

Society for Research and Academic Excellence

www.academicexcellencesociety.com

Conference Proceedings

12th International Conference

Date:

28th to 30th September 2020

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Contact

08063465010

In this Issue

2020 September Conference

Covid-19 and the Fluidity of Identity: Perspectives from Religion and Philosophy <i>Josephine Ngozi Akah & Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah</i>	- - - -	-5-14
The Impact of Rural-Urban Migration on Economic and Security Systems in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State of Nigeria <i>Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka, Afokwalam Augustine Chinedu, Ihenacho Charless Uzoma & Adiukwu Chima Benjamin</i>	- - - - - - - -	-15-32
Biblical Studies and Interpretation of COVID - 19 in Nigeria <i>Babatunde, Christopher Femi</i>	- - - - - - - -	-33-41
The Appreciation of Blacksmithing as an Art in Art Education <i>Nzoiwu, Azuka Abigail</i>	- - - - - - - -	-42-49
Implications of Coronavirus Outbreak on the Religious Practices of Churches in Nigeria <i>Chukwuma, Onyekachi Gift, Asogwa, Emmanuel Chukwujindu</i>	- - - - - - - -	-50-61
Ephesians 5: 22-33 and Parental Role in Curbing Domestic Violence in Nigerian Contemporary Society <i>Daniel Clement Unachukwu</i>	- - - - - - - -	-62-74
Socio-Ethical Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria <i>Ezeanya, Chioma Winifred, Otegbulu, Chukwuebuka Gabriel & Obiora Anichebe</i>	- - - - - - - -	-75-83
Covid-19 Pandemic and the Ubuntu Spirit in Nigeria <i>Ifegwu, A. Nduka & Okoli, Ugochukwu Richard</i>	- - - - - - - -	-84-91
Overcoming the Legal Challenges of Non-Interest Banking in Nigeria: An Agenda for Moving the Economy Forward <i>C. N. Iyidobi, & C. A. Ogbuabor</i>	- - - - - - - -	-92-106
Edutainment in the Face of Covid-19: A Critique of Cobham Asuquo's Song "We Go Win" (Corona) <i>Lawal, Deborah Temisan</i>	- - - - - - - -	-107-112
Establishing Psychological Hermeneutics as A Method in New Testament Biblical Interpretation <i>John Chijioke Madubuko</i>	- - - - - - - -	-113-122
Corona Virus 2019 (Covid-19) Pandemic Lockdown: Politicisation of Palliative Measures in Nigeria <i>Ejikeme Jombo Nwagwu</i>	- - - - - - - -	-123-134
Entrepreneurial Eco-System Covid-19 Intervention Measures and Entrepreneurial Emergency: A Study of Enterprises in South-East Geopolitical Zone in Nigeria <i>Chinazor Franca, Obi</i>	- - - - - - - -	-135-151
Effects of Federal Government N power Scheme on the Nation's Educational System: A Study of Selected Schools in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State <i>Ogbu Obinna Samson & Mbah Eusebius Chinedu</i>	- - - - - - - -	-152-161

Effects of Covid-19 on Religious Practices in Nigeria <i>Ojile, Barnabas Audu</i> - - - - -	-162-169
Religion and Mental Colonization: A Textual Analysis of Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God <i>Austin Chibueze Okeke</i> - - - - -	-170-176
Bad Governance and Social Infrastructural Deficit in the Management of Covid-19 Pandemic, Nigerian Perspective <i>Olise, Charles Nnamdi & Emeh, Ikechukwu Eke & Attama, Paulinus Ikechukwu & Udenze, Chukwudike</i> - - - - -	-177-194
COVID-19 Pandemic: A Humanist Response <i>Otegbulu Chukwuebuka Gabriel & Ezeanya Chioma Winifred</i> - - -	-195-202
Disruption of Farming Activities and Communal Conflict that Affect Socio-Economic Development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State <i>Bassey, Ugo Samuel & Onyema, Okwu Augustina</i> - - - -	-203-208
The Writer as a Historical Witness: The Covid-19 Pandemic and Poetic Responses <i>Gabriel Oche Ukah-</i> - - - - -	-209-213
Fight against Covid-19 pandemic in the context of socio-political crisis: the case of the North West Region of Cameroon <i>Meva’a Abomo Dominique & Ejuande Emmanuel Wonomu</i> - - - -	-214-227
COVID-19; Revealing the Hypocrisy of Religion and Technological Advancement <i>Ikechukwu Onah & Solomon, Chidi Alexander</i> - - - - -	-228-234
Education Management and Covid-19 in Nigeria <i>Okafor Judith Nneka</i> - - - - -	-235-242
Patterns of Violent Crime in Nigeria <i>Onyejebu, Dominic Chukwuemeka; Egbegi, Friday Raphael & Benjamin Okorie Ajah</i> -	243-255
Religious Fanaticism and Changing Patterns of Violent Crime in Nigeria <i>Onyejebu, Dominic Chukwuemeka, Egbegi, Friday Raphael & Benjamin Okorie Ajah</i> -	256-267
Courts in Nigeria and Access to Justice in the Covid-19 Era <i>Obi-Ochiabutor, Clara Chinasa, Akpamgbo Ebube Hillary, LLB, BL.</i> - - -	268-276
Digital Platform Dynamics and Covid-19 Crisis on the Educational System in Douala V – Cameroon <i>Nkumbesone Makoley Essone & Ejuande Emmanuel Wonomu</i> - - -	277-285
Effects of Covid-19 on Religious Practices in Nigeria - - - - - <i>Gonee Barle Jonathan</i>	-286-295
Jesus’ Teaching on “Heal the Sick” in Matthew 10:8a and Its Relevance to the Healing of Covid-19 <i>Samuel Sunday Alamu & Oluwabukola Alaba Ifabiyi,</i> - - - - -	296-304

Sociological Analysis of the Effect of Covid-19 on Religious Practices in Nigeria <i>Agba A. O. ; John Thompson Okpa ; Emmanuel Eshiotse; Akomaye Sylvester & Thelma Aya Abang</i> - - - - - - - - - -	-305-310
The COVID – 19 Pandemic and Social Distancing: Implications for Communal Living and Social Cohesion in South-East Nigeria <i>Casmir Obinna Odo; Perpetua LumTanyi & Bukie Fidelis Bukie</i> -- - - - -	-311-321
The Nexus between Human Capital Formation and National Development in Nigeria: A Case Study of Imo State of Nigeria <i>Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka ; Ihenacho Charless Uzoma ; Adiukwu Chima Benjamin & Afokwalam Augustine Chinedu</i> - - - - - - - - - -	-322-337
Oil Price Volatility and Macroeconomic Performance in Non-Oil Exporting Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa <i>David-Wayas, Onyinye Maria Ph.D & Kumeka Terver T.</i> - - - - -	-338-356
Paul’s Philosophy of Taking A little Wine in 1 Timothy 5:23 and the Curb of Drug Abuse among Nigeria Youths <i>Ijeudo Nnamdi Ugochukwu & Ogbuclement Samson Chijioke</i> - - - - -	-357-365
Freedom and Determinism: Contextualizing Rousseau’s Social Contract Theory vis-à-vis IPOB’s Struggle for Referendum <i>Dr. Obi, Louis U. & Chukwu Peter Damian Ezechi & Awurumibe, Douglas N.U.</i> ---	366-371
Sociological Analysis of the effect of Covid-19 on Religious Practices in Nigeria <i>Agba A. O. & John Thompson Okpa & Emmanuel Eshiotse & Akomaye Sylvester & Thelma Aya Abang</i> -- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- ---	372-379

COVID-19 AND THE FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

By

Josephine Ngozi Akah & Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah

¹. Humanities Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

². Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

³. Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to argue that COVID-19 has highlighted the commonality of human experiences and the fluidity of group identifications. This paper adopted qualitative method of study to analyze primary and secondary data using content analysis. The question of identity was assessed from specific religious, and broader philosophical perspectives. We found out that various bases for human identification and grouping faded in the face of COVID-19 as societies vigorously exchanged ideas and updates, on solutions to the problem. This paper concludes that the commonality of human experiences in the face of global problems such as COVID-19 is an empirical pointer to the absurdity of rigid self- and group-identifications. We therefore recommend that scholars in area studies such as African studies, should devote less attention on unique identifications; but more attention to the imperative to collaborate with each other towards solving human problems.

Keywords: COVID-19; fluidity; identity; religion; philosophy; African studies

Introduction

We aim in this paper is to argue that COVID-19 has highlighted the commonality of human experiences and the fluidity of group identifications. The world remains divided on the basis of various forms of identification. Individuals and groups segregate themselves from others based on religious affiliations (Christians, Muslim, traditional religionists, Hinduists, and so on) or religious orientation (theists, atheists, secularists). Sometimes, the bases for religious differentiation also imply ethnic and nationalist differentiations. People also differentiate themselves from others simply on the basis of political ideologies and affiliation. In the process of holding onto these forms of identification and differentiation, people who deserve help are ignored. The faults of members of one's in-group are ignored or simply explained away resulting in larger, negative social consequences. We explore the idea that negative attitudes toward those we consider as out-group, and the uncritical attitude toward those of our in-group, are largely unreasonable. They are based on a faulty assumption that what we consider as our identity is rigid and fundamental. These assumptions are behind exaggerated and destructive critique of a political leader simply because of his political affiliation, the wanton waste of human lives and property through religious and ethnic violence, the lingering Israeli-Palestinian border conflicts, and so on.

Some scholars have highlighted some of the weaknesses in this predominant, rigid conception of human beings into groups (see Appiah 1992, 2018; Lefkowitz 1996; Bhatt 2015; Asiegbu & Ajah 2020; Akah & Ajah 2020). Others, unfortunately, have focused on sustaining such forms of human conceptualization and differentiation, in the name of area studies (see Mbiti 1969; Metz 2015; Chimakonam 2019). We find the engagements of the latter group as problematic, anti-development, largely against improved general human self-understanding, as well as against human collaboration. Although several authors have argued on how misdirected the exaggerated focus on human identification is, particularly in relation to Africa, we use the situation of COVID-19 pandemic to draw a fresh attention to this misdirected stance and the projects it grounds. We imagine what would have happened if human societies did not collaborate to identify patterns of manifestation of the pandemic. We highlight how the

pandemic has projected the fundamental fact of our commonality, and sidelined all forms of emphasis on how we differ.

To achieve our aim, we adopted qualitative method of study to analyze primary and secondary data using content analysis. We assessed the question of identity from specific religious, and broader philosophical perspectives. Our contribution is divided into three sections after this Introduction, and before the Conclusion. The first section is a brief definition of the idea of identity and its resurgence in the 21st Century. The second section highlighted some of the weaknesses of excessive attachment to one's identity. In the third section, we paid close attention to evidences on how human cleavage to identities faded in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also raised some questions that emphasized the fluidity of identity.

21st Century hype for identity

In this section, we briefly indicate our conceptualization of the term identity and its use in this contribution. We also highlight evidences of surprising resurgence of identity in the 21st century global society. Our use of the term identity here is as (i) self-conception of an individual or a group, and/or (ii) self-awareness and -representation of an individual or a group. Either way, we conceptualize identity here particularly from the perspective of group/social identity. Hence, we define it as the self-conception, self-awareness, and (preferred) self-presentation of a group and its members.

Based on this baseline conceptualization, we agree with Appiah (2018) that there are five predominant modes of social identification. The first is social identity based on creed or belief (that is, identity on the basis of religion). This includes identification based on religious affiliation (Christian or Muslim, and so on), or orientation towards religion (theist, atheist, secularist). The former part of this first classification implies several sub-classifications such that, among Muslims, there are Shi'ites, non-denominational Muslims, Sunnis. And, among Christians, there are Pentecostals, Catholics, and so on. The second mode of identification is based on colour, or what is dangerously termed race. The third is identification based on country or recognized state. The fourth is culture, which includes human groupings based on ethnic groupings, or ideas of nation as different from state. The fifth, according to Appiah, is identification based on class. This form of identity includes such differentiations as economic class, social class, political class, the free and the *osu*-caste, and we may even add, religious class (the ordained or the clergy; the not-ordained or the lay).

In the opening lines of this section, we hinted that we consider the resurgence of identity in the 21st century as surprising. Our position is because we are in a century of increased human knowledge and interaction – thanks to globalization and massive advancements in ICT. One would have been rationally justified to expect that mutual knowledge of the existence of several others and their minor points of difference would enhance humanity's understanding that they are fundamentally more common than they are different. Or, that their points of differentiation are accidental, rather than fundamental. That calculation has proven to be unappealing to most. Instead, what has predominated is that the mutual encounter of groups has increased fears about domination and intimidation by others. In fact, Samuel Huntington's (1996) prediction during the eve-years of the 21st century seems to have completely taken the day. For this reason, rather than the first calculation having its way, identity continues to be hyped in a century of massive knowledge and mutual encounter (see Akah & Ajah 2020). First, we recall the global shock by the events of 11 September 2001 attack on the U.S. That the attack was carried out in 2001, we think, was a notice to the world that the master-minders of the attacker were out to emphasize their religious identity. And, ever since then, similar attacks of various scales continue to be carried out in various parts of the world for related reasons of emphasizing religious identity (for instance in the U.S., France, Nigeria and Lake Chad Region, Central African Republic, India, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan), or nationalist/racial preferences (for instance in Sudan, the U.S., Nigeria, South Africa). The continuous loss of life along Israeli-Palestinian border is anchored on both forms of identity.

What remains worrisome, we think, is that we are in a century in which there are loads of scientific evidences to the fact that the points of differences are not worth resulting in the large scale of violence and loss of life. Yet, the problem is complicated by that the fact that the lines of identity differentiation are

being hyped rather than faded. A set of important questions worth posing repeatedly is this: Are our lines of differentiation so rigid and fundamental that we should lose lives, and developmental gains at the rate we do (see Akah & Ajah 2019)? Are our differentiations not more fluid than rigid? We think there are a lot of reasons to argue sustainably that group identity and lines of differentiation have several weak-points that should make us pay less attention to them.

Weak-points of excessive attachment to identity

In this section, we engage some ideas highlighted by Akah and Ajah (2020). First, let us explore the basic submissions of these authors, and then attempt an expansion of their arguments.

According to these authors, an underlying assumption by most claims to identity is that identities unite disinterestedly. This means that in its various manifestations, identity as a philosophical concept and mental stance, appeals to the fundamental human propensity to belong in a special way, with specific persons. A follow-up feature of this propensity is that for each group they form, humans demand to be respected. A failure to recognize by non-members of each group is faced, first, with an insistence on recognition, and maybe later, various forms of violence, and possibly destruction. The authors posed a question which they didn't quite answer directly. They asked: "But, are the destructions and violence worth the demand and the identity?" (Akah & Ajah 2020: 135). Although we consider this an important question, we would not be able to explore its answers here considering that our focus is less on the connection between identity and violence. We shall, however, explore what they meant by the expression that there are weak-points of excessive cleavage to identity and nationalism. They identified five of such weak-points: (i) identity is more fluid than it is fixed; (ii) identities over-lap; (iii) the narratives that ground some identities are lies, or just myths; (iv) identities can be mere tools in the hands of selfish others, and (v) humans can reconstruct.

With regard to the first weak-point, Akah and Ajah explained that unlike what is predominantly assumed about group identities, they are fluid, and neither fixed nor immutable. This means, in the words of Sapolsky (2019), that group identity and identification is continuously random, like the toss of a coin. Akah and Ajah projected the idea that group identification is nothing other than stories we were told and that we tell ourselves (see also Kaplan 2003; Bhatt 2015). On the second weak-point, our authors explained that the various identities that exist do over-lap from time to time. The primary assumption for this position, according to them, is that "[N]o human being has a single identity. Rather, every human being has several/ multiple identities" (Akah & Ajah 2020:135). This position is related to that of Sapolsky (2019:45) that humans have "multiple over-lapping in-groups", or another fact that "a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (James 1950:294).

On the third weak-point, Akah and Ajah expanded an idea they hinted on in the first weak-point, namely, that many times what we call our identities are mere stories or narratives we were told or that we tell ourselves, about ourselves. However, in their explanation of the third weak-point, they held that many times, the narratives that give meaning to what we cling to as our identities are either lies or just myths. They summed their critique of narratives as lies by posing two striking questions, namely, "If a story that grounds a particular identity is an outright lie, or just a myth, is the cause to defend that identity worth pursuing? Is one justified to be violent to others because of a lie or a myth, even if he/she does not know yet that the story is a lie or a myth?" The fourth weak-point, according to Akah and Ajah (2020), is that identities can be mere tools in the hands of selfish others. According to them, this implies that most times, calls for identities are made by political elites, for their selfish interests (see also Eide 1997; Rosenthal 2008).

The fifth weak-point, according to Akah and Ajah (2020), is that humans can reconstruct themselves. This is based on the assumption that they are creative. The result is that they creatively reconstruct their perceptions of and approach to, themselves and reality in general. This capacity to reconstruct, according to the authors, implies that granted that humans have an underlying propensity to differentiate themselves into groups, they can as well suspend and provide justifications for not exhibiting this propensity. A striking example to back-up this aspect of their submission is the 2019 Jena Declaration

in which several German scientists publicly declared that “there is no biological basis for races, and there has never been one. The concept of race is the result of racism, not its prerequisite” (see Cavanagh 2019). That such a declaration came from Germany of all countries, in the views of Akah and Ajah, is a further boost to their view that our perceptions about our identity and that of others, is always open to reconstruction. Now, let us expand some of the arguments expressed by these authors, particularly as some of them have manifested during the COVID-19 pandemic. To do that, we first present how the pandemic projected human solidarity in moments of shared concerns.

COVID-19, shared struggle to live, and the fluidity of identity

Whitehead (2020) reported the views of Sandy Mather who admitted that although the experiences surrounding COVID-19 can be defined as amounting to “a terrible time”, yet, one of its exciting features is that it “has brought the international intensive care community together” (Whitehead 2020: Web). For instance, Mather explained that since the outbreak, professionals across the globe who use intensive care unit (ICU) have been sharing their experiences to improve their efforts in treating the virus. The result is that lessons are passed on quickly, from one country to the other – from those who had earlier experiences in combating the pandemic, to those in locations whose experiences were still comparatively lower. Whitehead (2020:Web) summed that despite the many unclear and unpredictable twists regarding how the virus is manifesting, one thing that is clear, however, is that “the mortality of patients in ICUs around the world has fallen by one third between March and the end of May, from 60 per cent to 42 per cent.” In her view, the decline in fatality rates of COVID-19 cases in ICUs “could be a result of ‘the rapid learning that has taken place on a global scale due to the prompt publication of clinical reports early in the pandemic’” (Whitehead 2020:Web).

A striking point in reports like the one by Whitehead (2020) is that there was no reference to religious dispositions of the scientists, or their nationalist ideologies. There was also no reference to whether or not national/ethnic sovereignty and self-reliance was at stake. During those moments of extreme crisis and fears of death, all the lines of division faded. Elsanousi, Visotzky, & Roberts (2020) noted in catchy terms that in the experience of COVID-19 pandemic, Islam, Judaism and Christianity came together to obey government instructions and guides on how to stay healthy. But, what could not fade was that we are all humans, and that whatever worked in saving a life in one location would also – not probably, but certainly – save lives in other locations.

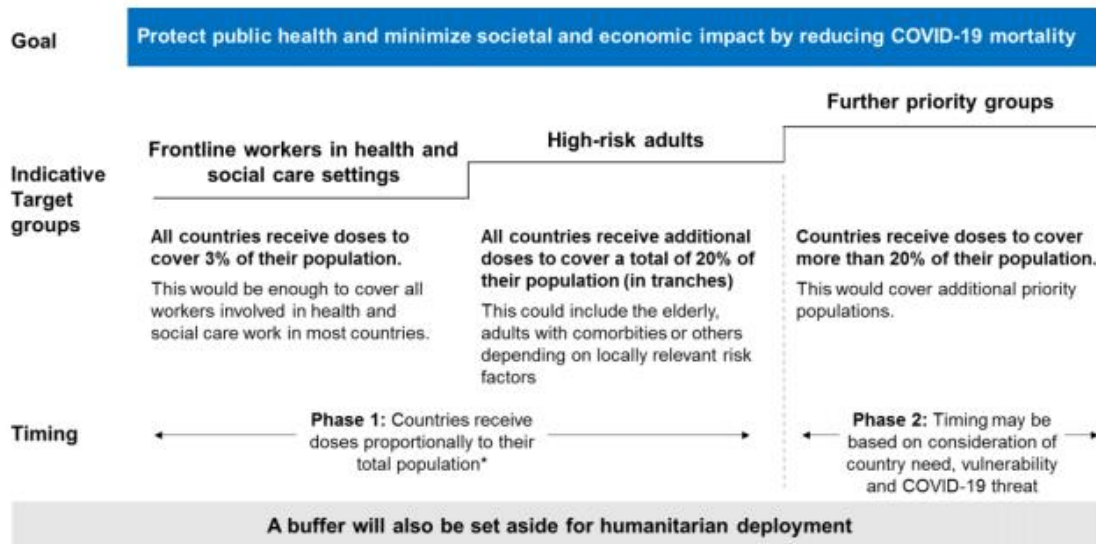
In related terms, the World Health Organization (WHO 2020) has submitted with regard to collaborations since the COVID-19 pandemic, that “[T]he unprecedented investments and global collaboration in research and development may result in a vaccine being available in the medium term” (WHO 2020:3). In what she described as “global allocation framework for fair and equitable access to COVID-19 health products”, WHO’s official statements are not around racial distribution of humans around colour and religion. They are simply about humans in various parts of the globe. This focus informed what came to be termed COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, and the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator). In both platforms, global partners, countries and groups are pooling resources together in preparation for how best a successful vaccine will be distributed in fairness, and with earliest attention to locations that will be in greatest need at the time. WHO explained that the COVAX Facility is meant to bring all participating countries together, regardless of their income level, for the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. The underlying idea that grounded COVAX Facility is the establishment of a global access mechanism that links individuals and groups in various areas of research, development and manufacture of vaccines. Based on this framework, WHO explained that the COVAX Facility has four specific goals. These are:

- a. to develop a large and diverse actively-managed portfolio of COVID-19 vaccine candidates to maximize the probability of success of several candidates, so that the best vaccines are ultimately made available and the supply will be sufficient for highest-priority populations globally for all self-financing participants and COVAX AMC Eligible Economies
- b. to deliver at least two billion doses of approved vaccines by the end of 2021
- c. to guarantee access to approved vaccines for every participating economy, and

d. to end the acute phase of the pandemic by the end of 2021 (WHO 2020:4).

Figure 1 represents WHO’s proposed plan on how to allocate successful COVID-19 vaccine, according to phases, and with priority on specific groups based on needs. As the figure shows, in the classification of who receives the vaccine first, considerations were not given based on which group is loved by God the most, which nation or ethnic group are God’s most beloved (for instance, Israel’s stories as the beloved of ‘God’), and which group is in possession of the last revealed truth (for instance, the story that Muslims are in possession of the final truth). The distribution of vaccines will not be based on who obeys which revealed truth, who is a sinner or an infidel, or who is white or black. The basis for the decision were just on the fact of reducing deaths. Hence, WHO wrote about what she termed ‘a reasonable scenario’ that will define which group gets the vaccine first. A defining component of this ‘reasonable scenario’ is a focus on reducing mortality and protecting the global health system.

Figure 1: Graphic representation of WHO’s plan for COVID-19 vaccine allocation in phases



(Source: WHO 2020:8)

The first-Tier group (Tier 1) that will receive the vaccine, according to this ‘reasonable scenario’, include: (i) frontline workers in health and social care settings, (ii) people over the age of 65 years, and (iii) people under the age of 65 years who have underlying conditions that put them at a higher risk of death. Explanations for this classification based on need and reason are that:

Frontline workers in health and social care settings could be prioritized as they are essential to treat and protect the population and come in close contact with infected individuals and provide care for high-mortality risk groups. Initial epidemiological data has shown that adults over 65 years of age and those with certain co-morbidities are at the highest risk of dying from COVID-19. However, this evidence may evolve as more data from different contexts is gathered and assessed (WHO 2020:7).

The last sentence in the quotation still lays emphasis on reason, need, and epistemological humility (see Akah & Ajah 2019), not on group identification and absolute truths about who deserves to live and who they should not be yoked together (2 Cor. 6:14).

As a follow-up to the above, the central issues at stake in discussions about COVID-19 vaccine production and allocation are not at all around differences in identities, but around more fundamental issues around fairness and equity. Again, this is evident in the views of the WHO (2020:7) that “[T]he fair allocation of vaccines will combine the principle of fairness to meet the basic needs of all countries at the same time in the initial stages (that is, based on proportional allocation), as well as the principle of equity to account for differences in risk profiles across countries.” These principles informed a further emphasis

that the supply of vaccines should also prioritize the need of those trapped in humanitarian situations, deployments and other emergency related situations. What should be reserved for people in such conditions were described as components of “humanitarian buffer” (WHO 2020:8). They will be made available to partners involved in implementing humanitarian aid as well as other relevant organizations working in such contexts. Specifically, the vaccines that will make up the buffer will “serve vulnerable populations, for example refugees and asylum seekers, and those dedicated to relieving their suffering.” (2020:8). Again, on the basis of rational considerations, rather than group identification, WHO added still that

The prioritization and quantification of products for each allocation round should be based on a risk assessment through the evaluation of: threat – the potential impact of COVID-19 on a country, assessed using epidemiological data - and vulnerability – the vulnerability of a country based on health systems and population factors (WHO 2020:10)

In an expression of a voice speaking on behalf of a common human family, WHO (2020:9) clarified that “[G]iven the ubiquitous nature of COVID-19, all countries should receive, in Phase 1, an initial allocation of vaccines based on a proportional allocation scheme.” Again, we see in this voice a focus on humanity, and an obvious redundancy of group differentiations along identity lines. This shows that in the face of real human needs, these identities become obviously irrelevant. This means, in our view, that they were never necessary in the first place.

There will be obvious rejoinders to our positions and interpretation of the issues of COVID-19 vaccine up to this point. One quick response could be that the above positions are merely official positions as we ‘rightly’ qualified them. Our respondent may go ahead to remind us that even among the ‘so-called’ world uniting agencies and institutions, there are efforts to benefit one group to the detriment of others. Our critic may add that in the end, it is the poor countries that will still be short-changed and left behind. Our brief response is that the observations by our potential critic do not weaken our position. They rather justify the problem that warranted the question of identity and nationalism that we highlighted in this contribution. That groups short-change others is only a fact of international politics. And, by the way, that is why it is called ‘politics.’ That same fact confirms the urgency of our position rather than weaken our central argument that our lines of identification and differentiation are not as fundamental as we tend to take them, and therefore, they are also not necessary.

The views we expressed here are related to that of Bollyky and Bown (2020). In a *Foreign Affairs* article titled “The tragedy of vaccine nationalism - Only cooperation can end the pandemic”, they worried that the earliest available COVID-19 vaccines will result in a tension. On the one hand, they admitted that there will be an obvious problem of each country trying to provide COVID-19 vaccines for her country before she can release quantities for countries who will not be able to provide initial quantities for their citizens. On the other hand, they argued that the only way to avert the dangerous consequences of vaccine nationalism is if global institutions provide the necessary lead for collaboration, and if political leaders keep to their commitments to global frameworks for initial distribution of earliest quantities of available vaccines according to needs and vulnerability of nations. The striking similarity between the views of Bollyky and Bown, and the views we have expressed here is that the focus is on human cooperation, rather than group identification. And, whereas we focus on identity generally, Bollyky and Bown addressed the issues with particular focus on state-nationalism.

Our views are also related to those of Okonjo-Iweala (2020) and Hillman (2020). Okonjo-Iweala’s submission was based on a deeply entrenched assumption that the world is made of one human family. In her views, the ultimate goal of the race for COVID-19 vaccine “is not only to produce a safe and effective inoculation but to bring the pandemic to an end” (2020:Web). One way to make this possible is to ensure that once such a safe vaccine is available, it should be made affordable particularly to low-income countries. Okonjo-Iweala emphasized low-income countries. We assume that this emphasis is in respect to ‘affordability’ rather than ‘who gets the vaccine first’. With regard to the first (affordability), her emphasis is understandable because if the experience about HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral drugs repeats itself, whereby the price of anti-retroviral drugs was not affordable by individuals in low-income countries who needed them the most, then COVID-19-related death toll in such countries will be terrible. If on the other hand, her emphasis on low-income countries is in terms of who gets first, then, we assume that her position is

either entirely wrong, or simply based on the paucity of data on COVID-19 spread at the time she wrote, that is, April 2020. For the sake of the latter, we excuse her.

Notwithstanding this clarification, we think Okonjo-Iweala was still right in her later view that making COVID-19 vaccine affordable and available, is a huge enterprise. According to her, to succeed with this enterprise, there is a need for a new perspective to understanding vaccines. This perspective is that vaccines should be seen not as the property of the scientists and pharmaceutical companies that produced them, or the countries that funded them. They rather “must be recognized as global public goods” (Okonjo-Iweala 2020:Web). She explained that

Neither domestic agendas nor profit can be allowed to drive the effort for the largest vaccine deployment in history. Governments, pharmaceutical companies, and multilateral organizations must work together to develop, produce, and deliver the vaccine. Producing and distributing billions of doses of a new vaccine would be challenging at the best of times. Doing so during a pandemic will require an unprecedented global effort (Okonjo-Iweala 2020:Web).

Again, we find in those lines, obvious sidelining of demands for nationalist, professional, ethnic, religious, and racial identifications. There are only appeals to fundamental points of human unity and possibilities for collaboration. These also indicate that all the bases for differentiation are not fundamental enough to surface during such critical decisions. And, since they are not fundamental, we should learn to keep them aside and focus on the things that matter, namely, the fact that we are humans; the fact that our sustenance and ability to surmount our common problems are anchored on our collaboration. Okonjo-Iweala (2020:Web) agreed that “It is the duty of every government to put its citizens first, but during a pandemic this duty also requires thinking and acting globally.” Yet, she didn’t think this weakened her argument for a new perspective as the world gets ready for COVID-19 vaccine. She rather argued that the problem at hand is enough to justify the removal of identity barriers “created by intellectual property and technology transfer laws and to encourage manufacturers and research groups to work together toward a common goal” (Okonjo-Iweala 2020:Web).

Okonjo-Iweala’s submissions also contain further evidences in support of our arguments in this contribution. She recorded that the Serum Institute of India had already announced that it will not retain the intellectual property on its COVID-19 vaccine candidate. This is in addition to what she termed “an unprecedented partnership” by companies such as GSK and Sanofi, to pool their resources towards timely production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine. Apart from pooling resources, several manufacturers, Okonjo-Iweala added, “have agreed to not profit from COVID-19 vaccines” (2020:Web). These, in our views, are further evidence that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, human points of differentiation and identification have faded in the battle of humans to live. Hence, Okonjo-Iweala emphasized that the pandemic has become an opportunity to mobilize humans and contributors in the race towards development of COVID-19 vaccine around a common goal. This goal, in her view, is that we are in one world, and that we all need to be protected “Because no one will be safe until everyone is safe” (2020:Web).

On the other hand, Hillman’s (2020) particular focus was on the possibilities of individual identity constituting a cog in the wheel of fast and timely distribution of vaccines. Specifically, she worried about whether patents, as manifestations of rights and identity of individuals and groups who may produce COVID-19 vaccines, would, in her words “stand in the way of global health” (2020: Web. See also Lester and Mercurio 2020). Before Hillman addressed her major concerns, she observed the already evident impacts of global cooperation in the race for COVID-19 vaccine. A remarkable result of such a cooperation is that vaccines and new medicines which usually took at least a decade to develop and test, were already showing possibilities of being within reach in 18 months. This is possible because of “intensive global research efforts” and collaborations. These collaborations and results were possible because in the face of what Hillman rightly described as “a once-in-a-lifetime crisis”, points of differentiation have either faded and/or are being demanded to fade. To stress her point and offer a solution, Hillman (2020:Web) thought that “The best way to ensure that vaccines and treatments are

provided to all who need them... is for countries to commit to working cooperatively.” This involves, among other things, ensuring that trade protections and intellectual property rights are not emphasized over and above the need to reduce the avoidable death of humans, that is, to safeguard public health.

Recalling human experiences of public health challenges during the hay-days of HIV/AIDS, Hillman noted that despite years of pain and conflict on how best to distribute anti-retroviral drugs to reduce the cost of lives in Africa, the efforts to combat HIV/AIDS laid important groundwork. One obvious result of that groundwork is that it “brought international organizations, governments, private companies, research institutions, and nongovernmental organizations into cooperative relationships—the very sort that will be essential for the effective production and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine” (Hillman 2020:Web).

Based on our assessment and analyses up to this point, we think that despite the lingering discrimination against groups and identities, the situation that has shocked the world reveals that the identities we emphasize are not as fundamental as we tend to hold and accept them. The fact that they are not projected in honest, public discussions on how to save humanity from life-threatening conditions such as COVID-19 pandemic draws attention to the other fact that they are not as important as we project them. The fact that we keep quiet about them when we are eager to get each other’s assistance and collaboration, also means that they are not fundamental. They are not rigid. They are fluid. Their fluidity should make us give them less attention.

We consider these last points important in particular context of scholarship in what is generically termed African studies, and area studies in general. In the case of the former, we think that scholars involved in that subfield have focused too much on how humans differ rather than how they are united. This is particularly manifest in religious and cultural studies in Africa, including the sub-field of African philosophy (see Wiredu 1984; Mudimbe 1988; Platvoet & Rinsum 2003; Metz 2015; Chimakonam 2019). In these fields and sub-fields, there has been an emphasis on how Africans are more caring than the rest of the world. The comparison however is usually done in relation to so-called Western societies (see Metz 2015, for instance). Having assessed the efforts towards saving human lives from COVID-19 pandemic we now pose a question: If Africans care about life more than those in the global West, and if they also extend helping hands in the context of communitarianism more than humans in the global West, how come countries in Africa are not obviously involved in the race for COVID-19 drugs? How come they are not emphasizing their blackness and uniqueness in this search for COVID-19 vaccine? How come it is the WHO, not the AU, that is planning on how to allocate prospective COVID-19 vaccine? Since the most successful vaccine candidates are originating from partnerships in the West and East, what if they insist on their racial difference from Africa as a deciding principle for allocation of COVID-19 vaccines? The answers to these questions are not straight forward, not obvious. Whatever their answers, they will all point to the fact that once again the commonality of humanity and human experiences has been manifested in the COVID-19 pandemic. And, as humans struggled to live, they abandoned their locus of identification because in the struggle to survive, only the fundamental things remained, namely, that whatever we hold onto as our points of differentiation are not rigid. They are not important. At most, they are just there because we created them. However, we think we should just learn to treat them for what they are: fluid stories we created which do not truly count for our survival.

Conclusion

Our aim in this article is to argue that COVID-19 has highlighted the commonality of human experiences and the fluidity of group identifications. Our analyses of primary and secondary data revealed that various bases for human identification and grouping faded in the face of COVID-19 as societies, international organizations and associations vigorously exchanged ideas and updates, on solutions to the problem. We conclude that the commonality of human experiences in the face of global problems such as COVID-19 is an empirical pointer to the absurdity of rigid self- and group-identifications. We think that

scholars in area studies such as African studies, should devote less attention on unique identifications; but more attention on the imperative to collaborate with each other towards solving human problems.

References

- Akah, J.N. and Ajah, A.C. (2019). Secularization and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Ikoru: Journal of Contemporary African Studies UNN*, 13(2), pp.166-179.
- Akah, J.N. and Ajah, A.C. (2020). Identity, nationalism, and 21st century violence, in J.O. Uzuegbu, A.C. Ajah, & C.A. Ezema (eds.), *Philosophy, Logic, and Human Existence – With Selected Topics in/on Igbo Language*, pp.123-140. Nsukka: Newland Designs & Print Solutions.
- Appiah, K.A. (1992). *In my father's house: Africa in the philosophy of culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Appiah, K.A. (2018). *The lies that bind: Rethinking identity*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Bhatt, C. (2015). Dare to refuse the origin myths that claim who you are. <http://www.ted.com/talks/chetan_bhatt_dare_to_refuse_the_origin_myths_that_claim_who_you_are>
- Bollyky, T.J. and Bown, C.P. (2020). The tragedy of vaccine nationalism - Only cooperation can end the pandemic. *Foreign Affairs (Sept./Oct.)*. Retrieved: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-07-27/vaccine-nationalism-pandemic>
- Cavanagh, M. (11.09.2019). Don't use the term 'race', German scientists urge. *Deutsche Welle*, 11 September 2019. <http://www.dw.com/en/dont-use-the-term-race-german-scientists-urge/a-50390>
- Chimakonam, J.O. (2019). *Ezumezu: A system of logic for African philosophy and studies*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Eide, Espen Barth (1997). Conflict entrepreneurship: On the 'Art' of waging civil war. In Anthony McDermott (ed.), *The Humanitarian Force, PRIO Report 4/97*. Oslo, Norway: International Peace Research Institute.
- Elsanousi, M., Visotzky, B.L. & Roberts, B. (2020). Love your neighbour: Islam, Judaism and Christianity come together over COVID-19. Retrieved: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/religions-covid-19-coronavirus-collaboration/> (21 Sept. 2020).
- Hillman, J. (19 May 2020). Drugs and Vaccines Are Coming—But to Whom? - How to Make Sure Patents Don't Stand in the Way of Global Health. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-05-19/drugs-and-vaccines-are-coming-whom> (Accessed: 20 May 2020)
- Huntington, S.P. (1996/2002). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. London: Simon & Schuster.
- James, W. (1890/1950). *The principles of psychology*. New York: Dover.
- Kaplan, D.M. (2003). *Ricoeur's critical theory*. New York: State University of New York.
- Kupferschmidt, K. (2020). WHO unveils global plan to fairly distribute COVID-19 vaccine, but challenges await. *Science* (Sep. 21, 2020). Retrieved from: https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/09/who-unveils-global-plan-fairly-distribute-covid-19-vaccine-challenges-await?utm_campaign=news_daily_2020-09-21&et rid=707741872&et cid=3488985
- Lefkowitz, M. (1996). *Not out of Africa: How Afrocentrism became an excuse to teach myth as history*. New York: BasicBooks
- Lester, S. and Mercurio, B. (8 April 2020). We Need a Coronavirus Vaccine. Patents Might Slow the Process. Retrieved: <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/we-need-coronavirus-vaccine-patents-might-slow-process> (Accessed: 13 April 2020)
- Mbiti, J. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. Heinemann: London.
- Metz, T. (2015). How the West was One: The Western as individualist, the African communitarian. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47(11): 1175-1184.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. (1988). *The invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy, and order of knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Okonjo-Iweala, N. (April 30 2020). Finding a vaccine is only the first step - No one will be safe until the whole world is safe. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-04-30/finding-vaccine-only-first-step> (1 May 2020)
- Rosenthal, Justine A. (2008). For-profit terrorism: The rise of armed entrepreneurs. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31(6), pp.481-498. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100802064858>
- Platvoet, J. and Rinsum, H. (2003). Is Africa incurably religious? *Exchange* 1-25.
- Sapolsky, R. (2019). This is your brain on nationalism: The biology of Us and Them. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 98(2), 42-47.
- Whitehead, S. (Aug. & Sept. 2020). View from the frontline. *The World Today*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/twt/view-frontline>(Accessed: 17 Sept. 2020)
- Wiredu, K. (1984). How not to compare African thought with western thought, in R.A. Wright (ed), *African philosophy: An Introduction*, pp.149-162. New York: University Press of America.
- World Health Organization (WHO).(2020). Fair allocation mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility Final working version - 9 September 2020. Retrieved from:<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/fair-allocation-mechanism-for-covid-19-vaccines-through-the-covax-facility> (Accessed: 20 Sept. 2020)

THE IMPACT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION ON ECONOMIC AND SECURITY SYSTEMS IN ISU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF IMO STATE OF NIGERIA

By

Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka
Department of Public Administration
Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo; Nigeria

&

Afokwalam Augustine Chinedu
Department of Public Administration
Imo State Polytechnic

&

Ihenacho Charless Uzoma
Department of Public Administration
Imo State polytechnic

&

Adiukwu Chima Benjamin
Department of Cooperative Economics
Imo State Polytechnic

Abstract

This study examined the impact of rural-urban migration on economic and security systems in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. A rural-urban migration is a movement of people from their home to settle in the urban area for several purposes ranging from searching for employment, business opportunities, artisan and other forms of life accomplishment. In the research studied, four research questions and four objectives were raised. In realizing this research studies; both the primary and secondary data collections were used. In the primary data collection, interview, the questionnaires and empirical studies were used while the literature review was adopted for the secondary data collection. The population of the study was 164,328 while the sample size calculated with Taro Yamane formula was 399. The content analyses were simple percentage; statistical tables and the chi square with hypothetical null to analyzed and interpret data. The migration theories such as Ernest Ravenstein Push-Pull Migration theory,(1889) and Nicholas Van Hear migration and social Change theory, (2010) were used due to the complex nature of migration. Some findings were made. In those findings, rural-urban migration is observed to be as a result of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, lack of infrastructural facilities, absent of standard health facilities and equipments and poor economic welling of the people. The recommendations suggest thatboth government and able private organizationsshould aid in making provision for infrastructural development, site industries that is capable of providing job opportunities, ensure the provision for security apparatuses to caution the security challenges, provide financial aid to improve agricultural productivity and Health sector by providing standard health equipments and qualified health personnel as well as poverty alleviation programme for citizens in the rural areas to better their lots.

Key Words: Rural area, urban area, migration, Security.

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Migration is the movement of people to/from one place to another. It involves emigration and immigration. Emigration is the movement of people from their abode to the town, city or across the country. The immigration is the movement of people from another area of abode to present area. It is a movement where people leave their home of abode to enter another town, city or country. All these movements are intended to capture some goals. At this point, the rural-urban migration is not left out to these definitions. People tend to move from rural area to urban area and from urban area to rural area respectively depends on one's needs and aspirations. The rural-urban migration has been a usual occurring movement which is subject to one's aims and aspirations. (Guresci, 2014:p.18) states that rural migration denotes the migration to the cities from rural settlements (villages, town, hamlets etc). This concept is employed from time to time as migration from village, the most important settlements of the rural areas to cities. However, in as much as the only administrative units of the rural areas are not the villages, there is a difference between the concepts of rural migration and migration from villages to cities. (Tsegai, 2007:p.305) states that migration decision on the role of income differences shows that the migrants are not random part of the population. The migration equation has been corrected for selection bias using the Heckman procedure. The data for this study has also been collected under a common sampling framework approach recovered through questionnaires distributed which resulted in the variety of data. In the study, factor such as migration experience, household size, education, social capital, ethnic networks, off-farm activities and irrigation are the decision considered before migration tour can be decided. From the inception, people usually leave their homes to settle in another home-town-city or country. The purpose of doing so depends on individuals, the needs and targets but all are anchored on obtaining and achieving desired goals and objectives. In most cases, the fulfillment of life aspirations would not be done in one place consequence to that, people decide to move hence an adage said that change is constant. Therefore, rural-urban migration is a movement by people living in a rural area to urban area. The need for such movement arises when there are limitations towards achieving one's life expectancy in rural area or Local place of abode.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Owing to certain impending limitations affecting one's targets in the Local area and the need to achieve life expectancy; human needs and aspirations always borders and triggers consciousness for better environmental change. (Alarima, C.I., 2018:p.6) states that there are three categories of factors perceived as responsible for rural-urban migration which include those related to the need for education and acquisition of skills in various vocations, those related to the absence of desirable job opportunities in rural areas which are absence of employment, absence of industries and companies and boredom in agriculture; and those factors relating to social such as inadequate amenities.

The need for Civilization and Modernization of one's attitudes, understand of issues and quest for human developments give room for opportunities and plans for actualization of dream outside one's local abode. The challenges of primitivity, absence of reasonable social infrastructure with consistencies of security issues, employment issues, and poor Agricultural productivity remain the attribute of rural areas. The epileptic power supply, the pipe borne water and bore hole are always subject of contention. One of the characteristic of urban areas is the present of good roads, electricity and hospitals. Such have been the object of argument and consistently complaining in the local areas. In the local areas, there are different human cultural development base on different environmental settings that affect change and development in the local areas. In a heterogeneous area with local background have tendency of erupting crises among the people due to different attitudes, languages, colors and understandings consequence to constant crises and rivalry. The unemployment problems, absence of a well structured educational library, recreational facilities and sports facilities and systems for communication, information and gadgets capable of engendering capacity buildings are rightly absent. The poor organization of environment that involve reckless dumping of waste refuse resulting to environmental pollution, degradation and dilapidated road infrastructure affect the chances of achieving one's life expectancy in rural area consequence to urban movement.

However, insecurity of lives and properties, disease infliction and poor provision of medical care and absent of infrastructural atmosphere are the reasonable features of local environment which cannot provide comfortability and the avenue towards which ones destiny can be achieved. Therefore, rural-urban migration affect the economy and security systems when there are absence of infrastructural development, absence of manpower planning and development, unemployment issues, high level of poverty and low standard of living of the people, poor agricultural productivity, absent of stable flow of income, security challenges which gives room to robbery, kidnappings, raping, assassination, quarrels, fighting, threat, poor provision of health equipments and caring which may lead to increase in mortality and death rate. In all these negative attributes eventually characterized most of the rural areas in Isu Local Government Area in particular and Imo State in general, thereby making rural-urban migration of the people sacrosanct.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of this study include the followings:

- (i) What are the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?
- (ii) To what extent does rural-urban migration affect security system in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?
- (iii) What are the consequences of rural-urban migration on economic development?
- (iv) What are the measures to curb with the effect of rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?
- (v)

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was anchored on the following objectives. They include:

- (i) To find out the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.
- (ii) To know the effect of rural-urban migration on economic development
- (iii) To articulate the effect of rural-urban migration on security in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.
- (iv) To fashion out measures to curb with the effect of rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

1.5 Hypotheses

- (i) There are factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State of Nigeria.
- (ii) There are consequences of rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.
- (iii) The rural-urban migration affects security system in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.
- (iv) There are measures to curb with the rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

- (i) This study is essential to everybody whether educated or none educated. Both educated and non educated people will find it importance due to its capability in providing new ideas, knowledge and serve as corrective measure to address the effect of rural-urban migration in Isu local Government Area in particular and Imo State of Nigeria in general.
- (ii) It will serve as essential material for academic staff, scholars and researchers for academic development in the society.
- (iii) It will serve as a valuable material for politicians and leaders of the Local Government area of Isu and other local Governments in the Society and the countries at large when using the ideas and knowledge to curb with the effect of rural-urban migration in their localities.

- (iv) It will serve as a document for future academic research and students' development because of its huge potential in adding to academic knowledge and creativity.
- (v) It will help the governments of all levels to take proactive measures on how to prevent high rate of rural-urban migration in our society.
- (vi) It will acknowledge the governments of all levels to extend development to rural area in other to reduce the number of rural-urban migration in our society. This can be done by providing essential infrastructural development.

2.0 Review of the Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Ellucidation

The rural-urban migration is the movement of people from rural area to urban in search of greener pastures. It is a situation that prompts people to leave their rural areas to settle in urban or city for some purposes for life accomplishment. In the accomplishment of future life objectives, people migrate. Such could be for educational purpose, employment, business opportunities, and security reason and for productive services. (Nicholas Van Hear, 2010) defines migration as a process which is an integral part of broader social transformations, but which also has its own internal dynamics and which shapes social transformation in its own right. (Anglel, 2016: p 356) opined that migration is a powerful process generating leveled processes of diffusion of money, goods, ideas and values, ultimately changing entire communities and regions of origin. (kanics, 2011:p.199) asserted that the determinant of labor migration are market potential, wages, cost of living and integration. (Tsegai & Verlag, 2005) in their opinions stated that migration effect of the Volta Basin of Ghana household and district levels was base on the household survey and census 2000 data, a complete matrix of inter-district migration flows, where the investigation was made to determine the decision to migrate within the Volta Basin of Ghana which emphasis was on the role of migration income affecting household migration decisions. (Kanics & Kielyte, 2010:p.14), studies how European integration might affect the migration of workers in enlarged. This is based on empirical analysis of the theory of economic Geography a (La Krugman, 1991) which provides an alternative modeling of migration pull and push factors. Migration is a selective process affecting individuals or families with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics. (Eze, 2016) assert that migration follows a variety of pattern on space dimension which include; urban-urban, urban-rural, rural-urban, rural-rural. Rural-urban migration results from the movement from rural to urban in the search for opportunities due to rural-urban inequality in wealth and better quality of life found in urban centers. (Aponte, 2002). All these movement involved both internal and external migrations. There are different kinds of migrations which include:

1. Emigration
2. Immigration
3. Return migration
4. Seasonal migration

Emigration

Emigration is the movement of persons from the country of abode to another. It is a movement from one urban area to another. The movement of Nigerian Citizen to South Africa

Immigration

Immigration is the movement of people from the state of residence into a new state for a purpose(s) such as business, education, employment, agriculture etc. For instance; a person entering into Nigeria from United States of America is an example of immigrant. It is a movement into a new country for purposes. Immigration is an act of entering into a country from another to make a new home.

Return Migration

The return migration is the movement of persons back to his original place. It is a returning movement made by people after migrated to a particular area for business, service, and effect of war or insecurity.

Seasonal Migration

The seasonal migration is the movement of person in every season or in response to conditions that occurs seasonally; such as climate condition, labor movement etc. For instance; the movement during summer and winter etc

Refugee Migration

The refugee migration is the movement of people to a new country because of a problem in their former home. It is a movement made because of insecurity and war.

Reasons/Factors Responsible for Migration

There are two factors responsible for migration in the society according to (Raveinstein, 1889): They include: (a) Push factor (b) Pull factor

Push Factors

The push factor which is responsible for migration of people outside their areas are forces which drive people away from their home. Such forces include: shortage of food, war, unemployment, natural disaster, poverty, lack of infrastructural development and poor information and communication system in the area etc.

Pull Factors

The pull factors are those things that drive people into a place. It is a movement to a place because of something good, such as good climatic conditions, food sufficiency and in cheap sales, the presence of infrastructural facilities such as good roads, electrification, pipe borne water/borehole, good and standard markets, well equipped schools, industries, availability of raw materials and machines for operations. Others include; provision of standard health centre, hospitals, recreational areas like field for playing footballs, entertainment arena and libraries. Employment is also attracts people to make movement to a favorable area.

Categories of People who Migrates

There are several categories of people that embark on migration tour in our society today. They failed under-refugees, emigrants and immigrants.

Emigrants

Emigrants are people who leave their countries to go to another country for greener pasture. For instance; a Nigerian who leave Nigeria to settle in USA, is an emigrant of Nigeria.

Immigrants

Immigrants are those people who enter into a country from another country to make a new home. For instance; a Nigeria who leave Nigeria to settle in USA, is an immigrant of USA. That is to say that, he/she is a visitor in USA.

Refugee

Refugees are those people that leave their countries to flee to another country. This movement is as a result of war ravaging the country of abode. The purposes may be for safety against security bridges, war, natural disaster and conflict.

2.1.1 The Economic Effects of Rural-Urban Migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State

The rural-urban migration is an attempt made by some citizens of the rural area to leave their home area of residence for the urban area. This attempt is predicated by the number of issues both positive and negative which borders on socio-economic and the political climatic condition of the environment. The issues prompting rural-urban migration are as follows:

1. Absence of infrastructural facilities: - The infrastructural facilities are social amenities like good roads, pipe borne water/borehole; electrification, bridges, and health facilities such as well equip hospitals, maternities and health clinic capable of providing essential health services and save lives. Other infrastructural facilities include: Provision of standard markets for buying and selling

- etc. These enable the provision of adequate lives and its maintenance, but where they are not rightly available in rural area(s) affect lives and lead to rural abandonment to urban area by the citizens.
2. **Low productivity and distribution of goods and services:** - Production of goods and services is anchored upon the use of raw materials to manufacture, fabricate, industrializing, processing and crystallizing and assemblage of the products to where the potential buyers will meet and exchange for it. It is unfortunate that insufficient number of people in the rural areas of Isu Local Government Area coupled with the absent of infrastructural facilities affect the productions and the distributions of goods and services in that areas, thereby hamper employment opportunities and development of the areas.
 3. **Poverty and Ignorance:** - Poverty is the state of lacking. It is a condition where someone experience bankruptcy, absence of food, poor state of wellbeing of person(s) which inform hardship, difficulties, not having, not thinking reasonably and implementation. (Olewe, B.N., 2001: p; 50), “states that poverty is derived from the Latin word “pauper” which meaning poor”. It is categorized into four types which include; economic poverty, social poverty, mental poverty and political poverty.
 4. **Absent of effective communication and information dissemination:** - Information and communication is an essential tools that foster human relations. Getting messages and feedback on how production and services are being carried out in the rural area is through information and communication. This implies that information is an act of informing, sending messages, reporting issues within ones environment. Communication is an interaction between and among two or more people within and outside the environment. Where there is absent of these, affect socio-economic and political development of the citizens of the areas. Therefore, the absent of information and communication in the rural area hampers economic production, improve market values, industrialization, manufacturing of goods and services, employment opportunities, change and development.
 5. **Poor health infrastructures depreciated equipments and absent of trained personnel:** - Health infrastructures are equipments, materials requires to standardizing health service and providing enable health services. It involves structural standard needed to provide adequate protection of patients and health personnel. Such Standard modern equipments include; ultrasound, x-ray machines, etc. The substandard of these equipments or absence of the health equipments in rural hospitals, maternities and health centre have the tendency of enhancing rural-urban migration thereby cause rural desertification of people and economic declining in the rural areas.
 6. **Insecurity and Pests Destruction of agricultural Produce:** - Insecurity has been articulated as one of the critical issues that hamper the effort of ensuring effective rural development. Insecurity is a state of uncertainty purported by fear, conflict, chaos, war and other intolerable conditions within ones environments. (Anoruo, A.C. 2018:p.184) defined insecurity as a feeling of uncertainty, inadequacy or doubt heightened by a sense of helplessness, rejection, lack of purpose and blame observable in the society among individuals.

2.1.2 Challenges/ Factors Responsible For Rural-Urban Migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State

There are some critical factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. Such include the followings:

1. **Poverty:** - Poverty is a state of lacking, absent of the necessary economic power, mental derail and derange and incapacitated to meet certain targeted needs and obligations in the society. So, people most of the times leave rural areas to settle in urban areas because of poverty. It is observed that there are lacks of opportunities of jobs, socio-economic and political stabilities in the rural areas.

These conditions of live affect individual members of the society coupled with hardship, lack of commitment for economic advantage, poor business environment and low service leading to poor economic realization, development and capacity building. (Abiodun, J.O. 1998:p.3) defines poverty in terms of quantitative terms of income in a society like Nigeria or calories intake per day or in terms of a given level of income. Others discuss it in qualitative terms (i.e in the terms of the inability of certain people in the society to attain a given economic, cultural, social or other levels).

2. **Unemployment:-** Unemployment is the state of no commitment to job engagement. It is when grown up persons who suppose to engage in work for living have no work at hand. This affects economic status of people in the rural areas thereby lead into crimes commitment and criminalities, suicide and aggression. (Oberai, 1992: p; 65) states that there has been a steady deterioration in the employment situation in most sub- Saharan Africa countries in the seventies with a marked accentuation in the eighties. This is the result of a continuing deceleration in economic growth of labour supply. This chronic unemployment has caused several people to face long spells of the scourge, many frustrated into several anti social behavior and social aberrations such as robbery, killing and stealing; advanced fee frauds, otherwise known as 419, counter feting, drugs peddling, drug abuse, prostitution and madness etc.”
3. **Absence of Infrastructural facilities:** - Infrastructural facilities are social amenities which are used in the betterment and development of an area. Such include pipe borne water (borehole), electricity, good roads network, standard markets, standard hospitals and health clinics for provision of health facilities, bridges and schools for sound education, learning and development. Therefore, when there are absent of social services in the rural area; both the environment and the people will suffer socio-economic and political development.
4. **Insecurity and Social Instability:** - Insecurity is the state of uncertain purported by fear, intolerance, dishonesty, crime commitment and war. Others are killings, assassination, abduction and conflicts in the society. We have social insecurity, economic insecurity and political insecurity (instability). Social insecurity gives room to social vices, chaos, conflicts, fight and war among people in the rural areas. Economic insecurity is the state of economic meltdown, economic reduction, economic poverty, low production and distribution of goods and services, pest destruction of economic trees, crops and plants.

2.1.3 The consequences of rural-urban migration on economic development and security system
Low production and service delivery (poor production)
Rural desertion and abandonment
Economic collapse
Infrastructural collapse

Rural-urban migration lead to poor security services
Rural-urban migration lead to shortage of security personnel
It gives room for under funding of security organization due to economic collapse occasioned by low productivity and service delivery in the rural areas.
It leads to shortage of security equipments and arms because the rural-urban migrants have left the area with the available arms to urban areas.

2.1.4 The Prospects of Rural-Urban Migration in Isu Local Government Area

There are some reasonable needs for rural-urban migration in the society. Some of them include the followings:

1. **The present of standard Infrastructural facilities:** The provision of infrastructural development determine in great extent the development strive of an area as well as job provision, individual opportunities and performance. Where there is availability of Electricity, good roads, water supply, provides rapid industrialization, production and distribution of goods and services.
2. **Job opportunities:-** The important of rural-urban migration cannot be over emphasized. This is due to the high rate of job opportunities spread across the urban areas that is not in rural area.
3. **Self and Educational Development:** - The rural-urban migration provides opportunities for self and educational development in the society. The self development in area of skill acquisition such as new advanced electronic repairs service like phones, laptops, computers of both hardware and software. Others are the repairing of advanced technologies like tractors, bulldozers, and caterpillars. Others also are skill on how to provide services on the new modern system of building construction, tiling, marbles, roofing, interlocking etc. The educational development is anchored on acquisition of skills and knowledge that is useful for child development which can be obtained in both classrooms where well trained teachers are available. Also well structured school blocks and standard equipments for teaching and learning promote educational development. All these improve one's career and capacity building in the society.
4. **Improves ones Information Acquisition and communication Development:-** Rural-urban migration have the prospect of improving ones information acquisition, which are not quite available in the rural areas due to lack/absent of infrastructural facilities and jobs opportunities.
5. **Stable Security system/Network:-** In urban areas, there are much more plans towards promotion of security network such as street vigilantes, urban patrol team, police and military forces and the present of other Paramilitary forces like civil defense, road safety, immigration corpse, prison and custom service just to mention them. These security forces help to provide security network in the urban areas. These make urban areas more comfortable to stay and prepare for ones development and security than rural area where security services are limited in operation.
6. The presence of urbanization has provided leadership and technological advancement in the society. These have made it necessary to define civilization with urbanization and development

2.2 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theory used in the course of this study is push-pull theory of migration propounded by (Ernest Ravenstein, an English geographer) who used census data of England and Wale to develop his laws of migration (1889). In his theory, he asserted that migration is controlled by push-pull factors; (that is) unfavorable conditions in one place, oppressive laws and heavy taxation push people out, and favorable conditions in an external location "pull" them out. He further stated that the basic cause of migration was better external economic opportunities. The volume of migration decreases as distance increases. Migration occurs in stages instead of one long move; population movements are bilateral and migration deferential by gender, social class and age influence a person's mobility.

The Nicholas Van Hear theory of migration and social change (2010) was adopted to study the rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo state. The theory opined that migration is a process which is an integral part of broader social transformations, but which also has its own internal dynamics and which shapes social transformation in its own right. He asserted that migration is a complex ways to class, gender, generation, ethnicity and other social cleavages, which are embodied in hierarchies of power and social status, in positions in home and host communities, and in work and domestic relationship all of which may be transformed in the course of the migrating process. The consideration of the migrants' perceptions and aspirations by this study link micro-level understanding of migration to macro level trends in development and globalization, through analysis of the social dynamics of migratory processes. So, poverty, unemployment and absent of infrastructural development etc. pushed-pull some of the Isu citizens into urban areas.

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted through the use of descriptive survey method. This involved a standard method where relevant instruments are used to gather data and information for the study. They are research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, method of data collection, validity and reliability of the measuring instrument and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a plan of action on how information can be gathered in the research study involved. The research design used in this study include, survey research design. It involves procedures outline for the conduct of any given investigation, such as the equipments and the materials used in the successful achievement of research study. Survey research design is adopted due to its descriptive nature of research analyzing.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study according to (Nworgu, 1991:p.71) is the totality of any group, persons or object which is defined by some unique attributes. The population of the study is 164,328.

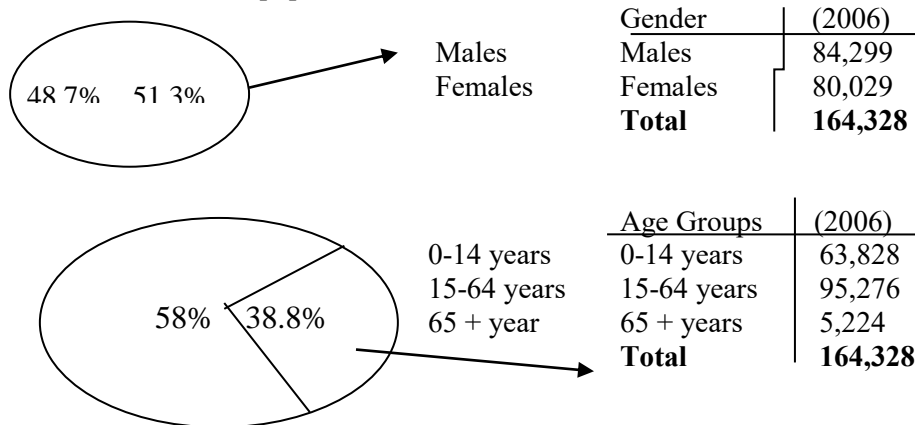
The population development of Isu Local Government Area and the related information and services

Name	Population Census 1991-11-26	Population Census 2006-03-21	Population Projection 2016-03-21
Isu	----	164,328	226,300

Area: 66.8km²-Density: 3386/km² Isu Local Government Area in Nigeria

Source: National population commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of statistics (web).

Further information about population structure is as follows:



3.3 Sample Size and Sample Techniques

(Nworgu, 2004: p. 340) states that samples are used in studies that involved large population.

Sampling method was adopted to adequately manipulate the enormous population. In

Determining the sample size of the study, the researcher drew the population from sixteen autonomous communities of Isu Local government Area of Imo State. The population of 164 328 were gathered and the sample size with Taro Yamane formula is as follows:

$$n = \text{Sample size} \quad 1 = \text{Constant}$$

$$N = \text{population} \quad E = \text{coefficient error by 5\%}$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Nx(e)^2} n = \frac{164328}{1+164328(5)^2} n = \frac{164328}{1+164328(0.05)^2} n = \frac{164328}{1+164328 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{164328}{1 + 164328 \times 0.0025} n = \frac{164328}{1 + 411} n = \frac{164328}{412} n = 399 n = 399$$

Samples Technique

Sampling technique is the process of selecting a fact (called a sample from the whole (called a population). (Obasi I.N., 2000 p.134), the sampling technique used in the study is probability sampling techniques. The Simple random sampling technique which is one of the types of probability sampling technique is used for the study.

3.4. Method of Data Collection

There are two methods used in collecting data during data collections. The methods are primary data collection and secondary data collection. The primary data collection involves the gathering of information through questionnaires, interview and empirical study, while the secondary data collection involves the review of the related literature which is done by extracting information from textbooks, journals, radios, television, Newspaper and magazines etc.

3.5 Validity of the Measuring Instrument

Validity of an instrument is the process of finding out the degree to which researchers or test indeed measured what is purported to measure. In the study, the researcher adopted pilot study which was carried out in three phases. Phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3. Pilot study according to (Habby, 1998: p. 211) is the process of trying out the entire aspect of the study including analysis of the data following closely the procedure planned for the main study before launching the said main study. The researchers administered questionnaires to 50 respondents differently. After their scoring, the researchers have to evaluate the individual sample group scoring with his scored questionnaire to note similarity. This was done by the researchers taking on ideal one he scored by himself in the way he expected everyone of the pilot sample group to score the questionnaire. Out of the 50 respondents considered for the pilot study, the researchers found out that the correct scores of the questionnaires were 40(80%). This made the researchers into believing that the instrument was valid. He took the same measure in phase two with the distribution of 200 questionnaires and the third phase with the distribution of 149 questionnaires respectively and observed the same thing thereby concluding that the instrument were valid

Reliability of the Measuring Instrument

The reliability of the measuring instrument could be observed in the consistency of the result given by the respondents while responding to the questionnaires and interviews carried out in the research study. In the research study, a result could be judged to be reliable when there are consistent, dependable and credible attestation to the instrument of questionnaires administered and the responds given by the respondents seemed to majorly agree with and disagreed with the research questionnaires. Therefore, (Isaac, O, 2000: p.126) asserted that reliability of a measuring instrument is the ability of the instrument to produce the same consistent result over time when applied to the same sample.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the statistical tables, percentage and chi square. The information gathered through questionnaires was used in chapter four.

The Research Setting

Isu Local government Area is one of the seven hundred and seventy four Local Government Areas of Nigeria. It is also one of the twenty seven Local government Area of Imo state. It was created in 1984 as Nkwerre/Isu Local Government Area under the Buhari administration. The headquarter was at Nkwerre. In those days Nkwerre/Isu Local Government was comprise of Amandugba Community, Umundugba, Isunjaba, Ekwe, Amurie, Amaigbo, Umuaka, Isu-muozu, Isuofeighi, Abba, Nkwerre, Owerre-Nkworji, Umudi, Okwudor, Attah, Amucha, Nkume, Ezianya Obire, Isunwangele etc. The secretariat was at

Nkwerre/Isu Local Government Council, Nkwerre. The political administration also took place in the National electoral commission (NEC) then at Nkwerre/Isu Council.

However, the quest for development give room to the creation otherwise separation of the two- Nkwerre and Isu into Nkwerre Local Government Area and Isu Local Government Area in 1988. The communities under Isu Local Government Area are Amandugba community, Umundugba, Amurie, Ekwe, Isunjaba, Umuaka, Nkume, Attah, Amucha and Okwudor. The headquarters of Isu Local Government Area is known as Umundugba which is 40km² from state capital Owerri, Imo State.

Furthermore, Isu Local Government area has had an offspring known as Njaba Local government Area in 4th February, 1991 by the then head of state, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's administration. Five autonomous communities seeded to Njaba include; Umuaka, Okwudor, Nkume, Attah, and Amucha while the rest communities. Such as Amandugba, Umundugba, Ekwe, Amurie and Isunjaba are in the present Isu Local government Area. The headquarters is still in Umundugba. Both the administrative, political and judicial powers are located at Umundugba. The autonomous communities, carved out from the old five communities of Amandugba, Umundugba, Ekwe, Isunjaba and Amurie. The rest of the new autonomous communities include Ulo-ano-Ndugba, Ezisu-Ndugba, Nnerim-Ndugba, Uburu-Ekwe, Ebenator-Ekwe, Ibeoma-Ekwe, Okoro-duru-Ekwe, Isiokporo-Isunjaba, Amauju, Isuobishii and Oboro-Amurie.

4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretations

4.1 Data Presentation

The questionnaires collected have been subjected into statistical analysis through percentage fraction, statistical table calculation and chi-square formula application. This makes it clear and the findings very necessary because the purpose of the research is to identify the variables which affect and give use to rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

Therefore, data presentation is very essential because it enhances the ability to understand the Idea behind this research. The essence of this study is to examine the effect of rural-urban migration on economic and security systems in Isu Local government Area of Imo State. The study will analyze the factors that responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State in order to capture the pros and the cons of the topic in this modern society.

So, this chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation as well as the summary of findings which is statistically calculated. The questionnaire of this study was prepared and give out to the respondents made up of (399) three hundred and ninety nine persons. Three hundred and seventy five questionnaires recovered while twenty four (24) questionnaires were declared missing or unrecovered.

Response	Number Distributed	%	Number Returned	%	Number not Returned	%
Semi Educated	189	47.4	174	43.6	11	2.8
Educated	210	52.6	201	50.4	13	3.3
Total	399	100	375	94	24	6.01

Source: field study, 2020.

Research Question One:

What are the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?

S/No	Description of items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
(i)	Insecurity in rural areas is responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State	370	98.7	5	1.3	375

(ii)	Increase in unemployment of the youths residing in the rural areas force rural-urban migration	350	93.3	25	6.7	375
(iii)	The poverty nature of rural area is responsible for rural-urban migration	368	98.1	7	1.9	375
(iv)	Absent of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas are responsible for rural-urban migration.	340	90.7	35	9.33	375
	Total	1428		72		

Source: field research work 2020 August.

The calculation of the percentages is as follows:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{n}{N} \times 100 = \frac{370}{375} \times 100 = \frac{370 \times 100}{375}$$

$$P = 98.7 \quad = \text{Yes} = 98.7$$

$$\text{Percentage No} = \frac{5}{375} \times 100 = \frac{500}{375} = 1.33$$

$$\text{Percentage of No} = 1.3$$

4.2 Analysis of Table 1

In the research question one in table one; it is worthy of note that insecurity, unemployment, poverty and absent of infrastructure are the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

However, in the responses by the respondents, out of 375 questionnaires recovered 370 respondents with the 98.7% responses agreed “yes” that insecurity within the rural areas are responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area while 5 respondents with 1.3% responses said No (or) reject the notion that insecurity are not responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. Therefore, majority of the respondents of which 370 respondents with 98.7% accepted the fact that insecurity within the rural areas in Isu Local Government Area are responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

In option two-350 respondents with 93.3% agree that unemployment of the youths residing in the rural areas force rural-urban migration, while 25 respondents with 6.7% disagreed or rejected the notion accordingly. Therefore, the 350 respondents with 93.3% who scored the highest numbers of the responds accepted that unemployment of the youths is responsible for rural-urban migration claimed the majority and accepted view.

In the option three, 368 respondents representing 98.1% stated that poverty nature of rural dwellers force them into rural-urban migration, while 7 respondents representing 1.9% respondents rejected the notion that poverty in rural areas are not responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

In the option four, 340 respondents representing 90.7% responses said that absent of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas are responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area, while 35 respondents representing 9.3% rejected the notion to say otherwise. Therefore, 340 respondents with 90.3% have majority opinions and agreed that absent of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas of Isu are responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

Null Hypothesis

There are factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State in Nigeria.

Table: 1:1 (Table one Hypothesis Ho One)

The insecurity in rural areas is responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State in Nigeria.

At assumed level of significance = 0.05 chi square

Responses	Semi Educated	Educated	Total
Yes	170	200	370
No	4	1	5
Total	74	201	375

Source: Field study, 2020.

$$\text{Formular} = \frac{rt \times ct}{gt} = \frac{\text{row total} \times \text{column total}}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$\text{Yes A} = \frac{370 \times 174}{375} = \frac{64380}{375} = 171.7$$

$$\text{No A} = \frac{5 \times 174}{375} = \frac{870}{375} = 2.31$$

$$\text{Yes B} = \frac{370 \times 201}{375} = \frac{74,370}{375} = 198.3$$

$$\text{No B} = \frac{5 \times 201}{375} = \frac{1005}{375} = 2.7$$

Table 1:1.2 Frequency Distributions for Hypothesis

Responses	Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe)	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	Fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
	170	171.7				200	198.3			
Yes	170	171.7	-1.7	2.89	0.0168	200	198.3	1.7	2.89	0.0146
No	4	2.3	1.7	2.89	1.2565	1	2.7	-1.7	2.89	1.0704
Total					1.2733					1,085

Calculated value (CV) = 1.2733+1.085 = 2.3583

Degree of freedom = (c-1) (r-1) =? Where C = column = 2

Therefore, degree = (2-1) (2-1) = 1x1 = 1

Critical value = X₂ = 0.05 = 3.8416

Comparison = 2.3583 < 3.8416

Judging from the calculation above, the calculated value is less than the critical value. Therefore, I accept the null and reject the alternative hypothesis which implies that insecurity within rural areas of Isu Local Government Area is responsible for rural-urban migration of the area in Nigeria.

4.3 Test of Research Questions and Findings

To identify the effect of rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, the researcher constructed four research questions which enable him to obtain the necessary information and data for the

research study. However, from these four research questions, 16 sixteen questionnaires items were formulated so as to give answers to the research questions and necessary information obtained for effective research study.

In the test of research question one which tries to study the factors that are responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. The responses were collected accordingly and analyses properly made in questionnaires distribution table 1. The four options with their responses and rate were (yes) 370 (98.7%), 350 (93.3%), 368 (98.1%), 340 (90.7%) while “No” responses and rate were 5 (1.3%), 25 (6.7%), 7(1.9%), 35(9.3%) respectively. Decision was taking base on the fact that the calculated value was less than the critical value that resulted into the adoption of null hypothesis which says that insecurity within rural areas of Isu Local Government Area is responsible for rural-urban migration.

5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

The effect of rural-urban migration on economic and security systems in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State was studied to identify some factors hampering and contributing to the rural-urban migration within the locality. To achieve that, four objectives were articulated. Among them are to know the effect of rural-urban migration on economic development, to articulate the effect of rural-urban migration on security in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State, to find out the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State and to fashion out measures that will be possible to curb with the effect of rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

However, four research questions were carried out with sixteen questionnaires items structured. The total of (375) three hundred and seventy five respondents recovered and data were collected from the responses. All analyses were accurately made. Findings were equally made accordingly. In the course of the findings, the research question one and its hypothesis opined that there are factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. Such include insecurity, unemployment, Poverty and absent of infrastructural facilities.

In research question two and hypothesis, the consequences of rural-urban migration on economic development include low productivity and service delivery, rural desertion and abandonment, economic collapse and infrastructural collapse-depreciation of equipments and dilapidation of infrastructural facilities.

The research question three stated how rural-urban migration affects security of lives and properties in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State. The respondents concluded that poor security services, shortage of security personnel, under funding of security organization and shortage of security equipments, arms and ammunitions were the factors responsible for security loopholes in the rural areas of Isu Local Government Area of Imo State.

Lastly, the research question four adduced that the measures to curb with the rural-urban migration in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State are provision of rural infrastructures such as good and standard roads, bridges, electrification, pipe borne water (borehole), standard hospitals and health clinics, schools and good standard markets etc. Others are provision of job opportunities, effective information and communication technologies (ICT) services and the stabilization of the economy and security systems in the local areas of Isu Local Government Area.

5.2 Conclusion

It is pertinent to quantify the effect of rural-urban migration to economic and security systems in the rural areas. Rural-urban migration causes much more negative effect in the rural areas. Such can be seen in the gradual reduction of population occasioned by rural desertion of some relevant citizens of the society to urban areas for greener pastures and other related purposes in the society. Statistics have shown that rural-urban migration contributes big deal in rural insecurity, rural desertion or rural abandonment, conflicts and war of dorminarism occasioned by the absence of some citizens who abandoned their inheritance in the

rural areas to stay in the urban areas. It is well acknowledged that the factors responsible for rural-urban migration are unemployment, poverty, lack of infrastructural development or poor infrastructural development, poor information and communication technological development, spiritual forces, environmental influences, insecurity and instability. These have marred rural development and capacity building.

5.3 recommendations

The recommendations needed to caution the effects of rural-urban migration are as follows:

1. Joint government and private provision of infrastructural facilities:- Both the government and private should join hand through public private partnership (PPP) or differently to contribute in the provision of good roads, regular provision of electricity, pipe borne water (borehole), construction of bridges, standard markets where economic goods and services can be assembled and sold without hitches, The standard hospitals and health clinics with sophisticated health equipments to facilitate rural development and capacity building.
2. Job Opportunities: - Both Government and private organizations should ensure the provision of employment opportunities to citizens in rural areas by providing infrastructures and industries which will give room for skill acquisition and the training of the citizens for future performance.
3. Since communication and information have become inevitable in our society today. Both private organization and public should endeavor to ensure the provision of communication gadgets and equipments in rural areas to ensure effective information dissemination, interactions, service, productions and distribution of goods and services.
4. Provision of adequate security network system by providing necessary security apparatuses and personnel to beef up security network in the rural area. Well trained security personnel such as vigilantes, police force and military etc. And effective operation of these personnel in the rural areas can dictate all criminals hideout and dislodge them, apprehend them, discipline them, sanitize the environment and restore peace and normalcy in the rural areas.

Appendix I

Department of Public Administration
Faculty of Management Science
Imo State Polytechnic
P.M.B 1042
Imo state
1st August, 2020.

Dear Respondent,

With due sense of humility and responsibility, we, Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka and co, Lecturers in the department of Public Administration and cooperative economics in Imo State polytechnic, currently carrying out research on “the effect of rural-urban migration on economic and security systems in Isu Local Government Area of Imo state: Challenges and Prospects”

Therefore, we are appealing to you to respond to the attached questionnaire base on your idea of the subject matter in studying.

Every information supply here will be treated confidential and for the purpose of the study only.

Thanks for your acceptance.

Yours Sincerely,

Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka
07035520750.

APPENDIX 2

s/no	What are the factors responsible for rural-urban migration in Isu LGA of Imo State?	Yes	No
1			
(i)	Insecurity is responsible for rural-urban migration		
(ii)	unemployment of the youths are responsible for rural-urban migration		
(iii)	Poverty in rural area is responsible for rural-urban migration		
(iv)	Absent of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas are responsible for rural-urban migration		
2.	What are the consequences of rural-urban migration on economic development?		
(i)	Low production and service delivery (poor production)		
(ii)	Rural desertion and abandonment		
(iii)	Economic collapse		
(iv)	Infrastructural collapse		
3.	To what extent does rural-urban migration affect security system in Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?		
(i)	Rural-urban migration lead to poor security services		
(ii)	Rural-urban migration lead to shortage of security personnel		
(iii)	It gives room for under funding of security organization due to economic collapse occasioned by low productivity and service delivery in the rural areas.		
(iv)	It leads to shortage of security equipments and arms because the rural-urban migrants have left the area with the available arms to urban areas.		
4.	What are the measures to curb with the effect of rural-urban migration In Isu Local Government Area of Imo State?		
(i)	Rural-urban migration could be able to be addressed by the provision of infrastructural service		
(ii)	Provision of job opportunities to youths of the rural-areas.		
(iii)	By making provision for information and communication technologies in the rural areas.		
(iv)	Stabilization of economy and security systems of the rural areas.		

Bibliography

- Abiodun, J.O.(1998), Environment, poverty an sustainable development in Nigeria cities: published by Nigeria social scientist
- Adewale, A.O. (2005), Socio-economic factors associated with urban-rural migration in Nigeria: A case study of Oyo state. *Journal of Human Ecolun* 17 (1), 13-16.
- Alarima, C.I. (2018) Factors Influencing Rural-Urban Migration of youths in Osun State, Nigeria: *Agro-Science Journal of tropical Agriculture, food, Environment and Extension*. Volume 17, Number 3 (September 2018) PP. 34-39 ISSN 1119-7455
- Amrevurayire, E.O. & Ojeh, V.N. (2016) consequences of rural-urban migration on the source region of Ughievwen Clan Delta State of Nigeria: *European Journal of geography*, 7 (3), 42-57

- Anoruo, A.C. (2018) Current issues and contemporary social problems: A trend in modern society. Inner wealth publishers Owerri, Imo State Nigeria
- Aworeru I.R., Abdul-Azeez, I.A. & Apoola, N.A (2011), An Appraisal of the factor influencing rura-urban migration in some selected local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4 (3), 84-86.
- Dr. Olewe, B.N. (2001) *Development Administration; 2nd & Enlarged Edition*
- Eze, B.U. (2016), the underlying factors of rural-urban migration in Southern East, South Eastern Nigeria: A study in Nsukka region of Enugu State. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and social sciences*, 21(7)46-54
- Ezeodili, W.O. (2003), urban development
- Guresci, (2014),” The positive Impact of Rural Migration: Ahi Evran University European Journal of Social sciences, Education and Research; volume 1 Issue 1 MAU-August 2014.
- Isaac, N.O. (2000) *Research Methodology in Political Science*
- Nworgu, B.G. (1991). *Educational Research: Basic Issues and Methodology*. Ibadan: Wisdom Publishers Limited
- Todaro, M.(1976). “Migration and economic development: A review of theory, evidence, methodology and research priorities. Mimeographic, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- Kanics (2006), the economic geography of labour migration: competition, competitiveness and development EERI Research paper series, No. 1/2006: Economics and econometrics Research Institute (EERI), Brussels
- Gallup, J. L. (1997); *Theories of Migration, Development Discussion Paper No. 569 Harvard University*.
- Kanics, D. (2005), can we use NEG models to predict migration flows? An example of CEE, accession countries, *migration letters*, 2(1), 32-63.
- Kanics, D. (2010), *Labour Migration in the Enlarged E.U: A New Economic Geography Approach*, LSE Research Papers in Environmental and Spatial Analysis, No. 131, London School of Economics and Political Science, London.
- Kanics, D., Kielyte, J. (2010), Educating in the East, Emigrating to the West? *European review*, 18, 133-154.
- Aponte (2002), *documents De Trabajo Sobre Economia Regional: Integraciou regional de los Mercados Laborales en Colombia, 1984-2000*.
- Nworgu, O.G.Y. (2003), *Ethnic suspicious in Nigeria politics in Maduabuchi Dakor (ed philosophy and politics: Discourse on values, politics and power in Africa, Lagos: Malt house Press Limited*.
- Oberai, A.S.(1992), *Population Growth, Employment and Poverty in the Third World Mega-Cities*. The courier No 131 Jan-Feb
- Tsegari, D. (2005), *The Economics of Migration in the Volta Basin of Ghana: Household and district-level analysis*. A published Ph. D. Thesis, Cuvillier Verlag Gottingen, Germany: University of Bonn.
- Adewale, A.O. (2005), Socio-economic factors associated with urban-rural migration in Nigeria: A case study of Oyo state. *Journal of Human Ecolun* 17 (1), 13-16.
- Amrevurayire, E.O. and Ojeh, V.N. (2016) consequences of rural-urban migration on the source region of Ughievwen Clan Delta State of Nigeria: *European Journal of geography*, 7 (3), 42-57
- Aworeru I.R., Abdul-Azeez, I.A. & Apoola, N.A (2011), An Appraisal of the factor influencing rura-urban migration in some selected local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4 (3), 84-86.
- Eze, B.U. (2016), the underlying factors of rural-urban migration in Southern East, South Eastern Nigeria: A study in Nsukka region of Enugu State. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and social sciences*, 21(7)46-54
- Ezeodili, W.O. (2003), *Urban Administration in Nigeria (2nd Edition)*
- Guresci, (2014),” The positive Impact of Rural Migration: Ahi Evran University European Journal of Social sciences, Education and Research; volume 1 Issue 1 MAU-August 2014.
- Isaac, N.O. (2000) *Research Methodology in Political Science*

Nworgu, B.G. (1991). Educational Research: Basic Issues and Methodology. Ibadan: Wisdom Publishers Limited

BIBLICAL STUDIES AND INTERPRETATION OF COVID - 19 IN NIGERIA

By

Babatunde, Christopher Femi

Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology
Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto

Abstract

The paper examines the Biblical Studies and Interpretation of Covid – 19 in Nigeria. The righteous has no need to fear except if you are not of God. Stand on the word of God, trust and obey Him. Covid – 19 is a plague, pestilence and a fulfillment of the gospel of darkness. No plague has a specific duration; it can only be how fast people respond until the purpose of the plague is accomplished. This is not the season to sleep but to pray. We are presently at the journey to His coming.

Introduction

In these days, with the going-on, our life in God ought to be different. If we are still living normally like we used to before this Covid – 19, then we are living in self-denial, This is not the time to brag, the fact that the mercy of God has preserved us does not mean we are better. This is the time to be grateful to God. Every time God brought plague, it was for a season and a reason. As a people, we must not allow it to continue for too long. And while this is going on, we must begin to take stock. As the day is drawing near, there will be things that will keep coming to question our faith. Still, we must hold fast to the profession of our faith and stand in the consciousness that God is faithful, by considering one another and to provoke one another to love and good works and keep our assembling together and not self-centered.

Covid – 19 is a threat to Christianity and the church in Nigeria. It's a Spiritual matter that requires Spiritual confrontation to overcome it. As the day draws near there are things that will confront our faith, we need to hold the faith fast. God's prescribed pattern for the time and season we are in now can be found in **Acts 2: 41 – 47** "*And as they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" that is what is required of people of Nigeria, reason being that Covid – 19 is darkness and warning from God to make our way right before Him to fellowship together to be in one accord with God. Events such as Ebola, terrorism, Covid – 19 are manifestations of the darkness. No fellowship that begins without relationship. If your relationship with God is not intact, it will be difficult to relate with man. It will be hard for the enemy to break into your camp. Meanwhile, fellowship is coming together for a particular purpose. Fellowship has no replacement, and that is the agenda of devil (Covid - 19) to replace it. God made man in His own image and likeness to fellowship with Him. The root of most problems starts with broken fellowship with God. Our fellowship with God is one of our greatest privileges as believers. All the attack of Covid – 19 is about the fellowship. To have fellowship with God you must be in the light. Personal and corporate fellowship is very important to generate fire for each other and to prepare each other for corporate fellowship or communion. Personal fellowship with God is your strongest asset or weapon; it also reveals that in the place of fellowshiping with God revelation are made plain. It is a war of word time not play or reward time. Keep the corporal, congregational, personal and family altar alive and from home to home.

Biblical Studies and Interpretation of Covid – 19 in Nigeria

After few years of wandering with Ebola, the people of Nigeria have forgot the lessons they had learned through their rebellion. When Ebola manifested in Nigeria, it claim many lives, but God still show His mercy on many as well. After Ebola, Nigerians went back to their old way of living never minding the cause and effect as well as the Nigeria government failed to take any precaution for future occurrence. To be an authority is to represent God. Whether it is in wrath or mercy, an authority must always be like God. If, in such a position, we do anything wrong, we should acknowledge it as our own doing. We ought never

to draw God into our own fault(Watchman 2007). We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work. Throughout the bible we see an important truth illustrated over and over. The Holy Spirit releases his power the moment you take a step of faith. When Joshua was faced with an impassible barrier, the floodwaters of the Jordan River receded only after the leaders stepped into the rushing current in obedience and faith. Obedience unlocks God's power. God waits for you to act first. Don't wait to feel powerful or confident. Move ahead in your weakness, doing the right thing in spite of your fears and feelings. This is how you cooperate with the Holy Spirit (Rick, 2002).

The father and mother are the real leaders in the society, and the gateway as well as the target in the society. The gateway in the sense that, anything comes into the society through them and they are the set of people that determines the next generation in the society. Home is where everything starts and end. Root out, pull down and destroy to build and plant a replacement for better outcome. If the foundation be destroyed there is nothing the righteous can do. The importance and relevance of your home before God cannot be overemphasizing. *"For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God"***1 timothy 3: 5.**The home remain the greatest attack for satan and a place where is interested to God. Who are you opening it up to, God for miracle or satan for attack?Nigerians must keep speaking positive words against the attack of Covid – 19 it will yield positive someday. The time spent in the presence of God is a time well spent; it's the only solution to Covid – 19 in our Nation. This is not the time and season to sleep but to pray. We are presently at the journey to His coming, so, we must be ready to receive Him. Insist on the salvation of those connected to you to help fulfill His coming. The only testimony that heaven recon with is that you and your household are save. Draw the blood line around your covenant domain against the activities of the angel of darkness (Covid - 19). These are dangerous days; we have to come together and be strong in the lord. The bible said *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as we see the day approaching"***Hebrew 10: 24 – 25.**

In this generation, people fear satan and death more than God. Actually, if we fear God there is no place to fear satan and death. The virus of sin is more powerful than Covid – 19. You must fear sin that will lead you to hell not Covid – 19 that can be manage and cure. If your inside is clean, nothing outside can defile you. Satan come to Jesus and fined nothing implicating in Him. Your heart must be sanctify and be right as you wash your hands because of Covid – 19, wash your heart clean also. The environment of your heart must be clean always so that His will be continually dwelt in you. Only the will of God is permitted on earth. The only blessing for God to mankind is that His will be done in their lives. Whatever you are if it's not the will of God it will crash.

The medical explanation and the name for CORONAVIRUS is COVID – 19, but it has a spiritual name. IT IS A PLAQUE, IT IS A PESTILENCE, IT IS DARKNESS and it's a fulfillment of prophecies. Peter's expertise failed him at one time when he went fishing; he had toiled all night but caught nothing. He had to let go of what he thought he knew for a higher revelation/truth. When Jesus told him to let down his net he did so at the word of Jesus and experienced a turnaround. If we don't learn our lessons now, a far worse than CORONAVIRUS will come after it. CORONAVIRUS is a manifestation of the darkness. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* **Ephesians 6: 12.**

Covid – 19started inWuham, China in 2019 and came into Nigeria on the 27th of February 2020. Covid – 19 is from God and is calling for attention. Covid – 19 is a plaque, pestilence and a fulfillment of the gospel of darkness. It was sent by God. *"and the lord plaque Pharaoh and his house with great plaques because of sarai Abram's wife"***Genesis 12: 17,***"For I will at this time send all my plaques upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou may know that there is none like me in all the earth"***Exodus 9: 14,** *"Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plaque brake in upon them, then they stood up phinehas, and executed judgement: and so the plaque was stayed"***Psalm 106: 29 – 30.**All these are sent by God following reasons behind them. God actually sent Covid – 19 to demand for attention in Nigeria.No plaque has a specific duration, it can only be how fast people respond

or make adjustment, or how fast a message is passing across or until the purpose of the plague be accomplished. All personal and family altar should be activated and kept alive.

A look of Covid – 19 from the point of pestilence is any disease that is highly contagious and spread easily to large numbers of people. **Numbers 14: 11 – 12** “*And the LORD said unto Moses, how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they*”, and **Exodus 9: 15** says “*For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth*”. “*If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” **2 Chronicles 7: 13 – 14**. The disciples of Jesus came to Him to tell them what shall be the sign of His coming and end of the world? Jesus responded that “*For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers’ places. All these are the beginning of sorrows*” **Matthew 24: 7 – 8**. Meaning that Covid – 19 is a sign of end time. Nigerians must do everything possible to go closer to God in order to escape destruction.

If you pray more you act wiser. Things can never go back the same again, but as far as you are with God, you are at advantage. When they are saying there is a casting down, you will be saying there is a lifting up in Jesus name. “Give yourself to the Spirit because a man of the Spirit can never be stranded.” Start anyhow and you will end well by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We need a heart of repentance and a prophetic church to escape the plague of Covid – 19 in Nigeria. In this season the greatest need now is thus sayest the lord and you cannot say so if you have not been with the lord. Our relevance to God and men is as our relationship to God.

To have a heart of repentance and to enter into a prophetic church in Nigeria, we must be conversant with the traits (Characteristics) of a prophetic church.

- ✓ We must be in intimacy with God, knowing God’s mind and agenda, being in the same page and calendar with the lord.
- ✓ We must be consecrated to the lord. Is not a church where everything can be done anyhow but a church where all things are yielded to God. Everything about the prophetic church expresses the lord.
- ✓ A prophetic church is an orderly church. It’s not rigid and not lawless. Nothing can be altered **2 Peter 14: 21**. This is what we need in Nigeria.
- ✓ Is a Spirit filled church, open and flexible? For churches in Nigeria to function well, it must come under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ A church with a sense of mission knowing where it is heading to.
- ✓ In a prophetic church, Grace of God grew and multiplies and the fear of God increase in their midst.

If these entire traits exist in all our churches in Nigeria there will be no cause for alarm and Covid – 19 cannot have a place to hide. All these we need to subdue the plague. Satan want to go ahead to see how he can destroy God’s agenda for Nigeria and the world because, satan objectives for Nigeria and the world is that he has come to kill, to steal and to destroy the heavenly mandate of God. As a people, we should not give satan the privilege to achieve this in Nigeria and the world as a whole, for by a prophet people were saved and preserved.

In summary, Covid – 19 is sent by God seeking for the attention of men in Nigeria. Don’t fight this season. Use the moment, seize it. How? Begin to give yourself to what the season offers. Maximize the opportunities the season offers you. We should also watch and pray to see and hear what the Lord will say to us. God needs our heart so that we can have one and same voice with God for the fulfillment of the gospel and repentance of people in Nigeria as the end time approaches.

Root of Covid – 19 in Nigeria

Covid – 19 didn’t just come to be in Nigeria, it came through some powerful forces that man find difficult to restrain from, and until that is dealt with, the plague will continue to have its way in

Nigeria. When there is no divine help, you are bound to be a prey to your enemy. Covid – 19 has come to expose the weakness of the church and government of the day. The root can be viewed from different perspectives as stated in this paper.

Our Sin in Nigeria

Refuse to stay in sin, because it breaks relationship between man and God. Sin takes man from the presence of the Almighty. *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* **Romans 3: 23**. Everywhere in the world today, evil is on the increase. *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold”* **Matthew 24: 12**. Sin makes you to lose grip of the love of God, which is paramount in these last days. Evil is on the increase in the continents of the world. But God created man to remain holy and be separated from sin (Kato, 2004). Likewise, in Nigeria, the rate of sin cannot be overemphasizing as it grows stronger on a daily basis. **Romans 5: 20** *“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”* From Boko Haram to Bandits to Kidnapping to Rapes in diverse places including right inside the church to an unholy dressing etc existing in Nigeria. All this is because the purpose of God is not understood.

God created man for a righteous living. The creation of man in God’s image was to create a holy relationship (fellowship) between God and man; but sin becomes an obstacle to this holy relationship. Satan then introduced sin into the life of man just to deprive man of this eternal benefit God has destined for man. As a result of this corrupt act by Satan, it has become humanly impossible for man to free himself from the claw of sin. The human nature is really in love with sin, but thank God for the death of Jesus that cleansed and washed away our sin. Jesus died on the cross so as to free man from sin. A spiritual force controls sin such that any physical exercise from man to stop it on his own cannot work; only Christ is the remedy (Kato, 2004).

However, we should note that a man who continually lives in sin is a spiritually dead man. When the first man and woman sinned, they didn’t die a physical death but spiritual; sin generally has a spiritual foundation, and when the foundation is not in place nothing meaningful can be achieved: **(Psalm 11: 3)**. So, as a result of the above, sin is one of the roots of Covid – 19 in Nigeria.

Our Thinking Pattern

In **Isaiah 55: 8**, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, said the lord”*. This is the root of every anti-redemption state of our life. Everything in my life which ought not to be there by virtue of Jesus’ atoning death, but which is still there, the reason is simply a matter of our thinking pattern, how different it is from God’s (Moses, 2005). When things happen we are sober and we never reflect and link it to what God is trying to say or what He is saying concerning it, but ignore and continue with our normal way of living. In Nigeria people believe and act as if the happenings didn’t affect them directly, there is no cause for alarm, unknowingly that, that is when to intensify in prayers to avert further and future occurrence.

The difference between His way of thinking and our way of thinking is equivalent to the distance between His life and our lives. How much we resemble Him in right living is a function of how much we resemble Him in thought pattern (Moses, 2005). So, man has to learn how to think in line with God. Our thinking pattern should be upgraded to the pattern of God, so that Nigerians can be able to discern what God is saying per time. Our thinking faculty should be sharp to the dealings of God always.

Unthankful

No matter how small something good has been done to you, learn to say thank you. Thanksgiving is one of God’s will clearly stated in scriptures *“In everything give thanks: for this the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* **1 Thessalonians 5: 18**. This is a command and must be obeyed. The spirit at work these days forbid man to be unthankful to God. Thanksgiving is the will of God, at all times under any condition. Anyone who is praying and asking for the will of God in a matter, yet, is not walking in thanksgiving or in gratitude to God, is living in self-denial and is simply paying lip service. Thanksgiving is an expression of faith in God. Everytime you are thanking God, you are expressing your faith in Him.

Once you are out of thanksgiving, you are out of order. Thanksgiving is not tied to experiences, it is regulated from inside. The word of God reveals that *“This no also, that in last day’s perilous time shall come. For men will be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”* **2 timothy 3: 1 - 5**.

The system of this world is anti – God, so, we are in opposition. In the natural there shall be many reasons not to be thankful to God. Every time you are grumbling, you are creating atmosphere for satan to strike. If man can think, he can actually thank God. One of the ways to quench the activities of God in your life is to be unthankful. Thanking God is not for what he has done only but for what he is still going to do (expectation) **Psalm 103: 1 – 8** *“Always thank God without season”* Thanksgiving pleases and satisfy God a lot **Psalm 50: 23** *“The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.”* Thanking God brings more of God blessing, presence and create a conducive atmosphere for God where Covid – 19 cannot strike.

Absence of the fear of God

Consciousness of the presence of God is the fear of God. **Proverb 9: 10** *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”* We have lost the fear of God in Nigeria to the extent that it unleashes the anger on our Nation. The absence of the fear of God does all manners of bad things, **Romans 1: 26 – 32** talked about lesbianism and homosexuality, which is also applicable to Nigeria. Which is outside the will of God for a nation? Pride in man and nation also sets in, that can be seen in book of **Daniel 4: 31 – 33** where king Nebuchadnezzar because of pride and the absence of the fear of God was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws. When the fear of God come upon someone, you get divine wisdom **Psalm 25: 14**, also people that fear the God will be delivered from famine and death **Psalm 33: 18 – 19** and long life shall be guaranteed **Proverb 10: 27**. Nigerians must have the fear of God to be able to eschew evil, **Job 1: 8** said *“And the Lord said unto satan, have thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fear God and eschew evil”*. The fear of the God also secures a nation with mercy; it brings answer and fulfillment of desires and salvation **Psalm 147: 11**. Jesus himself advises us to fear Him **Matthew 10: 28** *“which says, and fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

Unbelief

Unbelief is lack of faith, not believing the word of God enough. Taking another step outside the ways or plan of God for your life is totally wrong and the reason is unbelief. The solution to unbelief is not to pretend but to cry out to the messiah for help. Nigerians need to cry out for help from God because of unbelief which is one of the root causes of Covid – 19 in Nigeria. **Mark 9:24** says *“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, I believe; help mine unbelief”*. We didn’t really believe in God the way and manner we go about our business daily. We are not conscious of the fact that we listen to the word all the time but never act on it, which is because we didn’t really believe in the word. **Matthew 13: 58** *“And he didn’t do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.”* **Romans 11: 23** *“And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.”* **Hebrew 3: 19** *“So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.”* Nigerians should believe in the word so as to curtail the pandemic in Nigeria, which can be achieved if Nigerians can be rooted in God.

How to be Rooted in God against Covid – 19 in Nigeria

It is the will of God that we should be rooted and grounded in Christ and love **Ephesians 3: 17**. God want us to find our root in Him to show forth the glory we are carrying. Man must be stable in the knowledge of Christ. To be rooted in Christ;

- ❖ Man must seek to believe, learn and ready to obey Him.

- ❖ Recognize and constantly obeying the presence of the Lord and listening to Him before you make moves.
- ❖ **Psalm 92: 13** we must be planted in the house of the Lord to be rooted in God.

Lessons to learn out of Covid – 19 in Nigeria

Happiness is determined by the physical externalities, why Joy is from the inside. In the presence of God, there is fullness of joy, when your fellowship with God is broken; you make lose your joy. Covid – 19 has come to break our strong relationship with God as a nation. *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”* **2 Corinthians 4: 18**. Nigerians cannot be boasting of happiness or joy in this season because people have turned their focus on the plaque, and whatever you focused on is what you will keep seeing. Therefore, there are lessons to learn out of existence of Covid – 19 in Nigeria. They can be likening to;

- Covid - 19 has come to expose the church weakness, our praying strength and how far we are as a nation to God. It caught most church unaware. So, churches must be on the alert against future occurrence.
- The crisis moment and suffering of Jesus produced an obedience person in Him. Now that we are battling with Covid – 19 what is it producing in our live? This season will expose what we have done with our life. What you become this season is a choice. What will this moment produce in your live?
- Covid – 19 is hastening the coming of the lord **Matthew 24: 7 – 8**. It’s a sign of the end time. In this season if men will not faint, they must give complete attention to prayer so as not to fall into temptation reason being that whoever does not really pray does not have any regard for God. It’s a time we intensify in our prayers to God for mercy. What shall be our response now **2 Chronicles 7: 14** (Prayer). We can only be saving by our own righteousness **Philippians 1: 19**.
- Analyzing Covid – 19 will take you away from prayer and God. It requires Spiritual because it’s a Spiritual matter. Nigeria must enter into the Spirit to be able to subdue the pandemic.
- The righteous has no need to fear except if you are not of God. Stand sure on the word of God, trust and obey Him. Come what may be, don’t run from God but run to Him as the only solution to the pandemic (Covid - 19).
- Covid – 19 has come to expose what we do in term of crisis with our time because that will determine the outcome of what you have done with your time. Let us use our time judiciously and wisely during this season of crisis.
- Covid – 19 has come to remind us that whatever grew naturally on its own without been planted does not really have value, but what have value must be planted and nurtured to grow for exploit. Let us cultivate the habit to consciously plant the word of God in our children and society at large so that God’s will on earth is made manifest and our children will be able to face crisis on their own.
- Destiny is the purpose of God for your life; it is God pre – ordained, plan for your life. But then, it can be diverted, destroyed, perverted, replaced with something else and so on (Jacob, 2011). This is one of the agenda of Covid – 19. **John 10: 10** said, *“The thief (Covid - 19) has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy”*, and deal with destinies and re-arrange them. *“Jesus has come that we might have life and have it in abundance.”* So, you can seek the restoration of your destiny through aggressive prayer. Stolen destinies must be restored for God’s will and purpose to be fulfilled. *“For I know the taught that I think toward you says the lord, thought of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”* **Jeremiah 29: 11**. Nigerians must hold fast their destinies from satan’s invasion.
- Ability to discern God’s voice. In these times, people must be able to hear clearly the voice of God. There is no short cut to knowing the voice of the Spirit, other than to develop a qualitative and quantitative communion with the Spirit. It is in practice that there is perfection. Harkening to God’s voice must always be the other of the day. Until peter hearkened to the voice of Christ,

toiling never ceased. When we work without direction from above, we only struggle and end up in frustration **Deuteronomy 28: 1 – 2** (Courage, 2000).

- In **Matthew 16: 19** Jesus said, *“I give you the keys of the kingdom, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* **Psalm 119: 89** tells us, *“Forever O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven,”* What God said is already established. Now it’s up to you. God will not alter what He has said. *“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips”* **Psalm 89: 34** (Charles, 1976). Be eager to know what you are learning from this season and not when it will end. It can make out of you somebody full of fear or faith.

Whatever that has happen in life is what we allow, so, it’s up to Nigerians to take charge of their domain. Whatever interpretation you give to covid – 19, so shall it be unto you. Stop given it attention, your total and ultimate attention should be focus on God and God alone.

Conclusion

Those who know the bible should not be surprise at the state of the world as it is now. The bible said in **Matthew 24: 7 – 8** *“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers’ places. All these are the beginning of sorrows”*. **2 timothy 3: 1 - 5** said *“This no also, that in last day’s perilous time shall come. For men will be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”*. The bible still went ahead to tell us in **Hebrew 10: 24 – 25** *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.”* All these were ignored as the days are here.

Suggestions and Possible Solutions

If we will escape the calamities of these times, if we will not lose hope, then we must learn from the scriptures. Our hope is in the scriptures. Jesus said, *“Learn of me”*. As we search the scriptures, we will find comfort and see the need not to be destabilized. *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you: in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and savior”* **2 Peter 3: 1 – 18**. No matter how blessed Nigeria is she needs help, even the rich in Nigeria need help **Genesis 40: 9 – 23**. Only God’s help that can sustain Nigeria. It got to a stage in Nigeria in the year 2020 where the government’s efforts came to a standstill, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) “Boss Mustapha” said; we have tried our humanly possible best to curtail the pandemic but it’s rising day by day, so at this point, we handover to God.” These were his sayings concerning Covid - 19 in Nigeria. So, the only solution is from the scriptures.

The following are suggestions and possible solutions:

- We must be mindful of what the scriptures are saying. Putting ourselves in remembrance of what the word says is important. That is why we should keep repeating these truths. Anywhere there’s discipleship, training, proper parenting, there will be repetition.
- We must be mindful of the words of the holy prophets because many things are calling for our attention. We have to mind the prophecies of the prophets and not to be carried away by the happenings and events of the day.
- For those in authority, their hearts must be given to light to discern when God is saying and to know what to do per time, and wisdom to be able to respond to the affair of the season. God should use them as instruments to make Nigeria a befitting atmosphere for His desire to be fulfilled. **John 17: 12**.
- Authority must be obedient and sanctify themselves. There are conditions for being delegated Authorities which must be met to be subject unto the Spirit **Ephesians 5: 22, 25, 28, 33, 6: 9**. Spiritual authority is based on spirituality. It is not something apportioned by men nor simply appointed by

God. We need to remember that it is on the one hand based upon spirituality and on the other hand based upon the humble and obedient condition of the man before God and must be sanctified from the crowd. “The lord sanctifying Himself” means for the sake of His disciples the Lord refrained from doing many things which were perfectly legitimate to Him, from speaking many words which He might have lawfully spoken, from maintaining many attitudes which He could have justifiably had, from putting on many kinds of apparel which could have been proper for Him, and from many foods which would have been normal to Him. Being the son of God who knew no sin, His freedom far exceeded any we have on earth (Watchman, 2007). Nigeria leaders must abide with this to be free completely.

- We were created to become like Christ. From the very beginning, God’s plan has been to make man like His son, Jesus. God announce this intension at the creation: Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” **Genesis 1: 26a** (Rick, 2002). This is God’s thinking pattern for man; it is expedient that man must do everything possible to have a thinking pattern that looks like Gods’ so as to look like God for His purpose and plan for man to be fulfill.
- Nigerians and the leaders should stop focusing on Covid – 19, rather should focus on God and be mindful of what He is saying, the instructions He is given to stop the pandemic from spreading and its total elimination.
- Prayers should be intensifying from church to church and to the government of the day for direct intervention from God, and humanly possible solution should be reduced to give God room to function. There should be place for personal and corporate fellowship to join force against the pandemic. Personal and corporate fellowship is very important to generate fire for each other. Personal fellowship with God is your strongest asset or weapon; in the place of fellowshipping with God revelation are made plain.

In summary, the solution to this season is repentance and a complete turnaround to God. God forbid the death of sinners, He want them to come to repentance. **Luke 5: 32** “*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance*” The gospel has to be preached all over the world for His counsel to be done. **Acts 1: 8** “*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth*” Jesus said, in **Matthew 28: 19** “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit.*” This is the will of God concerning the earth (Nigeria).

References

- Charles, C. (1976). *God’s Creative Power will work for you*. P. O. Box, 69 England, Arkansas: Published by Capps Publishing.
- Courage, O. (2000). *Three Vital Key to Breaking New Frontiers*. Love Riveval Ministries. P. O. Box 1954, Sokoto State: Published by Whitedove
- Jacob, A. A. (2011). *Overcoming the Enemy of your Destiny*. 10 Jema’a Road by Kigo Road, Kaduna: Published by setop Enterprises.
- Kato, A. A. (2004). *Man and Sin, a Call to Repentance*. Sokoto, Nigeria: Published by
- Moses, A. F. (2005). *To Live Like God, Think Like Him*. 2nd Floor NACRDB Building, Westerm Bye – Pass, Gidan – Dare, Sokoto, Nigeria: Published by Klearconcept Publishing.
- Rick, W. (2002). *The Purpose Driven Life*. Created to Become like Christ. U.S.A: Published in United State of America.
- Watchman, N. (2007). *Spiritual Authority*. 14 Owoseni Street, off Mission Road, Benin City: Nigeria. Divine Favour Christian Publication.

THE APPRECIATION OF BLACKSMITHING AS AN ART IN ART EDUCATION

By

Nzoiwu, Azuka Abigail Ph.D

Department of Fine and Applied Arts

Faculty of Environmental Sciences

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State

Abstract

Blacksmithing as an art should be a necessary part of Art Education curriculum in the sense that a lot of creativity is involved. There are different stages in blacksmithing and the blacksmith workshop has a hearth with bellows, anvil and stroke Iron. There are, different techniques in smithing: Welding, Upsetting, Punching, Twisting, Bending, Engraving and Finishing. These processes maybe combined in one process in order to make the product functional but also beautiful.

It is a common knowledge that Blacksmithing is as old as man-an ancient tradition. Human civilization is also linked to the discovery of irony and fabrication of tools and implements for agrarian culture of the ancient times. Blacksmithing is also classified into two: Primary and Secondary.

Introduction

Blacksmithing as Art: Wyland (2014) says that blacksmithing is an art because it involves the creative application of knowledge and skills to produce tools and items that could be useful to mankind. According to Okafor (1984), blacksmithing as an art takes, place in a process. Okafor adds that blacksmiths used charcoal as fuel for smithing. The workshop of a blacksmith is normally called a blacksmith's shop, smithy or forge (although 'forge' may also refer to several types of industrial facility and to the forge hearth within the smithy). The smithy will most times contain a hearth with its bellows, an anvil and a water container together with places to store fuel and stock iron (Young, 2012). Smithies may be a workplace for a single smith, but can also be industrial buildings in which many smiths work, each with their own facilities. The hearth is the essential feature of the smithy. Forge hearth and Smithing hearth are often used as terms to differentiate this from other forms of hearth. The purpose of the hearth is to heat the iron to an appropriate temperature. High temperature is attained through combustion of the fuel (charcoal, coke or coal) using a strong blast of air. Iron is very easily oxidised by air at high temperatures so the fire is constructed so the iron is heated in a reducing environment. This is achieved by ensuring a sufficient depth of fuel above the zone of intense combustion within which much of the oxygen has been already used. The hearth needs to contain the fuel (without restricting the smith's access to the fire) and to provide a means for conveying the air blast into the lower part of the fuel (Young, 2012).

Charcoal is one of the fuels that most African smiths use. According to Kauffman, (1995) the blacksmith worked with charcoal iron, so named because, charcoal was used for fuel in the furnace that produced the iron. It seems not only to have been suited to the various ways it had to be "worked" but also because of its other desirable qualities, much of it has outlived the iron of a later period that lacked these qualities. In order to make the charcoal or coke to bum even hotter, air is forced to the fire. In early times, this was done with bellows that pumped air through a pipe into the hearth or forge. The bellows was pumped either by hand or by a water wheel (Young, 2012). The result is a very hot, sustained fire. Learning about charcoal making and learning about a forced-draft fire made the Iron Age possible. This was the only way to generate enough heat to smelt iron ore. Colour is important for indicating the temperature and workability of the metal. As iron is heated to increasing temperature, it first glows red, then orange, yellow and finally white. The ideal heat for most forging is the bright yellow- orange colour known as a forging heat (Degarmo, Black &Kohser, 2003). Most work in well- lit conditions. The key is to have consistent lighting which is not too bright. Direct sunlight obscures the colours. The techniques of smithing presented in this work is the recommendation of Hoban (2017) who avers that the techniques may be roughly divided

into seven. They are Welding, Upsetting, Punching, Twisting, Bending, Engraving and Finishing.

- (1) **Welding** is the joining of the same or similar kind of metal. A modern blacksmith has a range of options and tools to accomplish this. The basic types of welding commonly employed in a modern workshop include traditional forge welding as well as modern methods including oxyacetylene and arc welding. In forge welding, the pieces to be joined are heated to what is generally referred to as “welding heat” for mild steel.

Most smiths judge this temperature by colour, the metal will glow an intense yellow or white. At this temperature, the steel is near molten. Welding was often preceded by scarping, which means tapering the ends or edges of parts before welding. Such tapered parts were then reheated and the ends overlapped the entire distance of the tapered parts. They were placed on the anvil and tapped until the two pieces were perfectly welded into one piece. If the joint were oversized, it was reheated and forged until all the parts were of uniform thickness. This operation was performed on wheel tyres, but the joint can rarely be found (Hoban, 2017). Some blacksmiths used sand as a flux to keep the surface of the metal clean in the fire but a good craftsman could work without this assistance. Kobelco (2015) avers that Welding is very essential in all metal works, therefore, it must be properly done so that it can serve its purpose.

- (2) **Upsetting** is the process of making metal thicker in one dimension through shortening in the other. One form is to heat the end of a rod and then hammer on it as one would drive a nail, the rod gets shorter and the hot part widens. An alternative to hammering on the hot end is to place the hot end on the anvil and hammer on the cold end. Upsetting was the opposite of drawing out, for in this operation the length of the bar was decreased instead of increased. A portion of the bar was heated to welding heat and other parts cooled, so that when the end of the bar was hammered, the hot portion was made thicker and the total length of the bar was decreased (Hoban, 2017). The enlarged portion was then finished with a hammer, or with swages, if a design with some specific details was desired. *According to Kajock (2007), the operation of upsetting* is carried out if: cross-section of finished part is larger than that of forging stock, required degree of working calls for increasing initial dimensions of ingot prior to main operations (usually, cogging), ingot is prepared to punching a hole, forging in shapes of blocks, discs, rings etc., or improvement of mechanical properties of forging is necessary.

- (3) **Punching**. According to Hoban (2017), punching may be done to create a decorative pattern, or to make a hole. For example, in preparation for making a hammer head, a smith would punch a hole in a heavy bar or rod for the hammer handle, punching is not limited to depressions and holes. It also includes cutting, slitting and drifting. All of these are done with a chisel. Punching was quite simple, but very important for decorative purposes and for joining pieces of iron. It was the only method known by which a hole one inch in diameter could be made in a bar one inch wide. The first operation was to heat the bar and slightly increase its width by upsetting. Then, after reheating a small punch was forced through the hot part of the bar with a hammer, until the punch was stopped by the face of the anvil. The punch was pulled out of the bar, the bar re-heated and punched from the opposite side until there was a small hole through the bar. The bar was reheated the third time and the hole placed over an opening in the anvil, where it was stretched to the desired diameter with larger punches. Such holes usually have a burr on the bottom side, and the bar was always wider at the hole than at any other part (Kauffman, 1995). At times, the enlarged portion was utilized to form part of the design of an object. It is used, like the other techniques described, does not guarantee great age, but it does indicate that it was hand-wrought. According to Kauffman, (1995), various methods were used by blacksmiths to join pieces of iron: riveting, collaring, pinning, screwing and bolting. Riveting used rivets with round or countersunk heads. When a countersunk-head was used, the head and the riveted end were flush with the surface of the iron, making them difficult to detect if the ironwork were heavily painted. When rivets with round heads were used, the portion hammered over or riveted, was the same size and shape as the original head. Collaring was done by wrapping a band of iron around two pieces to join them together. Scrolls were frequently fastened to bars or to each other by this plan. There were various

ways of pinning pieces of iron together, the type most frequently used resembled a mortise and tenon joint with the tenon completely going through the mortise and held in place with a tapered wedge or pin of iron. Such a joint was used on some early andirons, screwing and bolting were used in the 19th century. Bolted joints are undesirable if the bolt is secured with a nut. An alternative was to tap a thread on one of the bolted parts and dispense with the nuts.

- (4) **Twisting** was another technique that was widely used by craftsmen in iron. It was easily executed by heating the portion of the iron to be twisted to a blood-red heat: one end was then placed in a vise and the other end twisted with a holding device of some kind. The modern iron worker uses a monkey-wrench: the tool in its present form however, was not available before the 19th century. The spirals could be made tight or loose and the direction of the twist could be reversed a number of times if the craftsman wished to do so. A very long twist required a number of “heats”. Rarely has a craftsman had at his command such a simple but effective decorative technique. Fairchild and Camp (2012) opine that twisting is one of the cardinal requirements in metal work.
- (5) **Bending**, can be done with the hammer over the horn or edge of the anvil or by inserting a bending fork into the Hardy Hole (the square hole in the top of the anvil), *placing the work piece* between the tines of the fork and bending the material to the desired angle. Bend can be dressed and tightened or widened, by hammering them over the appropriately shaped part of the anvil. Chandramouli (2017, p.2) sums up bending thus:
Bending of sheets and plates is widely used in forming parts such as corrugations, flanges, etc. Bending is a forming operation in which a sheet metal is subjected to bending stress thereby a flat straight sheet is made into a curved sheet. The sheet gets plastically deformed without change in thickness.
- (6) **Engraving** was another popular decorating technique, but it was used principally by foreign craftsmen. The pattern was cut by removing small portion of iron with a pointed tool, usually called engraver. Some engraving was done on American door and gun locks made of iron (Kauffman, 1995). Today, most structures in the University of Nigeria, just like elsewhere in Nigeria and even beyond, have inscriptions on their commissioning date and who commissioned them.
- (7) **Drawing**: According to Hoban (2017) Drawing lengthens the metal by reducing one or both of the other two dimensions. When the depth is reduced, the width narrowed, or the piece is both lengthened and “drawn out.” Hoban adds that drawing does not have to be uniform. A taper can result as in making a wedge or a woodworking chisel blade. If tapered in two dimensions, a point results. Drawing can be accomplished with a variety of ways, depending on the skill and intent of the artist.
- (8) **Shrinking**: Although shrinking is similar to upsetting, it is essentially opposite the process of drawing. As the edge of a flat piece is curved—as in the making of a bowl shape—the edge will become wavy as the material bunches up in a shorter radius (Hoban, 2017).
- (9) **Combining Processes**: In this technique, the five basic forging processes above are combined to produce and refine the shapes necessary for finished products. For example, to fashion a cross-peen hammer head, a smith would start with a bar roughly the diameter of the hammer face: the handle hole would be punched and drifted (widened by inserting or passing a larger tool through it), the head would be cut (punched, but with a wedge), the peen would be drawn to a wedge, and the face would be dressed by upsetting. As with making a chisel, since it is lengthened by drawing it would also tend to spread in width. A smith would therefore frequently turn the chisel to-be on its side and hammer it back down—upsetting it—to check the spread and keep the metal at the correct width ((Hoban, 2017). Or, if a smith needed to put a 90-degree bend in a bar and wanted a sharp corner on the outside of the bend, he would begin by hammering an unsupported end to make the curved bend. Then, to “fatten up” the outside radius of the bend, one or both arms of the bend would need to be pushed back to fill the outer radius of the curve. So he would hammer the ends of the stock down into the bend, ‘upsetting’ it at the point of the bend. He would then dress the bend by drawing the sides of the bend to keep the correct thickness. The hammering would continue — upsetting and then drawing—until the curve had been properly shaped (Hoban, 2017).

(10) Finishing of iron work holds much interest for connoisseurs who try to separate the new from the old.

Novices assume that the pock-marked texture often found on modern reproductions is an evidence of hand production. No fact could be more distant from the truth, for there is evidence gathered from a study of the tools and techniques used by craftsmen that they try to make the surface of the metal as smooth as possible (Kauffman, 1995). As a matter of fact, there was a tool called a flatter, which was used to make the iron flat after it was drawn-out. A careful examination of surviving old objects of iron revealed surfaces so smooth that it is almost impossible to detect hammer marks on them. Edges and beveled were often smoothed with a file and there is evidence of competence in the use of file when they were crudely made in comparison to the quality that is available today. It should be noted that file marks were virtually never left on objects, they are usually evidence of indifferent workmanship. Powdered abrasives were available in early times and in the 18 century, paper coated with abrasives came into use. Finishing is dependent on the intended use of the piece, a blacksmith may finish it in a number of ways, namely:

1. A simple jig (a tool) that the smith might only use a few times in the shop may get the minimum of finishing: a rap on the anvil to break off scale and a brushing with a wire brush (Andrews, Jack 1994).
2. Files can be employed to bring a piece to final shape, remove burrs and sharp edges and smooth the surfaces (Sims, Lorelei, 2006)
3. Heat treatment and case hardening to achieve the desired hardness (Holmstrom, John Gustaf 2006)
4. The wire brush either as a hand tool or power tool can further smooth, brighten and polish surface (McRaven, Charles 1981).
5. Grinding stone, abrasive paper and emery wheels can further shape, smooth and polish the surface (Einhom, David, M. 2010).

2.10 Tools Needed for Blacksmithing

The blacksmithing technology is as ancient as human civilization. The development of different human civilizations has been linked to the discovery and use of metal to manufacture tools and implements that supported an agrarian lifestyle (Anigbogu, & Onyima 2014). Young (2012) describes blacksmithing as the manual forming of iron and other ferrous metals to make finished artefacts (or to repair existing ones). Young classifies blacksmithing into primary and secondary. Blacksmithing is considered as primary if its process leads to the formation of a new item. It is considered secondary when it repairs an old item. For example, if a blacksmith constructs a hoe, it is called primary blacksmithing but if he or she repairs a spoilt hoe, it is called secondary blacksmithing. Primary smithing is the working of raw blooms into usable iron. Smiths undertake various tasks to achieve these goals. Iron can be hot-worked into shape. Iron can also be joined to itself, or to other pieces of ferrous metal, through the process of forge welding (also known as fire welding or hammer welding). Joining may also be effected through techniques such as riveting and brazing. The chemical composition of the iron may be changed by the smith. For carbon steels, heat treatments (typically quenching followed by tempering) allow control over the hardness of the material and so can be used to control the properties of e.g. the working edge on a tool.

Not all blacksmiths would necessarily use all these techniques. Some smiths specialise in one particular process or one class of product, but smiths would commonly have been expected to be able to undertake many different tasks (Young, 2012). There are instances where some smiths are better at certain items than others. Ezimma (Personal interview, 2017) avers that in Awka, some smiths are better at constructing household items like knives than others. Ezimma adds that some smith cannot even construct a local gun at all while others do it almost perfectly.

According to Halsall (1998) blacksmiths were very important in the middle ages, they made weapons, armor, decoration for the modern medieval household, keys, chain and many other tools were needed in an average town. According to Oke and Aderoba, (2000) blacksmithing is the progenitor of various metal forging operations in use today and can be found in almost all- major culture of the world. Thomas, (1980) cited in Oke, (2007) blacksmithing processes remain primitive and rudimentary that it is hardly employed as a viable means of commercial production of metal wares in Nigeria. Oke (2007)

regrets that for long, particularly during the pre-colonial era and even now, some of Nigeria local blacksmith are traditional producer of simple tools such as cutlasses, hoes, knives head pans, diggers and machetes and many fixtures and devices primary used for agricultural production. Other items produced through blacksmithing processes, according to Oke, are domestic products, which include; kitchen wares, cooking utensils, basin, pails, which have found application in various homes, some blacksmiths are involved in the production of industrial products, which include. Hammer head, key, chisel punch, bolt and nuts etc. (Oke, 2007). A blacksmith would use certain tools similar to that of a goldsmith in order to melt the metals, combine them (in some cases, such pewter) and then shape them into the desired object. Some of these tools were anvils (used as a template on which to shape the object), Hammers (used to flatten and shape metals), raps, files, (used to smooth out rough edges) Chisels, (used to sculpt and carve out details or designs on objects) pincers, (used to pinch, close, and twist metals) chasing tools, and drawplates. (These were used for making wire). (Oke, 2005). According to Oke (2007), the three key technologies used in the blacksmithing process are: the closed furnace, the forging machine and the heattreatment bath. These items are explained as follows:

Closed Furnace - This particular technology is designed to solve the problem of inappropriate heating associated with older technologies like the open furnace as well as reduce the time for heating a work piece and minimize fuel wastage, consequently improving the quality and quantity of the product.

Heat Treatment bath - Contrary to the primitive heat treatment process, which is achieved by quenching the forged metal in a container containing palm oil, water or some vegetable oil solution, this new heat treatment technology is designed to allow proper hardening of products with less distortion and internal stress, here the overall objective is to stabilize the property of the products to avoid unnecessary cracking of the product as a result of high distortion which normally lead to failure of the products during operation (Oke, 2007).

Forging Machine - Unlike the traditional mode of forging used by most Nigerian blacksmiths, this new technology helps in forging the product within the stipulated time and forging temperature thereby preventing deformation of the products.

Blacksmithing as a very engaging activity requires some tools. No blacksmith, not minding how highly skilled, can be success without having tools. In fact, most craft requires certain tools and anybody willing to be successful at it must have such tools in his or her possession. According to Ebite, (1985) Blacksmithing tools in Igbo land include two types of hammers. The larger one is often used for hammering the red hot Iron coming straight from the fire while the smaller one was used as a smoothening tool. According to Kauffman, (1995) the tools of blacksmith varied from time to time and from place to place. They were generally divided into three groups. The first is the hearth with its bellows, water trough, shovels, tongs, rake, poker and a water container for damping down the fire and cooling objects. The second group consists of the anvil, sledges, tongs, swages, cutters, chisels and hammers. The third group was made up of the shoeing box, which contains knives, raps, and files for preparing the horse's hooves for shoes. An iron stand for supporting the horse's foot while working on it and a special hammer and nails to fasten the shoe to the hoof. As time goes, the tools and processes become incapable of meeting various demands. This may be due to their inability to produce high precision components, inability to achieve mass production within the minimum production time as required by demand, absence of ergonomic and anthropometric considerations in design, thus subjecting the operator worker to undue stress which lowers productivity as well as subjecting the operator to risks of accidents.

Indigenous tools and processes of manufacture are gradually disappearing as they have become obsolete and can no longer meet increasing consumer needs new service conditions and material requirements. However, in view of the important roles which they play in the economic well-being of the people, especially the rural populace, they will continue to be relevant in the lives of many Nigerians. Therefore, there is the need to identify areas of further development and improvement of these methods as well as preserving them, as it is anticipated that in the very near future most of the traditional tools and processes may disappear. Ezeadichie, (2002) argues that these tools and processes are being applied in various ways by rural populace. Below are some of the Indigenous tools:

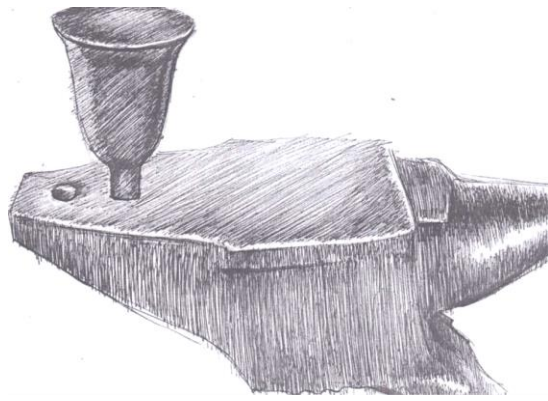


Fig 1: Eko (Manual Bellows): This is a locally made electric bellows with two long metals at the middle at the middle of each, used as handle for pumping air into the furnace.
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka 2018

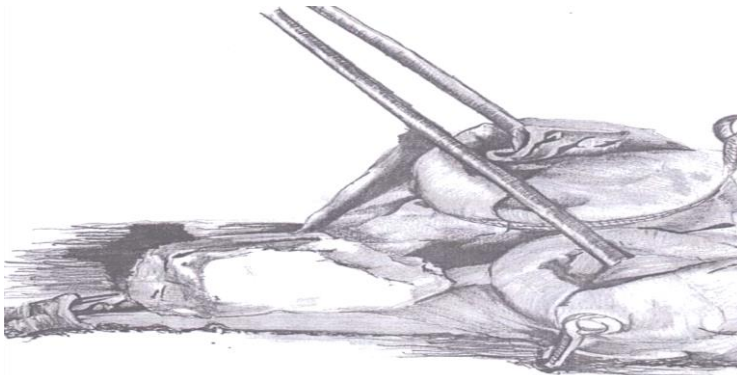


Fig.2 Mkpopu (Long nail): It is very long nail, used to hollow already heated metal
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka 2018



Fig.3 Otutu (Local made hammer): Used to heat the hot metal to shape
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka 2018



Fig 4: Anvil (Oshishiyama): An iron block on which red hot metals from the furnace are placed and shaped
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka (2017)

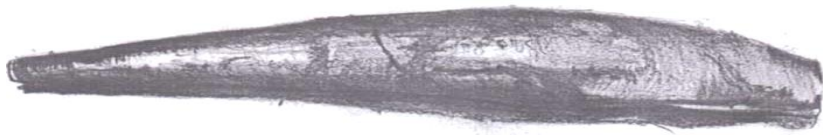


Fig.5 Mkpume (Stone): Used for sharpening the tools
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka 2018



Fig.6 Chizu (Local made chisel): Used for cutting some part of metal before sending it to the furnace
Drawing by Nzoiwu, Azuka 2018

Conclusion

It has become necessary that the method of blacksmithing should be improved in such a way as to enhance production. Blacksmithing as an art process involves creativity. The traditional method of blacksmithing should be modernized so that the young ones will be attracted to the profession otherwise blacksmithing is gradually declining steadily and time will come when there will be nothing like blacksmithing more over the important role blacksmithing plays in the economic wellbeing of our people cannot be over emphasized. It is the bedrock of our traditional technology and therefore should be sustained by improving the current method of production. Areas of further improvement should be Identified and worked on.It is hoped that this may stop the gradual abandonment of this traditional technology.

References

- Andrews, Jack. (1994). New Edge of Anvil. Musical culture of Awka, Journal of Liberal Studies, School of General studies, 2, 22-34.
- Anigbogu, C. & Onyima, B (2014). New technology and challenges of the blacksmithing Industry in Awka: implication for entrepreneurship Development. Retrieved from <https://papers.ssrn.com/Sol3/papers.cfm?abstract-id=2466839>
- Chandramouli, R. (2017). Fundamental concepts of metal forming technology. Retrieved from <http://nptel.ac.in/courses/112106153/Module%201/Lecture 1 pdf>
- Degarmo, E.P. Black, J.T: Kohser, R. A. (2003). Materials and processes in manufacturing (9th ed.): New York: Wiley.
- Ebite, M. O. (1985). Blacksmithing in Agbor clan: Ika local Government Area of Bendel State: Ime-obi Town and Idumu-oza village as case studies. (Unpubli- Shed B.A. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Ezeadichie, U.E (2002). External influence on nation building in Nigeria. A critic paper for Conference on externalist Vs internalist influence on African History and culture Organized by SOREC at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA.
- Fairchild, B., & C. (2012). Metal working processes, tools and machines. Retrieved from http://stoves.bioenergy/files/metal_working_tools_andmachines.pdf.
- Halsall, P. (1998). Blacksmiths. <http://www.mcatmaster.com/guilds/Blacksmiths.htm>.
- Hoban, B. (2017). The work of the blacksmith. Newtown: Clogher Heritage Cottage.
- Holmstrom, G. (2006). Modern Blacksmithing, rational horse shoeing and wagon making With Rules, Tables, Recipes.
- Kajock, J. (2007). Strain in the upsetting process. Metallurgy and Foundry Engineering, 33 (1), 51-61.
- Kauffman, J. (1995). The Tools and Trade Techniques of the Blacksmith
- Kobelco, (2015). The ABCS of arc welding and inspection. Tokyo: Kobe Steel.
- MCRaven, C. (1981). The Blacksmith's craft, originally published in country
- Okafor, A. (2013). The Awka People. Retrieved from <https://igbo cvbershrine.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/awka people.pdf>
- Oke, P.K. (2005). A Comparative study of Quality of Automobile spare parts produced in Nigeria. Nigerian Journal of Industrial Systems Studies, 4, 1-7
- Oke, P.K. (2007). An evaluation of improved local blacksmith process. Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences, 2(8), 1255-1261.
- Sims, L. (2006). The backyard blacksmith-traditional techniques for the modern smith.
- Young, T. (2012). Iron: hand blacksmithing. Retrieved from <http://histmet.org/images/Pdf/HMSdatasheet303.pdf>

IMPLICATIONS OF CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK ON THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF CHURCHES IN NIGERIA

By

Chukwuma, Onyekachi Gift

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Asogwa, Emmanuel Chukwujindu

Department of Philosophy/Religion and Cultural Studies

Alex Ekwueme Federal University

Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo

Abstract

The paper investigates the implications of Coronavirus outbreak on the religious practices of churches in Nigeria. The pandemic affected numerous practices in both orthodox and pentecostal churches. Long-standing traditions such as Solemnization of Holy Matrimony, Holy Communion, prayer patterns and sharing of peace have been modified or suspended. The paper also examines the responses of churches towards controlling the pandemic. The phenomenological method is used to analyse the data collected from both primary (semi-structured interview) and secondary sources (journals and internet materials). Findings from this work indicate that Coronavirus outbreak is a challenge to the purpose of the institution “church”.

Key Words: Implication, Coronavirus, Religious Practices and Church

Introduction

In the past years, churches in Nigeria have passed through a lot of challenges arising from the inhumane activities of Boko Haram insurgents and other groups of terrorists. In Northern Nigerian states, a lot of Christians have lost their lives from the attacks of these groups of people. Christians have faced difficulties such as loss of properties, persecution, bodily injuries, rape, and internal displacement. Consequently, a number of churches in Northern Nigerian states are no longer operating. However, to a large extent, Christianity in Nigeria has thrived amidst all these challenges.

The present problem which churches in Nigeria is contending with is the novel pandemic known as Coronavirus (COVID-19). The common view of churches with respect to the outbreak of Coronavirus is that the end of the world is imminent. Most Christians regard it as one of the signs that the coming of Christ is at hand. They also regard it as a divine punishment for ungodliness. It is understood to be a call to repentance and sincere commitment to God. It is an instrument for bringing back the people of God to godliness and creating awareness of the vanity of material possessions. It is a call to earnestly seek the Kingdom of God and its righteousness. It is a call to amend one’s ways and get ready for the inevitable second coming of Jesus Christ (Eke, Jummai and Onoja: informants).

This paper investigates the effects of Coronavirus to the practices of churches in Nigeria. In addition, it examines the various responses of churches towards containing the spread of the virus. Obviously, the pandemic has orchestrated numerous changes in the religious observances of churches in Nigeria. Various age-long traditions of the church are no longer observed as the result of the deadly pandemic. As a result of fear of contracting the virus, it has brought about observable decline in the attendance of members to church services and its consequential reduction in financial returns through tithes and offerings.

The increase in the number of Coronavirus cases in Nigeria led to an initial lockdown of churches following the directive of the Federal Government which was re-enacted by various state governments.

Irekamba (2020) agrees that in compliance with Lagos state government's advisory on religious gatherings to curb the spread of the dreaded Coronavirus, many churches have suspended their major and weekly activities, including Sunday services, which usually attract thousands of worshippers. However, despite the lockdown directive, some churches still observe its services skeletally. On the other hand, many church leaders resorted to live-streamed services through various social media platforms as a way of engaging their members and giving hope to them in these perilous times. Furthermore, the directive of the Federal Government for its citizens to stay at home propelled many church leaders to distribute food items and other palliatives to their members; especially the less-privileged ones.

In this study, the researchers employed the semi-structured interview method to gather data from both church leaders and Christians in Nigeria. These two groups were chosen because they are the categories of people who as a matter of their participation in church affairs observe the actual changes in the religious practices of churches. Being the primary informants, the views of one hundred and two (102) church leaders, workers and members from forty-nine (49) churches (both orthodox and pentecostal) in Nigeria were critically analysed and presented in the paper. The data was analyzed using the phenomenological method of data analysis also known as descriptive research method. This methodology brackets a researcher's bias in analysing and presenting data elicited from informants. It gives room for a detailed analysis of the phenomenon under discourse. Suffice it to note that as a result of the need to maintain social distancing, lockdown order and its inherent challenges on movement, the researchers mainly made use of various social media applications to disseminate the interview questions and also elicit information from informants.

Outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria

The first Coronavirus case to be reported in Nigeria was confirmed on Thursday, 27th February, 2020. Ehanire (2020) notes that the index case is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria. He returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on 25th February, 2020. He was confirmed positive by the Virology Laboratory of Lagos University Teaching Hospital, part of the Laboratory Network of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

Unfortunately, the number of Coronavirus cases has continued to increase. As at 16th May, 2020, Nigeria has recorded a total of five thousand, six hundred and twenty one (5,621) cases. Out of these, there are three thousand, nine hundred and seventy three (3,973) active cases; one thousand, four hundred and seventy two (1,472) persons have recovered while one hundred and seventy six (176) persons died. The states which have confirmed cases are Lagos, Kano, Federal Capital Territory, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Ogun, Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto, Oyo, Edo, Zamfara, Kwara, Osun, Rivers, Yobe, Nasarawa, Kebbi, Delta, Niger, Plateau, Adamawa, Ekiti, Ondo, Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, Bayelsa, Benue, Anambra and Abia. Lagos and Kano states have the highest number of cases: Two thousand, three hundred and seventy three (2,373) and seven hundred and sixty one (761) cases respectively. Two states with the least number of cases are Anambra and Abia: five (5) and two (2) cases respectively (Rahman; 2020).

Effects of Coronavirus Outbreak on the Religious Practices of Churches in Nigeria

The outbreak of Coronavirus heralded changes in the religious observances of churches in Nigeria. Some long-standing traditions of the church have been discontinued or modified. According to Adebisi, Chibuike and Ezeagu (informants), very few of these changes were last observed in 2014 when there was an outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EBV). However, these changes were short-lived because Ebola virus disease was contained within few weeks of its outbreak in Nigeria. The outbreak of EBV did not lead to lockdown of churches; the major precaution which was taken by churches was with respect to Holy Communion; some churches purchased multiple chalices for its members while others suspended the celebration of Holy Communion. Another preventive measure which was taken by churches in order to control the spread of Ebola virus was suspending of "sharing of peace" which involves hand shaking among congregants. Ndum (informant) notes that unlike Coronavirus, the outbreak of EVD did not cause prolonged commotion in the country. In fact, many Nigerians did not hear about Ebola Virus Disease till

the early hours of 10th September, 2014 when it was widely circulated that people should drink and bathe salt solution (water mixed with salt) as a way of preventing the disease. Unfortunately, some people who drank salted water later developed health complications, Ndum concludes.

After the initial shutdown of churches was relaxed, the Nigerian government directed that religious gatherings should be restricted to twenty (20) persons, in an effort to stop the spread of the virus. As the virus continued to spread to other parts of the country, the federal government re-directed that all places of worship should be on a total lockdown (Ayeni, 2020). Consequently, some churches completely suspended all services while others defied the lockdown directive and continued observing services though skeletally and with modifications. However, some church leaders utilized the media to engage their members in online live streamed services. Some also made their services available through various radio and television channels (Obafemi and Obiefuna: Informants). The modifications in the religious practices of churches in Nigeria are as follows:

Modifications in the Celebration of Eucharist: Eucharist (Holy Communion, Lord's Supper) is a central rite of the Christian religion, in which bread and wine are consecrated by an ordained minister and consumed by the minister and members of the congregation in obedience to Jesus' command at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me". In the Roman Catholic, Anglican and many Protestant churches, it is regarded as a sacrament, which both symbolizes and effects the union of Christ with the faithful (Price, 2008). Prior to the outbreak of Coronavirus, in most churches, the Holy Communion was administered with the use of one cup for drinking wine (blood of Christ); in such churches, the practice was that ministers use towels to clean the upper layer of the cup before giving to another communicant. More so, the common practice was that communicants queue up in rows and the ministers administer the Lord's Supper to them.

With the Coronavirus pandemic, some churches suspended the celebration of Lord's Supper while others made some adjustments such as providing individual cups for participants and the ministers coming to the pews to serve members instead up members clustering in queues. Asogwa, Eya, Igwe, Njidiofor, and Okechukwu (Informants) note that in their churches, the celebration of Holy Communion was suspended because they usually made use of a single chalice for partaking in the wine (blood of Christ). Ojike (informant) discloses that their pastor instructed them to observe the Lord's Supper at home. They were given some Bible references to read and prayers to say before taking the bread and wine. Similarly, on Thursday (2nd April, 2020), the general overseer of Redeemed Christian Church of God (Pastor Enoch Adeboye) celebrated the Lord's Supper via Dove Television Channel; members were directed to connect to the said channel and observe theirs at home. Ade and Odionye (informants) lament that staying at home to observe the Lord's Supper diminishes the sacredness of the institution. They add that it is advisable to completely suspend the celebration of Lord's Supper till the Federal Government directs that church services should be resumed.

Modifications in Child Dedication, Solemnization of Holy Matrimony and Funeral Mass:

Following the outbreak of Coronavirus, some church leaders adjusted the service liturgy for child dedication, solemnization of holy matrimony and funeral mass. These services usually bring together a lot of persons such as church members, family and friends. Even though there is a lockdown directive, some church members are eager to carry out some of these services. Dike (informant) notes that a certain man in his church was very anxious to dedicate his child so that his wife can resume their eatery business which was their main source of income. He accepted to carry out the dedication service on the condition that the service should be attended by only members of their immediate family. Dike concludes that the child dedication was conducted on Saturday (4th April, 2020) with only 7 persons in attendance and that the usual procedure was not followed; rather, he briefly prayed for the baby and her parents and in a space of about fifteen (15) minutes, the service was over. Similarly, Asadu, Inyang and Oruchukwu (informants) disclose that within the period of lockdown, they conducted infant baptism for four (4), three (3) and one (1) of their members respectively.

According to Nwokeocha (informant), his wedding ceremony had earlier been scheduled to hold on Easter Monday (13th April, 2020); his pastor agreed to go ahead and conduct the wedding service on the scheduled date with the condition that the guests would only be the intending couple, their parents and any other five (5) persons. Nwokeocha adds that he hopes to organize a reception party as soon as the restriction on large gathering of people is relaxed. Didiugwu, Echezona, Kayode and Olaniyi (informants) observes that they have conducted wedding ceremonies and marriage blessings for their members; although, they did not strictly follow the protocols guiding wedding ceremonies in their churches. In fact, Kayode adds that for the ones he conducted, he followed the order: blessing of the rings, exchange of vows and rings, brief admonition and finally he blessed the couples. For Echezona and Olaniyi, they did not exceed about forty-five (45) minutes in the wedding services they conducted.

On a similar note, Adeboye (informant) narrates that the funeral ceremony of his late father was earlier scheduled to hold on 4th April 2020. Consequently, he proposed to his parish priest that the funeral mass should still be carried out even if it was to be witnessed by only the deceased man's immediate family members. On the agreed date, three (3) of the church leaders and eight (8) family members of the deceased assembled at the grave side, prayers were said for the deceased and the family members after which the corpse was lowered. Adeboye adds that he does not intend to carry out any other ceremony on behalf of his late father owing to the fact that he spent so much on his medical treatment before he eventually died. It cannot be overstated that large guests usually spice up ceremonies but the truth is that there are some church members who cannot hold on till the pandemic is completely contained.

Poor Attendance to Church Services /Financial Depletion: The outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria led to a huge decline in the number of persons who attend services in various churches. However, the decline made it easier for churches to practice social distancing as a preventive measure. Ugwunodo (Informant) notes that in his church of about two hundred (200) members, he recorded an attendance of about thirty-six (36) members on Sunday (22nd March, 2020). He adds that to his utmost surprise, on Sunday (29th March, 2020), only nine (9) persons attended service. Similarly, Ivoke (informant) avers that even though God does not only demonstrate his power in the midst of multitudes of people, one finds more happiness in well attended services. He adds that he decided to stop attending services till the pandemic is over after being present in a Sunday service which was only attended by fourteen (14) persons. Furthermore, attendance to weekly services in various churches in Nigeria became nothing to write home about. According to Echeme and Orizu (Informants), prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, attendance to weekly activities in their churches was usually very poor; as a result of Coronavirus, it declined more to the extent that there were weekly activities attended by only pastors and their family members. Consequently, not more than one (1) hour is spent during Sunday and weekly services. All members are expected to leave the church premises once the service is over as group meetings are no longer scheduled to hold after service (Nzewi: Informant).

Another consequence of the poor attendance to services is poor financial remittances. Churches execute their projects mainly through the tithes, offerings, and donations from members. Many churches have been able to build standard well-equipped worship centers through the money realized from members. According to Ozioko (informant), the outbreak of Coronavirus reduced the financial capacity of many churches. Apart from the fact that more money was not being realized, some churches purchased some palliatives for distribution to their members, especially the less-privileged ones

Some churches notified members of their bank account details through various social media platforms for those who may wish to pay tithes and give offerings through mobile banking applications; however, the efforts proved abortive. Ukwa (informant) discloses that they usually realize not less than one hundred and fifty thousand naira (150,000.00) weekly through tithes and offerings but following the outbreak of the pandemic, they realized only eleven thousand, five hundred and eighty Naira (₦11,580.00) in the third and fourth weeks of March.

In addition, as a result of the financial decline, some churches are finding it difficult to pay the salaries of her pastors and workers. Obayi and Omojala (informants) disclose that the last salary they received was for the month of March. Similarly, Toye (informant) laments that the last salary he received

was for the Month of April and that it was not a full-salary. Toye adds that since he became a pastor, he showed his total commitment to the ministry by leaving off other businesses and as a result, it is a challenging time for him because he does not have other sources of livelihood. Prior to the outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria, some churches were not able to pay the salaries of her workers as and when due let alone now that many churches are financially incapacitated (Edozie and Ukwuoma: informants).

Modifications in Sunday Services: The outbreak of Coronavirus signaled significant changes during services in various churches in Nigeria. One of these changes is with respect to “sign of the cross”(a gesture in form of cross). In Christianity, “sign of the cross” is a movement of the hand as if tracing a cross on the body, usually by touching the forehead, chest, and shoulders in turn. The gesture is made mainly by Roman Catholics as a way of invoking the blessings of God or as a declaration of Christian faith. Granted that one of the preventive measures of Coronavirus is to avoid touching one’s face, many Christians suspended making the sign of the cross (Mmecha: informant). Adesiana (informant) asserts that he did not suspend the sign of the cross in his parish; rather, he cautioned his members to avoid touching their foreheads when they do the sign of the cross.

It is a practice in many churches for members to have handshakes with one another as a sign of peace after the celebration of Holy Communion (Ezike: Informant). Also, in many churches, ushers usually welcome people with handshake and thereafter carry their bags/bibles while leading them to where they can sit down (Ayo, Okpenyi and Temi: Informants). Often times, during church services, pastors order their members to go around and welcome one another with handshakes as a way of ensuring a lively atmosphere. Some members go to the extent of hugging themselves (Attamah: informant). Furthermore, pastors usually welcome first timers with handshakes after which they lay hands on them and pray. All these customs have been suspended as a result of the outbreak of the novel deadly disease.

Another custom which was disrupted in many churches is that of pastors laying their hands on the foreheads of those who in the course of the service gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Similarly, many church leaders have suspended “anointing services”; a special service whereby the priests/pastors make prophetic prayers and anoint their church members by rubbing some oil on their foreheads. According to Tunde (informant), their anointing service is usually observed last Sunday of every month. He adds that their anointing services are usually well attended which is evident in the over-crowded church auditorium.

In many churches, there is a type of prayer commonly referred to as “agreement prayers” whereby church members hold one another’s hands and say certain prophetic prayers as directed by the pastor or prayer leader. Segun and Yemi (informants) observe that in their places of worship, there is barely any Sunday service where the pastor does not instruct people to hold one another’s hands for prayers. Yemi adds that this practice is common in Pentecostal churches and that it encourages people to pray fervently during prayer sessions. It also enhances unity in the body of Christ. This practice has been suspended in Churches as a result of the outbreak of the novel deadly disease.

In addition, some other practices which largely promote happiness and togetherness have been suspended in churches in Nigeria. Udechukwu (informant) asserts that in his place of worship, there are two songs which they usually sing (while holding one another’s hands) before dismissal from Sunday services but they suspended the routine following the outbreak of Coronavirus; the songs are as follows:

“My hands are filled with the blessings of the Lord,
my hands are filled with the blessings of the Lord,
anyone I touch, he must be blessed,
my hands are filled with the blessings of the Lord”.

“Hold somebody, tell him that you love him,
lift your hands together and praise the Lord”.

Some other informants who share Udechukwu’s view are Adenuga, Nebo and Olisaemeka. Nebo adds that this practice which is commonly associated with Pentecostal churches is also fast spreading among orthodox churches; but, in both denominations, the practice has been suspended.

Modifications in Holy Week and Easter Celebrations: Holy Week, in the Christian liturgical year is the week immediately preceding Easter, beginning with Palm Sunday and including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. In Holy Week, solemn rites are observed commemorating the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Palm Sunday is a Christian religious day which commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem through a crowd waving portions of palm branches in procession. It is usually observed on the Sunday before Easter. The custom may be traced back at least to the 4th century (Bruce, 2019). On Maundy Thursday, Christians carry out special observances recalling the institution of the Last Supper. Scripture readings, solemn prayers, and veneration of the cross recall the crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday. Holy Saturday commemorates the burial of Christ. According to the 2020 Christian liturgical year, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday was on 5th April, 2020, 9th April, 2020, 10th April, 2020 and 11th April, 2020 respectively. Easter is an annual festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important feast in Christianity because on this day Christians celebrate Christ's victory over death. Easter also symbolizes Christians' participation in Christ's death and rebirth to a new life. In the 2020 Christian liturgical year, Easter was on 12th April, 2020.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of Coronavirus disrupted the Holy Week celebration in many churches. While some churches did not participate at all in Palm Sunday, others observed it without carrying out the associated rituals such as congregants moving out to the streets to worship Christ with palm branches in their hands (Ajala: informant). Egwu, Faka and Okechukwu (informants) note that they observed Palm Sunday in their respective churches but they did not carry out the usual procession; they sang and worshipped God inside the church auditorium while raising their palm branches above their heads. Likewise, Aru (informant) observes that in his parish, the few persons who attended Palm Sunday Service only processed around the church compound while waving their palm branches. In the same vein, Easter Sunday was not accorded its usual liturgy in many churches. Easter Sunday had very low attendance in many churches. According to Mba and Omotosho (informants), only members of the church council were invited to Easter Sunday service and the service was conducted in a space of about forty-five (45) minutes. Similarly, Ifedinachi (informant) reports that when he arrived his church on Easter Sunday, an usher turned him down as a result of the parish pastor's instruction not to allow more than thirty (30) persons into the church building so that social distancing can be easily maintained.

Indefinite Postponement of Open-air Crusades Organized by Churches: Prior to the outbreak of Coronavirus, some churches planned to hold crusades as part of their annual church programme. According to Ndu (2017), "unlike door to door evangelism, crusades provide ministers of God an opportunity to evangelize a large number of people from various faiths at the same time" (p. 38). More so, crusades are viable instruments for promoting a particular Christian denomination. As a result of its significance in church growth and expansion, some churches in Nigeria hold crusades annually or biannually. The city-wide crusade which was to be hosted by the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) on Tuesday (24th March, 2020) at Enugu was indefinitely postponed as a result of the outbreak of Coronavirus. According to Anorue, Chika, Olorunfemi and Ozioko (informants), unfortunately, much money had already been spent during the preparation processes. Ezema (informant) laments that the pandemic deprived him the opportunity to see Pastor E.A. Adebayo (General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God). Similarly, Iro (informant) discloses that his church had already spent over one million naira (₦1, 000,000.00) preparing for a crusade which was to take place on Saturday (28th March, 2020); however, the crusade was indefinitely postponed.

Responses of the Church to the Outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria

The outbreak of the novel Coronavirus in Nigeria elicited some significant actions from various churches in Nigeria. While some of the responses were aimed at preventing the further spread of the virus, others were targeted at supporting people with palliatives in order to push on with life in these times of economic turbulence. As revealed by the informants, the researchers discovered that a common response among all the Christian denominations is prayer. Christians believe that the outbreak of the virus in

Nigeria can be averted by prayers and trust in God. It is a period where churches all over the country seek the face of God. The leadership of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) directed that all members should engage in a thirty-day personal prayer retreat, beginning from Sunday, 22nd March to Monday, 20th April, 2020 (Nkwuda, informant). Similarly, members of DayStar Church, House on the Rock, Word of Life Ministries among others embarked on fasting and prayers for God to deliver Nigerians from the raging storm (Onuigbo, Adekunle and Onwubiko: informants). Other responses are:

Sensitization Campaigns: One of the earliest actions taken by many church leaders was to sensitize their church members on the preventive measures of Coronavirus. It was a very significant action as there are members of various churches who do not have access to modern sources of information. During both Sunday and weekly activities, many church leaders do not hesitate to inform their members of the basic preventive tips such as maintaining social distancing, avoiding shaking of hands and regular washing of hands. Ese and Niyi (informants) note that there is barely any church service in which their pastors do not remind them of the preventive measures they should carefully observe both at home, church and other public places. Ese adds that the last words of his pastor before every service closes is “stay safe; Coronavirus is real”. According to Nkpugo (informant), the administration of his church produced and distributed handbills whose contents are the basic preventive tips of Coronavirus. Banners were also mounted at strategic positions in the church compound. Ekwulu and Osagie (informants) report that the drama group of their churches did playlets aimed at educating members on the preventive measures of Coronavirus.

In various churches, sensitization is carried out through various social media platforms such as telegram, whatsapp and facebook. Mefela, Nduka and Ugwunodo, (informants) affirm that members of their churches get Coronavirus updates and preventive measures through their church Whatsapp groups. Members of various churches in Nigeria are also informed of the Coronavirus preventive measures through the means of bulk SMSs by their church authorities (Esehi, Imabong and Ufere: informants).

Provision of Sanitary Bucket and Hand Sanitizers: All the informants to this research affirm that one of the earliest actions carried out by churches in response to the outbreak of Coronavirus disease was the provision of sanitary buckets and sanitizers. The ushers ensure that members washed their hands before entering the church auditorium. Obichukwu (informant) notes that his church leaders purchased seven (7) sanitary buckets and some hand sanitizers which were kept at different positions in the church. Two (2) sanitary buckets and a hand sanitizer were kept at the entrance of the children’s hall. Asegbe and Dioke (informants) disclose that their churches put into use the sanitary buckets which were purchased in 2014 when there was an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease. Various church leaders also encouraged their members to observe regular washing of hands at their homes. According to Funke (informant), their church authorities distributed 100ml hand sanitizers to each of their members. They also distributed sanitary buckets to all pastors and ministers. Some other churches which distributed hand sanitizers to its members are Synagogue Church of All Nations, End Time Bible Ministry, Maranatha International and Voice of the Cross Evangelical Ministry (Obafemi, Idowu, Olaniyi and Kayode: Informants).

Some church leaders instructed their altar ministers to purchase their personal microphones as a way of curtailing the spread of the virus (Kayode, Olaniyi and Idowu: informants). According to Ndubuisi (informant), the microphones in his church were sanitized and labeled with the names of altar ministers; during church services, the ushers distribute the microphones to the ministers accordingly. Similarly, the choristers who were able to purchase their personal microphones made use of them while those who could not, sang without microphones. In addition, hand gloves were provided for ushers and those who handle musical equipments (Kayode, Olaniyi and Idowu: informants).

Social Distancing /Increase in the Number of Sunday Services: Another common response of churches is the enforcement of social distancing in their services. Social distancing is easily practiced for churches with very large auditorium and many seats/pews. Before church services (especially Sunday services) start, ushers arrange seats in a way that worshippers do not sit close to one another. For churches that use pews and benches, ushers direct members to sit at each end of pews/benches while one person sits at the middle

(Imabong and Udo: informants). Observing social distancing in weekly activities is not worrisome because weekly activities are not heavily attended in many churches.

Churches with very huge number of worshippers are able to observe social distancing by increasing the number of services held during on Sunday. According to Uduak (informant), her church usually holds one (1) service every Sunday but the outbreak of Coronavirus necessitated an increase to three (3) services. She adds that even after the pandemic is contained in Nigeria, it is better to continue observing three services so that people can attend church services when it is convenient for them. Likewise, Ezebuike, Ngwoke and Olushola (Informants) note that the number of services conducted in their churches increased from two (2) to four (4); each service lasting for about one hour and thirty minutes (1h 30m) rather than the usual three hours observed before the outbreak of Coronavirus.

Revitalization of House Fellowship / Live-Streamed Services: House fellowship refers to a religious service conducted in a person's house by a group of persons from the same church who live close to one another (Echezona: informant). It provides an avenue for familiarizing with people who attend the same church with you. House fellowship centers usually have leaders who act as intermediaries between church management and church members. In many churches, members get in touch with their pastors through their house fellowship leaders. According to Ihechukwu and Orji (informants), if a member is hospitalized, bereaved, puts to bed or wants to carry out a special thanksgiving, he informs his house fellowship leader who will then communicate the pastor for further actions. Some churches observe their house fellowship meetings once in every month while some observe theirs bi-monthly.

According to Abel and Ugwu (Informants), prior to the outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria, various churches were not fully committed to house fellowships meetings. Likewise, Adejor (informant) notes that in his church, members have never been committed to house fellowship meetings even though it is always emphasized during announcements. He adds that in the fellowship center where he is leading, not more than four persons attend; sometimes, he carries out the service alone. However, the pandemic and its attendant initial lockdown, prompted many churches to revitalize their house fellowship centers. During house fellowship meetings, centers connect to church headquarters service via live-streaming through various social media platforms. In fact, many church leaders have employed various modern technologies to keep in touch with their members and also to give them hope that the pandemic will soon will contained in the country. According to Uchechukwu and Ugwu (informants), the outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria provided an opportunity for many pastors in Nigeria to engage in frequent media evangelism. It provides an opportunity to minister not only to one's church members but also to people of other faiths all over the world.

Provision of Palliatives: Amidst the financial challenges occasioned by the lockdown, churches in Nigeria practiced "social action evangelism" which is commonly regarded as an effective way of propagating the good news of Jesus Christ. According to Ononogbu (2011), social action evangelism is a social theology which includes everything the church does to create justice in the public space because evangelism is about creating a world which cannot deny the reign of God. For instance, when a hungry person is given some bread to eat, it is not only attractive to them; making them ponder over such an act of compassion also brings the reign of God over them. Social action evangelism encompasses a declaration of God's kingdom in our words and deeds.

Undoubtedly, the pandemic and its attendant lockdown heralded financial hardship for many people especially those who totally depend on daily earnings for sustenance and those who are employed in private establishments. As a result, many churches in Nigeria provided their members with palliatives such as food items (rice, noodles, yam, tomato paste, cooking oil and other food items) and cash gifts. The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (Pastor E.A. Adeboye, RCCG) mandated every parish pastor to share palliatives to their church members from church fund (Adejor and Ihechukwu: informants). Likewise, members of House on the Rock, Dunamis International Gospel Centre, Deeper Life Bible Church, Abiding Word Assembly, Jesus Reigns Ministry, Synagogue Church of All Nations, New Life in Christ Bible Church, Mount Zion Battle Axe, The Apostolic Faith and a host of others received

palliatives from their church authorities (Ameh, Aduba, Chiebonam, Chukwuka, Adams, Kayode, Mba, Nnachi and Olawumi: informants). Interestingly, some churches such as Holy Ghost International Arena and Voice of the Cross Evangelical Ministry also extended their hospitality to non-members (Ukama and Kayode: Informants).

Recommendations

The thrust of this paper is to investigate the effects of the outbreak of Coronavirus on the religious traditions of churches in Nigeria. Based on the discussions and findings of this work, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Churches in Nigeria should wholeheartedly embrace technological advancements because it is a viable tool for proclaiming the good news (message of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ) in times such as these.
2. Churches in Nigeria that do not utilize various media applications should do so rather than suspending all forms of religious observances till the pandemic is completely contained in Nigeria.
3. Churches in Nigeria should strictly observe social distancing and other preventive measures in their services.
4. After Coronavirus is contained in Nigeria, churches should endeavour to maintain some hygiene principles (such as washing of hands and use of hand sanitizers) during their services as a preventive measure of other communicable diseases. Highly populated churches that increased their number of services should maintain the increase even after the pandemic is controlled.
5. It is also recommended that after Coronavirus is contained, churches should modify some of their practices which predispose members to infectious diseases. For example, holding of another person's hands while praying and sitting very close to one another in services.
6. Churches in Nigeria should not totally depend on tithes and offerings for paying the wages of her pastors and workers. It is recommended that they diversify their means of income so that they will push on in the case of eventualities.
7. They should also encourage their pastors, workers and members to have diverse means of income so as not to totally depend on the church for their sustenance.
8. In as much as ceremonies still successfully take place (on a low key) during the pandemic, it is recommended that (even after Coronavirus is contained in Nigeria) people should lessen the amount they expend on unnecessary ventures during ceremonies such as wedding, child naming and funeral ceremonies.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria heralded obvious changes in the traditions and practices of churches in Nigeria. Some long standing traditions of the church such as Holy Communion, baptism and sharing of peace have either been suspended or modified. The joy and unity shared by Christians in various churches have been tampered with as a result of the need to maintain social distancing and other preventive measures. Notwithstanding, this season has provided churches an opportunity to explore other means of engaging with and propagating the good news to her members and non-members. It has also been a time of deep reflection on supremacy of God over all creatures.

The paper established that the church has made some commendable marks with respect to controlling the spread of the virus by encouraging her members to meticulously observe the preventive measures as laid down by the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC). Through palliatives, the church has ameliorated the lives of majority of people. Therefore, alongside the concerted efforts of the federal government and various state governments to control the spread of Coronavirus in Nigeria, academic contributions aimed at investigating the implications of the pandemic to the religious customs of the Church and also the responses of the church are apt.

References

- Ayeni, T. (2020). “Religion in Nigeria despite Coronavirus Measures” <https://www.theafricareport.com/25532/religion-in-nigeria-despite-coronavirus-measures/>, retrieved on 13th April, 2020.
- Bruce, A.C. (2019). *The Significance of Palm Sunday*, New York: The Free Press.
- Ehanire, O. (2020) “First Case of Corona Virus Disease Confirmed in Nigeria” <https://ncdc.gov.ng/news/227/first-case-of-corona-virus-disease-confirmed-in-nigeria>, retrieved on 10th March, 2020.
- Irekamba, C. (2020). “COVID-19: Churches Suspend Sunday Services, Other Activities” <https://guardian.ng/news/covid-19-churches-suspend-sunday-services-other-activities/>, retrieved on 13th April, 2020.
- Ndu, G. (2017). *Church Planting and Discipleship in Urban Areas*, Enugu: SNAAP Press.
- Ononogbu, D.C. (2011). “Good News and Good Works as Exemplified by Christ: A Model for Social Action Evangelism in Nigeria”, *Journal of Bible Exposition*, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- Price, C. P. (2008) "Eucharist" *Microsoft Encarta*, Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Rahman, A. (2020). “Nigeria coronavirus: 4,641 cases, Bauchi lockdown, Madagascar syrup” <https://www.africanews.com/2020/05/12/nigeria-coronavirus-hub-updates-covid-19/>, retrieved on 17th May, 2020.

Personal Communication (Pseudonyms are used for the names of informants)

S/No.	Name of Informant	Informant’s Christian Denomination
1	Abel, V.	End Time Bible Ministry
2	Ade, N.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
3	Adebisi, T.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
4	Adeboye, E.	Catholic Church
5	Adejor, S.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
6	Adekunle, P.	House on the Rock Ministry International
7	Adenuga, R.	Assemblies of God Church
8	Adesiana, M.	Catholic Church
9	Ajala, T.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
10	Anorue, F.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
11	Aru, E.	Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
12	Asadu, U.	Catholic Church
13	Asegbe, J.	Catholic Church
14	Asogwa, G.	Christ Ascension Ministry
15	Attamah, E.	Potter’s House
16	Ayo, A.	Dunamis International Gospel Centre
17	Chibuike, Q.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
18	Chika, A.	Redeemed Christian Church of God

19	Didiugwu, Z.	Living Faith Church
20	Dike, W.	Mount Zion Ministries
21	Dioke, S.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
22	Echeme, X.	Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
23	Echezona, E.	Catholic Church
24	Echezona, D	Covenant Christian Bible Ministry
25	Edozie, C.	Living Faith Evangelical Ministries
26	Egwu, R.	Unity Church
27	Eke, F.	Pneuma Domain Ministry
28	Ekwulu, V.	Catholic Church
29	Ese, T.	Living Faith Church
30	Esehi, G.	Covenant Christian Bible Ministry
31	Eya, B.	Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
32	Ezeagu, Y.	Catholic Church
33	Ezebuike, H.	Catholic Church
34	Ezema, N.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
35	Ezike, U.	Living Faith Church
36	Fakae, J.	Methodist Church of Nigeria
37	Funke, M.	Deeper Life Word Ministry
38	Idowu, I.	End Time Bible Ministry
39	Ifedinachi, K.	Covenant Christian Bible Ministry
40	Igwe, M.	The Apostolic Mount Olive Church
41	Ihechukwu, I.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
42	Imabong, K.	Word of Life Ministries
43	Inyang, L.	Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
44	Iro, P.	The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Renewal Ministry
45	Ivoke, Y.	Overcomers World Ministries
46	Jummai, U.	Deeper Life Word Ministries
47	Kayode, I.	Voice of the Cross Evangelical Ministry
48	Mba, R.	Christ Church
49	Mefela, D.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
50	Mmecha, A.	Catholic Church
51	Ndubuisi, U.	Deeper Life Word Ministry
52	Nduka, G.	Domain of Praise Ministry International
53	Ndum, P.	New Life in Christ Bible Church
54	Nebo, E.	City Takers' Assembly
55	Ngwoke, K.	City of Purpose Ministries International
56	Niyi, L.	Fountain of Life Bible Ministries
57	Njidiofor, D.	Evangel Pentecostal Church
58	Nkpugo, I.	New Fountain of Life Ministry
59	Nkwuda, K.	Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries
60	Nwokeocha, S.	Fountain of Life Ministry
61	Nzewi, J.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
62	Obafemi, T.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
63	Obafemi, E.	Synagogue Church of All Nations
64	Obayi, E.	Deeper Faith Ministry
65	Obichukwu. A.	City of Purpose Ministries International
66	Obiefuna, R.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

67	Odionye, G.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
68	Ojike, U	Faith Tabernacle Ministry
69	Okechukwu, K.	God of Possibilities Ministry
70	Okechukwu, R.	Catholic Church
71	Okpenyi, A.	Christian Pentecostal Church
72	Olaniyi, J.	Maranatha International
73	Olisaemeka, O.	City of Purpose Ministries International
74	Olorunfemi, D.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
75	Olushola, S.	New Fountain of Life Ministry
76	Omojala, U.	Evangel Pentecostal Bible Church
77	Omotosho, A.	Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries
78	Onoja, C.	Assemblies of God Church
79	Onuigbo, I.	DayStar Church
80	Onwubiko, G	Word of Life Ministries
81	Orizu, D.	Mountain of Grace Ministry
82	Orji, U.	City Takers' Assembly
83	Oruchukwu, U.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
84	Osagie, C.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
85	Ozioko , T.	Deeper Life Christian Ministry
86	Ozioko , E.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
87	Segun, E.	Dominion City
88	Temi, S.	Christ Apostolic Church
89	Toye, K.	Christian Pentecostal Bible Based Church
90	Tunde, D.	House on the Rock Ministry International
91	Uchechukwu, E.	Maranatha International
92	Udechukwu, Q.	Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
93	Udo, E.	Domain of Praise Ministry International
94	Uduak, U.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
95	Ufere, L.	Potter's House
96	Ugwu, T.	Deeper Life Word Ministry
97	Ugwunodo, E.	Assemblies of God Church
98	Ugwunodo, J.	Christ Embassy
99	Ukama, A.	Holy Ghost International Arena
100	Ukwa, H.	Unity in Christ Bible Church
101	Ukwuoma, D.	Living Faith Evangelical Ministries
102	Yemi, S.	Dunamis International Gospel Centre

EPHESIANS 5: 22-33 AND PARENTAL ROLE IN CURBING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NIGERIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

By

Daniel Clement Unachukwu

Department of Religion/English and Literary Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

With its focus on spousal responsibilities, Ephesians 5:22-33 ranks among the most loved of Pauline writings. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul speaks of the duties of husbands and wives in a Christian manner; setting the church's submission to Christ, and Christ's love for the church as the guiding metaphor for the relationship between husbands and wives. Adopting historical-critical method of exegesis, the study argued that the wife's submission to her husband does not signify inferiority, but total acceptance of God's institutional order in the family; and also that husband's headship over the wife is not for dominance and exploitation but for protection, love, care, and comfort of his wife. From the hermeneutics of the study, it was discovered that such a positive understanding is lacking in Nigerian society today. Most parents in Nigerian society exhibits the marital mentality that stimulates domestic violence such as physical abuse, psychological abuse, among others which most times results to severe injuries or death of the victim. Ephesians 5:22-33 goes deeply to the heart of this issue; and teaches both the husband and the wife in Nigeria to look out for the interest of the other in total submission and unconditional love. Both husbands and wives must not appeal to traditions or customs as the basis for their relationship and roles in the family and marriage, but to Christ's example.

Keywords: Ephesians 5:22-33, love, submission, domestic violence, parents, Nigerian society

1. Introduction

In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul singled out husbands and wives and gave them crucial instructions concerning certain attitudes and behaviours, also known as household codes. Paul begins by modelling these household codes in a Christian manner; setting the church as an example of the wife's total submission, and Christ as an example of unconditional love of the husband to his wife. Paul's argues that since God in his divine wisdom has made the husband the head of the family, in the way Jesus is the head of the church, therefore, the wife is to follow after the example set by the church. However, this divine arrangement, as observes Turaki (2006:1462) does not imply "that women are in any way inferior to men or men superior to women. Both wives and husbands have been assigned domestic duties in order to foster unity in marriage." This accentuation captures the fact that where there is mutual condescension, forbearance and submission the duties of the partners will be better performed. The duty prescribed to the husbands is to love their wives as themselves, (v.25). Hoehner (2006:772) grimly postulates that this kind of love is "unconditional, it loves when not loved back, gives without getting; a love that seeks the highest good in a person." Turaki (2006:1462) pushes this idea further by stressing that "such divine love goes far beyond sexual love or even friendship love. It sacrifices itself for the one it loves." From these understanding, it can be deduced that the husbands are meant to love their wives even when they seem undeserving and unloving. Moreover, the reason why Christ sacrifices himself for the church is so that it can become pure and holy. While a husband cannot be like Christ and save his wife from sin, he can love her sacrificially despite her imperfectness. Not only are husbands to love their wives like Christ does, but they are to love them and treat them with the same care that they would their own bodies, (Turaki 2006).

What then, is it that pushed Paul into these serial homiletics? To start with, the Greco-Roman society of the first century was highly patriarchal and marriages were not as a result of "love matches" but by

arrangement by the father in order to promote their business and political interest (Miles 2006:84). Fathers are also unwilling to raise female children in this patriarchal based culture, hence, they usually force their under-aged daughters to marry men in their thirties and forties. The consequences of these were astronomical increase in the number of divorce cases, prostitution, infidelity, and female morality rate, etc., in most Roman households. (see Baldon 1962; Stark 1996; Bartchy 2005; Coontz 2006). This motivated most Greek and Roman philosophers like Plutarch and Aristotle to draft codes of conduct for the household, (Keener 1992:167-68; Balch, 1988:25).

However, while these secular writings enjoined obedience upon slaves, children, and wives, they were actually addressed to the family patriarchs themselves, encouraging them to "rule" or "lord" well those under their control. Paul wrote Ephesians 5:22-33 to serve an apologetic purpose. Christian households were to exhibit the character of God's inclusive household in society. The epicentre of Pauline line of thought in the pericope mirrors a Christ- Church relationship as a model for both the husbands and wives to follow. This interpretation holds promise for parents particularly in the contemporary Nigerian society where all forms of domestic violence are at its climax. The home which is supposed to serve as a form of succour and rest from life's many struggles and troubles fill many married women and men with fear, unrest and trepidation. This is because of what awaits them on getting to their respective homes. Women are often the victims of domestic violence, though there are other few cases where men are reportedly victimized. Domestic violence has send many to their early graves, some sustained heavy injuries, while others suffer from one form of psychological disorder to another. With these ripple effects, it is obvious that domestic violence in Nigeria is a problem which its solution cannot be put for another day.

The aim of this paper, however, is to critically examine Ephesians 5:22-33 with a view to revealing parental roles in curbing domestic violence in the contemporary Nigerian society. Through the research development this study underwent, its significance is not only limited to the Nigerian society but across the globe. It will help broaden the sceptical understanding of Pauline marital theology of submission, love and headship.

The study is mainly organized in three parts. The first part of discusses the socio-cultural context of Ephesians 5:22-33. The second part deals with a critical exegesis of the text of Ephesians 5:22-33. The third and final part focuses on the hermeneutics of Ephesians 5:22-33 in Nigerian society.

2. Socio-cultural context of Ephesians 5:22-33

The recipients of the letter of Ephesians was not specifically stated within the letter, however, most commentators such as Chadwick (1976:981), and Turaki (2006:1451) have backed the traditional belief that the letter was specifically addressed to Christians Ephesus while others such as Kobelski (2007:883), Dahl and Juel (2000:1113) argue that it is a circular letter destined for various churches visited by Paul. While this argument cannot be adequately adjudicated in the study, it is pertinent to note that Paul's primary aim of writing the letter was to maintain the unity of the church against whatever teachings that threatened to divide it or alienate it from its heritage (4:1-6). In view of this concern, Ephesians 5:22-33 is part of the larger section of the letter (5:21-6:9) that addresses the need for a socio-cultural analysis of ancient households and their codes of conduct. The household code in the pericope, will only be appreciated if a plausible picture of the socio-cultural world behind the text is well discussed. Insights from the works of numerous scholars such as Balch (1988), Osiek and Balch, (1990) and show that at the most basic level of kinship in the first century society was the household.

In the Roman Empire, the household comprised of all those who were legally under the power (authority, paternal patronage) of the patriarchal male head which includes "children, even adult sons, slaves, freed persons, and clients as well as the spouses of all these persons," And as such, household was regarded as a microcosm of society and also "a unit of identity, solidarity, and status" (Hanson 1996:66). The structure of the household in both the Greek and the Roman society, was therefore highly patriarchal (that is, essentially hierarchical) in nature, with "fatherly responsibility and dominion as legitimate rule over free (male) citizens while the submission of women, children and slaves was merely taken for granted," (Girard 2000:138-139).

Marriages in this patriarchal culture of Greco-Roman society, according to Miles 2006:84) were “not love matches. Rather, fathers arranged them to promote their own business and political interests.” There was unwillingness to raise female children and also a high death rate among women which “made Roman population sex ratio to be greatly skewed, with perhaps as few as seven women to every ten men,”(Miles, 2006: 85). Consequently, young girls within the age range of 12 to 14 or even as young as 8 years old were married to men in their late twenties and thirties, (Russell 1958:105). Due to this tenderness of age, the wives were suspected of giving their loyalty and allegiance to their biological family instead of the husband. It is further remarkable to note that in this patriarchal based culture, husbands sees it as weakness to be emotionally close to their wives. Bartchy, (2005: 65) grimly observes that “If someone wanted an intimate confidant, he or she was more likely to go to a brother or sister than to a spouse.” Because of this, there was an astronomic increase in the cases of divorce and prostitution in the Roman empire, “and a long-lived woman of the citizen class might be widowed or divorced and remarried several times,” (Stark 1996:117; Baldon 1962: 103; Coontz 2006:65-80).

In order to maintain orderliness in the household and the society, many Greek and Roman philosophers like Plutarch and Aristotle compiled codes of conduct otherwise known as household codes, (Keener 1992:167-68). While these secular writings enjoined obedience upon slaves, children, and wives, they were actually addressed to the family patriarchs themselves, encouraging them to "rule" or "govern" well those under their control. However the household codes found in New Testament were designed to generally serve an apologetic purpose. Christian households were to exhibit the character of God’s inclusive household in society. They were to live in peace and unity, as God’s newly established people in Christ.

With regards to persons in marriage (i.e. Husband and wife), Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33 re-imagined the household ethos from Christological perspective. By encouraging wives and husbands to submit and love one another, Paul modifies the common tendency to make the man of the house responsible for the good order of the entire household (Dahl and Juel 2000:1118). Moreover, the command to husbands to love their wives (5:25, 28) does not appear in any other contemporary household codes of the first century as observed Gombis (2005:327). Note that the kinds of behaviour Paul advocated here were far from being typical male roles. The Roman man was expected to be virile, dominant, and "macho." So the idea of "nourishing and cherishing" in v.29 were not typical "guy"behaviour in the first century. And remember that Paul was asking men in their late twenties or thirties to love and care for someone as insignificant as an eight-year-old girl just because she was his wife. In urging that a man should love and care for his wife as he does himself, Paul seriously challenged patriarchal motives for marriage (v. 28), in which husband took wives chiefly to serve their own needs for a legitimate heir and for household management.

Furthermore, the disclosure of the “great mystery” regarding the relation between husband and wife in Eph 5:32 (cf. 3:5–6) thus seems to serve not only to uphold the inherited ethos but also to modify it. While Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33 does not explicitly do away with traditional hierarchical structures in the first century society, it rather introduces new attitudes implicitly meant to confront and subvert exploitative elements of ancient household ethos (cf. Balla 2003:165–178; Mollenkott 2003:45–53). In other words, it is aimed at counteracting the devastating effects of the powers upon human relationships and in transforming relationships within appropriate hierarchical structures. Underestimating this would expose the code to serious misinterpretation and abuse. While it seems to invite husbands and wives to identify with the familiar ethos of their traditional household culture, it also appears to alienate them from (life-denying aspects of) that culture by reminding them of their radically alternative orientation in Christ.

3. Translation of Ephesians 5:22-33

Greek ¹	Researcher's Translation
<p>²² Αἰγυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ,</p>	<p>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord</p>
<p>²³ ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναϊκῆς ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος.</p>	<p>For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body.</p>
<p>²⁴ ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία τῷ Χριστῷ, οὕτως καὶ αἰγυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.</p>	<p>But as the assembly is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything</p>
<p>²⁵ Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,</p>	<p>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it;</p>
<p>²⁶ ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ ὕδατι τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,</p>	<p>that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,</p>
<p>²⁷ ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἕνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος.</p>	<p>that he might present the assembly to himself gloriously, not having spot or</p>

	wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
²⁸ οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἐαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἐαυτῶν σώματα. ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἐαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἐαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ.	Even so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.
²⁹ οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἐαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν, ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,	For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord also does the assembly;
³⁰ ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ.	because we are members of his body, of his flesh and bones.
³¹ ἀντὶ τοῦτου καταλείψει ἁνθρωπὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μιάν.	"For this cause a man will leave his father and mother, and will be joined to his wife. The two will become one flesh."
³² τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.	This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly

<p>³³πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἵ καθ' ἑναῖ καστοὺς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ὡς ἑαυτὸν, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.</p>	<p>Nevertheless each of you must also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband.</p>
--	--

3.1 Textual Problem in Ephesians 5:22-33

Verse 22 has the following textual problem:

- γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς, is reading adopted in the text and it is supported by P⁴⁶ (Papyrus 46) dated around 200 A.D, B (Codex Vaticanus) dated 4th century CE, and the testimonies of Clement, Theodore, etc.

The variants include:

- γυναῖκες ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς, which has the support of D (Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis) of 5th century CE, F (Codex Cambridge) of 9th century CE, G (Codex Dresden) dated 9th century CE, etc.
- γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὑποτάσσεσθε ὡς, is supported by Minuscules like 075,424*, and uncials like 1852,1912, 2200 among other supports.
- γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὑποτάσσεσθε ἁπλῶς, which is supported by 8 (Codex Sinaiticus) dated 4th century CE, A (Codex Alexandrinus) of 5th century CE, I (Codex Washington) of 5th century CE, P (Codex St Petersburg) of 9th century CE, Minuscules like 6, 33, 81, 104, etc., uncials like 1175, 1241,1319, etc. Testimonies of Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, etc., also support this reading.

Verse 30 has the following textual problem:

- αὐτοῦ: This reading, which is adopted in the text, has the support of P⁴⁶ (Papyrus 46) dated around 200 A.D, 8* (Codex Sinaiticus in its original form) dated 4th century CE, A (Codex Alexandrinus) of 5th century CE, B (Codex Vaticanus) of 4th century CE, Minuscules like 048, 6, 33, 81, etc., and uncials like 1739*, 1881, 2464, etc., and the testimonies of Origen, Methodius, Jerome, Augustine etc.

The variants include:

- αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ, which has the support of Minuscules like 0150,
- αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς σάρκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ, is supported by 8² (Codex Sinaiticus, second corrector) dated 4th century CE, DFG Minuscules like 075,104, 256, 263, etc., lectionaries 1154, among other supports.

3.2 Adopting Reading for the Textual Exegesis

Due to different variants for the problems in verses 22 and 30, it is necessary to adopt a suitable reading for the textual exegesis. As regards the textual problem in verse 22, we adopt the reading that has γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς, because of the date and character of the witnesses that supports it, other readings are less likely to be original. In verse 30, the reading that has αὐτοῦ, is adopted based on fact that its date and character of the witnesses that support it are heavily relied on in textual criticism with unlike other manuscripts' support.

4. The Literary context: The place of Ephesians 5:22-33 in the teaching of Ephesians

Ephesians 5:22-33 falls under the wider pericope of Ephesians 5:20-6:9. Within this large series of pericopes, which dominate the second half of the epistle, Paul focuses specifically on the behaviour of husbands and wives in 5:22-33. The paragraph before 5:22-33 runs from 4:25-5:21, where Paul first

applies the “put-off, put-on” principle to specific areas of life in 4:25-29 (speech [4:25, 29], conflict [4:26-27], and providing for one’s family [4:28-29]), and concludes by warning against grieving the Holy Spirit (4:30), (cf. Larkin, 2009). He then gives some general instructions in 4:31-5:21 about the necessity of a lifestyle of forgiveness, love, and purity, and of being filled with the Holy Spirit. At the end of this section, Paul lists three results of a Spirit-filled life: praising God with music (5:19), giving thanks to God for all things (5:20), and having a submissive spirit toward all believers (5:21).

This third result leads Paul naturally into two specific examples of mutual (though differentiated) submission: wives (5:22-24) and husbands (5:25-33). After instructing husbands and wives in 5:22-33, Paul turns to exhorting other family members in submissive, holy living – children and fathers (6:1-4). He then leaves the family unit and exhorts those in a master-slave relationship in the same way (6:5-9). This wraps up the Paul’s lengthy pericopes on holy living (5:22-6:9). Noteworthy, one remarkable feature of Ephesians 5:22-33 is that its theological kernel bears striking resemblance to Paul’s teaching in Colossians 3:18-19. It has been argued that that this similarity in thought was achieved by Paul through his emphasis on the relationship between the husband and the wife in the family.

5. Closer Reading of Ephesians 5:22-33

5.1 Verse 22-24: Exhortation to wives

Verses 22 opens with the statement: Αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ (“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord”). By this statement, Paul begins his appeal to wives to submit to their husbands as they submit to Christ because they are the head as Christ is the head of church. The word γυναῖκες is a feminine noun which is most likely from the base of γίνομαι meaning a woman. Though γυναῖκες can be used to refer to women in its generic class, however, in this context it is specifically used in reference to married women (wives) due to the presence of the possessive adjective “ἰδίοις” which gives a personal connotation to γυναῖκες in reference to ἀνδράσιν (husbands), and not men, (Balz, and Schneider, 1990:131). Originally the verb ὑποτάσσεσθε (“submit”) which is in its plural middle or passive imperative is missing in some manuscripts such as Codex Vaticanus, Papyrus 46, among others, however, it is included in most documents such Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, Codex Cambridge, Codex Dresden, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Washington, etc., either as second person present middle or passive imperative (ὑποτάσσεσθε) or as a third person present hortatory subjunctive (ὑποτάσσεσθσαν), (see variant readings contained in verse 22 in the textual problem above). If the original text omitted the verb, then one can conclude that scribal interpolation of ὑποτάσσεσθε was because of clarity since the preceding and the succeeding contexts use the second person present imperative. More so, it would be identical to the parallel passage of Colossian 3:18. The verb in question is the present middle or passive of ὑποτάσσω which means “to be subject, subordinate” and it is commonly rendered as “submit yourselves” and “subject yourselves” or even to be “in subjection” or “put under”, (George. and Scott 1968:818).

The passive of ὑποτάσσεσθε could convey the idea of a person is being forced to submit by a higher authority, while the middle connotes that the subject volitionally exercises the action of submission, an act of a free agent. Hoehner (2006:732) adjudicates that the middle seems in to be in harmony with the context for three main reasons. Firstly, there is no indication that the church’s submission to Christ is forced. Secondly, the duty of the husband is phrased in the active imperative in which the subject takes action to love his wife. Thirdly, in the previous context (5:18-21), four out of the five participles are dependent on the imperative “to be filled by the Holy Spirit” are active and the fifth participle is seen as the middle where the subject is responsible for the action. Therefore, “submission” here is better and most appropriately taken not as a passive but as a middle, with the wife acting as a free agent before God. According to Chadwick (1976:984) the wife’s submission to the husband is “an earthly enactment of the heavenly relation between the church and Christ.” Henry (2006) pushes this idea further by speculating the wife acknowledges God’s instruction by honouring and obeying her husband in alignment to Church’s obedience and reverence to Christ. Hence, the wives submissions signal their acceptance of God’s institutional order in family and the church (see Turaki 2006:1462). By implication, submission brings unity and orderliness in the church.

In verses 23-24, Paul continues his exhortation on the duties of wives by assigning reason for this submission from wives. As such, Paul uses the word Κεφαλή (“head”) metaphorically. According to Henry (2006:2317), “the metaphor is taken from the head in the natural body, which being the seat of reason, of wisdom, and of knowledge, and the fountain of sense and motion, is more excellent than the rest of the body.” Remarkably, Κεφαλή has been used in two earlier verses (1:22 and 4:15) in Ephesians in reference to Christ. In 1:22, for instance, Christ is presented as being supreme over all things. He is κεφαλή over all principalities, powers and the whole universe thus headship implies authority, rule and source, (Best 1998:535). In this context the headship of the husband is likened to that of Christ in which he is ruler and has power and authority over all creation. However, Christ’s rule over people is expressed in his care and nourishment as well as in his headship in order to fulfil divine purposes, (O’Brien 1999:413). According to Wolf and Musculus (2011:386) the reason a wife is to submit to her husband is that he is prominent and superior in dignity, authority, strength, powers of wisdom and created in the image and likeness of God. However, the researcher believes that Wolf and Musculus’s interpretation of submission in this context seems to be biased. Wolf and Musculus appear to mean that the reason for which the wife should submit to her husband is because she is inferior in all respects. On the contrary, several scriptural passages asserts that both male and female are created in the image and likeness of God and all equal, (see Gen.1:27; Gal.3:28; Col.3:11; Rom.10:12). Hence, headship in this context does not really imply dominance rather it clearly expresses the notion of service and benevolent leadership.

5.2 Verse 25-31: Exhortation to the husbands

From verse 25, Paul shifts his emphasis on the duty of the wives to that of the husband. He begins with this statement: Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἐαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς (“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it”). The plural verb ἀγαπάτε (“love”) is derived from the root word ἀγαπάω (“to love”). Being in its present imperative active, ἀγαπάτε shows that the husband’s love for the wife is an ongoing process. Hoehner (2006:772) grimly observes that this kind of love is “unconditional, it loves when not loved back, gives without getting; a love that seeks the highest good in a person.” This suggests that the husbands are meant to love their wives even when they seem undeserving and unloving. More so, Just as the wife’s submission is not dependent on her husband’s love so also is the husband’s love not dependent on the wife’s submission. The love required of the husband is succinctly portrayed in the type of love that Christ showed the church. He completely emptied himself for her in return for nothing. Hence, the love of the husband to the wife is given a Christological definition here and its typical characteristic is to give oneself up for the other.

In verse 25b – 27 likened the husband’s love for his wife to that of Christ to church and then presents the aim of such love by using the ἵνα clause. The word καθὼς which begins verse 25b is a comparative particle showing that the husband’s love is compared to that of Christ. Christ becomes the perfect illustration of love. In furthering this concern, Paul added that Christ loved the church that he might sanctify her and present to himself as a radiant, holy and blameless church. The phrase τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι (by the washing of water with the word), is most likely used here to point to baptism, or perhaps, the redemptive act of Christ instead of the ritual of baptism (cf. Titus 3:5).

Paul, then, strongly argues in verse 28 that the husband ought to love his wife as his own body. This statement is quite explicit. Here, Paul appears to be influenced by Leviticus 19:18 which say “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Sampley (2004:94), made an interesting comment on this verse by saying that “...the husband should be able to love his wife as he loves himself. Since loving himself comes naturally without thinking, he should be able to translate this same kind of love towards his wife.” Leaning on Sampley’s idea, one can infer that the husband loving his wife is no longer a duty but is something that is constant and consistent with his very nature. This, of course, introduces an element of unconditional love which is beyond sexual love or any other kind of love.

In verses 29-30, Paul continues his explanation on why husbands should unconditionally love their wives. He stated that Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies in the same way as Christ loves his body which is the church. By saying that “no one hates his own flesh” Paul is by implication portraying a perfect illustration of how this love should be conducted by the husband. The husband should ἐκτρέφει

(“nurture”, “nourish”, “bring up to maturity”), and *θάλλει* (“cherish and takes good care”) of his wife regardless of her imperfections. Notice that the term *σάρκα* (“flesh”) is used in verse 29 instead of *σώμα* (“body”) as used verse 23, 28, 30. It is most likely Paul that interchangeably uses these terms or perhaps he used it here in preparation for the quotation from Gen 2:24 in verse 31. In verse 30, Paul uses the conjunction *ὅτι* (“because”) to state the reason why Christ takes care of the church. Christ does so because “we are members of his body.” He displayed this by his sacrificial death (see v.25).

In verses 31, Paul now gave the proof from scripture: *ἀνηιούηοςκαθαλείταιἄνθρωπορηὸνπατέπακαὶἠνμηηέπακαὶπποζκολληθήζεηαιπὸρηήγγναῖκααὐηοῦ, καὶἔζονηαιοἰδύοειρζάπκαμίαν.* (“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh”). The verb *καταλείπει* is third person singular of the root word *καταλείτω* (“to leave behind”). Used in its future indicative active, *καταλείπει* means “leave behind”, “abandon”, “forsake” (see Gen.2:24; Matt.4:13; Isaiah 54:6; Luke 5:28). According to Hoehner (2006:772), “it illustrates that husbands and wives are supposed to be knitted together in every aspect of life, thought, interest and physical intimacy.” Paul also implies this oneness in 1Cor.6:16: “if anyone has intercourse with a prostitute he is one body with her.” The oneness in the context of our periscope, goes beyond sexual intercourse, to include complementarity of each other’s shortcomings and imperfections. Having joined together to become one flesh, Henry (2006:2317) contended that “no man in his right senses ever hated himself, however deformed, or whatever his imperfection.”

In verse 32-33, Paul therefore summarized the ongoing. He first stated that it is a mystery (v.32). However, some scholars of the opinion that “the mystery” Paul infers here reflects a deeper meaning of human marriage in Gen. 2:24, (see Moritz 1996:124-125; Wolfg and Musculus, 2011:386). However, Sampley (2004:95-96) strongly cautioned against this interpretation by arguing that “this cannot be the case because the text already makes mention of the Christians as the body of Christ and Gen.2:24 is just an illustration of that spirit union.” Paul then he uses the word *πλὴν*, which begins verse 33, to indicate that he is concluding to his discussion. Hence, this very verse is a concise summary of what had been stated in our pericope. Husbands are enjoined to love their wives as Christ loved the church and the wife is to fear her husband. The word “fear” is generally understood to possess two possible meaning. On one hand, it can signify “reverence” or “respect.” (cf. Lk. 1:50, 2cor.7:1, Rom 3:18, Rev.11:18). On the other hand, it may mean “alarm, dread, fright,” the self-regarding fear of the criminal or slave because of a sense of guilt; (cf. Lk. 12:5, Jn. 14:27, Rom.8:15, Heb 13:16, 2 Tim. 1:7). The fear that is used here means to reverence or respect her husband.

5.3 Conclusion of exegesis

Ephesians 5:22-33 deals with the responsibilities of husbands and wife in marriage. In his treatment, Paul urges the wife to be submissive to her husband in accordance with the church’s submission to Christ. It was argued that her submission to her husband does not mean that women are in any way inferior than man or man superior to women. But her submission signals her acceptance of God’s institutional order in the family which ultimately ensures unity in the home. Paul then shifts his exhortation from the wife to the husband. Not only are husbands to love their wife like Christ does, but they are also to love them and treat them with the same care that they would treat their own bodies. Christ nurtures and cherishes, and cares for his church the husband are also enjoined to do the same for his wife. Finally, the husband and the wife are no longer two but one.

6. Hermeneutics of Ephesians 5:22-33 in the context of Nigerian Society

6.1 An overview of Domestic Violence in Nigerian Contemporary society

The contingencies and variations in having a clear-cut definition of domestic violence have pushed most scholars and human right organisations to adopt a broader definition that includes “structural violence” like poverty, and unequal access to quality education and health. However, some others have argued for a more restricted definition so as not to lose the actual descriptive power of the term. In either of the case, the need to develop specific operational definition has been acknowledged so that research and monitoring can become more specific and have greater cross-cultural applicability. To this end, the World

Health Organisation (2007) defines domestic violence as “the range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against women by current or former male intimate partners.” This definition appears to be one-sided because the issue of domestic violence is not gender-specific.

While acknowledging the fact that women are mostly the victims of domestic violence, one cannot totally alienate men from being victims of this malaise. For the sake of this study, the researcher defines domestic violence to include the range of physical, economic, emotional and psychological abuse of anyone in the home which causes the victim to feel terrorized, intimidated, threatened, harassed, molested, and in most cases result in psychological disorder and in most cases death of the victim.

Domestic violence cuts across different societies around the world including Nigeria. A cursory examination of most households in Nigerian society shows that there is an upsurge in the rate of domestic violence which in most cases is caused by women’s misconception of submission to their husbands or the husband’s myopic understanding of his headship in the house. In furthering this concern, Adeyemo and Bamidele (2016) grimly observed that the abusive partners and perpetrators of domestic violence in Nigeria usually base their actions on superiority of masculine gender, custom, economic situation, family pressure or their behavioural pattern. Generally, homes are designed among other reasons, to serve as a form of succour, happiness, relaxation and rest from life’s many challenges and struggles; however, in most Nigerian homes the reverse seems to be the case instead. Most family members in some Nigerian households are filled with fear, tension, and trepidation, because of the knowledge of what awaits them on getting to their respective homes.

Over the years, Nigeria has recorded an astronomic number in cases of domestic violence which women are in most cases the victim. However, due to unavailability of official statistics, it is quite difficult to ascertain the extent of domestic violence as hundreds of cases go unreported and undocumented. According to Amnesty International on Nigeria(2005), “on a daily basis, women are beaten and ill-treated for supposed transgressions, raped and even murdered...and husbands, partners, and fathers are responsible for most of the violence.” To substantiate this, Famoroti (2012) cites the case of Mrs. Nkechi Ngene, a housewife and mother of two minors in Enugu State. According to the report, Mrs. Ngene, who was said to be eight months pregnant, confronted her husband over his incessant infidelity, precisely on January 31, 2012. Her husband allegedly responded by beating the living daylight out of her. Mrs. Ngene sustained various degree of injuries such that she began to bleed profusely and uncontrollably and was left to die by her husband. More so, there is another ugly incidence reported by Eniola in The Punch Newspaper, dated December 31, 2017. According to Eniola, a bank worker by name, Mr. Olaoluwa Adejo was arrested for belting his wife, Maureen, to death with a belt at their home on Peluola Street, in the Bariga area, Lagos State. The couple’s five year old son, Richard, who reportedly witnessed the violence, said his father also forced a local insecticide, “otapiapia” down the throat of his mother. More recently, is the report on PunchNewspaper of 7th, August 2020, by Oyero, that a husband abandoned his wife and children because they have blue eyes which is alien to dark eyes common in Nigeria. The blue-eyed wife allegedly stated on interview that her husband abandoned her to suffer upon discovering that all his children have blue eyes.

As it has been stated earlier that domestic violence is not gender specific, it is pertinent to infer that there are some other reported cases where men were the victims of the domestic violence. For instance, according to report on the Vanguard Newspaper dated 11 November 2017, by Eniola, one Maryam Sanda allegedly stabbed her husband, Mr Bilyamin Bello to death while sleeping over an erotic message she saw on his phone. Again, a report by Sobowale on Vanguard Newspaper of 9th July, 2020, has it that one Mrs. Rose Uwaga, was arrested by Abia State Police command for allegedly strangling her husband, Mr. Uwaga to death. It was gathered that the two couple had a disagreement which degenerated into fisticuffs at their residence in Ohobo-Afara, Umuahia. During the fight, the man allegedly grabbed a machete to scare the wife but the woman reportedly overpowered him. The machete fell off his hand and the wife, who is huge, pinned him down by the neck and strangled him to death.

From the above, it is quite clear that domestic violence has caused and still causing a lot of damages in various households in Nigeria. The experience of domestic violence can generate strong negative feelings about self, including feelings of guilt and shame. In addition, the victim may engage in

what Adeyemo and Bamidele (2016:179) termed “reasoning strategies” such as denying the abuse occurred, minimizing the threatening nature of the abuse or rationalising while the abuse occurred. On the other hand, given the centrality of the family in a child’s life, it can also be a frequent source of violence, abuse, discrimination and exploitation in the society, (Segmour and O’Donnel 2004). This is so true because children who have witnessed their mothers (or fathers), being subjected to one form of violence, tends to follow suit because they feel that is the best way to deal with their wives or husbands.

7. Implications of Ephesians 5:22-33 to Husbands and wife in Nigerian contemporary society

Based on the exegesis above, the researcher identifies three implications of Ephesians 5:22-33 for Nigerian society.

7.1 Wives submissions to their husbands are not signs of inferiority but acceptance of God’s institutional order in family

As seen in the exegesis of Ephesians 5:22-33, the submission of the wife does not connote inferiority or weakness but obedience and acceptance of God’s institutional order in the family and in church. This submission includes honouring, respecting and obeying the husband in alignment to church’s duty to Christ which brings unity. While most women in Nigerian society have wrongly projected the act of submission to their husband as a sign of inferiority and weakness, it is pertinent to also add that it has caused and still causing a lot domestic violence in most homes in Nigeria. Ephesians 5:22-33 goes to the heart of this issue and teaches Nigerian women that submission are existentially sign of obedience and acceptance of God’s institutional order in the family which are integral for peaceful co-existence in the household.

7.2 Husband’s headship in the family does not imply dominance rather it clearly expresses the idea of care, service and unconditional love

We saw that Paul deals squarely in Ephesians 5:22-33 with the patriarchal proclivity of husbands in the first century society which expects them to be virile, dominant, and "headmaster" over their households. In urging husbands to love, cherish and care for their wives as they do themselves, Paul seriously challenged patriarchal motives for marriage. While Paul likened Christ’s headship of the Church to that of the husband to his wife, He strongly emphasizes that Christ’s rule over the church is expressed in his care and nourishment as well as in his headship in order to fulfil divine purposes. Hence, headship of the husband in the family does not really imply dominance rather it clearly expresses the idea of care, unconditional love, selflessness and benevolent leadership. When this understanding is juxtaposed with the Nigerian situation, it is clear that the opposite is the case: not only do most Nigerian husbands greatly display an overwhelming dominance and high handedness in their family, but they also, at times, batter, brutally rape and murder their wives at any slightest provocation. Ephesians 5:22-33 seriously invites husbands in Nigeria to dig deep into the revealed mystery of Christ’s headship to the church and use it as a model for their family.

7.3 Marriage knits together husbands and wives in every aspect of life, thought, interest and physical intimacy

Ephesians 5:22-33 for soothing message for husbands and wives who desire peaceful and pleasant marriage. In the pericope, we saw that Paul made reference to Gen.2:24 when he stated in v. 31 that “For this reason (of marriage) a man shall leave(behind) his father and mother (and all other things that defines him as a bachelor) and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh, (Emphasis mine). What Paul is insinuating here is that marriage knits the husband together with his wife in every aspect of life, feeling, thought, interest and of course in physical intimacy. One should not rejoice, when the other is weeping. If one is needy, the other proffers solution as soon as possible. They are helpmeet united in love at all time and in every circumstances. Such a positive understanding of marriage is generally lacking in Nigerian society. To the contrary, marriage in Nigerian society seems to be a game of cat and kitten especially when there is financial instability, infidelity, childlessness, or sexual dissatisfaction. Ephesians 5:22-33 not only pictures the oneness of

husband and wife in every aspect of life as a binding force against these marital threats, but also encourages the husband and the wife to complement each others imperfection and shortcomings.

8. Conclusion

Having evaluated Ephesians 5:22-33 and parental role in curbing domestic violence in Nigerian society, it has been established in the course of discourse, through historical critical method of analysis that the teachings of Ephesians 5:22-33 holds promise for households in Nigerian society today. In the pericope, Paul speaks of the responsibilities of husbands and wives; and he speaks of these in a Christian manner, setting the church as an example of the wife's submission, and Christ as an example of love in husbands. It was argued in the study study that the wife's submission to her husband does not signal inferiority complex, instead, it shows her total acceptance of God's institutional order in the family which ensures peace and unity in the households. The responsibilities prescribed to husbands are to love their wives unconditionally. His headship over the wife is for dominance and control but for protection, care and comfort of his wife. From the hermeneutics of the study, it was discovered that such a positive understanding is lacking in Nigerian society today. The most parents in Nigerian society exhibits the conjugal mentality that increases domestic violence in their homes. Ephesians 5:22-33 goes to the heart of this situation in Nigerian society today. It explains that wives submit and respect her husband and that husbands should unconditionally love his wife.

References

- Aland, B., et'al. (2012). *The Greek New Testament*. Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft
- Adeyemo, O.O. and Bamidele, I. (2016). The menace of Domestic Violence:Improving the lives of women in Nigeria. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 177-198. Retrieved from: <https://brill.com/ajls/>
- Amnesty International Nigeria, (2005).Unheard Voices. Retrieved from: [athttps://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf440042005](https://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf440042005)
- Balch, D.L (1988). *"Household Codes" in Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*. Atlanta: Scholars Press
- Balla, P. (2003). *The Child-Parent Relationship in the New Testament and its Environment*.Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Balsdon, J. P. (1962). *Roman Women: Their History and Habits*. New York, Barnes and Noble Books,
- Balz, H. and Schneider, G. (1990).*Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*, (vol 1). Grand Rapids, Eerdmans.
- Bartchy, S.S. (2005). Undermining Ancient Patriarchy: The Apostle Paul's Vision of a Society of Siblings, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 29(2), 68-88
- Best, E. (1998).*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark,
- Chadwick, H. (1976). Ephesians.*Peake's Commentary on the Bible*. Nairobi: Thomas Nelson & Sons
- Coontz, S. (2006).*Marriage, a History: How love conquered marriage*. Penguin. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.com>
- Dahl, N.A. and Juel, D.H. (2000).Ephesians.*Harper Collins Bible Commentary*.New York: Harper SanFrancisco, 1113-1120.
- Eniola, B. (2017). "2017 year of deadly domestic violence cases." *The Punch Newspaper*, 31 Decemeber, 2017.Retrieved from: <https://punchng.com/2017-year-of-deadly-domestic-violence-cases/>
- Famoroti, F. (2012). Domestic Violence: When Spouses send their partners to early grave. Retrieved from: <https://nationalmirroronline.com>
- George. H and Scott, R. (1968). *Greek-English lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Girard, M. (2000). Love as Subjection, the Christian Ideal for Husbandsand Wives: A

- Structuralist Study of Ephesians 5:21-33. In *Women Also Journeyed with Him: Feminist Perspective on the Bible*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 125-152.
- Gombris, T.G. (2005). A Radically New Humanity: The Function of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians. *JETS* 48(2), 317-330
- Hanson, K. C. (1996). Kinship. *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 62-79.
- Henry, M. (2006). Ephesians. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2307-2319.
- Hoehner, H. W. (2006). *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Keener, C.S. (1992). *Paul, Women, and Wives*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Kobelski, P.J. (2007). Ephesians. *The New Jerome Commentary*. India: Indira Printers, 883-890.
- Larkin, W.J. (2009). Ephesians: A hand book on the Greek Text. Baylor: University Press
- Miles, C.A. (2006). Patriarchy or Gender Equality? The Letter to the Ephesians on Submission, Headship, and Slavery. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 39(2), 70-95. Retrieved from: <https://jstor.org/>
- Mollenkott, V.R. (2003). Emancipative Elements in Ephesians 5:21-33: Why Feminist Scholarship Has (often) Left Them Unmentioned, and Why they should be Emphasized. *A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.
- Moritz, T. (1996). *A Profound Mystery: The use of the Old Testament in Ephesians*, Vol. 85 Brill. Retrieved from: https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/7/2/articles-p206_12.xml
- Sampley, J.P. (2004). *And the Two Shall Become One Flesh; a Study of traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33*. (vol.16). Cambridge: University Press.
- O'Brien, P. T. (1999). *The letter to the Ephesians*. USA: Eerdmans
- Osiek, C. and Balch, D. L. (1990). *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox,
- Oyero, B. (2020). Nigerians lambast husband of abandoned blue-eyed Ilorin woman. *The Punch Newspaper*. August 7 2020. Retrieved from: <https://punchng.com/nigerians-lambast-husband-of-abandoned-blue-eyed-ilorin-woman/>
- Russell, J.C. (1958). Late ancient and medieval population. *Transactions of American Philosophical society* 48(3), 1-152. Retrieved from: <https://jstor.org>
- Seymour, D. and O'Donnell, D. (2004). Child Protection; a Handbook for Parliamentarians. Retrieved from: <https://ipu.org>
- Sobowale, R. (2020). "Domestic Violence: Police arrests woman for killing husband." *The Vanguard Newspaper*. July 9 2020. Retrieved from: <https://vanguardngr.com/domestic-violence-police-arrests-woman-for-killing-husband/>
- Stark, R. (1996). *The Rise of Christianity: A sociologist reconsiders history*. Princeton: University Press
- Turaki, Y. (2006). Ephesians. *African Bible Commentary*. Nairobi: WordAlive, 1451-1464.
- Wolff and Musculus, (2011). Commentary on Ephesians. *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Galatians and Ephesians*. USA: Intervarsity Press.
- World Health Organisation Report, 2007. Domestic Violence. Retrieved from: <https://who.org>

SOCIO-ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

By

Ezeanya, Chioma Winifred

Department of Philosophy
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Otegbulu, Chukwuebuka Gabriel

School of General Studies (Humanities Unit)
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Obiora Anichebe

Department of Philosophy
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

In the past years, the world has experienced varied kinds of contagious diseases like SARS, Ebola and Lassa virus etc., and presently the advanced Corona virus (COVID-19). Viruses are tiny bits and single kind of nucleic acid, segmented or not, quite coated of protein molecules that are harmful to human immune system. It is advanced because the corona virus is of varied strains. This family of virus is regarded as corona because it has a crown-like appearance, a circular core with spike-like projections of the surrounding glycol-proteins when viewed by electron microscopy. It is zoonotic because it is transmissible from animal to human. However, COVID-19 which is the focus of this paper is a pandemic that originated from China and belongs to the flu family. The aim of this paper is to investigate into this pandemic to identify its possible socio-ethical implications despite its widely observed health implications. This paper argues that the socio-ethical situation of the country during COVI-19 is but a hyper version of the previous status and unless something apt and drastic is done, the challenges will remain the same. The research methods are expository, analytical, descriptive and evaluative methods.

Keywords: Socio-ethics, Pandemic, COVID-19, Nigeria.

Introduction

Living is a state engineered by a whole lot of elements. These elements cut across biological, psychological and ethical elements among others. The substructure being the biological elements on which other elements are built on as superstructures. These biological elements vary, one of which are microbes, within and outside the body. However, some microbes are harmful to the body and to human health and some harmful microbes include virus among others. According to Oldstone (2010, p.10), as borrowed from Medawar, a “virus is a piece of nucleic acid surrounded by bad news. It is a tiny bit of genetic material, a single kind of nucleic acid (segmented or non-segmented, DNA or RNA) and a coat made of protein molecules. There are also some genetic materials quite coated of protein molecules that are not necessarily virus”. Therefore, combining the two definitions, virus or viruses are tiny bits and single kind of nucleic acid, segmented or not, quite coated of protein molecules that are harmful to human immune system. Through the RNA/DNA, it is able to get to the right sort of the cell and multiplies once it is able to invade a living cell. It can affect cellular forms of life of plants, animals, bacteria, fungi and protozoa, etc. (Oldstone, 2010).

Focusing on virus as it affects humans, they can be of “different shapes, sizes, varied number of genes, through mutations, recombinations and reassortments. The viral family belongs to the group with fewer genes from the minimum of 10 genes to the maximum of 400 genes unlike bacteria genes (5,000-10,000) as well as human genes of approximately 30,000 genes. Some of these viruses include measles virus, yellow

fever virus, poliomyelitis virus, Lassa fever virus, Ebola virus, hanta virus and human immune deficiency virus (HIV)”(Oldstone, 2010, p. 10-11). However, in the 21st century, there came Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the present corona virus. Some of these viruses are responsible for many loss of lives and unfortunately, they exist in every type of environment (Thomas, 2004) but its efficacy may vary according to the existing weather condition. The interest of this paper is to investigate into corona virus as a flu virus, its manifestation, the pre-corona virus situation as well as a corona virus influenced environment. Do we categorize the existing situation as a hyped version of the pre-COVID-19 or not? It will be identified in the paper. The following methodologies will be used in the research. The expository method will be used to expose the various situations, using the descriptive method to describe the impact of COVID-19 in Nigeria as well as analyse the impact of the experience while evaluative method will be used to evaluate the situation and recommend for the way forward. This method will follow in this manner: the overview of corona virus family and COVID-19 as a pandemic, the experience in Nigeria, the pre-existing socio-ethical situation prior to COVID-19, the on-going situation and post COVID-19 by way of recommendation before conclusion.

Covid-19 as a Pandemic

Expediently, we note that COVID-19 is not the first corona virus in history. One of the pandemics of the 21st century which is Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) belong to the corona virus family. It began in Southern part of China in November, 2002 and was brought under control in 2004 after spreading to 33 countries of 5 continents, infecting thousands of humans as well as killing hundreds (Oldstone, p. 226). Corona virus is of varied strains. This family of virus is regarded as corona because it has a crown-like appearance, a circular core with spike-like projections of the surrounding glycol-proteins when viewed by electron microscopy. It is zoonotic because it is transmissible from animal to human. Oldstone(2010, p.227) recorded that the first corona viruses isolated included the following: an infectious bronchitis virus of animals identified in 1930, a transmissible gastro-intestinal virus of pigs noted in the mid-1940s, and an encephalitis virus of mice recorded in 1949. In 1960, corona viruses were isolated from human basically from their upper respiratory tracts and were associated with modest respiratory disease and minimal mortality. This last human virus is SARS CoV (7) which originated in 2002/2003 with severe clinical disease in humans.

Examining the aforementioned viral diseases, one thing is mostly common and that is their area of residence: the respiratory part or the internal organs of their hosts. However, it is intracellular and that makes this virus dangerous. Virus mutates and as such always varies. This is exemplified in the fact that corona viruses though of the same family, may have varied ways of manifestations. For instance, apart from other manifestations like infection of the upper airway, SARS CoV (7), infects also the linings of the lungs which is the alveolar epithelium in the lower respiratory tract. This leads to severe difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath, respiratory distress as well as poor transfer of oxygen from the lungs to the blood (Oldstone, 2010). Corona virus like other viruses develops resistance in its advanced strain to withstand attack and as such cause rapid casualty in its hosts in relation to mechanism of manifestation.

The intention of this article is not to dwell extensively on other strains of corona virus but to bring to bear, its style of manifestation and why COVID-19 seems more transmissible. It is more transmissible because it is an enveloped virus as they contain two or more distinct layers of protein, usually glycoproteins. These proteins function to attach the virion of the target host cell receptors and facilitate the entry or fusion of the viral membranes with that of the host cell (Chiu and Johnsons, 2003, p.364). This is part of the reason it takes time to flush from the system. Furthermore, we shall elaborate extensively on COVID-19 as more than a corona virus but also as a pandemic of the 21st century.

In one of the previous sections, we identified various strains of corona virus that have manifested in different degrees until the first pandemic version which is SARS Cov(7). However, COVID-19 is a pandemic because it is a disease that has affected various continents of the universe. It belongs to Corona virus family and originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China (Jin et al, 2020). Initially, it was coded this name 2019-nCoV (2) by the Chinese when it broke out between November and December, 2019 because it is a novel corona virus that is highly contagious. It was later declared a pandemic by the World Health

Organization (WHO), on March 11, 2020 and was coded the name COVID-19, a name it bears till today. In essence, ‘COronaVirusDisease’“originated in 2019” (Jin et al, 2020, p.1). Consequent upon its contagious and manifestation rate, is its mortality rate of about 4.14%. Though Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are 34.45% and 9.6% respectively, COVID-19 start-death symptoms is similar to MERS, hence 4-14 days (Kwasim et al, 2020). However, observation has also shown that some continents survive more than others, example Africa.

Needless to go into details of the molecular properties and manifestations. The interest is that COVID-19 is a pandemic that has advanced into hundreds of countries, leading to thousands of death and millions of infections. It is a respiratory disease because its path of transmission is respiratory droplets and contact, aerosol droplets that cannot last up to 3hours, more stable on plastic, stainless steel, less effective on copper and cardboard. Its lethality is based on the fact that it can only be detected on a surface, 72hours of dropping yet it spreads as early as it comes in contact with a host/surface (Kwasim, 2020, p.2). As a second pandemic of the 21st century, Zhejiang university handbook(2020, p.26), noted that the pandemic operates in the following manners:

- At an early stage, it presents a multi-focal patchy shadows/ground glass opacities, located in the lung periphery, subpleural area and both lower lobes on chest CT scans.
- The long axis of the lesion is mostly parallel to the pleura.
- Interlobular septal thickening and interlobular interstitial thickening displaying a subpleural reticulation which is “a crazy paving” pattern observed in some ground glass opacities.
- A small number of cases may show solitary, local lesions or modular/patchy lesions distributed, consistent with bronchus and with periphery ground glass opacities changes.
- Disease progress often occurs at the minimum and maximum of 7-10days with enlarged and increased density of the lesions compared with previous images and consolidated lesions with air bronchogram sign.
- Critical cases have an expanded version of the above leading to a concept known as ‘white lungs’.
- When the condition is relieved, the ground glass can be completely absorbed and some consolidation lesions will leave fibrotic stripes or subpleural reticulation.
- Those multiple lobular case should be observed for disease exacerbation.

This is a sketch of the mechanism for identifying COVID-19 and how it affects humans. As a virus that has an improved mode of transmission, readymade vaccines were not the cure and as such various countries kept using improvise to control both its spread and suppression hence the idea of isolation, quarantine, social distancing for control as well as the use of ventilators and varied plausible drugs to cure the disease, hence the death rate. Speculations show that its rate of manifestation varies according to the temperature of a country. Like every other respiratory disease that thrives in cold temperature, COVID-19 is no difference, hence, its rate of infection in Europe and America as opposed to Africa except in South Africa that shares similar temperature with Europe.

COVID-19 spreads like wildfire not just because of its mode of transmission but also because of lack of discipline among citizens of various countries globally. However, countries are making efforts individually and collectively to find vaccine/s of which Russia has declared to have found one. Attempts and failures as well as little or no success have been made and researches are still on-going to develop a harm-free vaccine that can permanently bring COVID-19 under control if not cure it. Undeniably, apart from health sectors globally, the pandemic has affected other sectors more negatively. This is obvious in various shutdown that took place in aviation, transportation, commerce, religion, entertainment, hospitality to mention but a few. In a loose sense, ‘it closed up the globe like a book for some time before various countries of the world started flipping open, page by page’ and gradually. This implies a gradual and long-term recovery by world-countries as COVID-19 ravaged for months and is still on-going. Speculations had it that it is a bioweapon that got out of a control but whatever is the case, it is a known pandemic that has posed a great challenge globally.

In stating the fact, COVID-19 has modified the mode of living of many countries and has brought to consciousness an ignoble mode of healthy life which is washing of hands regularly on the one hand. On the other hand, it affected the social order thereby bringing about pre-COVID-19, COVID-19 and post COVID-19 social situation. One cannot espouse social situation without bringing ethics to bear, hence the focus of this research; the socio-ethical situation/implications which will be heralded by the same situation prior to COVID-19 in Nigeria and the on-going pandemic to evaluate the degree of disparity.

Pre-COVID-19 Socio-Ethical Situation in Nigeria

COVID-19 affected various countries of the universe and Nigeria in particular. In order to understand the impact of this pandemic on Nigeria, we examine the state of affairs of Nigeria prior to COVID-19. Just like in other countries of the world, the health sector is the direct casualty of this pandemic. However the crave for safety by all nations of the world led to the inevitable mostly negative impact of COVID-19 to sectors like the economy, academics, entertainment, religious and the social life . When we emphasize socio-ethical situation, the interest is to express the social situation alongside the governing ethics prior to COVID-19. An objective exposition will indicate that there are both positive and negative socio-ethical situation in pre-COVID-19 Nigeria.

According to 2006 census, Nigeria has 140 million people (**Adewale, 2010, p.20**). This means that it will be much above that presently. Most African populous countries consist of male, females which includes the aged, the parents' class, the youths and the children. This population is of varied ethnic groups and cultures with considerable landmass. The varied ethnic groups and cultures invoke the situation of ethnic loyalty and occasional extremism. It in turn influences the ethical dispositions of the members of the ethnic group. Nigeria is a country filled with think-tanks hence development of good policies but the assurance of good policies' implementers is not certain. Some of the policies include the 'Second National Youth Policy that was developed and documented in 2009. It is a declaration aimed at a commitment of the priorities, directions and practical support that a country intends to provide for the development of its young people (**2009, p.2**), various forms of social protection strategy, health insurance schemes, all forms of poverty alleviation Schemes, pension improvement schemes etc. to mention but a few. (**Holmes et al, 2012**). The efficacy of these programmes and schemes and positive impacts on citizens are still unsatisfying since their various times of inception.

In a clear statement, Nigeria amidst these good policies cannot be credited with a one complete functional sector. It is always a partial touch to every sector hence inadequate infrastructure, inefficient and insufficient ports, struggling power supply and a pitiable corrupt government (**Ofoche, 2012**). The National Youth Policy described that though human societies are characterized by both virtues and vices, their operationalization is greatly determined by the activities of the government, hence, the endemic corruption in government gives a loophole for abhorrent crimes like drug pedaling, money laundering, cybercrimes, terrorism (**2009, p.2**), arm banditry, kidnapping, ethnic bigotry, unpatriotism to mention but a few. These elements create a breeding ground for a perpetual altercation in social values, norms, institutions, relationship and stratification (**Mayowa, 2020, p.57-82**), which makes a human society unique and distinct on the one hand. On the other hand, in terms of ethical situation, these social problems that emerged as mentioned above do not just alter the social values but the norms, morals and ethics of our society and in turn rendered life uncomfortable. Some of them include deviance of behaviour towards the commandments of God especially when it has to do with our struggle for the control of our available scarce resources violently and wrongly (**George & Ukpog, 2013, p. 167-173**).

A critical observation will show that the social situation of a country determines greatly the efficacy of others like ethics (norms and values) and vice versa hence the idea of unpatriotism and corruption leading to misappropriation of national funds. This misappropriation leads to incomplete capital projects and neglect of vital sectors of the government. It in turn leads to social instability: a state of affairs devoid of social solidarity among people to make for a better society. For social stability to be sustainable, social

contract must be true, efficient and practicable otherwise scarce resources, unemployment, uneven distribution of wealth that impede on social trust tend to dominate thereby leading to social tensions and government loss of credibility (Nweke, 2014). It is not the position of this paper that the pre-COVID-19 Nigerian socio-ethical implication is appalling but that it needs and demands urgent restructuring and improvement. While still planning on improvements, we shall examine the present COVID-19 and identify if there are discrepancies with the former.

COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: The Experience so far

The index (first confirmed) case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was announced on 27th February, 2020 when an unnamed Italian citizen tested positive in Lagos followed by a contact, the second case in Ewekoro, Ogun State on 9th March, 2020 (**find the reference, do not use wiki**). It kept spreading until the federal government has to impose lockdown for a month or thereabout accompanied with social distancing, compulsory wearing of face-masks in crowded places, compulsory personal hygiene (handwashing with soap and water or improvised sanitizer). These became the norm after phase ease of lockdown. The spread was not curtailed optimally due to acts of indiscipline from both citizens and some public officials. As such, it permeated every state of the federation with varied degree of manifestation. As a contagious disease, it is obvious why Lagos is the epicenter of COVID-19 infection followed by Abuja and then other states. Some states that were free like Cross River and Rivers states later got infested after the inter-state travel ban was lifted. Presently, the situation and status of Kogi state is uncertain due to lack of consensus by the NCDC (National/Nigerian Centre for Disease Control) with their state government.

The low level of cooperation by citizens and public officials resulted in the daily increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Nigeria bringing the number to over 55,000 with over 14000 active cases, over 43000 recovered cases and over 1000 recorded deaths and 1.9% fatality rate as at September, 2020. The 1.9% fatality rate can be considered favourable when compared with Europe and America where hundreds of thousands die, despite their improved health care on the one hand. It also goes a long way to expose that if we had got a better health care, the fatality rate may be lower than what we already have. A lot of speculation have been as to reasons for these discrepancies on infection rate, but that is not the focus of this paper. But one important and common thing is that its process of transmission is the same globally and no vaccine has been certified globally as a cure. The way forward yet is boosting of immunity, using ventilators and some drugs to control the symptoms such that the patient's life span is extended. Such extensions impede on the survival of the virus since it is self-limiting. In Nigeria, neither health agency nor individuals has publicly explained in details their details of recovery. Corona virus is still present in Nigeria and has undeniably affected the socio-ethical situation of the country.

Socio-ethical Situation/Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

We have seen the situation of Nigeria before COVID-19 and in the pandemic as well as the modes of coping with the challenge by both the citizens and the government. The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, like every other affected country made many decisions to be taken and steps followed. They include total lockdown that later got eased in phases with observable considerations. This lockdown involved market places, worship centers, entertainment centres like night clubs, cinema, sports centres, inter-state travels, local and international flights and any gathering that attracts crowd of any sort. This includes offices and the ease to a certain grade level allowed to come for essential institutional duties, a drastic decrease in the level of services granted in the hospital at a time but a later complete service granted to patients with strict precautionary measures. Bank sectors close earlier than usual while some branches became momentarily dysfunctional, academic institutions were deserted, church premises abandoned and untidy, recreational activities from and by hotels were halted. In a loose sense, the country was on a low-key shutdown. It is glaring that these measures to curtail the pandemic in Nigeria had or will have a drastic effect on the state of affairs of the country. For instance:

In market places: The lockdown of market places affected the IGR of various states of the federation. Those who make their earnings on daily bases found life more difficult, those whose products are on the verge of expiring lost their capital and gain of/from those products respectively. Edible products not bought and consumed before then got decayed and spoilt and lots more. This implies social discomfort and invokes matters of ethics. Of course with the ease of lockdown, many traders and merchants went ahead to sell their expired products to ignorant consumers in a bid to recover their cash. Edibles were short in supply because retailers are not sure of the rate of consumptions and so, health is jeopardized. Those who care to uphold the ethics of business suffer business setbacks. Consequently, with the phasal ease of lockdown came inflation in the midst of unemployment, underemployment, half-pay and even no pay at all. In some states, time for market closure was earlier as though the pandemic comes and goes at particular times, etc.

Worship, entertainment and sports centres: Worship centres were closed for months such that Easter programmes were not publicly observed and celebrated likewise pilgrimages. It readjusted people's ideology and habits in relation to Sunday masses and services. It stirs in some, a deeper quest for God while in some, lassaiz-faire attitude to church programmes. Fearful persons abscond worship centres even after the ban was lifted which is a loophole to puncture one's belief system. With the ease of lockdown, populous worship centresspread their worship time hourly to accommodate for social distancing resulting in an undue stress on the clergies and religious workers on the one hand.

On the other hand, the entertainment centres were closed down such that in some European countries, some night club dancers took to dancing on the streets during daytime as a slight means of survival. Here in Nigeria, some entertainers were sanctioned by government officials in their bid to meet up with their concert during lockdown-part of their means of survival. Sports centres were empty and those who attempted to play like boxing, wrestling and soccer were done without direct audience while some unmanageable ones were post-poned. This in turn affected the finance of candidates, Nigerians inclusive. More so, pleasure accompanying live audience of these sports were denied of the people. It is also unfortunate for those whose source of income and livelihood depends on these live shows and their accompaniments.

Local, international and interstate travels: Since the index case was a result of travel history, coupled with the nature of the virus, it is reasonable that various means of travel and transportation be checkmated. Yet in the midst of this management, casualties were incurred. Import duties rose affecting price of goods and services, patients who would have survived of diseases died of the same disease due to lack of means to travel for treatment. Global aviation lost lots of billions of dollars due to that and in Nigeria, some airline workers were threatened with sack notice due to their acclaimed inability to pay accordingly according to Channels television. Many Nigerian travelers got stuck in various countries, some faced with hostile situation until when they got eventual evacuation by the government and people of goodwill. Furthermore, billions of dollars were lost from tourism according to Euro news in this pandemic on the one hand.

On the other hand, lots of emergencies were not met up within Nigeria. Local businesses were impeded on drastically leading to wastage, yet, some government officials took advantage of the situation to extort money from desperate citizens. Some disguise themselves as government workers and the permitted workers like 'the Press' to gain inter-state access. Then, it questions the citizens' morality and the justification of decisions made by government in this regard. On a strict sense, there was no complete inter-state travel ban and as such while some were patriotic and living with the consequences, some were not which questions the balance of justice in the country.

The Banking, Health and Academic Sectors: Some banks' branches were dysfunctional leading to congestion in the available branches. This is due to the cost of maintenance and the office hours reduced

from 8-6pm to 8-4pm. In turn, it brings about slow service and congestions and questions social distancing. Customers spend half if not all day waiting to be attended to and as such can feel depressed or frustrated.

The health sector is the most affected sector in this pandemic. Some frontline workers were infected with some survival and fatality. The situation exposed the poor/substandard state of healthcare in Nigeria. There were few ventilators and fewer well-equipped hospitals. Fortunately, state governments with some sponsorship provided an improvise centres for COVID-19 treatment in a short while. One begins to imagine the belief that public officials/politicians know the right things to do but do not just want to do them. Even though these centres seem insufficient, they contributed positively in handling infected cases and one could imagine if we had a stable and standard healthcare, we may suffer even less casualties. Low friendliness to research has also impacted on Nigerians as various researchers are facing financial challenge in furthering research for COVID-19 treatment and cure.

This hostility manifests much more in the academic sector. Lack of incentives and concern from the country has hampered the activities of the educational institutions. Within this time, academics are supposed to be head-on in intensive research to find solution to the pandemic but they were bedeviled with agitations for government's ignorance. A nation whose educational institutions and health sectors are in jeopardy does not intend to be sustainably progressive. Many countries of the world derive their innovation from researches done in colleges, universities and institutes but in Nigeria, politician tend to be the researchers.

From the foregoing, one observes that the socio-ethical situation of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is nothing other than a hyper-version of pre-COVID-19 socio-ethical situation. One of the good things one might envisage is the improvement of health and educational sectors as the government has prioritized them in his amended agenda for the remaining 3years. However, there is an increase in starvation and the resort to various means of survival both legitimate and illegitimate, kidnapping and robbery, increase in moral decadence and a lot more. Fortunately, it readjusted people's orientation from continual material acquisition to the basic necessities of life (food, clothing and shelter: self-preservation in its entirety). Life became much more valued among all things. With all these in mind, there must be a way forward which will be detailed in the next section.

Recommendations: The way forward

The country has various think-tanks groups that are good with drafting and development of policies within the various arms of government. But like Karl Marx said that 'philosophers have interpreted reality but are yet to change them'. Such has been the situation of Nigeria and any institution or country that do not practice their policies may not achieve a recognizable and accelerated growth and development. Reiterating further, the pandemic socio-ethical situation is but a hype-version. It means that any policy/ies that has been in place before the pandemic is expected to be given a serious and hasty attention as much as possible. Lots of countries have various means to solve their problems. One of the basic measures that Nigeria should get involved in is to indigenize solutions. In other words, finding solutions from within and not waiting or expecting aid from outside world. It does not mean then that the country should reject aids from foreign nations, but we should look inward and promote our local solutions that satisfies the integrity test.

In as much as it is expected that everyone will recognize their responsibilities and take ownership of their health and well-being as people with health complication are at a higher risk of such pandemic (**Knorr & Barbara, 2020**). Also, according to the Handbook on COVID-19 as compiled by the Zhejiang University School of Medicine, the government has an undeniable responsibility for providing necessary equipment and tools for hospitals for citizens to actualize these responsibilities in proximate areas. Sickness and disease do not select class as evidential with COVID-19 pandemic but the rate of survival varies according

as persons can afford treatment as well as the tenability of treatment. Having been caught up with the pandemic alongside personal responsibility, there is every need that the government should consistently and promptly provide the necessary materials to ensure disease containment while working tirelessly with vaccine researchers locally and internationally on finding a permanent cure for the pandemic (2020, p.5).

Furthermore, adopting the legislative council for 2020-2023 will go a long way to contribute positively. Some of them are: the need to review national health budget having seen the situation of the healthcare in the country by at least 15% yearly, equipping of frontline workers, availability of sophisticated health technologies. Furthermore, an increase in budgetary allocation, improved e-learning, attractive academic incentives to workers and comfortable education and increase in scientific research as well as a sincere and objective application of these research in solving national problems. These measures should apply in capital projects like roads, power, tourism, security, agriculture, economy, environment and climate change etc.(Gbaja, 2020, p.20-23).The measures are strategic, immediate, short and long-term goals. In all, these goals can only be brought to reality through good governance.

The socio-ethical situation of Nigeria can only be improved when the basic necessity that make for a country is given an apt and sincere attention. Once these substructures are built, the superstructures will not be problematic. It is only when consistencies about issues relating to human social interaction, mutual awareness, social norm and social order are present that a country can boast of a considerable social stability(Nweke, 2014).

Conclusion

In discussing the socio-ethical situation/implication of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, we have made reference to other areas of the country. This is because, the society is an advanced human community that thrives in inter-dependency (subsidiarity and solidarity). And as such, any nation that cares to develop must establish an appreciable social environment on which other elements be it healthcare, education and others can thrive. A society is a platform for growth and development enhanced and propelled through ethics (social norm, social value, social order etc.) hence society devoid of ethics is incomplete. Once there is social stability, it is easier to achieve political and relative economic stability. All are inter-connected.

Policies, strategies, goals, proposals, memoranda of understanding, bills, acts, declarations etc., are already in place. The next important and radical need is an apt implementation of these factors. Once taken into consideration will pave way for an all-round progress and any element that can spur instability will easily be identified, curtailed or unitedly confronted. If not, the nation might remain a toothless bulldog that surprisingly bites the vulnerable and feigns weak before the powerful.

References

1. Adewale, A.R. (2011). The Political, Economic and Social Dynamics of Nigeria: A Synopsis in *Asia Policy Brief*. No.39 retrieved from <https://media.africaportal.org/documents/No-39-The-Political-Economic-and-Social-pdf>
2. Advances in Protein Chemistry. (2003). Virus Structure. Vol.64. Wah Chiu & Johnson, J. E. Eds. Amsterdam: Academic Press.
3. Gbaja, F. (2020). Updated Legislative Agenda of the 9th House of Representatives Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020-2023: Our Contract with Nigerians. Nation Building: A Joint Task.
4. George, I. N. & Ukpong D. F. (2013). Contemporary Social problems in Nigeria and its impact on national development: Implications for Guidance and Counselling Services in *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, vol. 3 (2)

retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e30a/o5bed626c587f292f57749dbe134a69b521e.pdf>

5. Handbook of COVID-19 Prevention and Treatment: The First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine compiled according to Clinical Experience. Liang, T. ed.
6. Holmes, R, Akinrimisi, B. et al. (2012). *Social Protection in Nigeria: Mapping Programmes and their effectiveness*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
7. Jin, Y. Yang, H. (2020). *Virology, Epidemiology, Pathogenesis and Control of COVID-19*. Vol. 12(372) retrieved from b-ok-yz.
8. Knorr, L. & Matthews, B. (2020). *After the Pandemic, Visions of Life Post COVID-19*. Mechanisburg, PA USA: Sunbury.
9. Nweke, C. (2014). Social Stability within the Nigerian State in *UJAH Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, pp. 146-158 retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285847440-social-stability> within the Nigerian State.
10. Ofoche, C.O. (2012). *Socio-Economic Problems in Nigeria: Causes and Remedy* retrieved from <http://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a561627.pdf>
11. Oldstone, M. B. (2010). *Viruses, Plagues and History. Past, Present and Future. Revise and updated edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
12. Oludele, S. M. (2020). Social Change in Contemporary Nigeria: A Theoretical Discourse in *RSC*. Vol. 12 (1). Pp. 57-82 retrieved from <https://www.fuds.si/sites/default/files/priloge-aktualnosti/solaja-mayowa-oludele-57-82.pdf>.
13. Qasim, M. Ahmed, W. et al. (2020). *Analysis of the Worldwide Corona Virus (COVID-19) Pandemic Trend: A Modelling Study to Predict its Spread*.
14. Thomas, P. (2004). *Bacteria and Viruses*. Farmington Hills: Lucent Books.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE UBUNTU SPIRIT IN NIGERIA

By

Ifegwu, A. Nduka

Department Of Public Administration
Federal Polytechnic, Oko
Anambra State, Nigeria

&

Okoli, Ugochukwu Richard

Department Of Public Administration
Federal Polytechnic, Oko
Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has affected the pattern of human relationship immensely. The work-covid-19 pandemic and Ubuntu spirit in Nigeria is aimed at studying the effect of the pandemic on the pattern of human relation. The work is hinged on social theory. The paper adopt a discourse approach based on content analysis. The findings demonstrates that the Covid-19 have redefined social life and interactions in Nigeria, moreover in the spirit of Ubuntu, we all are victims, infected or affected. We recommend all-inclusiveness in the fight against the pandemic and government openness.

Keyword: Coronavirus (covid-19), *Ubuntu*, social distancing, self-isolation, Quarantine

Introduction

David (2020 cited in IfegwuNwachukwu & Okeagu, 2020)opined that Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (CDC, 2019) It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency (Gallegos, 2020; Ramzy & McNeil, 2020) On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009 (The New York Times, 11, March). Illness caused by SARS-CoV-2 was termed COVID-19 by the WHO, the acronym derived from coronavirus disease 2019.” The name was chosen to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origins in terms of populations, geography, or animal associations.(WHO, 2020).The major challenge and mystery shrouding the virus is the means of transmission. Since the novel disease, lots and lots of reports trail the pattern of communication. Some alluded that the virus is air borne while others refute that assertion. However, NCDC AND WHO confirms that when a person with coronavirus coughs or exhales, droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch the virus by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. (NCDC, 2020). Coronavirus can be transmitted when people breathe in these droplets. Therefore, it is important to stay at least 2 metres away from a person who is coughing or sneezing.

However expert have said that SARS-CoV-2, the virus, mainly spreads from person to person. Most of the time, it spreads when a sick person coughs or sneezes. They can spray droplets as far as 6 feet away. If you breathe them in or swallow them, the virus can get into your body. Some people who have the virus don't have symptoms, but they can still spread the virus.One can also get the virus from touching a surface or object the virus is on, then touching your mouth, nose, or possibly your eyes. Most viruses can live for several hours on surface that they land on. A study shows that SARS-CoV-2 can last for several hours on various types of surfaces:(WHO, 2020)

What is more worrisome is the evidence of asymptomatic transmission. This means a person could be infected and spread the virus without presenting clinical signs. The COVID-19 pandemic could be

appropriately described as the greatest global health emergency in contemporary times. From one city to the entire world, the viral infection diffused aggressively with blatant disregard for gender, age, race, social status, national boundaries and the level of development (Osayomi, 2020).

In a response to 'flatten the curve' (Loeb, 2020) governments have enforced border shutdowns, travel restrictions and quarantine (Al Jazeera News, 20th March; UK GOV, 2020) in countries which constitute the world's largest economies, sparking fears of an impending economic crisis and recession (Buck *et al.*, 2020). The combination of policies such as social/physical distancing, lockdowns, and quarantines, imply a slowdown ties for an uncertain period of time, crashing markets and potentially leading to the closure of businesses, sending millions of workers home. Labour, a key factor of production, had been quarantined in most sectors in the economy, borders have been closed and global value chains have been disrupted. Most estimates show a contraction of the level of output globally (Constantino & Andy, 2020 in Azubike & Ebere, 2020). With the lockdown and restrictions, social activities and interactions are seriously threatened. In fact, the relationships between family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other associates are avoided as much as possible.

This reality is what necessitated this work. The object is to examine the extent the covid-19 pandemic has affected social interactions, changed the value system in Africa, off course, Nigeria, and how the pandemic have literally redefined human relationship in Nigeria. The paper adopt a discourse approach based on content analysis.

2.0 Empirical Review

Osayomi (2020) carried out a scholarly response to a rapidly unfolding global health crisis-Covid-19, He observed that covid-19, after its emergence in China surfaced in Nigeria, and it's growing at a very worrisome rate. Given Nigeria's economic and demographic significance to the African continent, it is imperative to promptly understand the geography and trajectory of Covid-19 transmission as it continues to spread throughout the country. Data for study came from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and other publicly available data sources. Ordinary Least Square regression techniques were used to determine the growth trend, and identify possible national and local drivers of disease transmission. As at April 14, 2020, there were a total of 373 confirmed cases of which Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory accounted for 72.9 percent. There is a remarkable upward trend in the prevalence within six weeks and is likely to go high in weeks to come. COVID-19 transmission increases with large population size, with high degree of urbanisation, traffic flows, and relatively good transport networks and proximity to major entry points. Traffic flow was the only significant national driver of the COVID-19 transmission. The work strongly justifies the need for travel restrictions, physical distancing, proper hand hygiene, use of face masks so as to flatten the curve of the pandemic in Nigeria

Ozili (2020) in his work titled: COVID-19 in Africa: Socio-Economic Impact, Policy Response and Opportunities, examines the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and the policy response in African countries. The study used discourse analysis to analyze the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Africa. The findings reveal that African countries have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and the effect was more severe for African regions compared to other regions. The rising pandemic affected social interaction and economic activities through the imposed social distancing policies that have different levels of strictness in several African countries. The implication of the findings is that social policies can affect the social and economic well-being of citizens. Secondly, the coronavirus outbreak has revealed how a biological crisis can be transformed to a sociological subject. The most important sociological consequence of the coronavirus outbreak for African citizens is the creation of social anxiety among families and households in the region. The outbreak has also shown how vulnerable African societies are in facing health hazards. He recommend that Policymakers should enforce social policies that unite communities in bad times, to reduce social anxiety. Though Ozili's work was revealing on the socio-economic effect of covid-19, the scope is too large for a meaningful study of the effect of the pandemic.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development {OECD} (2020) carried out a study on the socio-economic impact of covid-19 in Africa and observed that although the number of COVID-19 cases and fatalities might still appear comparatively low in Africa than in other world regions, the looming

health shock of COVID-19 could have disastrous impacts on the continent's already strained health systems, and could quickly turn into a social and economic emergency. Beyond health risks, the COVID-19 shock to African economies is coming in three waves: (i) lower trade and investment from China in the immediate term; (ii) a demand slump associated with the lockdowns in the European Union and OECD countries; and (iii) a continental supply shock affecting domestic and intra-African trade. It is shaking commodity-driven growth models that had largely failed to create more and better jobs or improve well-being. On the health front, greater capacities to test, protect, treat and cure are essential. On the socio-economic front, policy measures should cushion income and jobs losses, while tackling the specific challenges of high informality. Beyond the immediate response, recovery strategies should include a strong structural component to reduce dependence on external financial flows and global markets, and develop more value-adding, knowledge-intensive and industrialized economies, underpinned by a more competitive and efficient services sector. Effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Union's productive transformation agenda can strengthen regional value chains, reduce vulnerability to external shocks, advance the digital transition, and build economic resilience against future crises. The study also centers on Africa.

McKibbin and Fernando (2020) studied the Global Impact of Covid-19. The outbreak of coronavirus named COVID-19 has disrupted the Chinese economy and is spreading globally. The evolution of the disease and its economic impact is highly uncertain, which makes it difficult for policymakers to formulate an appropriate macroeconomic policy response. In order to better understand possible economic outcomes, this paper explores seven different scenarios of how COVID-19 might evolve in the coming year using a modelling technique developed by Lee and McKibbin (2003) and extended by McKibbin and Sidorenko (2006). It examines the impacts of different scenarios on macroeconomic outcomes and financial markets in a global hybrid DSGE/CGE general equilibrium model. The scenarios in this paper demonstrate that even a contained outbreak could significantly impact the global economy in the short run. These scenarios demonstrate the scale of costs that might be avoided by greater investment in public health systems in all economies but particularly in less developed economies where health care systems are less developed and population density is high.

Even though the works reviewed gives very helpful insight on the covid-19 pandemic and its effect on the plain of general wellbeing, this paper is justify by the fact that none of the work reviewed centered particularly on the effect of the pandemic on social interactions in Nigeria.

2.1 Conceptual and Literature Review

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

David (2020) opined that Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (CDC, 2019) It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency (Gallegos, 2020; Ramzy & McNeil, 2020) On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009 (The New York Times, 11, March).

Nigerian Center for Disease Control (2020) affirm that Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are normally transmitted between animals and people. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a new strain of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that has not been previously identified in humans (NCDC, 2020 in Ifegwu, Nwachukwu & Okeagu, 2020).

Experts have contributed on the symptoms of the novel coronavirus. Presentations of COVID-19 have ranged from asymptomatic/mild symptoms to severe illness and mortality. Symptoms may develop 2 days to 2 weeks following exposure to the virus. (CDC, 2019) A pooled analysis of 181 confirmed cases of COVID-19 outside Wuhan, China, found the mean incubation period to be 5.1 days and that 97.5% of individuals who developed symptoms did so within 11.5 days of infection (Lauer, Grantz, Bi, Jones, Zheng & Meredith 2020)

Wu and McGoogan reported that, among 72,314 COVID-19 cases reported to the Chinese Center for disease Control and Prevention (CCDC), 81% were mild (absent or mild pneumonia), 14% were severe (hypoxia, dyspnea, >50% lung involvement within 24-48 hours), 5% were critical (shock, respiratory failure, multiorgan dysfunction), and 2.3% were fatal (Wu & McGoogan, 2020)

The following symptoms may indicate COVID-19 (CDC, 2020): Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea

Other reported symptoms have included the following: Sputum production, malaise, respiratory distress. The most common serious manifestation of COVID-19 appears to be pneumonia.

A complete or partial loss of the sense of smell (anosmia) has been reported as a potential history finding in patients eventually diagnosed with COVID-19 (Rabin, 2020) A phone survey of outpatients with mildly symptomatic COVID-19 found that 64.4% (130 of 202) reported any altered sense of smell or taste (Spinato, Fabbris, Polesel, Cazzador, Borsetto & Hopkins, 2020)

Symptoms in children with infection appear to be uncommon, although some children with severe COVID-19 have been reported (Wu & McGoogan, 2020; Dong, Mo, Hu, Qi, Jiang & Jiang, 2020; Qiu, Wu, Hong, Luo, Song & Chen, 2020; infegwu, Nwachukwu & Okeagu, 2020). The most important sociological consequence of the coronavirus outbreak for African citizens is the creation of social anxiety among families and households in the region. The outbreak has also shown how vulnerable African societies are in facing health hazards (Ozili, 2020).

Ubuntu

Swanson (2007) described Ubuntu as “short for an isiXhosa proverb in Southern Africa. It comes from Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu; a person is a person through their relationship to others. Ubuntu is recognized as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through ‘brotherhood’ or ‘sisterhood’. It makes a fundamental contribution to indigenous ‘ways of knowing and being’. With differing historical emphasis and (re)contextualization over time and place, it is considered a spiritual way of being in the broader socio-political context of Southern Africa” Swanson maintained that the approach is not only an expression of a spiritual philosophy in its theological and theoretical sense, but as an expression of daily living. That is, a way of knowing that fosters a journey towards ‘becoming human’ (Vanier, 1998) or ‘which renders us human’ (Tutu, 1999), or, in its collectivist sense, a greater humanity that transcends alterity of any form (Swanson, 2007).

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. It philosophized that "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life. We say, "A person is a person through other persons." It is not, "I think therefore I am." It says rather: "I am human because I belong. I participate, I share." A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are. (Tutu, 199 cited in Swanson, 2007).

Ubuntu also could be referred as social relationships which exemplified the connections that exist between people who have recurring interactions that are perceived by the participants to have personal meaning. This definition includes relationships between family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other associates. (August & Rock, 2015) However, in our context, social relationship include social contacts and any form of interaction giving the fact that the coronavirus spread through contacts and interactions, howbeit, the fleeting or incidental it may appear. Human relations can be defined as relations with or between people, particularly in a workplace or professional setting. (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020).

Social distancing

According to Cross (2020) “social distancing means keeping physical space between yourself and other people outside your household. It is a vital step in helping to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Covid-19 spreads easily through physical contacts from person to person. This why it is important to reduce the way

people come in close contact with one another” Social distance is physical separation of people, at least 6 feet apart, where in circumstances where there are crowds. Experts believe that that is the distance that the droplet can travel in instance of any acute respiratory disease situation.

Many communities have limited how many people can attend events or gathering or enter restaurant and bars, many schools and universities have reduced close contact by providing online learning. When close interaction with other is likely essential, the CDC staying at least 6 feet away from other. (Cross, 2020). It involve separating oneself from people and social settings. To this end it could entail working from home through the help of technology to avoid contact at the work place.

Self-Isolation

This means limiting contact with others. Covid-19 can spread from person to person even before symptom start. So when someone within the family start to feel even slightly ill, run down, tired or aching, it’s important to stay home and practice self-isolation. However, if more severe symptoms develop, like a fever, cough or shortness of breath, the person should see a doctor. Then test is run to establish the person is covid-19 positive or not(Cross, 2020). Self –isolation, therefore is a more stringent measure of separation from others, total avoidance of contact with anybody including family members when someone is suspected to be at risk of the disease.

Quarantine

Quarantine is the term used if one were in close contact (within about 6 feet) of a person with COVID-19 but have yet to test positive. These people are requested to stay away from others for 14 days or longer, to make sure they do not spread the virus during the “pre-illness” or incubation period (Cross, 2020).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

Social Theory

Social theories are analytical frameworks, or paradigm , that are used to study and interpret social phenomena (Seidman, 2006))A tool used by social scientists, social theories relate to historical debates over the validity and reliability of different methodologies (e.g. positivism and antipositivism), the primacy of either structure or agency, as well as the relationship between contingency and necessity. Social theory in an informal nature, or authorship based outside of academic social and political science, may be referred to as "social criticism" or "social commentary", or "cultural criticism" and may be associated both with formal cultural and literary scholarship, as well as other non-academic or journalistic forms of writing (Seidman, 2006): Social theory by definition is used to make distinctions and generalizations among different types of societies, and to analyze modernity as it has emerged in the past few centuries callinicos(1999 cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy, retrieved October 2017)) Social theory as it is recognized today emerged in the 20th century as a distinct discipline, and was largely equated with an attitude of critical thinking and the desire for knowledge through a posteriori methods of discovery, rather than *a priori* methods of tradition.

Social theory seeks to question why humans inhabit the world the way they do, and how that came to be by looking at power relations, social structures, and social norms (Harrington, 2005) while also examining how humans relate to each other and the society they find themselves in, how this has changed over time and in different cultures (Elliot, 2009) and the tools used to measure those things. Social theory looks to interdisciplinarity, combining knowledge from multiple academic disciplines in order to enlighten these complex issues(Harrington, 2005) and can draw on ideas from fields as diverse as anthropology and media studies.

As pointed out earlier, Ubuntu emanates from a proverb in Southern Africa. It comes from Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu; a person is a person through their relationship to others. Ubuntu is recognized as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through ‘brotherhood’ or ‘sisterhood’. It makes a fundamental contribution to indigenous ‘ways of knowing and being’. Therefore the social theory resonate in the spirit of Ubuntu- human and social relationship.

4.0 Discussion

The COVID-19 outbreak affects all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, continues to affect populations, including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples. Early evidence indicates that the health and economic impacts of the virus are being borne disproportionately by poor people. For example, homeless people, because they may be unable to safely shelter in place, are highly exposed to the danger of the virus. People without access to running water, refugees, migrants, or displaced persons also stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and its aftermath – whether due to limited movement, fewer employment opportunities, increased xenophobia etc. (UN DESA, 2020).

The value of a thing, be it an object or a belief, is normally defined as its worth. Just as an object is seen to be of a high value that is treasured, our beliefs about what is right or wrong that are worth being held are equally treasured. A value can be seen as some point of view or conviction which we can live with, live by and can even die for. This is why it seems that values actually permeate every aspect of human life. Depending on the way we perceive things we can praise and blame, declare actions right or wrong or even declare the scene or objects before us as either beautiful or ugly. Each person, as we could see, has some sense of values and there is no society without some value system (Idang 2007: 4). What is Africa, and indeed Nigerian social value? Africa believe and value social relationship and interaction. "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life" (Tutu, 1999) the extended family lineage bore witness to this fact. The culture embraces mingling together of people. Even the way of greeting involves handshake and embracing. The popular dictum in the African parlance is 'be your brother's keeper' little wonder Nigeria's foreign policy is Afro-centric. However, the coronavirus pandemic has threaten seriously this held value in Nigeria, and indeed the world.

If there is any lesson of the covid-19 is the fact that it is grave and erroneous mistake when we think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas we are connected and what we do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity (Tutu 1999 cited in Williams, 2018). This is exactly what Ubuntu is all about, it's a reminder that no one is an island — every single thing that you do, good or bad, has an effect on your family, friends, and society. It also reminds us that we need think twice about the choices we want to make and the kind of impact they may have on others (Williams, 2018).

However, the coronavirus has disorganized the social equilibrium in Nigeria. The government is forced by the pandemic to impose social distance. Imagine, someone is sick and the kith and kin that should be by their side as uphold by our value, will now be isolated from the person. This is totally a misnomer as far as Nigerian spirit of Ubuntu is concern. Tutu (199 cited in Swanson, 2007). Opined "A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are" Therefore, we all are victims of the coronavirus in Nigeria whether infected or affected.

Clustering to commiserate the bereaved has been a practice as old as society in the Nigerian setting notwithstanding religious background, as it is believed that that is the last respect for the deceased. But covid-19 has made this ancient practice impossible in Nigeria today. Since, March 26, 2020 the Federal government had ordered the closure of schools and other public places like markets, religious houses and government agencies in what the Presidential Task Force (PTF) termed lockdown in response to the pandemic. Even the entertainment industry is not spared of the effect of the dreaded covid-19.

5.0 Recommendations

Alterations orchestrated by disease outbreaks impede economic activities and international relatedness among nations. Notably, as stressed by Anton Pak *et al* (2020 cite in Azubike & Ebere, 2020), significant economic impact has already occurred across the globe due to reduced productivity, loss of life, business

closures, trade disruption, and decimation of the tourism industry. A global pandemic will have a serious supply-side impact – especially on foreign travel, manufacturing and investment. The uncertainty and decline in travel will also lead to people staying off work, losing income and causing a fall in demand (Tejvan, 2020 in Azubike & Ebere, 2020). The Spirit of Ubuntu reverberates the fact that we all are victims of the coronavirus in Nigeria whether infected or affected. Therefore we must take responsibility both for ourselves and others to ensure we win the fight against the pandemic. The government should be more open, sincere and pragmatic in the fight against covid-19. Good spirited individual and corporate organizations should continue their corporate social responsibilities in any capacity they can until the final whistle. Then we can roll out the drums again for Ubuntu in the social settings.

6.0 Conclusion

Ubuntu is borne out of the philosophy that community strength comes of community support, and that dignity and identity are achieved through mutualism, empathy, generosity and community commitment. The adage that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ is aligned with the spirit and intent of Ubuntu (Swanson, 2007). Covid-19 threatened to erode this traditional African way of being especially in Nigeria.

References

- Afuwape, A. (2020). COVID-19: Redefining the Future of Work. Lagos State Ministry of Information and Strategy. <https://lagosstate.gov.ng/blog/2020/04/15/covid-19-redefining-the-future-of-work-ayo-afuwape/>
- Al Jazeera (2020). Coronavirus: travel restrictions, border shutdowns by country | Coronavirus pandemic News. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-travel-restrictions-border-shutdowns-country-200318091505922.html>
- August, K. J & Rock, K. S. (2015). “Social Relationships” in Gellman, M. D & Turner, J. R. [ed] *Encyclopedia of behavioural Medicine*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005.9_59
- Azubike, C. R & Ebere, S. U (2020). Potential of Covid-19 for economic greatness in Agriculture: the Nigerian case. [Conference Proceedings] *AccexGate Maiden Virtual International Conference*. <http://www.accexgate.com/VICED-GI-COVID-19>
- Buck, T., Arnold, M., Chazan, G., Cookson, C. (2020). Coronavirus declared a pandemic as fears of economic crisis mount. <https://www.ft.com/content/d72f1e54-6396-11ea-b3f3-fe4680ea68b5>
- Callinicos, A. (1999). *Social Theory: A Historical Introduction*. New York: University press.
- CDC (2019). Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>. January 26, 2020; Accessed: January 27, 2020.
- Cross, C. (2020). Social Distance: Keep on keeping your Distance. American Academy of Pediatrics. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Social-Distancing-Why-Keeping-Your-Distance-Helps-Keep->
- David, J. C. (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019. *Medscape*: <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/2500114-overview>
- Dong, Y, Mo, X., Hu Y., Qi, X., Jiang, F. & Jiang, Z. (2020). Epidemiological Characteristics of 2143 Pediatric Patients with 2019 Coronavirus Disease in China. *Pediatrics*. 2020 Mar 16.
- Elliot, A. (2009). *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction*. Routledge. ISBN: 9780415386333.
- Gallegos, A. (2020) WHO Declares Public Health Emergency for Novel Coronavirus. *Medscape Medical News*. <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/924596>. January 30, 2020; Accessed: January 31, 2020.
- Harrington, A. (2005). *Modern Social Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199255702
- Idang, G.E (2007) Cultural Relativism and African the language of morals. *International Journal of Africa Culture and Development*. Vol. 2(1)
- Idang, G.E (2015) African Culture and values. *South African society for Greek Philosophy and Humanities*. (SASGPH).

- Ifegwu, A. N, Nwachukwu, C. P & Okeagu, C. (2020). Covid-19: The socio-economic effect on Nigerian and the way forward [Conference Proceedings] *AccexGate Maiden Virtual International Conference*.<http://www.accexgate.com/VICED-GI-COVID-19>
- Lauer, S. A., Grantz, K. H, Bi, Q., Jones, F. K., Zheng, Q.& Meredith, H. R. (2020) The Incubation Period of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) From Publicly Reported Confirmed Cases: Estimation and Application. *Ann Intern Med*. 2020 Mar 10.
- Loeb, A. B. (2020).Flattening the COVID-19 curves. Scientific American Blog Network.<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/flattening-the-covid-19-curves/>
- McKibbin, W & Fernando, R (2020).The Global Macroeconomics Impact of Covid-19. *Australian National University and Centre for Excellent Population Ageing Research (CEPAR)*
- Merriam Webster Dictionary, accessed January 30, 2012, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/human%20relations>
- OECD (2020). COVID-19 in Africa: Regional Socio-Economic Implications and Policy Priority.
- Osayemi, T (2020). Understanding the geography of covid19 transmission in Nigeria *ResearchGate*.<https://www.10.13140/RG.2.2.15465.65121/1>
- Ozili, P. K. (2020). Covid-19 In Africa: Socio-economic impact, Policy Responses and Opportunity. *ResearchGate*. <https://www.research.net/publication/340610720>
- Qiu, H., Wu, J, Hong, L, Luo, Y, Song, Q. & Chen, D.(2020). Clinical and epidemiological features of 36 children with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Zhejiang, China: an observational cohort study. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2020 Mar 25.
- Quentin, F. (2020). Another warning from the 1918 flu for COVID-19: ‘Survival does not mean that individuals fully recovered. *Market watch*.<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/another-warning-from-1918-spanish-flu-for-covid-19-survival-does-not-mean-that-individuals-fully-recove>
- Rabin, R. C. (2020). Lost Sense of Smell May Be Peculiar Clue to Coronavirus Infection. The New York Times.<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/22/health/coronavirus-symptoms-smell-taste.html>. March 22, 2020; Accessed: March 24, 2020.
- Sohrabi, C., Alsafi, Z., O'Neill, N., Khan, M., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A (2020). World Health Organization declares global emergency: a review of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) *Int. J. Surg*. 2020 Apr; 76:71.
- Spinato, G., Fabbris, C. Polesel, J.,Cazzador D, Borsetto D, Hopkins C. (2020). Alterations in Smell or Taste in Mildly Symptomatic Outpatients with SARS-CoV-2 Infection. *JAMA*.2020 Apr 22.
- Swanson, D. (2007). Ubuntu Africa contribution to (re)search for/with a “humble togetherness”.*Journal of Contemporary issues in Education*.vol.2 (2) <https://www.doi:10.20355/c5p4x>
- The New York Times. Coronavirus Live Updates: W.H.O. Declares Pandemic as Number of Infected Countries Grows. The New York Times.<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/world/coronavirus-news.html#link-682e5b06>. March 11, 2020; Accessed: March 11, 2020.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2017) Metaphysics Research Lab. Stanford University.
- Tutu, D. (1999). No Future without forgiveness. Doubleday.
- UK GOV (2020).Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>
- Williams, H. S. (2018). What is the Spirit of Ubuntu? How can we have it in our life? *Global Citizen*.globalcitizen.org/en/content/Ubuntu-south-africa-together-nelson-mandela/
- Woodward, A. (2020). We now have the best Evidence yet that everyone develops long-term coronavirus immunity after infection-and it's not just about antibodies. *Yahoo!news*<https://www.yahoo.com/news/now-best-evidence-yet-everyone-195200113.html>
- Wu, Z, & McGoogan, J. M.(2020). Characteristics of and Important Lessons from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak in China: Summary of a Report of 72 314 Cases from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *JAMA*.2020 Feb 24.

OVERCOMING THE LEGAL CHALLENGES OF NON-INTEREST BANKING IN NIGERIA: AN AGENDA FOR MOVING THE ECONOMY FORWARD

By

C. N. Iyidobi, LL.B (Hons), LL.M (Nig) B.L.,
Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, Enugu, Nigeria

&

C. A. Ogbuabor, LL.B (Hons), LL.M, PhD (Nig) B.L.
Department of International Law & Jurisprudence,
Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus,

Abstract

The reality of the moment is that after man years of the introduction of non interest banking (NIB) in Nigeria by the Central Bank of Nigeria through the Islamic Non Interest Bank, non interest banking is yet to take root in Nigeria or achieve any of the purposes for which it was introduced. The problem is not unconnected with the manner and circumstances surrounding its introduction which tied it to religious affiliation and thus raised not only political but constitutional questions. This paper critically examines the concept of non interest banking, interrogates factors responsible for the failure of non-interest banking to deliver its benefits to Nigeria, and recommends ways of overcoming the limiting factors of non-interest banking so that its benefits can be properly harnessed for the benefit of Nigerians.

Keywords: Non-Interest Banking, Islamic Banking, Interest Free Banking, Micro Finance Banks, Nigeria

1. Introduction

As a developing nation/economy, Nigeria is faced with among others the twin challenges of endemic poverty and an overwhelming rate of unemployment. Curiously however, the unemployed youths of Nigeria, many of whom are graduates, are in a position to impact positively on the economy. Without doubt, given the needed financial capital and managerial training, most of them can be self-employed in profitable sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture. This will certainly diversify the Nigerian economy which presently has about 90% or more dependence on oil revenue.

One may therefore wonders why such youths cannot raise the much needed financial capital from any of the commercial banks in Nigeria. The truth however, is that borrowing money from commercial banks in Nigeria is almost impossible for the poor unemployed Nigerian youths. Incidentally, it is these youths and poor Nigerians with the zeal and intent that need capital to invest in the Nigerian economy. This point is vividly and most rightly captured by Alao David Olamideji and Alao Esther Monisola (2012: 65) in these words :

One of the agonizing experiences that one can encounter in Nigeria is the decision to transact business with most commercial banks in Nigeria, particularly if it has to do with loan. The experience is more excoriating the lower you are on the rung of the socio-economic ladder. The first challenge is that of getting attention, and the cut throat condition associated with borrowing money from banks that range from provision of collateral to lack of sufficient interest to see the success of the venture provided the collateral is strong enough to swallow the loan. In addition, there were recorded cases of fraudulent practices and other sharp practices that significantly erode the confidence of customers. However, one of the most efficient ...obtainable from banks is that the interest on the transaction is hardly under charged.

This researcher completely agrees with the author that borrowing money for business in Nigeria especially by the poor is almost impossible. It must however be emphasized that the rate of interest is not only over

charged but is rather too high for any small or medium scale enterprise to cope with and still break even. Without doubt, the need for a viable alternative that will provide capital for small and medium scale businesses in Nigeria is critical. It is precisely in a bid to solve the problem of lack of capital for this level of businesses that led to the emergence of Micro Finance Banks. Unfortunately, their emergence has failed to solve the problem as highlighted again by Alao Daivid Olamideji and Alao Esther Monisola (2012: 65) who states and we agree that:

The establishment of Micro Finance Banks (MFB) was to correct the shortfall associated with inaccessible banking services to the active poor, but the issue of the interest chargeable on operation significantly erodes the gain and the fraudulent and sharp practices by the directors of some of the banks in addition to weak institutional mechanisms to bring to book such people involved in the unwholesome bank operations, is still a serious challenge.

The point is made that Nigeria needs her unemployed but energetic youth to embrace entrepreneurship in order to diversify the nation's economy. The most limiting factor to this however, is lack of capital. Unfortunately, both commercial and micro finance banks have been unable to solve this challenge. The reason for this is that funds from these banks are grossly unaffordable and most difficult to access by the poor active Nigerians. In furtherance of efforts at finding a solution to the problem of financial capital for the active poor Nigerians, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) took steps some years back to introduce Non-Interest Banking (NIB) in Nigeria. This introduction however was strongly resisted and is still not acceptable by the large population of Nigerians. Hence the objectives of the introduction of non-interest banking in Nigeria remain unattained. This stiff opposition was mainly due to the fact that the CBN started with the introduction of pure Islamic Non-Interest Banking in a multi-ethnic religious and secular country like Nigeria. The introduction was thus engulfed in varied controversies that have continued to haunt it. These controversies that we shall later review in this work, ranges from the constitutionality of Islamic Banking practice in Nigeria, to the legality or otherwise of the regulatory framework for Islamic non-interest banks as provided by the CBN, and many others.

The main point that needs to be made here is that issues of religion are very sensitive in Nigeria. There is thus no doubt that the CBN should have been and still needs to be, more sensitive in handling such things like faith based banking. Having said this, it is the finding of this work as will be seen in due cause, that there are two clear divides among Nigerians: those in favour and those against non-interest banking, which has wrongly been taken to be synonymous with Islamic banking. Again, both sides have very strong and tenable arguments. It is however the argument of this paper that if things are taken from the correct perspectives and the CBN takes a balanced position, the divides as well as the arguments will be totally uncalled for. This researcher holds the view that there is nothing unconstitutional with the practice of non-interest banking as a whole, be it Christian, Islamic, traditional or secular in nature. Again, there will also be nothing illegal or unconstitutional in CBN providing a guideline for the practice of any of such variations of non-interest banking in Nigeria. This paper however argues that for non-interest banking to yield its many benefits in Nigeria, steps must be taken to make it acceptable to the majority of the Nigerians; Muslims, Christians, Traditionalists and non-faith believing people alike. It is thus part of the thesis of this work that it is not enough to successfully argue in legal terms that the practice of non-interest Islamic banking is constitutional and not illegal. This is true because, issues of faith and religion are not always based on logic and law but belief. This paper thus submits that the way out of this quagmire is for the CBN to create a balance by making non-interest banking all-inclusive. The CBN must accommodate all the divides. It is not enough for the CBN to simply create a window for the establishment of other forms of non-interest banking in the country. Having provided a guideline for Islamic non-interest banking, the minimum expected of the CBN is to create an alternative non faith based framework alongside the Islamic framework. The Islamic framework contrary to the views of many, has to be sustained because it seems the purpose of respecting and upholding the religious rights of Muslims. It is submitted that if any faith group, especially the Christians are interested in their own version of non-interest banking, it is incumbent on them to come up with such. Our primary concern is that the present situation of much motion without movement as it relates to the practice of non interest banking is

unacceptable. The challenges causing the lack of progress must therefore be tackled squarely without giving in to unnecessary legality or sentiments.

The problems necessitating this research therefore is that about eight years or more following efforts to introduce non-interest banking in Nigeria, the impact of non-interest banking is yet to be felt. This is mainly due to the fact that the only variation of non-interest banking available is Islamic non-interest banking which is unacceptable to non-Muslim Nigerians. Consequently, irrespective of vigorous efforts by writers to rationalize both on the importance of the practice and the constitutionality of non-interest Islamic banking in Nigeria, many Nigerians have refused to accept same. There is thus the need to realize that constitutionality and legality are not always enough and may not be enough to sell non-interest banking to the entire Nigerian population. This is so especially when it is presented as though it is synonymous or tantamount to Islamic Banking. This points again to the problems of conceptual confusion as it relates to non-interest banking in Nigeria. The need to properly conceptualize non-interest banking and create a balance in its practice so as to enhance the delivery of its many benefits remains an issue that must be resolved. The above raises some pertinent questions that this work seeks to answer. These questions will include; what is non-interest banking all about and what are its advantages? What factors are responsible for the failure of non-interest banking to deliver its benefits to Nigeria? Does the mere fact that Islamic non-interest banking is legal and constitutional make it thrive in Nigeria and if not, what steps can we take to derive the many advantages of holistic non-interest banking in Nigeria?

Drawing from the above, the work aims mainly at seeing that the challenges bedeviling non-interest banking in Nigeria are overcome and its benefits attained. To this end, the work sets out to attain such specific objectives as: ascertaining the true meaning and essence of non-interest banking; ascertaining why non interest banking has failed to deliver its advantages to the Nigerian economy and to recommend ways of seeing that the limiting factors of non-interest banking are overcome and that the practice thrives and its advantages harnessed. The paper is in six parts. Following the introduction is an overview of the concept of non interest banking, and Islamic noninterest banking. Then follows an extrapolation of the advantages and basic characteristics of non interest banking before a critical appraisal of the legal challenges of non interest banking in Nigeria. The paper finally concludes in part six with recommendations on the best ways to harness the benefits of non interest banking for all Nigerians.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF NON INTEREST BANKING

The problem associated with the introduction of non interest banking in Nigeria is directly connected to an initial misconception of the concept by the CBN and Nigerians. It follows that a proper understanding of the concept is very important in order to deal with the challenges facing the practice today. In the framework on non-interest financial institutions (NIFI) (2011), released by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) dated 13th January 2011, non-interest financial institutions is defined thus:-

A non-interest financial institution (NIFI) means a bank or other financial institutions (OFI) under the purview of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which transacts banking business, engage in trading, investment and commercial activities as well as the provisions of financial products and services in accordance with sharia principles and rules of Islamic commercial jurisprudence...

The above definition without doubt equates non-interest banking with Islamic banking. It simply goes to say that there is no other form of non-interest financial institution capable of operation but for that based on Islamic teaching. This is undoubtedly, the genesis of the controversies trading non-interest banking in Nigeria till date. The question that begs an answer is whether this definition is correct and the answer is a capital no. The above is at best a definition of Islamic non interest banking or financial business. To understand non interest financing or banking from a holistic perspective, one will need to look at the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act. The said Act does not however make provision directly for non interest financial institutions but has a definition for its equivalent. The Act provides that “profit and loss sharing bank means a bank which transacts investment or commercial banking business and maintains a profit and loss sharing accounts”. It is our submission that profit and loss sharing bank is synonymous with

non interest banking. It is obviously in connection with this that Egheomhanre Eyieyien (2011) observed that:

The only valid definitions are stated in section 61 of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act of 1991 which speaks of a “profit and loss sharing bank”. That is, “a bank which transacts investment or commercial banking business and maintains profit and loss sharing accounts”. Profit and loss banking has always been the interpretation and understanding of Non-interest service in Nigeria.

It needs to be noted that the correct section of the BOFIA on the definition of non-interest banking is section 66. We however agree that going by the said section of the Act, non-interest banking or financing is not synonymous with Islamic banking. On the contrary, it encapsulates all kinds of banking or financing that does not charge interest on capital. It is a form of banking that receives investment by sharing in the profit rather than charging interest on the capital provided. It follows that Islamic banking is only a brand of or model of non-interest banking or profit and loss sharing banking. It is also interesting to note that the above writer evidenced that non-interest banking predates Islam. He thus noted that: ‘Non interest banking dates back to about 1444 B.C It has its origin in the Jewish practice of lending money by an Israelite to a fellow Israelite without charging “Usury” or interest as commanded in Exodus 22:25 and Deuteronomy 23:19-20’ Egheomhanre Eyieyien (2011)

The point being made is that non interest banking is not the same as Islamic banking and interestingly even the CBN has come to terms with this reality. This is evident in the Apex bank’s release of a revised version of its framework for the regulation of non-interest financial institutions. The undated new guideline was released by the CBN on the 21st of June 2011 and was titled “Guideline for the Regulation and Supervision of Institutions Offering Non-Interest Financial Services in Nigeria”. In its preamble the said guideline provides as follows:

Whereas, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) New Banking Model authorizes the establishment of the following banking structure as defined under the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 1991 as amended (i) Commercial banks, (ii) Merchant Banks and (iii) specialized banks; Special banks include non-interest banks, microfinance banks, development banks, mortgage banks and such other banks as may be designated by the CBN from time to time.

With the above, the bank properly introduced non-interest banks as specialized banks in Nigeria. This without doubt is within the capacity of the CBN and the BOFIA. The CBN however failed to fully discharge its duties by providing regulatory framework for all non-interest financial institutions but only did so for non-interest Islamic banking. This is implicitly clear in the guideline since a part of its preamble reads thus; ‘The emphasis of this guideline is on Non-interest financial institutions operating under the principles of Islamic commercial jurisprudence, one of the categories of non-interest financial institutions...’ It follows that the bank simply provided guideline for one form of non-interest banking which has a religious coloration. We understand and accept as shall be shown later, that there is nothing wrong with Islamic banking as a form of non interest banking especially in Nigeria which has a reasonable Muslim population. There is however, everything wrong with providing it as the only available non interest banking option even if it is for the time being. This led to the stiff opposition which the practice has received. For example, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended(1999 s. 14(3).writing on the new guideline observed thus:-

While it is commendable that the CBN has yielded to superior reasoning on the subject, sadly, the new guideline only made mere cosmetic modifications of the previous NIFI framework and seeks to perpetuate most of the illegal, discriminatory and unconstitutional provision which caused the controversy in the first place.

The author however, recognizes that CBN has resolved the issue of completely excluding non-Muslims from the possibility of participating in Non-Interest financial services. He also recognized that Islamic banking is now but an aspect of non interest banking and that CBN is to license other non-interest financial institutions if it receives application. The writer is all the same adamant that the provision of the guideline

leaves much to be desired, his words, “But these provisions do not address the fundamental issue that Islamic banking as of today remains illegal and unconstitutional in Nigeria given the provisions of Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 1991 as amended and the Nigerian Constitution.”

While we agree with the author that there are problems associated with the guideline, we however beg to disagree on the issue of its legality and unconstitutionality. This issue will therefore be addressed in the cause of the work. What we have tried to establish so far in this part is that non interest banking is not the same as Islamic banking. It has also been shown that as at today the only form of non interest banking for which the CBN has provided a framework for its operation is the Islamic model. This researcher posits that there is nothing wrong with providing an Islamic bank window but that must be an alternative non-Islamic window of non interest banking for the non-Muslim population.

3. Non-Interest Islamic Banking Conceptualized

It is noted that this work is not necessarily a study on Islamic banking and its practice in Nigeria. It is rather a quest into how to overcome the legal challenges militating against the practice of a much wider concept that is, non-interest banking. Having said this, it is important to also note that non interest Islamic banking is a model of non-interest banking and that so far it is the only window of non-interest financing available. Moreover, some of the challenges relating to the practice of non interest banking in Nigeria are connected with the introduction of Islamic banking. To this end, an understanding of what Islamic banking is all about as well as its precepts cannot be overlooked in a work of this nature. In the words of Alao Daivid Olamideji and Alao Esther Monisola (2012: 65);

Islamic banking otherwise known as participant banking is a banking activity that is based on the principles of Sharia law and a derivative of Islamic economics. It is to be acknowledged that Sharia prohibits the fixed or floating payment or acceptance of specific interest or fees that in Christian principle is referred to as usury and *riba* (surplus value) in Islam for loans granted. Any act contrary to this principle in Islam is regarded as sinful or *haram*.

Magaji Chorema and others (2012:65) are of the view that:-

Islamic finance generally is a system of finance that carries its services and activities based on the tenets of Islamic commercial jurisprudence. It is an engagement in *Mu'āmalat* (Islamic transactions) which comprises of banking business, trading, investments and commercial activities, as well as the provision of financial products and services in accordance with the principles and rules of Islamic commercial jurisprudence.

One may be correct to say that these definitions are more or less recursive. This is true because the definitions make no true sense unless one understands what is actually meant by Islamic commercial jurisprudence. Again the CBN seems to have given a related definition as the initial definition of Non-interest Financial Institutions in the framework for the Regulation and Supervision of Non-Interest Financial Services in Nigeria thus:

A non-interest financial institution (NIFI) means a bank or other financial institution (OFI) under the purview of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) which transacts banking businesses, engages in trading and commercial activities as well as the provision of financial products and services in accordance with Sharia principles and rules of Islamic commercial jurisprudence. Transactions, instruments and contracts under this type of services are non-permissible *if they involve; interest, uncertainty, or ambiguity relating to the subject matter, terms or conditions, gambling, speculation, exploration/unfair trading practices, dealing in pork, alcohol, arms and ammunitions, pornography and; other transactions, products, goods or services which are not compliant with sharia rules and principle.*

While this definition is related to the previous ones, it has given some insight into what should be part of Islamic banking (see the underlined part of the quotation). Be that as it may, it will still be important to have an insight into some of the basic principles of

Islamic banking for one to truly appreciate the concept. These basic principles are vividly captured by Shehu Usman Rano Aliyu(2012) thus;

The Islamic system of banking and finance is coveted for its prohibition of interest, despising uncertainty and denouncing speculation. With emphasis on resource mobilization for active partnership with entrepreneurs and real sector operators of the economy, the Islamic system proved to be capable of stimulating real growth – non inflationary growth, by way of forging mutual cooperation in risk taking and profit and loss sharing.

From the above, what is clear is that Islamic banking is a form of non interest banking that discourages the charging of interests on loan while encouraging profit and loss sharing. The only thing peculiar about it being that the prohibition of interest is based on Islamic law which forbids same. The other distinguishing factor is that only business which is compliant with Islamic teaching can be funded under Islamic banking practice. It follows that aside from maintaining Islamic religion precepts, the objectives of Islamic banking are in line with that of non-interest banking. It is in this sense that it is correctly regarded as a model of non interest banking. It is noted that the revised CBN guideline has modified the definition of NIF. Consequently, the CBN Guideline on NIFI (2011) goes on to clarify that;

Islamic banking as one of the models of non-interest banking, services the same purpose of providing financial services as do conventional financial institutions save that it operates in accordance with principles and rules of Islamic commercial jurisprudence that generally recognize profit sharing and the prohibition of interest as a model.

The above leaves no one in doubt as to the general meaning of Islamic banking and that is enough for the purpose of this research.

4. Advantages and Distinguishing Characteristics of Non-Interest Banking

From the foregoing considerations, we can distill the following advantages of non interest banking. Before delving into the advantages however, it needs to be observed that these also represent the main characteristics of this specialized banking system. Hence these advantages of non-interest banking sets it apart from conventional banks practice. It must be emphasized that only factors that are applicable to all brands of non interest banking are highlighted. The said factors as deducible from the foregoing considerations are considered hereunder

4.1 Non-Interest Banking does not Trade in Money.

Non-interest banking unlike conventional banking practice do not view or use money as commodity that can be sold. As such the practice of non interest banking creates a link with the real sector of the economic system through trade related activities. The consequence of the link between money and real sector rather than trading it as a commodity is that it impacts directly on the economy. As a consequence the practice is known to reduce inflation.

4.2 It Creates a Partnership Between the Parties.

In non-interest banking the relationship between the bank and the person funded is more like a partnership. Hence, unlike the debtor and creditor relationship that exists in conventional bank lending practice, the parties at the time of funding will agree on a formula for sharing profit and loss. Consequently, the bank will usually bring its expertise, experience and other capacities to impact on the business and ensure its success. This is so because they see themselves as part of the business such that they can only profit from the profitability of the business.

4.3. It does not Charge Interest, Requires no Collateral and therefore makes Funds Accessible to Small and Medium Enterprises.

Like the name goes, interest is not charged on the loan provided. On the contrary effort is put in by both parties to ensure the success of the businesses. It is only upon the success of the business that the parties will share profit as agreed prior to the execution of the business. In the same way any loss will also be

shared by the parties. This is unlike the case of conventional bank lending where in the event of the failure of the business the bank will not only pounce on the collateral to recover the principal sum but also the accrued interest. A direct consequence of this is the next major character and advantage of this kind of banking. To this end non interest banking makes loan accessible to the small and medium scale enterprise. This is so because funds provided under the practice are not based on provision of collateral which most poor and young entrepreneurs cannot provide. Viability and prospects of the business and not availability of high security for the loan is the basis of funding.

The big question then is, why can't Nigerians benefit from non interest banking? The answer is that the practice so far is embroiled with many challenges both legal and otherwise even though, the interest of this work are those challenges that have some legal implications or that are rooted in law. Such legal challenges are considered hereunder. These legal challenges are now considered below.

5. The Legal Challenges of Non-Interest Banking in Nigeria

The introduction of non interest banking in Nigeria has remained controversial from its beginning till date. These controversies have thus resulted in real legal challenges for the practice. The challenges as already noted is directly connected to the introduction of only non- interest Islamic banking in a multi religious and acclaimed secular society like Nigeria. Question has thus been raised as to the constitutionality as well as legality of practicing Islamic banking at all in Nigeria. This has also led to the questioning of the constitutionality/legality of CBN Guideline for NIFI in Nigeria especially as the framework covers only Islamic non-interest banking. This further raises questions as to the adequacy of the framework even when the question of legality is put aside. These issues are now reviewed in this part of the work.

5.1 The Constitutionality of the Introduction/ Practice of Islamic Non-Interest Banking in Nigeria

As already observed the introduction of Islamic non-interest banking in Nigeria has been greeted with many arguments. These arguments will include but is not limited to the constitutionality of the introduction and practice of Islamic banking in Nigeria. There is no doubt that the constitution of any country, Nigeria inclusive, is the supreme and ultimate law of the land. The constitution is the overriding and primordial legal authority from which every other law derives its authority and to which every other legislation must bow. The consequence is that any provision of every other legislation that runs contrary to the constitution will be rendered null and void and of no effect whatsoever, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended(1999 s. 14(3)). For this reason, any question as to the constitutionality of an act of any institution or agency of government is usually very serious. It is for this reason that we set out at this point to critically consider the issues relating to the constitutionality of Islamic banking in Nigeria. In doing this, we shall examine the arguments that have been adduced in support of the idea that Islamic banking practice in Nigeria is unconstitutional. Beyond this however, it will be shown that there is nothing truly unconstitutional as far as the practice of Islamic banking in Nigeria is concerned. It shall also be shown that contrary to the views of many, the introduction of Islamic banking does not affect the secular nature of Nigeria, as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended.

It is noteworthy that those who have opposed the practice of Islamic banking practice have presented varied reasons for their position. These reasons have culminated in the advancement of the legal arguments that the practice is not constitutional. It will be useful to consider some of these background reasons for the stiff opposition to the practice of non-interest Islamic banking while delving into the constitutional questions. There has been very vocal concern that the Islamic banking practice segregates and amounts to an *Islamization* project. Serious concern and apprehension have also been expressed to the effect that the practice of Islamic banking will not provide equal rights and opportunity to Muslims and non-Muslims alike to draw from the benefits of non interest banking in Nigeria. To start with, it is noted that this anxiety is founded on the mutual suspicion that exists between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It is thus difficult to conceive a situation where Christians will readily accept to freely participate in a banking system that is completely subjected to the Islamic law (sharia) as provided in the Quran etc. On the contrary the Christians view the introduction as part of an effort to Islamize Nigeria. While one does not subscribe to the Islamization conspiracy, it is submitted that the act of providing Islamic banking as the

only available non interest financing system by the CBN has not provided equal opportunity for all Nigerians. One is not oblivious of the fact that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (1999) has a provision that allows every Nigerian to participate in any area of the economy in these words;

“Without prejudice to the right of any person to participate in areas of the economy within the major sectors of the economy, protect the right of every citizen to engage in any economic activity outside the major sectors of the economy

The point is that one can rely on the above to claim that Christians who wish to participate in Islamic banking can freely do so under the constitution. The truth however is that many Christians who would want to benefit from non interest banking will view Islamic banking as being contrary to the dictates of their religion. In the absence of an alternative, the right of Christians to freedom of conscience, thought and religion, provided for in section 38 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (1999) will not be adequately protected. The way out of this particular problem is simply to create a balance by providing an alternative for those who are not willing to participate in Islamic banking. It is noted that it is also this lack of balance that have created the unnecessary fear that Islamic banking is a step towards the islamization of Nigeria. It is also important to note that while the CBN has a corporate responsibility to provide an alternative non-religious framework, the duty to put forward a basis for a Christian non-interest banking scheme fall wholly on Christian leaders such as the Christian Association of Nigeria. It is always not enough to complain against the status quo, it is also very important to provide viable and workable options. The claim that Islamic banking is aimed at islamization can be completely neutralized by introducing Christian banking. It must however be noted that in the absence of Christians non-interest banking, the provision of a non-religious neutral non-interest banking framework will go a long way in making non-interest Islamic banking in Nigeria look less like an Islamic agenda. If there is an alternative for everybody, then, such a claim will at best be aimed at misleading the public. After all, many secular states, some even much more secular than Nigeria like USA, UK, Germany, South Africa, Japan, etc practice Islamic banking and same has not been viewed as an islamization project.

On the constitutionality of the introduction of the practice of Islamic banking in Nigeria many issues including some of those above have been raised. The center trust of the argument however, is that the introduction of Islamic banking in Nigeria is unconstitutional and many grounds have been canvassed to be the basis of this alleged unconstitutional status of Islamic non-interest banking. One of such arguments is that the CBN lacked powers to actually create Islamic banking in Nigeria. For example in the preamble to his article, Egheomhanre Eyieyi (2011) declared thus:

The Central Bank of Nigeria foisted on the nation a needless controversy when in its inordinate ambition and misplaced over-zealousness to establish Islamic banking in Nigeria, it purported to assume legislative powers which it does not have and introduced provisions in its framework on non interest financial institutions (NIFI) issued on 13th January 2011, which are illegal, unconstitutional, unjust, inequitable and blatantly discriminatory against non-Muslim Nigerians.

The writer further emphasized that the CBN framework for regulation of NIFI essentially redefined non interest financial institutions as Islamic banking according, contrary to the spirit and letters of the Banks and other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) of 1991 as amended. In his view this was again done with the mistaken belief that only Muslims are interested in that form of financing services. It needs to be noted that the above arguments is to a large extent the position of many who oppose Islamic banking and our consideration of it is from that perspective. Some clarifications therefore need to be made at this point. The first is that the CBN has already corrected itself to the effect that Islamic banking is only a brand of non interest banking. The CBN has thus kept the door open for other forms of non-interest banking. The view of this researcher is consistent that leaving an open window or door is not enough. Again, the CBN has also come out clear that its guideline is meant for Islamic non interest banking and to this extent the claim that the NIFI guideline is “unjust, inequitable and blatantly discriminatory against non-Muslim Nigerians” may be misleading unless it is qualified. By this it is meant that these assertions are true only to the extent that an alternative framework has not been made available to non-Muslims. That is to say that

the framework in itself is not the problem. This issue will be further considered in the later part of this work. The more crucial issue is that of the NIFI guideline being illegal and unconstitutional for having been issued outside the powers of the CBN. It is noted that it is the guideline that actually introduced Islamic banking as a non-interest banking system in Nigeria. It follows that the lack of power to create the guideline invariably amounts to the lack of power to introduce Islamic banking. It also follows that one major basis for which Islamic banking in Nigeria is claimed to be unconstitutional is that it is beyond the powers of the CBN to introduce same. We submit that this argument is wrong and highly misleading. Not only does the CBN have capacity to introduce Islamic banking (or even Christian banking) in Nigeria, the bank actually presented the legal basis upon which it acted on the guideline. In this regard, the guideline provides thus on its legal framework;

This supervisory and regulatory guidelines is issued pursuant to the power conferred on it by the provisions of section 33(1)(b) of the CBN Act 2007, section 236, 52; 55 (2); 59(1) (a) and 61 of Bank and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 1991 (as amended) and section 4(1)(c) of the Regulation on the scope of Banking Activities and Auxiliary matters No. 3 2010. It shall be read together with the provisions of other relevant sections of BOFIA 1991 (as amended), the CBN Act 2007, Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 1990 (as amended) and circulars/guidelines issued by the CBN from time to time.

It is argued that a combined and most constructive reading of these provisions and other relevant ones like section 66 of BOFIA will leave no one in doubt that the CBN acted within its powers in introducing Islamic banking and developing a guideline for its operations. To start with section 23(1) (b) of the CBN Act empowers the CBN to issue guidelines thus; ‘in addition to any of its powers the bank may (b) issue guideline to any person and any institution under its supervision.’ to this extent, it will be wrong to claim that the guideline issued amounts to usurping legislative powers beyond the CBN. Again, there is no doubt that non-interest banking is contemplated by the Central Bank of Nigeria Establishment Act Cap C4 LFN 2010 s. 33(1)(b) which provides thus:

Every bank shall display at its offices, its lending and deposit interest rates and shall render to the Bank information on such rules as may be specified from time to time by the bank, provided that the provisions of this subsection shall not apply to profit and loss sharing banks.

The only reason such banks are excluded is simply because they do not charge interest. Certainly, therefore, the CBN has power to supervise and license Non-Interest Banks. The question will then be whether such banks can be Islamic or religious in nature? This question will however be answered subsequently. Now section 53 of the said Central Bank of Nigeria Establishment Act Cap C4 LFN 2010 provides that:

Neither the Federal Government nor the bank nor any officer of that government or bank shall be subject to any action claim or demand by or liability to any person in respect of anything done or omitted to be done in good faith in pursuance or in execution of or in connection with the execution or intended execution of any power conferred upon that government, the bank or such officers by this Act.

The above section aims at protecting relevant authorities from unwarranted litigation arising from acts done in good faith pursuant to the act. Subsection (2) of the section on the other hand more or less defines those protected by subsection (1) Section 55(2) of the Act serves the purpose of subjecting the company and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) to the CBN Act as it relates to banking issues. The implication being that if the CAMA contradicts the CBN Act the later will prevail. Also of great relevance to the issues relating to the CBN’s authority to create a framework for the practice of Islamic banking in Nigeria is the provisions of section 57 of Bank and other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) CAP B3 LFN 2010 which provides that;

1) The Governor may make regulations published in the Federal Gazette to give full effect to the objectives of this Act.

2) Without prejudice to the provision of subsection (1) of this section, the Governor may make rules and regulations for the operation and control of all institutions under the supervision of the bank.

In addition to the above powers section 61 (1) (a) and (b) of the Bank and other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) CAP B3 LFN 2010 s57(1) provides that;

- (i) The bank shall have power to supervise and regulate the activities of other financial institutions and specialized banks;
- (b) Prescribe the minimum paid up capital requirement of other financial institutions and specialize banks.

Beyond this section 66 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Establishment Act Cap C4 LFN 2010 defines specialized banks as;

Nigerian Agricultural and cooperative bank, Nigerian Export Import Bank, Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry, the Urban Development Bank, Federal Mortgage Banks, Peoples Bank of Nigeria and such other banks as may be designed from time to time.

In the face of the above powers conferred on the CBN by the above legislative provisions, it will be wrong to say that issuing a regulation or guideline for non-interest banking is an act done in excess of the powers of the CBN. What the CBN has actually done is to designate non-interest banking or banks as specialized bank in addition to creating a guideline for the operation of Islamic banking as a model of the specialized bank that is non-interest banks. The issue of whether a religious model of non-interest banking offends or contradicts the provisions of the 1999 Constitution to the effect that Nigerian is a secular State is a totally different question distinct from whether or not the CBN has authority to issue regulation for the operation of any brand of specialized bank including but not limited to non-interest banks. This constitutional issue relating to Islamic banking offending the constitutional provisions on the secular nature of Nigeria is now addressed herein.

As already noted one major argument against the practice of Islamic banking is that it contravenes the provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as Amended, particularly section 10 which says that Nigeria and shall not adopt any religion as a state religion. The pertinent question however is whether the fact that the constitution prohibits a state religion without more makes Nigeria purely a secular state without more? A writer has defined secularism as the separation of a government, organization or institution from religion and or religious beliefs”Egbor Edwin Mukoro (2011). It follows that in a purely secular state, while individuals are allowed to practice their religion according to their beliefs, the government and all its apparatus is expected to be distanced from all religious issues. It is only from this pure idea of secularism that Islamic banking can be validly viewed as offending secularism. The truth however, is that, religion is capable of being viewed from two different perspectives. One can actually view religion as simply a body of rituals which a private individual or group observe in their relationship with a supernatural entity they believe in. In this instance, religion is no more but a purely private affair. In that case also religion will have little or no role in public life. In contrast religion can also be viewed as a way of life of a people covering the entire gamut of people thoughts and actions, in this case, it is difficult to separate religion from public life and relegate it to the private affairs of the individual. Egbor Edwin Mukoro (2011) This research opines that a pure secular state will be more realistic where religion is viewed from the first perspective of religion above. It is also the view of this researcher that Nigerians are deeply religious, as individuals, groups and even as a country and as such cannot divorce religion from other aspects of her life governance inclusive. Fortunately, the 1999 Constitution including its provision in section 10 is mindful of this. It is submitted that the said section 10 of the 1999 Constitution as amended, properly construed, intends no more than to give equal respect to all religious groups in the country by not elevating any of them to the status of a state religion. The constitution therefore has not set out to divorce issues of governance and religion completely. A look at some other provisions of the constitution will give credence to this just like many other activities of government. It has for instance been pointed out that Nigeria will usually observe prayers by two recognized religions at the beginning and end of most national functions both at the federal, state and local government levels. The

countries national calendar also contains religious festivals Christian and Muslims alike. Examples will include the Christmas day, Easter, Good Friday, Sallah etc. Interestingly, the major ones among these events are usually public holidays. Egbor Edwin Mukoro (2011) This goes to show that Nigeria as a nation is interested in such aspects religion. It has been noted and it needs to be emphasized that the Nigerian Constitution does not pretend to have completely divorced religion from the affairs of the Nation. The emphasis of the constitution is on making sure that religion is not the basis for treating anybody unjustly hence, Section 15(2) of the said constitution provides that national integration shall be actively encouraged; whilst discrimination on grounds of religion shall be prohibited. Section 17(3) (b) of the Same constitution provides among other things that - "the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facility for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life". One can even argue correctly that since the conventional banks can only lend money on interest which is contrary to Muslim belief, the introduction of Islamic banking which in tune with their fate only goes to provides Muslims with good facility for religious life in the context of economic activities. Akin to this is Section 38 of the said constitution which provides that every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to change his religion or belief. It can thus be said that rather than go against the dictations of the constitution, the introduction of Islamic banking respects the right of Muslims to express their religion by banking while avoiding interest which for them is a sin. It is obviously in line with this that section 262 of the constitution empowers any interested state to establish a Sharia Court of Appeal with its jurisdiction limited to Sharia law. In the light of the above it will be wrong to rely on section 10 of the constitution and argue that Nigeria is in the strict sense of it a secular state. What the Nigerian constitutions sets out to avoid is favouring one religion above the other or discriminating against the citizen or group of citizens on the grounds of their religious belief. The position of this paper is that the introduction of Islamic banking in Nigeria is constitutional. It is also the position in this researcher that the issuing of a guideline for the regulation of Islamic banking or any other form of non-interest banking is constitutional and fully within the powers of the CBN.

It is however, our considered view that introducing Islamic banking though constitutional, but without an alternative platform for non-Muslims, even free thinkers and traditionalists fails to meet the required balance sort to be maintained by the 1999 constitution. Steps must thus be taken to resolve this because it is a major limitation and challenge for the thriving and effective practice of non interest banking in Nigeria. There is one more important issue sought to be addressed in connection with this which is that the mere fact that the CBN has power to issue a guideline does not in itself make every guideline issued by them legal and constitutional. The guideline though issued by a competent authority may all the same be illegal or unconstitutional if any of its provisions is contradicted in another law or the constitution. Hence, the question relating to the legality and constitutionality of the CBN guideline for NIFI must be dealt with before we proceed any further in this work.

5.2 The Legality and Constitutionality of CBN Guideline for the Regulation of NIFI.

The legality and constitutionality of CBN guideline for the Regulation of NIFI has been challenged on many and a good number of them have already been dealt with in this work already. One argument that has not been dealt with is the one relating to the provisions of the guideline relating to the counsel of experts which has been argued to be unconstitutional. The said guideline in its paragraph 9.1 provides that there shall be an advisory body to be called CBN Advisory council of Experts to advise the CBN on matters relating to the effective regulation and supervision of NIFIS in Nigeria. For purposes of clarity, qualifications, duties, responsibility etc. of members of the council are contained in guideline to be issued by the CBN. The argument to the effect that this provision is unconstitutional has been well articulated by Eghes Eyieyien (2011) as reproduced hereunder;

Another shocking and offensive aspect of the NIFI Framework was that it provided for the creation of "the CBN Shariah Council". The CBN Shariah Council was to "advise the

CBN on Shariah matters for the effective regulation and supervision of NIFIs in Nigeria”. Since such a body must necessarily comprise only Muslims, the CBN would be flouting fundamental provisions of the Nigerian Constitution as follows:

i. Contravening the Federal Character Principle entrenched in Section 14(3) which states that “The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies”.

ii. Contravening the secularity of Nigeria enshrined in Section 10 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that “The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion”;

iii. Contravening the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion as stated in Section 38 (1) that “every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”. But unarguably the most significant issue is that fact that the CBN was introducing religion into Nigerian banking contrary to the spirit, letter and intendment of Section 39(1) of BOFIA which states: “Except with the written consent of the Governor (a) no bank shall, as from the commencement of this Decree, be registered or incorporated with a name which includes the words “Central” “Federal,” “Federation,” “National”, “Nigeria”, “Reserve”, “State”, “Christian”, “Islamic”, “Moslem”, “Quaranic”, “Biblical”

It can be said that the writer challenges the provision for the ‘CBN Sharia Advisory Council’ on three constitutional grounds in addition to non-conformity with section 39(1) of BOFIA. The real issue then is, how correct or tenable are these arguments? The humble position of this paper is that the arguments are wrongly footed and that there is nothing unconstitutional or illegal about the guideline in question. The basis of this position is now presented hereunder.

It is noted that the arguments relating to the contravention of the provisions of section 10 of the constitution on the grounds that Nigeria is a secular state have already been addressed. In like manner the argument relating to section 38(1) of the constitution with regards to freedom of religion has also been dealt with extensively. What we may add as far as these arguments are concerned is that the NIFI guideline is not the first legislation or regulation relating to the activity of a particular religion in Nigeria. The Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission Establishment Act 2010 is a good example. The functions of the commission as provided for in section 3 (a)-(i) leaves no one in doubt that the commission is to serve Christian pilgrims only. Can the Act be said to violate the constitution? The answer will be no, because it exists side by side with the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (HAHCON) Act. The Hajj Act is exactly for the Muslims what the Christian Pilgrim Act is for the Christians. As such section 4 of the Act which provides for the functions of the Act does not leave anyone in doubt that the Commission is solely for the purpose of serving the needs of Nigerians moving from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia to perform the Harjj or Umra. What is important is that there should be a balance and as long as such a balance is struck the provisions of section 10 and 38(1) of the constitution remain satisfied.

The remaining constitutional question relates to the provision of section 14(3) which provides for the observation of federal character and it is now addressed. Now for purposes of clarity section 14(3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended (1999) provides that:

The composition of the government of the federal or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few state or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies.

Without doubt, the argument that the guideline contravenes the provision for federal character is premised on the grounds that the commission will be made up of basically Muslims. It is submitted that this argument is faulty because it presumes that Muslims can only be found in one part of the country. In

reality, there is no geopolitical zone in Nigeria where a qualified Muslim will not be found to be a member of the council of experts for purposes of Islamic non-interest banking. Secondly, the issue arose and remains sustained because there is a lack of balance. Hence, if a framework for non interest Christian banking is developed to function side by side with the Islamic non interest banking guideline the problem will be as good as solved. The only reason there was no hoes and cries when the Nigerian Pilgrim Commission Act Cap 321 LFN 1990 was repealed in 2007 was that two separate Acts were immediately enacted as already highlighted to serve Christians and Muslims respectively. The need to create this very important balance cannot thus be overemphasized.

The last issue left to be resolved is the question as to whether the Regulation contravenes section 39(1) of BOFIA? To properly address this question, it is important to put the arguments of the proponents of the illegality of the guideline on this ground in perspective. The crux of the argument is that the Act intends to prohibit the registration of a bank with a name that has a religious coloration. It is also argued that the Act envisaged that the CBN governor will not be moved by religious consideration to approve such a name even though he has the discretion to approve same.

It is the considered view of this researcher that the intendment of the law was that the CBN Governor can exercise his discretion when it is appropriate. It also needs to be added that those claiming that the CBN has contravened section 39(1) of BOFIA are reading the Act out of context. The section prohibits the registration of a bank with any of the names listed therein many of which have nothing to do with religion. It is the Corporate Affairs Commission that is bared from registering such a name unless there is express approval of the CBN Governor. It follows that the issuance of a Guideline for the regulation of non-interest Islamic banking does not by any extension or imagination amount to the registration of a bank with the prohibited name. Interestingly the CBN is rather very mindful of the provisions of S. 39(1) of BOFIA. Hence, paragraph 10.1 of the guideline provides as follows:-

In line with the provisions of Section 39 (1) of BOFIA 1991 (as amended), the registered or licensed name of an IIFS shall not include the word "Islamic", except with the consent of the Governor of the CBN. IIFS shall, however, be recognized by a uniform symbol designed by the CBN. All the signages and promotional materials of IIFS shall bear this symbol to facilitate recognition by customers and the general public.

It follows that until an Islamic institution offering non-interest financial services is registered with any of the prohibited names like Islam or Muslim without the approval of CBN Governor, the provisions of S. 39(1) of BOFIA cannot be said to have been contravened. In addition we must not read into an Act what it never provided or intended to achieve. If the Act intended that the CBN Governor must under no circumstances allow a bank with a religious coloration to be registered or licensed, it would not have granted the CBN the discretionary power to do same. Infact, the grant of such discretion simply shows that the Act anticipates that the need to register such a bank will arise. It follows that the practice of Islamic or Christian banking in Nigeria is by no means or by any extension illegal or unconstitutional. In the same way, the issuance of a guideline for the operation of such a bank does not offend any existing law in Nigeria. It is also submitted that the guideline issued by the CBN for the regulation of Islamic banking has not offended the constitution or any existing law. What is unacceptable is the failure of the CBN to provide an alternative guideline for Christians and other non-Muslims alike and therein lays the failure of non-interest banking or financing to take roots in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing considerations this research comes to the inevitable conclusion that Nigeria, like every other developing economy, need the medium scale enterprises to thrive. This is especially important because Nigeria is in an urgent need to diversify her economy which is currently almost wholly dependent on oil revenue. Again, one of the major areas of the economy that has the potential of boosting the economy is the Agricultural sector. The major challenge facing agricultural production in Nigeria is the fact that the young population, the poor and middle class people who have the energy and interest to delve into the agricultural sector lack the needed financial capital. It has however been shown in this work that this much needed financial capital is almost impossible to be accessed by means of loan from

commercial banks for many reasons. Some of such reasons will include the stringent requirements for such loans especially the need to provide security (collateral) for the loan. The other is the extremely high interest charged by commercial banks on such loans. It is therefore found that non-interest banking, which emphasizes profit sharing and does not charge interest and requires no collateral before loan is accessed, will be very useful to the Nigerian economy. Without doubt, it will grow small and medium enterprises and bring back the middle class in Nigeria. It has also been observed that the Central Bank of Nigeria took steps way back in 2011 to introduce this form of financing in Nigeria. Unfortunately, this form of financing has so far failed to fully take root or become fully beneficial to Nigerians due to many challenges. This work has found that key among the challenges are legal/constitutional controversies surrounding the non interest banking as introduced by the CBN in the country. It has also been observed that the CBN has so far introduced only Islamic form of non interest banking. Many Nigerians have however argued that the practice of Islamic banking in Nigeria as well as the guideline issued for its operation is unconstitutional and illegal. The finding of this research is that this argument is faulty as both the practice of Islamic banking as well as the guideline for its operation is legal. The work therefore concludes that the problem that has hindered the progress of non-interest banking in Nigeria is the failure of the CBN to create an alternative guideline for Christians, traditionalists and even free thinkers. This has resulted in mutual suspicion and skepticism that has undermined the practice of non interest banking general in Nigeria. It is in the light of the above that this paper recommends as follows:-

1. That non-interest form of banking in Nigeria should be encouraged and sustained. To attain a viable interest free banking therefore, the CBN should create more awareness about the many advantages and prospects of this form of specialized bank in order to ensure that Nigerians donot dismiss same out of ignorance.
2. It is also recommended that the unnecessary efforts to shut down Islamic banking be stopped. Non-Muslims should rather channel their energy positively. In this regard the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Conference of the Bishops of the different Christian denominations are challenged to develop non-interest banking models based on Christian principles and make same available to the CBN for implementation. This is important as the CBN door is widely open to receive same.
3. The CBN must not rely on the absence of a Christian alternative to allow the current state of affairs to continue. The apex bank should as a matter of urgency, develop a neutral regulatory framework for non- interest banking that is non-religious based. This will be without prejudice to the existing framework for Islamic non interest banking as well as Christian alternative that may be developed. CBN must appreciate that it is not enough to have acted legally or constitutionally, it is also very important to see that the actions are convincing and are imbibed by majority of Nigerians. The legality of non interest banking has not and will not make Islamic non-interest banking to thrive. As long as it remains the only non-interest window in a multi religious entity like Nigeria the future will remain bleak. The Central Bank must therefore act urgently to create a very balanced framework for the practice of non-interest banking that will accommodate all Nigerians, religious affiliations notwithstanding.

References

Alao David Olamideji and Alao Esther Monisola, (2012)Islamic Banking,: The Controversy Over Non-Interest Banking in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Nigerian Chapter)* (1) (1) 65

Framework for the Regulation and Supervision of Institutions Offering Non-interest financial services in Nigeria (2011) FPR/DIR/CIR/GEN/01/010

Eghes Eyieyien, (2011)Central Bank of Nigeria Islamic Banking,The Law and Appropriate Regulation of Non-Interest Finance Institution in Nigeria. *Pharez Consulting* available at

<https://www.proshareng.com/articles/The-Economy/The-CBN,-Islamic-Banking,-The-Law-and-Appropriate-Regulation-of-Non-Interest-Financial-Institutions-in-Nigeria--/2276>

CBN Guideline for the Regulation and Supervision of Institutions offering Non-Interest financial services in Nigeria paragraph 1.0

Magaji Chorema and others (2012) Legal Framework Regulating Islamic Finance in Nigeria. A Critical Appraisal of Hurdles against the Effective Sharia Governance. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Nigerian Chapter)*. (1) (1) 65

Shehu Usman Rano Aliyu (2012) Islamic Banking and Finance in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in Nigeria.

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (1999)

Central Bank of Nigeria Establishment Act cap C4 LFN 2010

Bank and other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) CAP B3 LFN 2010

Egbor Edwin Mukoro(2011) Interest Free Banking in Nigeria- Welcome Islamic Banking; Welcome Christian Banking. *JORIND*(vol. 9) No.2) . 288. Available at www.ajol.info/journals/jorind, last accessed 10 12 2020.

EDUTAINMENT IN THE FACE OF COVID-19: A CRITIQUE OF COBHAM ASUQUO'S SONG "WE GO WIN" (CORONA)

By

Lawal, Deborah Temisan

Department of Music

School of Arts and Social Sciences

Federal College of Education, Abeokuta

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine how the song, "We go win" (corona) by CobhamsAsuquo is used as a form of entertainment and education in the face of COVID-19. Content and narrative analysis shows that the subject of the song is very germane as it addresses the pandemic in piginEnglish, which is a language understood by majority of Nigerians and projects African values of community collaboration. This study therefore focuses on the possibilities inherent in the use of music to achieve edutainment purposes.

Introduction

Music plays an important role in our everyday life. As far back as man's existence, music was used as a tool to pacify the crying child, settle communal disputes, correct erring members of the society and so on. Music is also considered an important component of tradition that must be passed unto the next generation. (Akere&Ologundudu, 2018; Vidal, 2012). Music in Africa often serve multiple purposes; it is accompanied by drums, rattles and other African instruments to bring about some form of excitement and enjoyment, its lyrics also contain informative and educative instructions that are germane to the promotion of personal and collective growth as well as peaceful coexistence. The song text is used as a medium to preach the message of hope and healthy lifestyle. It is therefore fit as one of the effective tools to be used in the sensitization process during the outbreak of COVID-19.

As at the time the pandemic broke out in Nigeria, no one was prepared for it. There was general panic, apprehensions, and speculations. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) rolled out some information via news media outlets and through SMS to dissolve some of the tension, yet, there was still the challenge of getting people to adhere to the pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical measures put in place to curb the spread of the virus. Not only that, there was need to ensure that people remember to observe all these safety protocols while keeping a calm disposition. The theory of transformative musicology by Adedeji (2010) postulates that musical compositions can be a useful tool in the society to transform the mindset of human beings and how they interact with their environment. Adedeji is of the opinion that, with the mirage of problems plaguing our society and the efforts of other change agents like religion, media, NGOs, and so on, music still remains an essential transformative tool that should not be taken for granted.

In a recent ongoing study by DipoOyeleye, a graduate student in the University of Wisconsin-Madison, department of English, it was discovered that because there is already some level of distrust and hypocrisy between the Nigerian government and its citizens, many did not take the news of the pandemic with the seriousness it requires. As it was during the Ebola crises when songs by African musicians was adjudged to be effective at reaching and convincing the public to take proper action to control the spread, so it is to the musicians that many are turning to again in the COVID-19 pandemic to disseminate health information rather than government-issued health directives (Conklin, 2020). In the first two months after "We go win" (corona) was posted on YouTube by CobhamsAsuquo Official, it was already viewed by 17,000 people and a month later, it had 21,000 views. This is a testimony to the fact that, not only did the song entertain people who were forced to stay home under government lockdown, but it educated them on the seriousness of the pandemic and ways of preventing the spread.

The objective of this paper is to investigate the level of promotion of educating and entertaining contents in the selected song. Using a quantitative approach, this study analyses the lyrical and musical content of the

song “We go win” (corona) by CobhamsAsuquo to appropriate the lessons therein as it relates to COVID-19 and the African value system. The choice of content is based on its relevance to the current pandemic ravaging the world.

Brief Biography of CobhamsAsuquo

Cobhams Emmanuel Asuquo was born on the 6th of January 1981 in Jos, Plateau state. He was born blind. As a young boy, music has always been a source of happiness to him. He would whistle to the sound from a piano and music on the radio. What began as a hobby grew so big that he had to eventually abandon his career in Law so as to pursue his passion in music. In 2010, CobhamsAsuquo got married to his wife, Ojuolape Veronica Olukanni and the couple is blessed with two children.

In 2016, CobhamsAsuquo established Vintage Gray Media, an entertainment company, whose aim is to discover and nurture new talents. It currently produces a digital radio show. The company is also involved in the creation of all forms of audio content for corporations and the media.

His style of music cuts across various genres like reggae, rock, hip hop, jazz, and country, and each song conveys deep messages. Cobhams has produced several award-winning songs for popular Nigerian music artistes such as Banky W, Asa, Omawumi, Djinee, Dare Art Alade, Chidinma, Praiz, Timi Dakolo, and so on. and has released great songs like Ordinary People (2014), Star of Wonder (2015), Do the Right Thing feat Bez (2015), Stronger Than Before (2015). In addition, Cobhams has successfully organized various local and international music concerts and shows. He has written and arranged a number of film scores for film and stage performance. He has also featured on CNN’s African Voices for his contribution and impact on the African music industry.

CobhamsAsuquo’s awards include:

The Future Awards for Producer of the Year (2006 and 2009)

Hip-hop World Awards for Producer of the Year (2007 and 2008)

Nigeria Music Awards (NMA) for Producer of the decade (2007 and 2008)

Recipient of LEAP Africa Award for his Creativity, Fortitude and Exemplary Leadership in the Music Industry (2007)

One Gospel Awards for “Gospel Composer/ Writer of the Year” (2008)

The Partnership Awards recipient for Supporting the Worship for Change Concert (2008)

The Nigerian Award for British Council’s International Young Music Entrepreneur of the year (2009)

LEAP Africa Award for his “Creativity, Fortitude & Exemplary Leadership In the Music Industry” (2007)

Recording of the Year Award at the Headies, for his song, Ordinary People (2014)

Lyrics of the song “We go win” (Corona)

My brother, my sister, papa, mama and pikin
Corona no big pass us, we go fight am we go win
As long as we remember to always do the right thing
Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o
Corona na the virus weydey worry human being
E no get leg o but e deywaka from pesin to pesin
But we fit beat am, we fit stop am
If we maintain good hygiene
And practice social distancing
We go win o
No shaking hands with your neighbor
Blow them a kiss from afar
Use soap and water to wage war
Let’s show this thing who we are
We are special, we’re courageous
We are awesome human beings
We dey super, we get power

We can conquer anything
 If we hear word and obey laws
 And exercise discipline
 Wash your hands love each other
 We go win
 If e be like say you no well like e something dey do you
 And you feel say, you believe say, e get as e do you
 And your body no greesoji like something dey do you
 No let panic finish you
 You go win o
 Self-isolate for the sake of...
 All the people wey you love ooo
 Don't go around spreading rumors
 Cos fake news won't help anyone
 You are special, you're courageous
 You're a kajad human being
 You too much o, you get power
 You can conquer anything
 Only if you hear word and obey laws
 And exercise discipline
 Wash your hands, love one another
 We go win o
 My brother, my sister, papa, mama and pikin
 Covid-19 no big pass we, we go fight am we go win
 Just as long as we remember to always do the right thing
 Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o

Musical style

The song is a piano-based ballad. It is part of a collaboration between CobhamsAsuquo and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to raise public awareness about strategies to combat the spread of COVID-19. Due to the importance of the message, the rhythm and beat of the song is not as fast as other popular music styles. This gives the listener the opportunity to catch the words, sing along, and remember in the future.

The use of only one musical instrument – keyboard – is also strategic, as it erases the loud and boisterous sound accustomed to pop music. It lends a solemn ambience to the song, making it grave and more meaningful. The performance style is organized and devoid of unnecessary distractions or props.

Language

Adedeji&Omosilade (2018) observed that language plays an important role as one of the determining factors that make a music acceptable by the majority. They also noted that “one of the functions of music is to create awareness or pass information about important concepts, events and values to the general society.” Therefore, this can only be achieved using the right approach of which language, in this case, the use of pigin English, is germane. Many Nigerians from different ethnic groups have unofficially adopted pigin English as a language of communication. Pigin does not belong to any ethnic group in Nigeria, rather, it is a common language of communication among peoples of different background.

The use of pigin in the song under review, made it more acceptable and relevant to the majority of listeners. It gave a feeling of inclusiveness and made the words easy to understand and remember. A study of music in Nigeria shows that the most popular musicians are those who infuse pigin English into their songs. Olatunji (2001) in support of similar study, opined that, since many popular musicians have used pigin English in their compositions and performances to reach a wider audience, it can also be a platform of shared heritage for Nigerians.

Song text or lyrics

Music has verbal and non-verbal elements that help convey its message. The non-verbal are gestures, expressions, exclamations, and so on. The song text is the verbal aspect that portrays a large percent of the song theme. The song text in “We go win” (corona), is a call to every age group to do the right thing and fight the coronavirus the right way. In between, are interjections of words of hope and resilience extolling our strength as humans to “conquer anything”. The lyrics ends with a resounding message, “we go win o”.

Impact within the view of the African value system

In the opinion of Idang (2015), the society we live in has its values about what is good, right and acceptable which we are expected to conform to and those who err are immediately called to order via established standards or measures. Regardless of the political climate, the culture and rules of core Africa never changes. That is why the slogan, “back to your roots” is often used to remind an erring child that he needs to revisit his African foundation which is rooted in core moral values that transcends time and persons. It is therefore worthy of note that this song by Cobhamsis relatable with the values enshrined in Africa; notable values represented in the song include,

Greeting and respect

“My brother, my sister, papa, mama and pikin”

In the African setting, it is expected that when you want to address anyone, the first thing to do is the greet the person. If it is a group of people, culture demands that the presence of each person is recognized.

Hygiene

“Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o”

African culture boasts of certain dishes that are best enjoyed when eaten with bare hands as against the use of spoon or fork. Eating this kind of dish popularly referred to as ‘swallow’ means your hands must be very clean to avoid transferring germs from hand to mouth. Bringing this familiar illustration and relating it to the hygienic standards for preventing the spread of coronavirus is strategic and effective.

Social relations and attitudes

“Don’t go around spreading rumors, Cos fake news won’t help anyone”

The African society thrives on truth and honesty. Liars are called out without hesitation. Those who create false fear and panic are made to face the consequences of their actions. This song therefore buttresses these ethical values as it enjoins people not to spread unsubstantiated rumors about the virus.

Social harmony

“No shaking hands with your neighbor, Blow them a kiss from afar”

Though the government regulation demands for social and physical distancing which is alien to the communal lifestyle practiced by Africans, Cobhams still encourages us to “blow a kiss” to each other from afar. As a result of technology, we can send a “kiss” virtually via phone call, conference call, *Zoom*, *Google meet* and *Whatsapp* video conversation.

Cooperative living

“Only if you hear word and obey laws, And exercise discipline”

No community can thrive without unity and mutual cooperation. If one family refuses to obey the law, and they eventually get infected, the community they belong to is at risk of getting infected. In China, where the coronavirus was first reported, local interventions were put in place so that in a community, any person suspected to have been infected is quickly isolated. His close contacts are traced and placed under quarantine (Qian, X., Ren, R., Wang, Y., Guo, Y., Fang, J., Wu, Z., Liu, P., Han, T., 2020). This strategy is only effective when there is cooperation among members of the community.

Notion of the Common Good

“Use soap and water to wage war, Let’s show this thing who we are”

A good society operates from the level of the common good (Molefe, 2019). Africans operate a system that encourages communal life. Therefore, it is common to see members of a community take up the responsibility of supporting each other when the need arises. A war cannot be fought by a single person, if

we must win the war against this virus, everyone has a role to play for the common good of the community.

Ethics of Duty

“Corona no big pass us, we go fight am we go win; As long as we remember to always do the right thing; Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o”

As part of a community, it is our duty to do the right thing especially when doing otherwise can lead to consequences that will affect others. The value of ethics in Africa makes us duty bound to consider others in all our actions and inactions. In the case of the coronavirus, our duty is to wash our hands, do not spread fake news, obey laws, exercise discipline, maintain good hygiene, practice social distancing, and love each other.

Conclusion

Imbedded in the theme of music is a reflection of various germane issues that affects the musician, his society, his listeners and the world at large (Akere&Ologundudu, 2018). It is therefore very important to explore such music as one of the change agents that will help bring back our fast eroding values in Africa – an issue of concern to Africans at home and diaspora. Scholars from other disciplines have understudied this song because they were attracted by its edutainment attributes. In a comment made on the 20th of June, 2020 at 12:03 pm by MrsElekima Charity, a visitor to a popular blog site, Bluetoolz.com.ng, she stated that, “the song’s ability to inform, entertain and then, sustain my optimism attracted me to do a textual analysis through the linguistic theory of Discourse Analysis (DA) based on the model of De Besugrande and Drssler.”According to Conklin (2020), “musicians occupy a unique, often apolitical, space and have a broader appeal to the public sensibility. They tap into their creativity to effectively disseminate the information needed to keep the people safe.” Music can serve as a supplement to other strategies that will be employed to help us recover from the physical, emotional, economic, and psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The world now operates in the sphere of a new normal that may further expand the gap of physical interactions between human beings. Some institutions of learning have adopted a hybrid of online and offline classes, some churches stream their service via the internet and some big corporations now encourage their staff to work remotely. From the roles played by music during the lockdown, there is some level of confidence that music will again be used as a coping strategy in the future as people will need consistent encouragement and messages of hope to help them transit into the new normal.

References

- Adedeji, F. &Omosilade, T. (2018). Musical entertainment and moral values in contemporary Nigeria: A re-evaluation. *Journal of the Association of Nigerian Musicologists*. 12. 163 – 185.
- Adedeji, F. (2010). Transformative Musicology: recontextualizing art music composition for societal transformation in Nigeria. Retrieved September 14, 2020 from http://www.rem.ufpr.br/REM/REMr14/09/transformative_musicology.html
- Akere, A. O. &Ologundudu, R. P. (2018). Analysis of gender role stereotyping in Nigerian music video: evidence from Tiwa Savage, Cynthia Morgan and Olamide Artiste. *Journal of the Association of Nigerian Musicologists*. 12, 187 – 198.
- CobhamsAsuquo Official. (May 15, 2020). CobhamsAsuquo - We go win (Corona). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PGMGrz6LAU>
- Conklin, A. R. (2020). The Music is the Message. Retrieved September 14, 2020 from <https://ls.wisc.edu/news/the-music-is-the-message>
- Idang, G. E. (2015). African culture and values. *Phronimon*.16(2).
- Molefe, M. (2019). Ubuntu and Development: An African Conception of Development. *Africa Today*, 66(1), 96-115. doi:10.2979/africatoday.66.1.05
- Ofiakpone, O. (2020). Music + Lyrics: CobhamsAsuquo – We Go Win (Corona). Retrieved September 16, 2020 from <https://amebo9ja.com/music-lyrics-cobhams-asuquo-we-go-win-corona/>

- Olatunji, Michael. (2001). The use of Pidgin English in contemporary Nigerian music: A new approach towards national identity. *Humanities Review Journal*.1. 10.4314/hrj.v1i1.5920.
- Qian, X., Ren, R., Wang, Y. et al. (2020). Fighting against the common enemy of COVID-19: a practice of building a community with a shared future for mankind. *Infect Dis Poverty*.9(34). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40249-020-00650-1>
- ReDahlia (n.d). CobhamsAsuquo: Biography and Career Journey of a Special Producer-Songwriter. Retrieved September 16, 2020 from <https://www.entrepreneurs.ng/cobhams-asuquo/>
- Vidal, A. O. (2012). The Education roles and functions of folksongs performance among the Yoruba children of Nigeria. *Essays on Yoruba Musicology (History, Theory and Practice)*. 289 – 296.

ESTABLISHING PSYCHOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS AS A METHOD IN NEW TESTAMENT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION¹

By

John Chijioke Madubuko

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

Scholarly reading of the Bible (New Testament) as differing from the popular reading or misreading, as the case may be, demands and involves expertise. Such expertise is aware that certain settings and circumstances gave rise to the articulations that became scriptural texts. Making the age-old text understandable to today's audience is absolutely important. As such, exegesis has become interdisciplinary, presenting itself in, and through models of interpretation. One of such, as this work buttresses, is the place of psychology in biblical hermeneutics. This paper highlights the fact, and responds to the realization that psychic sensitivities influenced the expressions that became the scriptural text.

Keywords: Religion, Psychology, Hermeneutics, Cognitive restructuring

Introduction:

Religion is generally understood as both the awareness of and relationship to the supernatural in the bid to give meaning to the world as given, to man's experience of his environment. As such, it is lived; it is experienced; it is handed on either by word of mouth or by documents, texts. These became Scripture. With the historical-critical method's consideration of biblical texts as historical documents with historical circumstances also, these circumstances were often given critical attention. The history of religion school thrived in these paths, examining religions and religious symbolics that pre- and or co-existed with the generation of particular biblical texts. The understanding of religion, among others, as part of the attempts at giving meaning to the world as given, opened it up as well to study, to investigation. It is in this making of religion an object of study that the place of psychology in the endeavour gets established.

Despite surrounding controversies, the founding relationship between religion and psychology is based on the fact that religion has to do with attitude, experience, behaviour and relationship. These are also issues that constitute fundamental factors in the basic understanding(s) of psychology. Psychological mainstreams see themselves often concentrating on the religious phenomena. Sometimes, however, they officially seem to deny such pre-occupation or merely engage in relativizing the phenomena. This engagement of psychology with religious phenomena, giving rise to the psychology of religion, was enhanced by the humanistic branch of psychology. This branch recognized and buttressed the roles of cognition, emotion, feeling, will, morality, ethics, aesthetics, intra-, inter-, and transpersonal relationships. Exploring these possibilities in the pursuit of the psychological perspectives to the study of religion, there occurs a criss-crossing of the boundaries of particular disciplines. It is in this interdisciplinary engagement that psychology encounters hermeneutics, an encounter that is crystallized in humanistic branch of psychology (Rennie, 2011). This led to humanistic psychology being regarded more as a "world-view" than a discipline in psychology. This is the point where its usefulness for biblical exegesis comes to light (Theißen, 1987).

The usefulness stems from the fact that words, spoken or written, are first of all, symbols and signs of mental affections (Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 1.16a4). They are avenues of giving meaning and expression to reality as perceived, whereby written words themselves become signs of the spoken. Texts, biblical texts above all, are made of written words. In order to understand and interpret them properly, reading the 'signs' according to their meaning and intention is paramount. As such, an appreciation of the complexities that got into the making of the texts become achieved. It is then in this reader-sign

relationship, with the signs bearing significance and expressing human ideas, intentions, feelings, dispositions, that interpretation of reality evolves. These establish the place of the interdisciplinary psychological hermeneutics. They are also issues of religion; for biblical texts are religious documents. The attempts, therefore, to interpret a given text(s) ought to take note of the psychological issues featured in, and through the text(s). This is the logic of this paper, the understanding of the term psychological hermeneutics for which this paper makes a case. We shall proceed along the lines of giving an understanding of the key concepts – Religion, Psychology, Hermeneutics, and thereafter, forge some operational synthesis.

Psychology as a hermeneutical approach

One of the fundamental problems of psychology is articulated in the difficulty of a generally accepted definition. Almost every attempt exhibits a bias for or against a particular school of thought or the other, as well as about method(s). Added to this is, are the issues about its specific boundaries, the scientific (quantitative) nature of its various approaches as different from so-called common sense associations, pre-scientific and *daily psychologies*. While the term *daily psychology* refers to those common place conjectures and opinions about human behaviour and experience, opinions with which people go through their daily lives, pre-scientific psychology refers to those attempts to describe, explain or interpret human behaviour and experience, which however, lack the systematic method of science. Difference is therefore made between everyman's daily observations and "theories" about life, and scientific, systematic theories (Cervone & Pervin, 2008). Against this background, Vergote (1997, 11-34) noted the importance of differentiating between fundamental and applied psychology. He calls attention to the separation of scientific research and the practical use of psychological insights in for eg., education, pastoral work, etc.

A working definition is, however, afforded by Zimbardo and Gerring (2004, 3), who in very general terms define Psychology as "the scientific examination of the behaviour of individuals and their mental processes." One observes the absence of the word "experience", often taken for granted as a *must* in psychological discuss. The choice of the term "mental processes" seems to suggest a preference that, however, evokes the question whether *mental processes* capture all the contents of *experience*. Seemingly defending this position, the authors go on to argue that *many human activities take place as private, internal events* (perhaps before they manifest as observable), and that psychologists have recognized that human behaviour cannot be understood without understanding the mental processes that prompt and bring them about. True as the second proposition may be, the objection remains that the qualification *many*, with regard to the view about human activities, does not mean *all* of human activities. As such, the absence of *experience* and what it is understood to embrace, in the definition, is remarkable. This may, however, be seen to be complemented by the view that inner behaviour (mental processes?) embraces perceiving, thinking, remembering, judging.

Leiner (1995) seemingly appreciative of the issues of the bias of definitions, gives a rather all-embracing description. According to him, scientific psychology is to be understood as

...the designation for the variety of research programs, which satisfying specific scientific standards, and by means of free and standardized self and external observations, surveys, measurements and experiments, seek to understand, explain, describe, and possibly quantify and predict the behaviour and experience of the individual. (p152)

Going by the general terms, however, psychology is understood as the scientific attempts at comprehending and describing human experience and behaviour, whereby behaviour is not just about actions/conduct but includes also the underlying mental processes - perception and its underlying cognitive structures, thought and thought patterns, judgment, memory (Zimbardo and Gerring, 2004, 3-4)). The interest in such enquiries is as old as the quest for knowledge itself. It is based on the very interest in man, his feelings, actions and motivations, in the bid to understand himself, his world and reality around him.

Beyond the general association with such knowledge, as presented above, in the bid to understand, psychology becomes as it were eclectic. It is in this interdisciplinary circumstance that psychology encounters hermeneutics, and becomes a veritable aspect of the latter as the general theory of interpretation and understanding, thanks to the pioneering works of F.D.E. Schleiermacher (Vergote, 1997, 11-12). Even

when Schleiermacher is credited with the pioneer work, its paternity goes to no other than Aristotle from whom the former took cue. The name and project of hermeneutics is attributed to him.

Derived from the Greek word - ἑρμηνεύω ('translate' or 'interpret'), it was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle's work Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας - 'On Interpretation', more commonly referred to by its Latin title *De Interpretatione*. It is one of the earliest (c.360 BC) extant philosophical works in the Western tradition to deal with the relationship between language and logic in a comprehensive, explicit, and formal way. Through his understanding of hermeneutics as the methodic understanding of human signs, the most fundamental of which is the spoken word, Aristotle, in *De Interpretatione 1.16a4*, offers an early understanding that lays the groundwork for many contemporary theories of interpretation and semiotics:

“Words spoken are symbols or signs (*symbola*) of affections or impressions (*pathemata*) of the soul (*psyche*); written words are the signs of words spoken. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the **mental affections** themselves, of which these words are primarily signs (*semeia*), are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects (*pragmata*) of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies (*homoiomata*).”(Aristotle, On Interpretation, 1.16a4, in: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics);

By referring to “mental affections” as the origin of those signs he was referring to, Aristotle was already preparing the ground for the recognition of the place of the psychological in the hermeneutic enterprise. Written words constitute texts. The understanding/ interpretation of such signs would be achieved by means of reading the signs according to their meaning and intention. By these means the interpretation of reality is accomplished. It is, therefore, in the complex reader-sign relationship, which in turn interprets reality, that hermeneutics evolve (Vergote, 1997, 12). The difficulty and assured tension about the distance between the literary material and the reader, between the world of the text and the present world of the reader get bridged by the reader through the continuous expansion and fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1996, 306). The questions and the prejudices with which the reader encounters the text become something else in the course of reading.

Signs, in this regard, bear significance and express human ideas, intentions, feelings, and dispositions (emotional and otherwise). These are veritable psychological issues as well. These issues are also involved in religion on its own part. Religion thus becoming a phenomenon observable in signs expressing ideas, intentions, feelings, dispositions, becomes also an object of science. The attempts, therefore, to interpret a given text/ given texts, taking note of, and buttressing the psychological issues featured become the foundation of our understanding of the term “psychological-hermeneutics”. It is about appreciating, and applying psychological perspectives to biblical texts. The qualifying term “hermeneutical” also underscores the attempt at interpretation of the text in question, that is geared towards fruitful application to life in given contexts.

This fundamental understanding by Aristotle was built upon and developed by subsequent generations of thinkers, especially F.D.E. Schleiermacher (1768-1843). Considered to be the father of modern hermeneutics, Schleiermacher is singled out here because in his investigation of the nature of understanding, in his theory of interpretations, which he now extended to all human texts and modes of communication and not just to sacred texts, he distinguished between grammatical (linguistic) interpretation and psychological interpretation. He defined hermeneutics as “the art of correctly understanding another person’s discourse, above all in writing”. This view strives towards avoiding misunderstanding, against the background that every problem of interpretation is a problem of understanding. He opined that the knowledge of grammatical and psychological laws in trying to understand the text and the writer would aid avoiding misunderstanding. By so doing he introduced a basic shift – understanding would not just have to do with the exact words and their objective meanings, but also with the very individuality of the author. Such is the issue of authorship and content (Barton, 2007, 61-62), very important to biblical scholarship.

The hermeneutical approach to human psychology evolved in the circumstances of the question of the relation between physical and human sciences. Having expressed doubts that the principles of the natural

sciences, especially measurements and predictions, could be applied to the study of human psychology, scholars, especially in the 19th century, came up with hermeneutical approach to the psychology of persons and his circumstance. This approach applies the style of explanation to the style of thinking used while reading a text. Reading a character's action(s) or words in a text, for instance, an interpretation of the action(s) or words is made within the overall context provided in the text. This includes the character's personality, experiences, relations to others, the social, general cultural and historical setting of the particular action(s)/ words and character(s). Psychological-hermeneutical approach in biblical scholarship, therefore, proceeds along these lines. It (a) searches for the meaning of a character's action(s)/ words, (b) meaning deduced from the examination of the overall socio-historical context in view, and (c) evaluating the ethical and moral implications of the action(s)/ words (Cervone and Pervin, 2008, 169).

To the extent Schleiermacher made the distinction between grammatical and psychological interpretations, to that extent could one associate him with influencing our approach. However, a fundamental difference must be noted. The psychological interpretation he and his associates propagated dealt with exploring the psychological disposition of the individual author/ speaker (H-G. Gadamer, *Hermeneutics of Suspicion*, in D.L. Rennie, "Hermeneutics and Humanistic Psychology", in <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div32/pdfs/hermeneutics.pdf>; 04. Feb., 2011, 12.45pm, p.5) The dangers of such explorations seem very obvious. The individual in question is not only absent; the time in which he lived is so distant from our time that access to his individual dispositions becomes really difficult if not impossible. Impositions and projections are made. This leads to similar archetypal generality, the so-called "archetypal hermeneutic of the human psyche" (Berger, 2003, 2). Drewermann has harvested immense criticisms over such incongruity, and for which many a critic justify their doubts about psychological exegesis in so-called "sins of psychological exegesis" (Theißen, 1997, 1; 2007, 11).

The psychological hermeneutics being discussed here, while noting the individual psyche, appreciates the psychological, above all, from the point of view of the cultural distinctiveness of the setting in question. This includes the text, the author, the addressees and the intention of the message. By so doing, it builds on socio-psychological perspectives, appreciating the influence socio-religious environment has on individuals and the society. This is especially on the areas of their perception of, and mastering of the reality around them. It is an approach that is attentive to the sharp historical contours. It neither pushing these contours aside nor imposes the modern situation on the text. It rather links psychological analogies to traditio-historical investigations. Theißen and Gemünden (2007) underscore the importance of such historical approach thus:

It is obvious to a scientist that works with the consideration of historical perspectives that human experience and behaviour are culturally determined. This is in the sense of how human beings thought about, and acted in their world in various times. Their behaviour, their feelings and motivations are only indirectly accessible to us in their texts. Their thoughts are more direct. These thoughts are in turn influenced by the traditions of prior generations. (p.9)

These traditions would become known by means of the historical investigations. One would also know how normative the text(s) they determined have been. The patterns and models that shaped or still shape the experience and behaviour (the psychology) of the people in focus would be discovered. It becomes seen for what it is, an extension of the historical-critical method.

From the fore-going therefore, the hermeneutics that has psychological orientation is understood to "...include all attempts to interpret texts as expression and occurrence of human experience and behaviour" (Theißen, 1987, p.1). The interpretation in question implies psychological evaluations from texts to experience and behaviour. Understood in this way, the question of the possibility is seen to have been already overtaken. It is already a manifested reality. Its necessity for our times cannot be over-emphasized in the bid to on-going genuine dialogue between our conceptual categories on one side, and patterns of perception in the past, on the other side. It contributes to bringing to light the continued relevance of the message of the biblical text (for instance, the Gospel) to the realities of our times, so that we may have the life the gospel promises (Jn10:10).

Rebell (1989, 111-117) stresses the importance of psychological approach to the understanding of biblical texts. According to him, "Exegetes must bring the biblical text in relation to the human reality. The capturing of the human reality as well as the process of communication between the text and the receiver of the text cannot succeed without psychological concepts." Such an approach is basically in agreement with the logic of the synchronic method which also considers the communication system in which the biblical text is embedded. The logic of the synchronic approach is built on the understanding of the text as constituted by elements related with one another, as part of an all-embracing communication, and a living situation *Sitz im Leben* (Egger, 1987, 25). Such exegetical exercise working from, and endeavouring to the transformation of the pre-scientific mental dispositions – the daily psychologies earlier alluded to – with which the human perceived/perceives reality in order to get along with it, underscores the hallmark of the psychological hermeneutical approach. The decisive factor in such an exegetical endeavour as Theißen (1987) rightly pointed out, would not merely be how consistent the theories are, but "...the correspondence of an interpretation with the whole of the text..." (p.50)

This is related to Schleiermacher's position, having understood that the fundamental goal of hermeneutics was the examination of the overall art of understanding, especially articulating its elements and conditions. He defined hermeneutics as "the historical and divinatory, objective and subjective reconstruction of the given utterance," (Godzieba, 2003, 787). The "objective" refers to the grammatical, linguistic aspects, and "the subjective (the empathetic)" is the psychological. Observing that the given utterance is a product of thought, thereby establishing the reciprocal relationship between thought and speech/text, he argued that true interpretation of a given speech/text would have to proceed from the reconstruction of the author's thought and the underlying feeling(s) that originally gave rise to the expression the speech/text presents us with; for the meaning of a text exceeds what any purely grammatical interpretation may disclose.

Upon this radically pioneer perspective, subsequent hermeneutical endeavours would no longer be considered thoroughly thought through without engaging the place of the experiences, feelings and thoughts of the author of the particular text(s) in question. The purpose the text pursues, as well as its receptivity by the original and subsequent audience cannot not left out (Söding, 1998, 16, 37-53). The subsequent emergence of document analysis, involving the scientific evaluation of documents, targeted some encounter of the author and the addressees in their life situations. This is on the grounds of the generally accepted position that the authors of documents represented their own experience in their documents, and have endeavoured to objectify these experiences through their writings.

Psychology and Exegesis, Biblical hermeneutics towards application

Scripture, as document of faith with the system of belief that it contains, shares in the basic character of texts as articulations of the experiences of the various authors of its books and their various audience in their times and circumstances. It has this fundamental nature even as it came to assume normative status (*Canonicity*). It is this understanding of these texts of faith as stemming from, and related to the elementary phenomena of human experience, even as their basis and point of departure remain their theocentric/religious character, that constitute the foundations of biblical hermeneutics. It is the hermeneutical engagements with them. The very appreciation of the fundamental roles of experience and behaviour, this bedrock of psychology, in the coming to be of the scriptural texts, give psychology its place in the endeavours of biblical hermeneutics. This is, above all, complemented by, and evidenced in the irresistible augmentations (Leiner, 1995, 17-22) that often occur at contact with these texts.

The augmentations refer to the almost natural tendency, at contact with biblical texts, to visualize, historicize and psychologize their scenerios, characters etc. Visualization refers to the imaginations in connection with a given biblical scene; historicizing is the transference of the scene into action by some historical reconstructions; psychologizing here is about augmenting the biblical characters with presuppositions with regard to emotions, experience and behaviour. This is most evident in practical theological fields – in the pastoral, liturgy, religious pedagogy, bibliodrama etc. On more reflective levels, however, the question is raised about the relationship between psychology and exegesis. Would the findings of scientific psychology, in the light of the abiding influence of psychology on contemporary world, aid the discovery of the intentions and the truth of the biblical texts? Can they assist in

communicating the message of, for instance, NT texts to the present generation, whose self-understanding, language and existence have become, as it were, psychological in the sense of the increased sensitivities to psychic processes, conflicts and difficulties, in order to offer it orientation?

The fact that biblical (NT) texts originated from socio-religious experiences, and in their normative status intend orientation for their audience, sees them already (at least implicitly) psychological. This position is not negated by the fact that their authors would be said to have been more interested in their message and in their reception than in explicit psychic sensitivities. The seeming lack of explicit expressions about psychic sensitivities must have been very much influenced by the manner of expression of the time. Leiner (1995) thus argues that

The New Testament itself speaks the language of the popular psychology of its time. Exegesis, in its bid to interpret it, has to take up the concepts and theories of popular psychology of our time... and with the help of scientific psychology, exegesis examines, differentiates and develops these further. (p.39)

It is the positive response to this realization that constitutes the fact and business of psychological exegesis; for it has been realized that in order to enrich the historical basis upon and through which exegesis operates,

...in order to gain a full picture of the people and time on the New Testament, it is most desirable that psychological issues around them be appreciated and addressed. These would surely assist the better explanation of other themes of exegesis like the intentions of the statements made by particular authors or by the redactors. (p.32)

There have been dissenting voices to this approach among biblical scholars. These dissensions are expressed in the so-called “‘sins’ of psychological exegesis”(Theißen, 2007, 20-32). They include the allegations about interpolations, naivety, triviality, anachronism, incongruity of methods, subjects of investigation and self-understandings etc. Despite these objections, this perspective in the exegetical endeavours has continued to prove its usefulness and establishment. (Leiner, 1995, 41-76). For Leiner ((1995) and Gemünden (2009), the rejection of collaboration (interdisciplinary dialogue) between psychology and exegesis is a misunderstanding that should be given up, given that psychology affords exegesis some intelligibility of the biblical texts with regard to highlighting the “humanity” of the texts. Undeterred by the vehement objections to the relationship between the two disciplines, (Theißen, 1987), with regard to the NT, argues that psychological exegesis

...seeks to describe and explain, as far as humanly possible, human behaviour and experience in ancient Christianity. Its foundations are early Christian texts, whether it concludes from them to human behaviour and experiences or interprets the texts themselves as psychic acts – as acts of praying, appealing, thinking, interpreting, and evaluating. (p.1)

Adding his voice to the arguments for, Wayne (2007) insisting that psychological critical approach to exegesis basically approaches a text as a “psychic event”. He notes that

...it views the text not only as the product of historical, social, and literary processes, but also as the product of a psychic process or processes in which conscious as well as unconscious factors are at work in the authors of the text, their communities, and historical settings, as well as in those of the readers, and in which the nature and the habits of the psyche are at work in the selection, formulation, organization, and rhetorical orientation of the textual materials. (p.19)

Note is, however, to be taken that the understanding of consciousness here is beyond the categories and confines of the psychoanalytic school of psychology and its Freudian influences. Consciousness here refers to thinking, feeling and willing. They are the three ultimate modes of consciousness. They are also referred to as Cognition, Feeling and Conation. It is in the co-operative functioning of these modes that the phenomena of conscious life are arranged (Fletcher, 2007, 11-17).

Despite understanding psychological exegesis as including “...all attempts to interpret texts as expression and occurrence of human experience and behaviour” (Theißen, 1987,1), concession is made to the possibility of differentiations. This is between psychological evaluation of texts as conclusion from texts to

experience and behaviour, on the one hand, and psychological exegesis as interpretation of the texts themselves as forms of experience and behaviour, on the other hand. From these concessions and accommodations Theißen worked out what he termed “hermeneutically oriented psychology”. This refers to a convergence between psychological and hermeneutical approaches, that is, the interpretations of texts, explanatory models that are oriented to psychology.

The hermeneutic approach offers no independent approach to explanation on the same level as learning theory, or as psychodynamic and cognitive models. It is on the one hand a corrective in the exegetical use of these models, and on the other hand a general framework that becomes concrete and fruitful only through assumption of explanatory models...they do not contradict the tested historical-critical methods of exegesis but rather make them more profound. They have the same goal: to make texts intelligible on the basis of their connection with life. (p.2)

On what hermeneutical psychology actually is, Theißen(2007, 16-18) in this later work of his related it to historical psychology. This is the a posteriori interpretation of received texts, which, because of its methodic limitations (regarding the empirical methods obtainable in scientific psychology), contents itself with classifying, understanding and explaining from given texts. Cultural rules and norms, despite their contextual variations, provide the basic regularity that may parallel the regular rules of scientific methods. Berger (2003) while appreciating the importance of historical psychology, sees it as scientific response of theology to the hermeneutic significance of human experience. He is, however, sceptical about the danger of imposing too much of the modern situation on the text, while insisting on deliberate openness to the biblical modes of experiencing reality, on the historical specificity of the text.

Taking Position

While agreeing with, and substantially sharing this understanding and the enormous insights of these developments in which Theißen rightly counts as one of its strongest advocates, we are wont to go a step further, to suggest a different approach. This is summed-up in our preference of the term **psychological hermeneutic** to hermeneutical psychology. Related in their basic meanings, our understanding of psychological hermeneutics portrays a nuance. This is based on our earlier understanding of hermeneutics as not only being interpretation/explanation but as also involving application in the sense of actualization. This is not in the sense of making hermeneutics become application, a misunderstanding against which Berger (2003) warned. But it is in the sense of hermeneutics being the articulation of the two approaches to text – exegesis and application –, showing coherence and substantiation (Berger, 1999,110).

Whereas the understanding of hermeneutics employed in Theißen’s hermeneutical psychology, his other term for psychological exegesis, seems to give the impression of analyses with little involvement of direct application, our perspective of psychological hermeneutics is precisely in the direction of application with careful analysis as prerequisite. Theißen may be said to have been more or less involved with laying down principles, following them in his analysis. His target was, as he noted, “posing new historical questions.”(Theißen, 1987, 394) Attempts at such analysis as our understanding proposes, involve, and are governed by the consideration of historical and sociological situations, comprehensive reception process, conditions and possibilities.

Our point of departure in the approach is founded on our understanding of hermeneutics, following Berger as engagement with the ancient texts in the quest for orientation and meaning in life in the face of the reality of the vagaries of *conditio humana*. Such hermeneutics necessarily involves application. It is motivated by the inadequacies and wants in praxis. Application here is more than the transference of ideas to the present. It is an attempt to understand that is oriented towards responsible action. It is about the discovery of these wants, a criticism of the praxis and the proffering of some assistance. Berger (2003) thus argues,

The beginning of application is the evidence of the appeal arising from the situation in which there is the need for action, a need that one cannot close oneself up against or explain away with one ideology or the other... Liberation, comprehensively understood, is the goal of applicative endeavour. (p.25)

We share, thereby, the conviction that human beings are optimally motivated to action by the conviction that they can influence the proceedings of things rather than submit to the crippling dispositions to inaction. The dispositions in question are, for instance, such that seem to make fate of every experience, even the ones that have very natural explanations and demand such attention. The motivation to such application informs and defines our psychological hermeneutical understanding and orientation. It challenges inherited patterns of thought and debilitating traditional worldview with the freedom and life enhancing Christian message. Its primary point of take-off is the psychology of the early Christianity within the approaches of the psychology of religion, and in the circumstance of their religious world and cultural orientations. This is because the place of psychological hermeneutics is between theology and theory of religion.

Where theology is understood as the science which seeks to serve the proclamation of the gospel by means of various methods and in various subjects (Theißen and Gemünden, 2007, 43-47), the implications of psychology therein is obvious. In this relationship, it is of great importance to differentiate between scientific psychology and para- and pseudo-scientific (esoteric) psychology. In the scientific reflection on the subjective and practical aspects of religion that theology is about, it cannot afford to remain in the fundamentalistic or the pre-scientific traditional understandings of man (Grom, 1992, 14). It has to move on, address the modern man in his circumstance, and afford him anchor and orientation towards the attainment of his eternal vocation. Cumont (1960) sums up the need and value of such interdisciplinary approach.

If psychology to-day conscientiously applies itself to the disorder of the memory and of the will, it cannot fail to interest itself in the ailments of the faculty of belief, and specialists in lunacy will do useful work in dealing with this species of morbid manifestation with the view of settling its etiology and tracing its course. (p.xiii)

The ailments of the faculty of belief in question here are many. They include fundamentalism fanned by ignorance, debilitating fear, indiscretion, abuse, exploitation and other attendant social ills. That these are issues our society battles with is obvious. More often than not, given our religiosity, religion is abusively instrumentalized in perpetuating these anomalies. Scripture being the text of Christian religion is readily employed and misread to feed and sustain the positions. Psychological hermeneutics enhanced by psychology of religion afford some clarifying remedies.

The technicalities of the psychology of religion in the task of psychological hermeneutics are beyond the scope of this paper. (For more on it, see Madubuko, 2014). But suffice it to note that it is generally concerned with inquiries into the relationship between a person's religious expressions and his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. According to Batson (1997), it is technically understood as the "scientific study of individual's beliefs and behaviour, including the relationship of individual religion to other aspects of psycho-social make-up"(p.3). Difference must, however, be made between the scientific description of views, ideas, behaviour and experience by means of psychology, and the study of the goals of particular religion or worldview. While the former is properly psychology of religion, the latter is rather religious pedagogy clothed with psychology (Hoheisel, 1998, 1-7).

Psychology of religion, attempting to determine what is psychic in and about religion, religious experience, knowledge and behaviour, employs the theoretical and methodic instruments of psychology. In this bid, it makes the most of the best suitable of them for its goal. This goal is no other than "...the study of the processes in the field of religion. These processes are the ongoing tensions and conflicts which the subject (or the religious society) is in the process of solving." (Vergote, 1997, 22) The push and pull of life, these discrepancies that constitute the current and dynamic of life, occasion the evolution of some system of regulation, motivational impulses, as it were, with which they are dealt with. Religion is regarded as such a system. From the point of view of Christianity, Scripture as religious texts, is part and parcel of this system. Psychology of religion, therefore, being about the examination of such system and its structures, participates in the hermeneutics in question. It becomes then most useful, therefore, given the understanding that biblical texts are religious texts, emanating from, and expressing perception and behaviour, and geared towards regulation and motivational impulses.

From the point of view of the traditional classifications of the schools of psychology – psychoanalytic, behavioural and cognitive schools etc. – and their various points of emphasis (Zimbardo & Gerring, 2004, 17-18), the cognitive orientations in psychology asserts themselves as the most appropriate for the psychological investigations of religion. This is not only because of the nature of the object of study – religion – as an issue of interpretations (interpretation itself is basically an issue of perception/cognition). It is moreso on the nature of the cognitive turn in psychology assuming the uniting point of the seeming extremely divergent positions of the psychoanalytic and behavioural schools of psychology. As such psychological hermeneutics as proposed here, builds on, and harvests the fruits of the cognitive orientations of psychological sciences. Its end point as far as our issue of discuss is concerned, becomes what Jones (1999, 222) termed “cognitive restructuring” (Madubuko, 2015, 342-346). Noting the very close relationship between perception, cognition and physiological expressions, diseased perception definitely leads to maladapted cognition and wrong physiological expression. Cognitive restructuring, therefore, is a therapeutic process aimed at re-positioning or correcting the maladapted cognitive schema, and thereby positively influencing and bettering perception, consequent cognition and resultant physiological expression (behaviour). It brings about change in irrational thoughts and the healing of the afore-mentioned “ailments of the faculty of belief” (Cumont, 1960).

Conclusion

Psychology is oriented to therapy. The interdisciplinary venture that its relationship with religion becomes, is aimed at multiplying the positive effects of their synergy. The here proposed psychological hermeneutics as a method in NT biblical interpretation aims at tapping into the immense resources of the Scriptures through proper interpretation. It is to bring about the betterment of the society, freedom from the bonds of maladapted perceptions especially in the culture of belief that our setting is. It springs from the basic axiom of religion: God and faith in him as a cognitive factor influencing the perception, appraisal and interpretation of an experience, producing positive emotions that enhance personal competence (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Psychological hermeneutical reading of NT texts would give insight into the psychology of the early Christians as expressed in these texts. Its kern is the faith in Christ. It is the centre of their value-system, This faith is given expression in the technical term Christology, constituting a psychological factor (Madubuko, 2015, 346-358). Christological expressions as the articulation of belief in Jesus the Christ, emerged in response to the pressing needs of the believers. By so doing, it earmarked the soteriological implications of such expressions, helping the generation of rational response. This is most eloquent in Paul (and NT writings under his influence) whose Christology is soteriology – the good news of the salvific work of God in Christ. The human society in general, and our society in particular needs such a re-reading of the Christ event as expressed in the NT, to enable it build on the available strengths, generate rational responses for the betterment of the society.

References

- Aristotle, On Interpretation, 1.16a4, in: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutic;
- Barton, J. (2007), *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*. Louisville, KE: John Knox Press.
- Batson, C. D., (1997), “An Agenda Item for Psychology of Religion: Getting Respect.”, in: Spilka, B., & McIntosh, D. N., (eds.), *The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press (3-19).
- Beck, A. T., (1979), *Wahrnehmung der Wirklichkeit und Neurose, Kognitive Psychotherapie der Störung*. München: J. Pfeiffer.
- Berger, K., (1991), *Historische Psychologie des Neuen Testaments*. Stuttgart: Katholisches Biblewerk.
- (2003), *Identity and Experience in the New Testament* (translated by Charles Muenchow). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Cervone, D. & Pervin, L. A., (2008), *Personality: Theory and Research*. 10th Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Comont, F., (1960), *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*. New York: Dover Publications.

- Fletcher, M. S., (2007), "The Psychology of the New Testament", in: Wayne, G. R., et al (eds), Psychological Insight into the Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Godzieba, A. J., (2003) „Hermeneutics“, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia (NCE), 786 - 791
- Grom, B., (1992), Religionspsychologie. München: Kösel – Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Gadamer, H-G., (1996), Truth and Method. London: Sheed and Ward.
- Gadamer, H-G., Hermeneutics of Suspicion, in D.L. Rennie, "Hermeneutics and Humanistic Psychology", in <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div32/pdfs/hermeneutics.pdf>:
- Jones, S. L., (1999), „Psychology and Religion“, in: Benner, D. G., & Hill, P. C., (eds.), Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counselling. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, (961-965).
- (1999), "Cognitive Restructuring", in: Benner, D. G., & Hill, P. C., (eds.), Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counselling. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, (222-223).
- Hoheisel, K., (1998) „Religionspsychologie“, in: TRE 29.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S., (1987), Stress, Appraisal and Coping. 3rded. New York: Springer.
- Leiner, M., (1995), Psychologie und Exegese. Grundfragen einer textpsychologischen Exegese des Neuen Testaments. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
- (2007), „Dem Evangelium die Seele wiedergeben? Grundsätzliche Fragen einer Psychologie der Urchristentums“, in: Theißen, G., & von Gemünden, P., (Hg), Erkennen und Erleben. Beiträge zur psychologischen Erforschung des frühen Christentum. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
- Madubuko, J. C., (2015), The „Pauline“ Spirit World in Eph 3:10 in the Context of Igbo World View – A Psychological-Hermeneutical Appraisal. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Rebell, W., (1989), "Psychologische Bibelauslegung – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen", in: Bibel und Kirche 44, 111-117.
- Theißen, G., (1987), Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology. (trs. by John P. Galvin). Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- (2007), Erleben und Verhalten der ersten Christen: Eine Psychologie des Urchristentums. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
 - (2007), „Kausalattribution und Theodizee. Ein Beitrag zur kognitiven Analyse urchristlichen Glauben“, in: Theißen, G., & von Gemünden, P., (Hg), Erkennen und Erleben. Beiträge zur psychologischen Erforschung des frühen Christentums (183-196).
- Vergote, A., (1997), "Cause and Meaning, Explanation and Interpretation in the Psychology of Religion", in: Belzen, J.A., (ed), Hermeneutical Approaches in Psychology of Religion. International series in the Psychology of Religion (ISPR) 6. Amsterdam: Rodopi (11-34).
- Wayne, G. R., (2007), "A Psychological-Critical Approach to the Bible and its Interpretation", in: Wayne, G. R., et al (eds.), Psychological Insight into the Bible. Texts and Readings. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, (17-21).
- Zimbardo, G., & Gerring, R. J., (2004), Psychologie. 16 aktualisierte Aufl. München: Pearson Studium.

CORONA VIRUS 2019 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN: POLITICISATION OF PALLIATIVE MEASURES IN NIGERIA

By

Ejikeme Jombo Nwagwu,
Department of Political Science
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The outbreak of corona-virus disease in 2019 in China, spread wildly across the globe, caught the world by surprise, dislodged supposedly medically advanced countries from proffering immediate solutions to tackle the ravaging disease. The unprecedented health challenge humbled mankind and exposed world vulnerability, and its impact and the severity across the world led to the declaration of the virus as a pandemic. The disease was traced in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020, and its progressive spread and record of affected persons and mortality rate compelled the government to clampdown on citizens' free movement. The lockdown became unbearable amongst households due to incapability to meet the basic social needs. The government swiftly intervened; individuals from the private sector and nongovernmental organisations donated palliative cares to ameliorate the adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The distribution of the palliative measures was allegedly politicised and the exercise shortchanged the vulnerable poor. The administration of the palliative materials seemingly lacked integrity, transparency and accountability.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic Lockdown Palliative Measures, Politicisation, Service Delivery

Introduction

The outbreak of corona-virus disease (COVID-19) in the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province, China in December 2019 spread wildly across the globe. The disease caught the entire world by surprise, dislodged supposedly medically advanced countries of the world from proffering immediate solutions to tackle the seemingly critical and devastating health challenges. The unprecedented health crises with the rising rate of people contracting the virus and the resultant global death toll humbled mankind and exposed world vulnerability, and its impact and the severity across the world led to the declaration of the disease on 11th March, 2020 by World Health Organisation (WHO) as a pandemic (i.e. uncontained spread of an infection in multiple regions). The declaration was imperative because the virus had attained the epidemiological criteria of affecting more than 100,000 people in at least 100 countries (Callaway, 2020). WHO made a global estimate of mortality rate at 3.4%, even though older people and others suffering from comorbidities had higher mortality rates (Costantini et al, 2020). The disturbing issue about the imminent spread of the disease in developing countries is that African countries' health systems are friable to contend with the virus. The velocity of the spread was worrisome as Ohia et al (2020) averred "in a very short time, the disease spread across China and cases were reported with an exponential increase in morbidity and mortality rate" (p.279), foreseeing uncontrollable of the spread of the virus.

The disease was traced in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020, and its progressive spread and record of increasing number of affected persons and high mortality rate compelled the Federal Government to impose a partial clampdown on free movement of people specifically in the identified states such as Ogun and Lagos States, and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja where the disease was spreading in quick succession. Subsequently, other state governments applied precautionary measures to avert the spread of the viral-disease, and declared a total lockdown (stay at home restriction) and ordered for the closure of all interstate borders and imposed curfew to checkmate defaulters (Eranga, 2020). There were also limitations on social interactions such as closures of workplaces, schools, places for worship, malls and markets; while emphasis was laid on wearing face-mask, constantly washing hands with soap and maintaining social distance to prevent contraction of the virus disease. The lockdown placed almost every person out of

legitimate means of livelihood which resulted in unimaginable hardship to families, internally displaced persons in camps, particularly the vulnerable groups at the lowest rung of social stratification. The suffering became unbearable as the virus was rapidly escalating and ravaging in scope, hence the overwhelming outcry of the populace for palliative measures to ameliorate the harsh economic condition brought about by the pandemic confinement.

In response, the federal and state governments intervened, individuals in the private sector and non-governmental organisations and international organisations like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Union, United Nations, Central Bank of Nigeria, foreign countries, etc palliated hugely to lessen the severity of the situation. The precarious state of affairs was exacerbated by the method applied in the administration of the palliative measures, as it was allegedly politicised and the vulnerable were skipped in the distribution process (Eranga, 2020; Onyeka, 2011). The exercise was carried out in a very suspicious manner short of integrity, transparency and accountability.

The primary thrust of the study was to establish how the palliative materials donated for the wellbeing of the people were distributed, and to ascertain whether the target population (the vulnerable) benefited from the exercise.

An explanation of Corona-Virus Disease

Coronaviruses are an enormous family of viruses which cause ailment in animals or humans. In humans, distinct Coronaviruses are known to bring about respiratory infections from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most currently uncovered Coronavirus brings about Coronavirus disease COVID-19 (WHO, 2020).

The corona-virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) manifests disease symptoms like acute fever, shortness of breath, cough, respiratory symptoms and breathing difficulties. In cases where severe virus diseases prevail or calamitous consequences such as lower respiratory tract illness which often results in acute respiratory distress syndrome, or pneumonia and bronchitis or severe acute respiratory syndrome are all indices of COVID-19 (WHO, 2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an illness occasioned by a new Coronavirus christened Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2: hitherto known as 2019-nCoV) which was earlier identified amongst an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Illness induced by SARS-CoV-2 was named COVID-19 by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the acronym was a derivative concept from “Coronavirus disease 2019”. The choice of the nomenclature was to eschew stigmatization of the virus’s origins in terms of populations, geography or animal associations (WHO, 2020; Cennimo, 2020).

Materials and methods

This study is a qualitative research which involved documentary method of gathering data from secondary sources. Documentary method centers on descriptive analysis of all documents with relevant information pertaining to the subject under investigation. The application of secondary methods refers to analysis of documents that contain data pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation (Mogalakwe, 2006). This type of technique has erroneously been viewed as an exclusive class of professional historians, librarians and information science specialists. Umar (2016, p.127) opined that “some social scientists often project qualitative methods as a worthless pursuit, incapable of aiding understanding of social phenomena let alone prescribing for its resolution or amelioration”. “It is somewhat surprising that most social research methods texts fail to give documentary materials more than a passing reference” (Burnham et al., 2004, p.168).

Thus, the seeming neglect of the usefulness of qualitative research and its apparent under-utilisation does not make this kind of research in social sciences less rigorous as researchers with expression of absolute confidence and proof demonstrate that the method employs scientific tools and skills which demand essential rigour in research protocol. Qualitative inquiry applies diverse philosophical suppositions, strategic inquiry, and methods of generating data, analysis and interpretation. A qualitative method stresses on the qualities of entities, processes and significance that cannot be experimentally

evaluated or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. The goal of descriptive research is to portray phenomenon under investigation and elaborate its characteristics. In descriptive inquiry, information obtained qualitatively may be analysed quantitatively, making use of frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analysis to establish relationship (Nassaji 2015; Umar 2016).

Documentary method of data collection has an inherent flexibility in information generation through use of public or school libraries, government records or reports on events or personal accounts on experiential incidents, retrieval of facts and figures from statistical records on social issues or from the archival sources, books, journals, the media, and internet sources. Therefore, documentary technique was utilised to establish information gaps in literature that required to be filled through review of a plethora of existing knowledge. The study exposed the researchers to a wide stream of literature on Coronavirus disease pandemic. Thus, it adopted qualitative descriptive method of data analysis to analyse data garnered. In analysing data generated, the researcher used descriptive statistics. The method of data collection and analysis lean on the above premise.

Global Trend of Coronavirus Disease 2019

The global trend of the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated huge human destruction in terms of the high rate of morbidity and mortality. The multiple adverse effects of the disease on world economy and the ripple effects on the standard of living of the world population, specifically the developing countries like Nigeria depict the severity of the outcome. The global updates showed total number of cases as 27,486,960, and total death figure was 894,983 as at 9th September, 2020. The number of countries affected by the virus disease was 216 as at the same date. The global level of assessment of the ravage as at 11th April and 14th May, 2020 was rated very high by the World Health Organisation (2020) as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2. The situation became unbearable in developing nations where poor and scanty medical facilities are even inadequate, dearth of social security, the imposition of lockdown and restrictions on interstate travel brought about severe implications on the health status and ailing economy, particularly on consumer goods where food vendors were permitted access across state borders, yet no food to purchase. The precarious condition hiked prices of food stuff, high cost of transportation of food items and aftermath burden on the end-consumer were frighteningly heightening the worsened situation. The international community was called upon to come to their rescue. On the strength of the situation reports, the World Bank, European Union, United Nations, some countries in Europe, United States, and China responded to the clarion calls from the developing countries for assistance through donations to fight the COVID-19. The Table 3 illustrates some of the donors and beneficiaries.

Table 1

Corona-virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Situation Report – 82 As At April 11, 2020

Globally	Confirmed Cases		Confirmed Deaths	
	Total	New	Total	New
	1,610,909	89,657	99,690	6,892
Region	Confirmed Cases		Confirmed Deaths	
	Total	New	Total	New
	Europe	839,257	39,561	70,565
America	536,664	43,491	19,294	2,256
Western Pacific	118,549	1,302	4,017	39
Eastern Mediterranean	92,226	3,569	617	164
South-East Asia	14,161	1,183	617	48
Africa	9,340	551	415	33

Source: World Health Organisation, 2020

Table 2

Corona-virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 115 as at May 14, 2020

Globally	Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
----------	-----------------	------------------

	Total	New	Total	New
		4,248,389	77,965	292,046
Region	Confirmed Cases		Confirmed Deaths	
	Total	New	Total	New
Africa	51,752	2,323	1,567	67
Eastern Mediterranean	293,805	9,535	9,389	130
America	1,819,553	37,989	109,121	2,617
Europe	1,801,668	21,352	161,413	1,614
South-East Asia	116,617	5,685	3,921	175
Western Pacific	164,282	1,081	6,622	44

Source: World Health Organisation, 2020

The Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the pandemic has very huge unfavourable impact on Europe, America, Western Pacific and Eastern Mediterranean regions. African region is less hit in the ravage, but the most vulnerable in terms of poverty, illiteracy, backwardness in medical-care facilities and paucity of problem solving research outcomes. The virus disease seems to be gathering momentum in its spread as the war is not over. Radbruch et al., (2020, p.1) aptly observe that:

For low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs), the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be even more severe than in high-income countries. There will probably be a high burden of COVID-19 in settings where there are weak health-care systems, lack of access to clean water and disinfectants, poor outbreak preparedness, severe shortages in personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical technology, challenges in enforcing physical distancing regulations, and reliance on informal employment.

In a study carried out in China by Costantini et al (2020), it was established that the most prevalent symptoms were fever (94%), shortness of breath (58%), fatigue (47%) and cough (39%). The study also revealed that Italy was the first country in Europe to be severely affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The initial case occurred on 21st February, 2020 but as at 15th March, 2020, 24,000 cases had been confirmed and 1,809 deaths had been recorded in the country.

Table 3

War against COVID-19: External Palliative Donations to some African countries

Beneficiaries	Amount (million)	Donors
Zimbabwe	€68.4m	European Union
	\$5m	World Bank
	\$3m	United States
	\$15.3m	Japan
Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti	€64m	European Union
	€105m (given earlier to fight plague)	

Nigeria	\$54m (plus 50 Ventilators and personal protective equipment valued at \$2m) ₦27 billion €26m \$21.4m ₦48m \$150m	European Union Private Sector in Nigeria German United States Chinese Chamber of Commerce Withdrawal by Nigerian Government from Sovereign Wealth Fund to fight the virus
Sierra Leone	\$8m	World Bank

Source: (a) Ishiekwene, Azu (2020). Using COVID-19 donations to give charity a bad Name. <https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/opinion/3643-using-covid-19-donations-to-give-charity-a-bad-name>

(b) Okwumbu, Ruth (2020). Top Nigerian billionaires and their contribution to the fight against COVID-19. <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/05/top-10-nigerian-billionaires-and-their-contributions-to-the-fight-against-covid-19/> Accessed 15 September,

Trend of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Nigeria

The trend of the pandemic in Nigeria as at 9th September, 2020 disclosed that 433,206 samples had been tested, and 55,632 cases were confirmed. The number of cases (patients) discharged was 43,610, while 1,070 deaths were recorded with 1.9% (confirmed fatality rate (CFR) as shown on Table 4. The most affected age group in the demographics study was 31-40 (25%) as illustrated on Figure 1. The male suffered more in the number of confirmed cases with 63% than the female with 37% (National Centre for Disease Control, 2020).

Table 4

COVID-19 Situation Report 194 in Nigeria as at 9th September, 2020

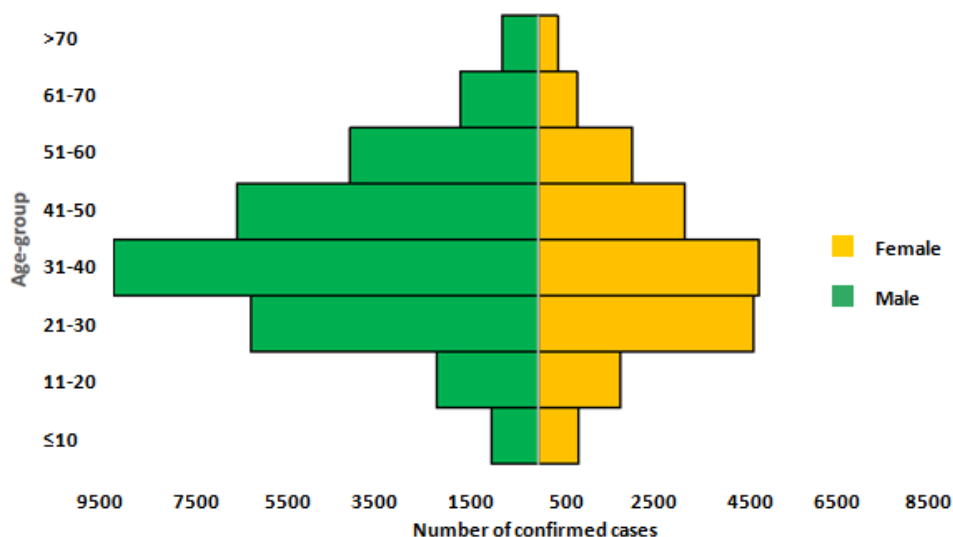
Samples Tested		Confirmed Cases		Discharged Cases		Confirmed Fatalities	
Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New
433,206	2,494	55,632	176	43,610	276	1,070 (1.9% CFR)	3
Demographics		Most affected age group		Provenance			
Male	Female	31 -40 (25%)		Travel history		850 (1%)	
35,295	20,337 (37%)	See the illustration in figure 1		Contacts		14,112	

(63%)			(24%)
		Unknown exposure	40,670 (75%)

Source: National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) 2020

Figure 1

Age-Sex Distribution of Confirmed Cases (WK9 – WK37)

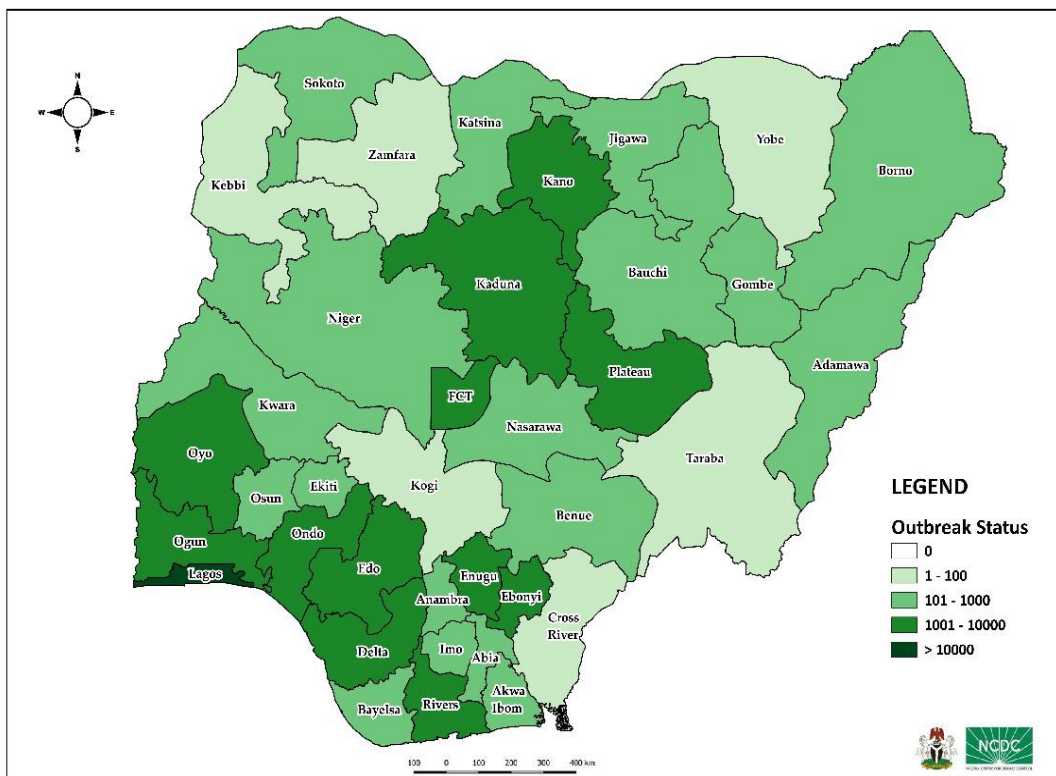


Source: National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) 2020

The trend of the pandemic in Nigeria as at 9th September, 2020 shows that 433,206 samples had been tested, and 55,632 cases were confirmed while 43,610 cases (patients) were discharged and 1,070 fatalities were recorded with 1.9% (confirmed fatality rate (CFR) as shown on Table 4. The most affected age-group in the demographics was 31-40 (25%) as shown on Figure 1. The structure indicates that male rate with 63% is higher than female with 37% in the age-sex distribution of confirmed cases (week9 – week37) (NCDC, 2020). The pandemic spread quickly and covered all the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, and every state had at least a confirmed case of infected person as shown on Figure 2 and Table 5. The number of the newly confirmed cases reported 24 hours before 9th September, 2020 was 176 from 17 states as follows – FCT (40), Lagos (34), Plateau (26), Enugu (14), Delta (12), Ogun (12), Ondo (9), Oyo (8), Ekiti (6), Ebonyi (4), Adamawa (2), Kwara (2), Nasarawa (2), Rivers (2), Bauchi (1), Edo (1) and Osun (1) (National Centre for Disease Control, 2020).

Figure 2

Map of Nigeria showing 36 States and Federal Capital Territory affected by COVID-19



Source: National Centre for Disease Control 2020

The number of the newly discharged cases was 276 from 11 states as at 9th September, 2020 as follows – Benue (110), Plateau (70), Ondo (42), Delta (13), FCT (13), Rivers (12), Ogun (9), Bauchi (2), Bayelsa (2), Osun (2) and Ekiti (1); while death occurred in 3 states – FCT (1), Ogun (1) and Rivers (1).

Table 5

States with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases, recoveries, deaths and days Since last reported as at 9th September, 2020

State	Confirmed Cases		Discharged Cases		Deaths		Total Active Cases	Days since last reported case
	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New		
Lagos	18,456	34	15,237	0	203	0	3,016	0
FCT	5,375	40	1,637	13	70	1	3,668	0
Oyo	3,209	8	1,961	0	38	0	1,210	0
Plateau	2,954	26	1,879	70	30	0	1,045	0
Edo	2,603	1	2,404	0	100	0	99	0
Kaduna	2,214	0	2,099	0	32	0	83	2
Rivers	2,195	2	2,087	12	59	1	49	0
Delta	1,780	12	1,616	13	48	0	116	0
Kano	1,728	0	1,604	0	54	0	70	2

Ogun	1,715	12	1,648	9	27	1	40	0
Ondo	1,575	9	1,485	42	33	0	57	0
Enugu	1,198	14	1,088	0	21	0	89	0
Ebonyi	1,034	4	986	0	30	0	18	0
Kwara	989	2	794	0	25	0	170	0
Katsina	819	0	457	0	24	0	338	2
Abia	816	0	712	0	8	0	96	2
Osun	803	1	756	2	17	0	30	0
Gombe	746	0	643	0	23	0	80	1
Borno	741	0	703	0	36	0	2	9
Bauchi	671	1	646	2	14	0	11	0
Imo	537	0	211	0	12	0	314	1
Benue	460	0	401	110	9	0	50	8
Nasarawa	443	2	298	0	12	0	133	0
Bayelsa	391	0	365	2	21	0	5	11
Jigawa	322	0	308	0	11	0	3	55
Ekiti	299	6	254	1	5	0	40	0
Akwa Ibom	283	0	247	0	8	0	28	1
Niger	244	0	216	0	12	0	16	5
Adama wa	230	2	180	0	15	0	35	0
Anambra	226	0	181	0	19	0	26	1
Sokoto	159	0	142	0	17	0	0	9
Kebbi	93	0	84	0	8	0	1	12
Taraba	91	0	73	0	6	0	12	2
Cross River	83	0	73	0	8	0	2	6
Zamfara	78	0	73	0	5	0	0	20
Yobe	67	0	59	0	8	0	0	41
Kogi	5	0	3	0	2	0	0	68
Total	55,632	176	43,610	276	1,070	3	10,952	

Source: National Centre for Disease Control 2020

The incidents of Coronavirus disease cases and the serious danger it constitutes to the populace as portrayed above, particularly to the poor vulnerable ones whose perilous condition had been worsened with the lockdown and confinement of families in their homes. Radbruch et al, (2020, p.1) averred:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has brought a tsunami of suffering that is devastating even well resourced countries. The disease has wreaked havoc on health systems and generated immense losses for families, communities, and economies, in addition to the growing death toll. Patients, caregivers, health-care providers, and health systems can benefit from the extensive knowledge of the palliative care community and by taking heed of long-standing admonitions to improve access to essential medicines, particularly opioids for the relief of breathlessness and pain.

It was on this ground the desire for federal and state governments and good spirited individuals in the private sector; nongovernmental organisations' intervention in the area of providing palliative materials was inevitable. Consequently, the underlisted donations were made to cushion the harsh effect of the pandemic.

Table 6

Nigerian Private Sector Coalition against COVID-19: Relief Fund

S/No.	Name of Donors	Amount (₦)	Remarks
1.	Aliko Dangot	2,000,000,000	
2.	Femi Atedola	1,000,000,000	
3.	Abdulsamad Rabiu	1,000,000,000	Plus 100,000 protective face masks, 1,000 high grade medical protection and isolation gear, 2,000 protective goggles, and 1,000 testing kits to be supplied to each of the following nine states – Lagos, Kano, Adamawa, Edo, Kwara, Rivers, Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Sokoto. To be shared by Sokoto, Edo and Ogun States to help in the fight against COVID-19
	SBUA Group	300,000,000	
4.	Folorunsho Alakija	1,000,000,000	To be shared as follows: NCDC = ₦250m; Lagos State Government = ₦250m; ₦500m to be shared by African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Disease; Frontline health workers in Lagos and Abuja; Medical equipment to the relevant organs; and Dr Ameyo Stella Adedevo Health Trust.
5.	Tony Elumelu	1,000,000,000	
6.	United Bank for Africa	5,000,000,000	
7.	Jim Ovia	1,000,000,000	
8.	Segun Agbaje	1,000,000,000	
9.	Herbert Wigwe	1,000,000,000	
10.	Bola Ahmed Tinubu	200,000,000	To be shared as follows: Lagos State Government = 100,000,000. NCDC = 100,000,000
11.	Union Bank Plc	\$130,000m	To the Lagos State emergency response programme
12.	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation & other unspecified Oil companies	\$30m	
13.	Mike Adenuga of Globacom	\$2.59m	
14.	Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation	\$2,59m	
15.	The UBA Foundation	\$14m	To support local effort and other African countries where the bank operates

Source: (a) Okwumba, Ruth (2020). Top Nigerian billionaires and their contributions to the fight against COVID-19 <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/05/top-10-nigerian-billionaires-and-their-contributions-to-the-fight-against-covid-19/>

(b) Unah, Linus (2020). Nigerian private sector donates more than most other African countries in the fight against COVID-19. <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/west-africa/nigerian-private-sector-donates-more-than-most-other-african-countries-in-fight-against-covid-19/>

Politicisation of the Administration of Palliative Cares

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Sadiya Umar Farouq indicated that her ministry was set to implement the Federal Government Cash Transfer Intervention Programme to cushion the adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic. The government disclosed that 11 million households had been established in 35 states of the Federation to benefit from the palliative care. She confirmed that arrangement had been completed to commence the disbursement of ₦20,000 (US\$52) to 2.6 million households and each household is required to produce eligible six persons. According to the Minister, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) had 5,982 households, Nasarawa 8,271, Katsina 6,732 and Anambra 1,367 households. The basic criterion was that the beneficiaries must be only those families who registered with the Ministry in the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households scheme established in 2016 to flatten poverty curve. The government intent, it was stressed, was to programme each family identified on the register to receive a monthly cash payment of ₦20,000 (US\$52) for four consecutive months. The Minister claimed that the vulnerable persons were “captured” by community engagement but they failed to provide the names of the communities engaged and the names of the indigent and helpless persons so enlisted for the exercise (Ayado, 2020; Okwumba, 2020).

The programme was established in 2016, as at March 31, 2020, the Social National Register had a record of 11,045,537 indigent and helpless people in 35 states and 453 Local Government Areas across Nigeria from the 2,644,493 identified households. There was no disclosure on the parameter that was applied to determine who was the poorest of the poor. The Ministry failed to present to the public comprehensive lists of the purported registered poor and vulnerable persons, their names, state of origin, local government areas, and the communities in the areas where such indigent persons were accessed. How many of the registered people really got the ₦20,000? The analysis should as well contain their state of origin, local government areas, communities within the areas covered. The Ministry also appears to be unyielding in disclosing in an unequivocal manner the exact amount of money budgeted by the Federal Government and how much had been released for the palliative cares. The Federal Government has not informed Nigerian the total amount of money (in foreign and local currencies) realised from those organisations, spirited individuals in the private sector, and external aids for the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

The civil society organisations under the umbrella of Upright For Nigeria, Stand Against Corruption has asked the Federal and State Governments to publish the names of all the beneficiaries of the government palliative initiative to guarantee transparency and accountability in the distribution of the COVID-19 palliative resources. The consortium embraces ActionAid Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development and the Centre for Communication and Social Impact. The group demanded for inclusion of their members in the federal and state task force committees on the execution of the emergency palliative programmes in Nigeria to ensure checks and balances in their operation. The President Muhammadu Buhari approved an increase in the number of the registered prospective beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) from 2.6 million to 3.6 million. The group observed that the exponential increase in the COVID-19 cases compelled the government to impose a lockdown in Lagos and Ogun States and FCT, Abuja and cautioned that the communication gap between the governments and the people on matters relating to 2016 CCT scheme and the current and specific palliative cares to ameliorate the harsh effects of

COVID-19 would not lead to corruption. It is imperative to divorce CCT programme from the COVID-19 palliative funds to strengthen transparency, accountability and service delivery.

The stringent criteria for eligibility in accessing the CCT as pronounced by the Minister have attracted wide condemnations by diverse interest groups. The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development stipulated that Nigerians who could recharge their mobile phones above ₦100 and those who maintain above ₦5,000 credit balance in their bank account are ineligible to access the CCT palliative care. She reiterated that the scheme was meant for the urban poorest of the poor who are mostly located in the informal sector of the economy, and who are dependent on daily earning for their livelihood. This measure seem to have displeased millions of Nigerians who are also living below the threshold of poverty line. The parameter established by the government is short of acceptable standard in determining the economic indices for identification of extremely poor people in society. This approach of the government is a manifestation that there is something fundamentally wrong with the pattern of distribution of the palliative resources. Dr. Chiwuike Uba, a Development Economist, observed that statistically, Nigeria has over 90 million people who are poor and over 68.8% lacks physiological needs – food, water, shelter and cloths. About 69% of the population of the country is below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has traumatised Nigerians, depopulated the people and created unbearable condition of living. The imposition of lockdown and restriction of movements to checkmate the spread of the virus disease apparently subjected families to terrible hardship. Their confinement exacerbated the precarious situation, there was scarcity of food stuffs and the available ones are not reachable as prices of food items increased and there was no money to purchase them as the disease placed everyone out of job. The Federal Government called upon international organisations, spirited individuals in the private sector, corporate entities to come to our aids to fight the virus disease. The central and state governments as well intervened in palliating to alleviate the suffering of the populace, particularly the daily earners of livelihood from the informal sectors and the poorest of the poor in urban ghettos and rural communities.

The distribution of the palliative resources was politicised by government agencies responsible for the allocation of the materials. There was a hidden agenda and insincerity of purpose. It had political party coloration in design and operation. The stringent measures adopted as parameter for accessing the CCT was meant to edge off certain groups of elements in the society. The poorest of the poor and the poor segment of the population do not operate with banks. There was no unity of purpose in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic as government concealed everything pertaining to the money realised and no record of those who benefited from the conditional cash transfer was disclosed to the public view.

References

- Ayado, Solomon (2020). COVID-19: 1.6m poor Nigerians to benefit from Federal Government's cash transfer intervention. <https://businessday.ng/coronavirus/article/covid-19-2-6m-poor-nigerians-to-benefit-from-fgs-cash-transfer-intervention/>
- British Council (2020). Coronavirus trend: The pandemic is far from over <https://www.dw.com/en/coronarivirus-global-pandemic-trend/a-53954594>. Accessed 15 September, 2020
- Burnham, P., K. Gilland, W. Grant, and Z. Layton-Henry.(2004). *Research Methods in Politics*. New York: PalGrave MacMillan.
- Callaway, Ewen (2020). Time to use the p-word? Corona virus enter dangerous new phase. *Nature*, 579. DOI: 10.1038/d41586-020-00551-1
- Cennimo, David J. (2020). What is COVID-19? Accessed 14 September, 2020 from <https://www.medscape.com/answers/2500114-197401/what-is-covid-19>
- Costantini, Massimo, Sleeman, Katherine E., Peruselli, Carlo & Higginson, Irene J. (2020). Response and role of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A national telephone Survey of hospices in Italy. *Palliative Medicine*, 34(7): 889-895
DOI: 10.1177/0269216320920780

- Eranga, Isaac O. (2020). COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: Palliative Measures and the Politics of Vulnerability. *International Journal of Maternal and Child Health and AIDS*, 9(2): 220-222. DOI: 10.21106/ijma.394.
- Ishiekwene, Azu (2020). Using COVID-19 donations to give charity a bad Name. <https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/opinion/3643-using-covid-19-donations-to-give-charity-a-bad-name> Accessed September 17, 2020
- Mogalakwe, M. 2006. "The Use of Documentary Research Methods in Social Research". *African Sociological Review* 10 (1): 221 – 230
- Nassaji, H. 2015. "Qualitative and Descriptive Research: Data Type versus Data Analysis". *Language Teaching Research* 19(2): 129-132.
- National Centre for Disease Control (2020). COVID-19 Situation Report 194 as at 9th September, 2020. <https://ncdc.gov.ng/diseases/sitreps/?cat=14&name=An%20update%20of%20COVID-19%20outbreak%20in%20Nigeria> Accessed 12 September, 2020
- Ohia, Chinenyenwa, Bakare, Adeleye S. & Ahmad Tauseef (2020). COVID-19 and Nigeria: Putting the realities in context. *International Journal of Infectious Disease*, 95, 279-281. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.04.062>
- Okwumbu, Ruth (2020). Top Nigerian billionaires and their contribution to the fight against COVID-19. <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/05/top-10-nigerian-billionaires-and-their-contributions-to-the-fight-against-covid-19/> Accessed 15 September, 2020
- Onyeka, Tonia C. (2011). Palliative Care in Enugu: Challenges to a New Practice. *Indian Journal of Palliative Care*, 17(2): 131-136. DOI: 10.4103/0973-1075.84534
- __ Press Release: COVID-19 – Publish list of Palliative Beneficiaries, Anti-corruption Groups Urged Government. <https://nigeria.actionaid.org/news/2020/press-release-covid-19-publish-list-palliative-beneficiaries-anti-corruption-groups-urge> Accessed September 17, 2020
- Radbruch, Lukas, Knaul, Felicia M., de Lima, Litiana, de Joncheere, Cornelis & Bhadelia, Afsan (2020). The key role of palliative care in response to the COVID-19 tsunami of suffering. *The Lancet*, 395 (10235): 1467 – 1469. DOI.org/10.1016/So140-6736(20)30964-8
- Umar, M. Z. 2016. "Qualitative Research Method: Insight and Perspectives on Data Collection and Content Analysis". In *Research Methodology in Social Science Analysis*, edited by A. M. N. Okolie and G. A. Oga. Nigeria: Nigerian Political Science Association.
- Unah, Linus (2020). Nigerian private sector donates more than most other African countries in the fight against COVID-19. <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/west-africa/nigerian-private-sector-donates-more-than-most-other-african-countries-in-fight-against-covid-19/> Accessed September 17, 2020
- __ Why Controversy over Federal Government's COVID-19 Palliative Persists August 31, 2020 <https://guardian.ng/news/why-controversy-over-fgs-covid-19-palliatives-persists/> Accessed
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 82. <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=World+Health+Organisation+%28WHO%29+%282020%29.+Coronavirus+disease+2019+%28COVID19%29+Situation+Report+-+82>. Accessed 15 September, 2020

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECO-SYSTEM COVID-19 INTERVENTION MEASURES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EMERGENCY: A STUDY OF ENTERPRISES IN SOUTH-EAST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE IN NIGERIA

By

Chinazor Franca, Obi

Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo,

Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,

Department of Business Administration,

Abstract

The study empirically determines the extent the COVID-19 Intervention Measures (IM) has impacted the entrepreneurial emergency (EE) through the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EES). Data was collected through an online questionnaire to the SMEs that is not up to five years of age. From the 11140 population, 780 SMEs new firms were sampled. Out of the returned questionnaires, 530 were used for the analysis. The findings from the structural equation model suggest that the emergence of the entrepreneurship in Nigeria is strongly contingent on the quality of EES, hence, the majority of the COVID-19 EES IM impact on EE.

Keywords: COVID-19, Entrepreneurial Eco-System, Intervention Measures, Entrepreneurial Emergency

1. Introduction

The whole world is ravaging with economic crisis and chaos with the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic has not only attacked the human health and lives but has also resulted in an economic, business and commercial pandemic to the whole world (GDA, 2020). To curb the rapid spread of the virus, individuals, businesses, states, countries and thus economy witnessed the disruption of the global supply chain of all products, from raw material to intermediate and final goods, workforce restrictions, physical and social distancing, interstate and international travel limitations, curfew, etc. Consequently, sustaining business operations becomes particularly difficult for especially most Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), startup and entrepreneurs who as vulnerable groups are directly hit by these measures.

About 50-70% of Nigeria economy depends on informal sectors mainly made up of SMEs and this sector has been described as the fastest emerging sector in the country (Obokoh and Goldman, 2016). Most of SMEs are living on daily subsistence conditions. The fallout of these challenges is unemployment, poverty and inequality. However, the pandemic crises posed the opportunity for those with cash reserved to acquire businesses and develop a new business model for the new economy. COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, poses a threat to many businesses while others see new opportunities emerge in the crisis (Brem, Nylund, Viardot, 2020). The key question now focused on what next for many individuals that had consumed their limited finance with their families during the lockdown or those that had lost their jobs. Consequently, there has been an accelerated unprecedented government policy launched in Nigeria to support individuals to venture into SMEs, resuscitate the dying businesses and boost the economy. Entrepreneurship through SMEs serves as remedy response for economic meltdown as witnessed during the pandemic.

Entrepreneurship through SMEs has been proven to be an indispensable tool for acquainting enterprises with the entrepreneurial mindset, introducing creative thinking, expansion and pioneers on the frontier of business and job creation, innovation, alleviating local poverty, inspiring industrial development, foster innovation and generate employment and value addition which increased economic growth (Rusu and Roman, 2017 and Williams and Shepherd, 2016). It emerges the major factor paving ways for economic

development during pandemic (Bishop, 2019 and Kuckertz, Br€andle, Gaudig, Hinderer, Reyes, Prochotta, Steinbrink, and Berger, 2020). Today, entrepreneurship is still expanding and also persistently altering and redefining nations' and the global economy. The market and society as a whole can no longer envisage a world with entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship emerged at new businesses creation, self-employment, new business organization, or expansion of an existing business by an individual, a team of individuals or an established business while Walsh and Cunningham, (2016) see it as the process of starting and continuing to expand a new business. Entrepreneurship has advanced beyond the classic startup concept to include companies and organisations of all type, in all stages. Thus entrepreneurship is seen in small and large firms, within and outside organisations, private and public sectors, all geographical and all nation's development. It involves a process of pursuing opportunities by individual either on their own or as a group. It, therefore, means different things to different people.

Entrepreneurship is the process through which enterprises are born while entrepreneurs refer to persons. An entrepreneur is a manager but not all managers are entrepreneurs. However, Moira, (2015) argue that self-employment serves as a substitution for entrepreneurship, but the two are not the same. Entrepreneurship covers intrapreneurs or corporate entrepreneurs. Intrapreneurs are people working within established organizations who approach their work in an entrepreneurial way. They are neither self-employed nor business owners. Entrepreneurship also embraces social entrepreneurs that offer altruistic forms of entrepreneurship that focuses on the benefits that society may reap. Entrepreneurs, therefore, can be firms' owners or employees in organizations or individuals who pursue innovative solutions to social problems. Entrepreneurial emergency at whatever form (within or outside the firm) refers to the recognition and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities.

Opportunity discovery involves an intentional exploration or unintentional discovery of opportunities as a result of the interaction and interrelatedness in the EES which creates market disequilibrium to create high valued products or services by providing solutions through EO. Moira (2015) sees entrepreneurial opportunity discovery as a presumed "fit" between market needs and resources. It is a match between need and resources. When entrepreneurs identify and define the market disequilibrium absolutely in terms of the values it sought through strategic thinking and planning, it becomes easier to define the precise resources that should tally with the required values. Hence opportunities abound in such a situation as it can result in the emergence of entrepreneurship (Kasabov, 2015). The entrepreneurs can capitalize on such opportunities to create value and wealth.

Previous studies viewed entrepreneurial emergency as opportunity recognition (Alvarez, Barney and Anderson, 2013, Kuckertz, Kollmann, Krell, and St€ockmann, 2017 and Bamfo, and Kraa, 2019), SMEs emergent (Caiazza, Belitski, and Audretsch, 2019), business start-up (Ooi, and Nasiru, 2015), new venture creation (Gartner, 1985 and Kuratko 2017), entrepreneurial development (Agwu, and Luke, 2014), organizational emergency (Katz and Gartner, 1988), organizational birth and evolution (Breslin, (2011), self-employment (Blumberg and Pfann, 2016), innovative activities (Angulo-Guerrero, P€erez-Moreno Abad-Guerrero, 2017), high growth start-up (Ooi and Nasiru, 2015), etc. The emergency of entrepreneurship gives birth to innovation as they introduce new models, seeks new resources, take risk of exploring the new geographical area (Schumpeter, 1934), and create value by transforming ideas into real goods and services. A new firm is not the same as the entrepreneurial firm until it involves risk-taking (Runyan, Cornelia, and Swinney, 2008). The entrepreneurial managerial ability to plan, organize, control, staff, direct material, man, money and machine makes creative ideas progress to the new firm, mature and grow. Individual entrepreneurs cannot be effective in the utilization of resources, institutions, market and business functions which are prerequisite for entrepreneurial emergency (Stam, 2017). The entrepreneurial emergency is a function of the collaborations and interaction that takes place between a range of institutional and individual stakeholders to foster self-employment, innovation and SMEs growth.

Entrepreneurship as a contextual concept is environmentally bound. It does not exist in a vacuum (Morre, 1993). "Despite a focus on the potential entrepreneur, entrepreneurship does not exist in a vacuum, Implicit in this is the notion that the group, organization or community possesses some potential for entrepreneurial activity. The environment need not be already rich in entrepreneurs but has the potential for increasing entrepreneurial activity. Regardless of the existence of the level of entrepreneurial activity, such as "seedbeds" establish fertile ground for potential entrepreneurs when and where they perceive a personal viable opportunity. That is entrepreneurial potential requires potential entrepreneurs"

Lehner and Harrer (2019) argued that entrepreneurial environment is the primary source of opportunities for all type and size of businesses. Entrepreneurship requires the interdependent and interactions of collective actors and factors that enable and constrain entrepreneurship within a particular environmental setting referred to as the "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem" (EES) (Acs, et.al. 2017 and Acs, Stam, Audretsch, and O'Connor, 2017). Scholars and experts used the allegory EES to show the contextual link between entrepreneurship and its environmental actors and forces (Stam 2015; Spigel 2017; Acs et al. 2017).Patriotta and Siegel, (2019) argue that entrepreneurship emerged as a result of the intermingling of different actors and factors within a focal environment. An individual aspires to behave entrepreneurially due to the perception or creation of opportunity from the interactions of different actors in the EES. EES enables entrepreneurs to gather information asymmetric, resources, knowledge, skills that result in opportunities utilization and enhanced entrepreneurial emergency (Kuratko, Fisher, Bloodgood, and Hornsby, 2017). Spigel (2017) observed that (EES) factors play a supportive background for the individual to embark in entrepreneurship.

The COVID-19 Intervention Measures (IM) are actions, processes and methods been directed to the individuals, entrepreneurs, firms and society at large through the already laid down country ecosystem to aid the emergency and survival of entrepreneurial firms. This indicates that the assessment of COVID-19 (IM) depends solely on interactions between the EES and individual in the ecosystem. Many entrepreneurial, therefore, need the assistance of different actors and factors in the EES (financial institutions, business support group, policymakers, and infrastructure) to raise resources to remain in business or embarking on new venture creation.

This study shows the value of entrepreneurial emergency with the system view of the context of entrepreneurship ecosystem COVID-19 (IM) The measure of the various components of EES COVID-19 (IM), will enable the policymakers to understand the extent of the effectiveness of the policy. Operationalization of the concept helps to determine the strengths and the weakness of individual EES COVID-19 (IM) which conversely enable the manager to figure out the special qualities, appreciate its strength and improve on its weakness. The in-depth knowledge of the unique proxies of EES COVID-19 (IM) assists in benchmarking against other EES both locally and on the international level. The study, therefore, aimed to establish the extent of the COVID-19 (IM) of the individual actors of EES (monetary and economic policy, finance-institutions, business support and physical infrastructure) drives entrepreneurial emergence after the lockdown with special reference to SMEs in South-West Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria.

The rest of the work is divided into

Hypothesis: COVID-19 (IM) of the different dimensions of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (government policy, finance-institutions, business supportive institution and physical infrastructure) positively and significant impact on the entrepreneurial emergency of the understudy businesses in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptualization and Configuration of EES COVID-19 (IM)

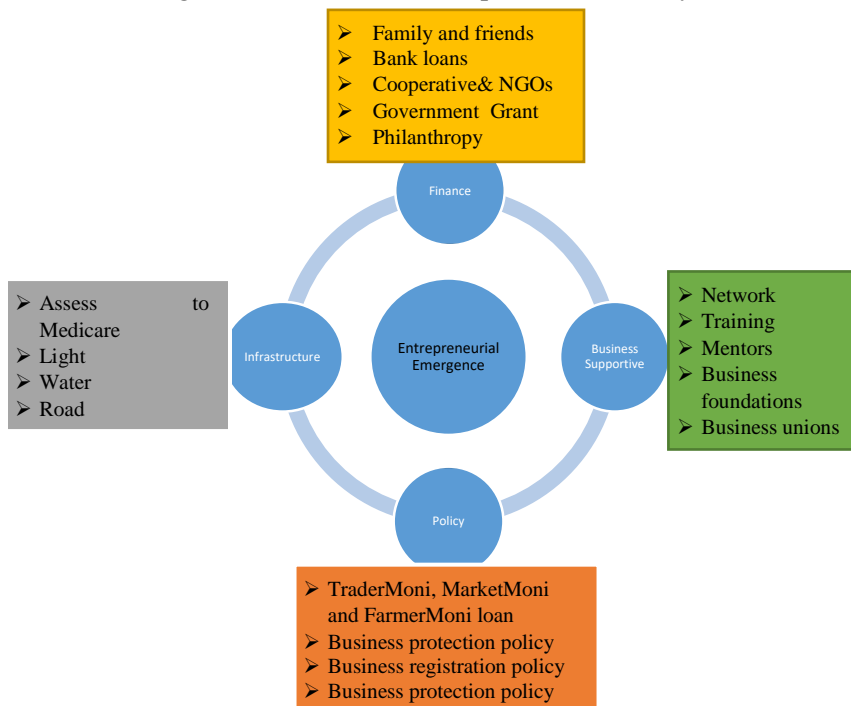
An ecosystem is a collaborating network of dynamic interrelated and subsystems in a particular environmental setting. The entrepreneurial ecosystem is new in the literature of entrepreneurship; conversely, there has not been a unified accepted definition of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Stam, 2015 and Valkokari, 2015). This result in the ambiguity increased on the different approaches of the concept (Suominen, Seppänen and Dedehayir, 2016), although, a study observed that scholars used these different approaches interchangeably (Aarikka-Stenroos, Peltola, Rikkiev, and Saari, 2016).

Vogel (2013, p. 446) defines it as “an interactive community within a geographic region, composed of varied and interdependent actors (e.g. entrepreneurs, institutions and organizations) and factors (e.g. markets, regulatory framework, support setting, entrepreneurial culture), which evolves and whose actors and factors coexist and interact to promote new venture creation”.

“an interdependent set of actors that is governed in such a way that it enables entrepreneurial action” (Stam, 2015)

The diverse definitions suggest that entrepreneurial ecosystem contextualize the increasingly multifaceted, interrelated and interdependent between enterprises to foster economic development. An entrepreneurial ecosystem describes the routine of alignment of economic activity within a particular area (Stoica, Roman, and Rusu, 2020). Other studied like Isenberg, (2011), Parwez, (2017), Nabi, Liñán, Fayolle, Krueger and Walmsley (2017) and Brown, and Mason (2017) argued that it Entrepreneurial ecosystem is the condition in which the individual, enterprises, and society come together to foster entrepreneurial emergency. In all these definitions, the aim remains entrepreneurial action and new venture creations. Entrepreneurs are at the centre of business creation

Figure 1: Model of an Entrepreneurial Eco-System COVID-19 IRM



Source: Survey Research, 2020

EES shows the local and regional environments conditions and a distinctive cluster of different actors and elements in a specific geographical area that either promote or hinder entrepreneurial emergency and activities. Each of these actors as a system, act in isolation and interrelatedness of others to affect entrepreneurship, however, a single dimension of entrepreneurial ecosystem lacks the capacity of determining the whole system (Bhawe and Zahra 2017 and Cunningham, Menter, and Wirsching, 2017); hence, the entire ecosystem actors interrelates and interacts with one another to give a supreme performance. The different EES involve includes:

2.1.1. Government Policies: the government through its policy can hinder as well as encourage entrepreneurial activity. Governments of each nations reforms their territories with support of donor and development agencies (Peter, Adegbuyi, Olokundun, Peter, Amaihian, and Ibidunni. 2018). The Nigeria government has made so many These are an institutional arrangement that influences the way key actors operate like government agencies, regulatory authorities and business membership organizations, civil society organization and trade union, etc.). The government has commenced a three-month repayment moratorium for all TraderMoni, MarketMoni and FarmerMoni loan. All federal government-funded loans are to be equipped with more moratorium issued by the bank of industry (BOI), and Bank of Agriculture (BOA). The Nigeria Export-Import Bank Authorities (NEIBA) have also offer for palliatives through reductions in customs duties and customs audits, conditional cash transfer for the next two months to be paid to the less vulnerable. More so was the reduction in petrol pump price from 145-123.50 naira per litre.to due to the reduction in global oil price. Some government agencies like Corporate Affairs Commissions (CAC), Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) and other regulatory agencies have developed a digital platform for easy of registration and doing businesses. The government also announced the reduction of its approved 2020 budget by NGN1.5t (\$490b) to as part of IRM and as the result of the crash in oil price from US\$57 to US\$30.

2.1.2. Finance: capital and finance is the backbone of businesses. Venture creation required some commitment of funds in gathering the resources, yet, inadequate funds have been traced as one of the factors and challenges of SMEs in Nigeria (Haruna, Sulaiman, and Isa, 2018). Financial institutions find it difficult to borrow funds like the larger businesses to SMEs for the fear of risk and uncertainty as the majority of them do not have assets to use as collateral. The central bank of Nigeria (CBN) on March 1, 2020, provide several response measures through its policy to reflate the economy and support businesses. like, extending the moratorium on principal repayment by one year, decrease on interest ratefrom 9% to 5% per annual, creation of fifty billion (NGN50bn) (US\$131.6M) targeted credit facility for MSMEs that have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19, provide credit support to healthcare industry, reduction in profitability margin, relinquishment of fees on electronic transactions and the negative impact of modification of financial assists on the bottom line among others, delayed in loan repayments due to loan forbearance and moratorium on principal repayments, energizing banks to extent more credit to their customers, etc. the banks and other financial institutions are not left out in rolling out some response measures of COVID-19 to support their customers and SMEs like, break-in loan repayment, special waivers on payment of fees on credit cards, increasing credit card limits, short term support facilities and a waiver of charges on a specified number of transactions on digital platforms. Also, friends and family are key community actors in responding to family needs. As part of the effort to curb COVID19, much non-profit organization (NGOs, cooperatives, larger organizations and other philanthropy) donates some cash and material gifts to be distributed to members and the less vulnerable families in society.

2.1.3. Businesses Support are groups and programs meant to assist businesses to solve key challenges in the areas of management and technical skills, access to markets, new or improved technologies and products and appropriate financial mechanism (OECD, 2019). They encourage spillover, training programs, information, innovations or value chain and association strategies. It may involve firms in other

sectors and informal firms in the same sectors (Braidford, and Stone (2016). These supports are to enable SMEs to equip their manpower with modern technological knowledge and skills. The enables firms to together capture collective externalities, experiences and mutual growth which is needed to shift from low equilibrium (micro size and scale) to a high equilibrium (larger scale and dynamism). (Cravo, and Piza, 2016) argued that they have a positive impact on productivity, employment generation, export and investment.

2.1.4. Infrastructure: Audretsch, Heger, and Veith (2015) argued that quality physical infrastructure is a bedrock that enables entrepreneurial emergency in a particular region. Nigeria has poor public health infrastructure even before the pandemic. Even the Aso Rock and almost government hospital have been reported not been equipped (Muhammad, Abdulkareem, and Chowdhury 2017, Ahmed, Alhassan, and Alshammari, 2017, Aregbeshola, and Khan, 2018). There is an ineffective health care system, inadequate or lack of emergency services, ambulance, and health insurance the citizens especially the frontline workers. As part of IRM, the federal government provides life insurance for the doctors and other front line workers. Provides free Medicare treatment on some certain ailments. Also, Nigeria was forced to migrate to the digital economy during the lockdown, however, people still bear the cost of data. Both schools, worship centres, business, banks, etc. transact their businesses online. Many Nigerians were observed to be homeless, and poor, however, the government provides palliatives to some people. The Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) in its responses to the COVID 19 ensures a constant supply of light during the lockdown and has also suspended the payment of electricity tariffs to enable customers to adjust. The telecommunication remained one of the sectors that experience a boom provided by COVID-19 as there was a rise in demand for data and voice-related services. Most employees depend on this to work from home (WFH), including education services and others.

2.2. Conceptualization of Entrepreneurial Emergence

Entrepreneurship emerges as a result of individuals choices prompted by opportunity. Its emergency involves several tactics and activities that occur concurrently and independently over time that lead to the firm formation, innovation and employment. The entrepreneur emergency requires individual led behaviour that mobilizes resources for opportunity exploitation through innovative ability. It may require specific expertise and highly skilled employees than incumbent firms since they often have inadequate finance. The incubation period of new venture formation was from 1-4 years, however, although the process of venture creation can take up to decades (Petrucci, 2018).

Figure2: Model of the Entrepreneurial Emergency Process

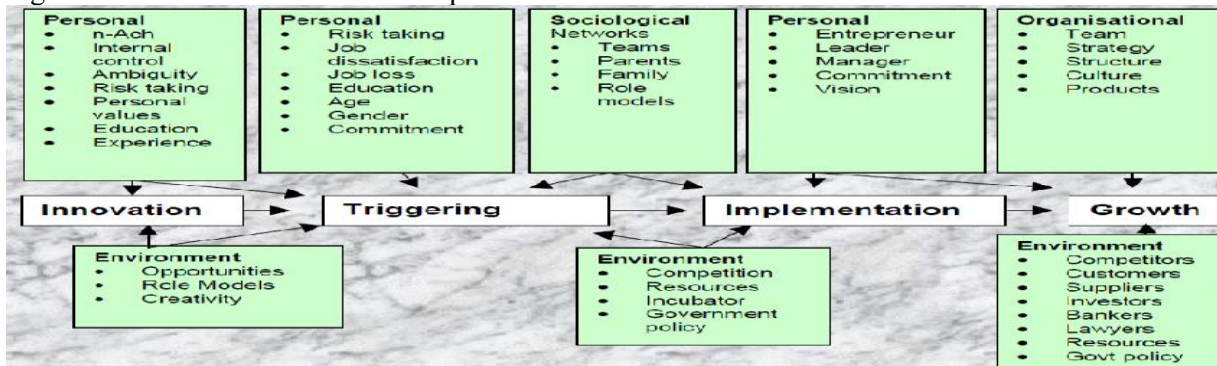


Firms' emergence stage is concerned with gathering information and resources before the firms are officially recognized. Some SMEs get involved in the apprentice, education, network, training etc. through business support groups, mentors, unions, in the EES etc. to gather the necessary skills and competencies that would enable them to initiate and grow their businesses. The emergency stage is confronted with many challenges: finance, resources, employees, etc. There is need to know where to get the necessary raw materials at cheaper rates, the different tools and equipment to work with, the different unions and

networking groups that will serve as a mentor, assist in information and training etc. The rate of knowledge, skills and resources with which the business emerges shows the quality of EES and these determine firms' performance and survival. Katz and Gartner (1988) argued that the process of new venture starts with entrepreneurial intention, resources search, developing the organizational structure and utilization and implementations of the resources. Gartner (1985) outline four different perspectives entrepreneurship emergency processes undergo in establishing the business, these are the individual aspect, the activities aspect, the structure and strategy and the environmental structure, while a researcher argued that business ideas and strategies, competencies, utilization and application of competencies to create innovated products and the impact of the business and industry.

2.2.1; Moore's model (1986) states that there is always triggering events that result in an entrepreneurial emergency. The model focuses on personal attributes, environmental factors of EES and other sociological factors (family). The entrepreneurial process in this model involves all the functions, actors, activities and actions associated with opportunities exploration and exploitation. Moore's model highlights four activities that are very important in the entrepreneurial emergency as innovation, trigger events, implementation, and growth

Figure 2: Moore's Model of the Entrepreneurial Process



Source: Bygrave W.D. (2003) *The Entrepreneurial Process* [Online] Available at <http://catalogimages.wiley.com/images/db/pdf/0471271543.excerpt.pdf>

- a) Innovation: creative ideas of an individual can lead to firm creation and production of new products/services. Innovation is a creative idea of entrepreneurs. The innovative aspect of an entrepreneur creates new ways of doing things, brings about new firm, products or can device new materials for production.
- b) Trigger Events: Triggering events may bring about an individual assuming risk that deters people from venturing into entrepreneurship. They are mainly unforeseen circumstances, events, conditions, phenomenon or factors embedded in a contextual EES that makes entrepreneurship desirable. A school of thought holds that certain triggering events of the EES like the COVID-19 (IM) may drive an individual into entrepreneurship (Sharma and Kulshreshtha, 2015).
- c) Implementation Stage: this is the actual introduction of the new product. It is the stage where ideas are transformed into products. There are lots of processes here that lead to this. The idea might have been evaluated, analyzed and eventually gather the necessary resources for its implementation. It, therefore, involves infancy of a business, incorporation of a business, setting and launching of the business, running the business, deploying resources, managing and nurturing the business.
- d) Growth: this is the final stage in the model. Enterprise growth is a product of many factors especially the owners' intention to grow the firm. It involves maximizing profit, harvesting the rewards and business expansion and diversification.

2.3. Relationship between EES COVID-19 IM and Entrepreneurial Emergency

There is a growing interest in the ecosystem as an approach for understanding the context of entrepreneurship at firm level of an organizational community. EES comprises of interdependent actors and factors that interact with each other resulting in an entrepreneurial emergency through firm creations, self-employment, innovation, etc. Favourable EES COVID-19 (IM) facilitates entrepreneurial emergency through interconnected and interrelated entrepreneurial activities and better institutional setting governing entrepreneurial decisions. Previous studies agreed that favourable and quality EES facilitates entrepreneurship emergency (firm creation, innovation, self-employment, start-up) (Audretsch and Belitski 2017 and Mujahid, Mubarik, and Naghavi, 2019). EES COVID-19 (IM) provides a new strategic growth model for a new business emergency. Successful EES COVID-19 (IM) impacts on individuals, firms and economy. through their skill, knowledge and managerial ability, entrepreneurs to craft an interconnected social and economic system that galvanize entrepreneurial emergency in the contextual level Sharma and Kulshreshtha (2015) argued that it may motivate individuals, businesses and communities through interrelated and interactions of actors which are embedded in the social, cultural and economic context of a particular area that increase the entrepreneurial emergency. Entrepreneurs can be facilitated by government policy through reform of legal, bureaucratic and regulatory frameworks. Some entrepreneurs draw their strength from the favourable EES COVID-19 (IM) policies like easy of business registration; strong business supporters like (businesses networking, industrial association, technical expert, mentors, on the job training and legal services), quality infrastructure like (constant light, water supply, internet, good road and easy transportation system) and supportive financial institutions like (business angels, who fund startup ventures, the mentor who contribute their experience as mentors, government grants, personal saves). All these actors and factors cannot favour entrepreneurial emergency if there is no strong or favourable medium EES to implement the EES COVID-19 (IM) in Nigeria. An individual can be influenced either by positive or negative COVID-19 (IM). The COVID-19 (IM) can be viewed in two ways by the entrepreneurs depending on the resources possessed by the individual in the EES, these are the pull and the push factors COVID-19 (IM) (Blumberg and Pfann, 2016). The pull factors are positive factors that provide positive drives for venturing into a new business e.g. availability of funds, government grants, quality and accessible infrastructure, favourable business policies, etc. It is mainly a result of perceived opportunities hence resulting in opportunity-based entrepreneurs. While push factors are negative factors that provide negative drives for venturing into new businesses e.g. the collateral condition attached for the assessment of the COVID-19 CBN loan. This type of drive results in necessity-based entrepreneurs. Necessity-based entrepreneurs create enterprises to avoid unemployment rather than utilizing the opportunity.

H0₁: financial accessibility of COVID-19 (IM) has a positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs

H0₂: business support availability of COVID-19 (IM) have a positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs in Nigeria

H0₃: infrastructural availability of COVID-19 (IM) has a positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs in Nigeria

H0₄: government business policies of COVID-19 (IM) have a positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs in Nigeria

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Setting and Sample

Study Design: the cross-sectional survey design was employed by this study following a quantitative approach. This is because of the nature of the pandemic which is still spreading as no cure or vaccine has yet been prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO). As a result, the impact of COVID-19 (IM) is still ongoing. Also due to lack of database to adequately support the tracking of variation in EES COVID-19 (IM).As part of the early effort to track the variation of COVID-19 (IM).

Sample and Data Collection: the target population for this study includes all the SMEs that have not been up to four years since study proves that it can take up to 4 years for a new firm to emerge while SMEs do not last up to five years (OECD, 2019). Using a simple random technique, a total of 780 SMEs was sampled through a simple random technique from the total population of 11140 in the zone. Data for the study was gathered through an online questionnaire that permits management perception, observation, and analysis visualizing the EES COVID-19 (IM) in the six states of the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeriacomprised of Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Oyo and Niger. The questionnaire contains a Likert scale of 1-5 designated as (1) = strongly insignificant, (2) = insignificant, (3) moderately significant, (4) significant (5) extremely significant. The questionnaire instrument was meant to provide a quick and holistic examination of EES COVID-19 (IM) in Nigeria from the perspective of entrepreneurial emergency. Out of the returned questionnaire sent via email got from the business addresses online, a total of 530 were found valid for the analysis. The respondents were duly briefed about the objectives of the study and informed consent was obtained before voluntarily participating in the study. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 25 was used for the analysis and to develop the structural equation model. The steps are taken performing a structural equation model needed to fit the data. As requires, the data which were drawn from a random sample were normally distributed and excluded outliers (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008).

PLS is used where the theory is not solidly developed which is the case with EES COVID-19 or where the sample is not large. It analyses the relationship between the latent variables and their indicator and the assessment of the structural model, examining the relationship between latent or construct (Rahi, 2017). The structural equation model was used to measure the interaction among EES dimensions.

1.2. Variables Measurement

Entrepreneurship index is an important tool to help countries accurately assess and evaluate their ecosystem. An ultimate and total understanding of the concept of EES is required for policymakers to promulgate effectively and efficiency COVID-19 (IM) that have impacted positively on SMEs emergency. *The questionnaire items were drawn from the following sources: 'Entrepreneurship at a Glance' Stam, (2017) and the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2016).* Although the analysis varies depending on the geographical unit, level of details and sectorial or domain of focus. The *Babson Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Project and Koltai six+six* framework which has the six domain in line with Isenberg (2011) is more conceptual and have the approved set of indicators. Studies of EES in developing and developed countries stressed the need for multi-constructs approach measurement of EES. This is due to large factors and actors that can impact on entrepreneurship and economic growth in a particular region. The study employs the firm-level survey instrument designed to provide a holistic analysis of the ecosystem from the firm perspective. However, the questionnaire as used here is modified to the local level to portray the COVID-19 (IM) measures in Nigeria.

1.3. Control Variables

Due to the current global trends of COVID-19, only are not up a year or newly established firms after the lockdown was employed in the study.

Measurement Model

The table below shows the validity and reliability of the items which were assessed to ensure the internal consistency. The reliability was used measured through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (CR α) and Composite Reliability (CR). All the reliability items values exceed the reference value of 0.7 as CR α values lie between 0.7 to 0.9 and CR values between 0.712 and 0.907. This indicates the adequacy of the internal consistency of the instrument. The construct validity was also determined through convergent and discriminant validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Standardized Factor Loading (SFLs) were used to measure convergent validity and these were deemed to be adequate as the values surpass 0.50 for satisfactory internal consistency. This shows the convergent validity was satisfied.

4.0. Data Analysis

Table; Evaluation of the Uni-Dimensionality, Reliability and Validity

	ITEM		FL	CR α	CR	AVE	AC
Finance	F1	Support of Family and friend	0.934	0.771	0.745	0.522	0.707
	F2	Bank loans	0.541				
	F3	Support for Cooperative &	0.792				
	F4	NGOs	0.783				
	F5	Government grant Large firms & Philanthropy	0.576				
Business Supportive	BS1	Network	0.580	0.800	0.921	0.779	0.872
	BS2	Training	0.782				
	BS3	Mentors	0.507				
	BS4	Business foundations	0.674				
	BS5	Business unions	0.877				
Policy	P1	Tax rate tax incentives	0.694	0.757	0.712	0.802	0.513
	P2	Cost of starting a business	0.704				
	P3	Business registration policy	0.586				
	P4	Business protection policy	0.511				
Infrastructure	IF1	Assess to Medicare	0.543	0.738	0.772	0.865	0.552
	IF2	Light	0.503				
	IF3	Water	0.504				
	IF4	Road	0.525				
	IF5	Internet availability	0.504				
Entrepreneurial Emergence	EE1	Rate Enterprises birth,	0.832	0.902	0.927	0.965	0.772
	EE2	Rate of innovation,	0.688				
	EE3	Number of new Firms	0.741				
	EE4	Number of Self-employment	0.909				
	EE5	Risk-taking propensity	0.886				

Structural Model

Table 2 depicts the supremacy of the square root of AVE (main diagonal) to the correlations between the constructs in all cases. This ensures the discriminant validity. The table also shows that the discriminant validity was assessed through the Square Root of Average Variance Extracted (Square Root of AVE) for each construct. The table also reveals that the correlations are of lower values than their respective reliabilities which are evidence between (0.728-0.910). The implication of this is that the entire construct of the scale used to measure the model agrees with the discriminate validity. None of the independent variables related to EES in the model exceeds a variance inflation factor of 3.3 (Byrne, 2001) which shows a good fit of the model (Rahi, 2017). The VIF range between 0.023 and 0.228, hence the values do not exceed the critical threshold of 3.33.

Table 2: Square Root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Inter-Correlations Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Finance	(0.728)				
Business Support	.108**	(0.884)			
Policy	.162*	.115*	(0.802)		
Infrastructure	.023	.130*	-.089	(0.745)	
Entrepreneurial Emergency	.228**	.116*	-.046	0.060*	(0.832)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: the elements on the diagonal (value between parentheses represent the square root on the (AVE) and the values outside the diagonal represent the correlations between the constructs.

Evaluation of Fitness of Model Index

The model fitness of model was obtained using the following statistic measurement as indicated in the table below. These statistics adjusted the model complexity as opposed to Chi-square statistics which is sensitive to the model complexity (Runyan, Cornelia and Swinney, 2008). All the obtained result shows that the fitness indices are adequate as they all fall within the accepted region, hence, is adequate to be used for the hypotheses testing.

The Goodness of Fit for SEM Model

Model fitness indices	Recommended value	Model value obtained
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	<0.08	0.70
Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI)	>0.90	0.922
The goodness of fit (GFI)	>0.95	0.980
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>0.90	0.903
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	<0.07	0.055

Table Result of the Structural Equation Model

Hypotheses	Path	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	P-Value	Decision
H ₁	Finance → EE	0.312**	0.098	4.341	0.000	Accepted
H ₂	Business support → EE	0.258*	0.070	3.872	0.004	Accepted
H ₃	Policy → EE	0.188	0.079	2.708	0.010	Accepted
H ₄	Infrastructure → EE	-0.038	0.062	-2.226	0.219	Rejected

***P < 0.001, ** P < 0.01, * P < 0.05

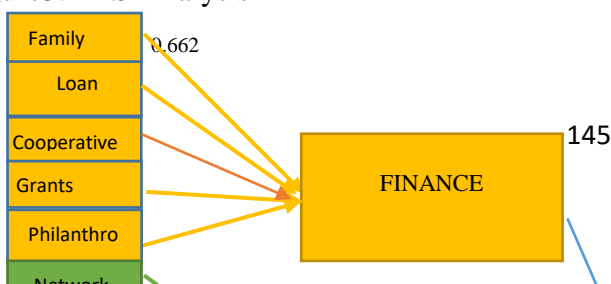
Result of Structural Model Using PLS Analysis

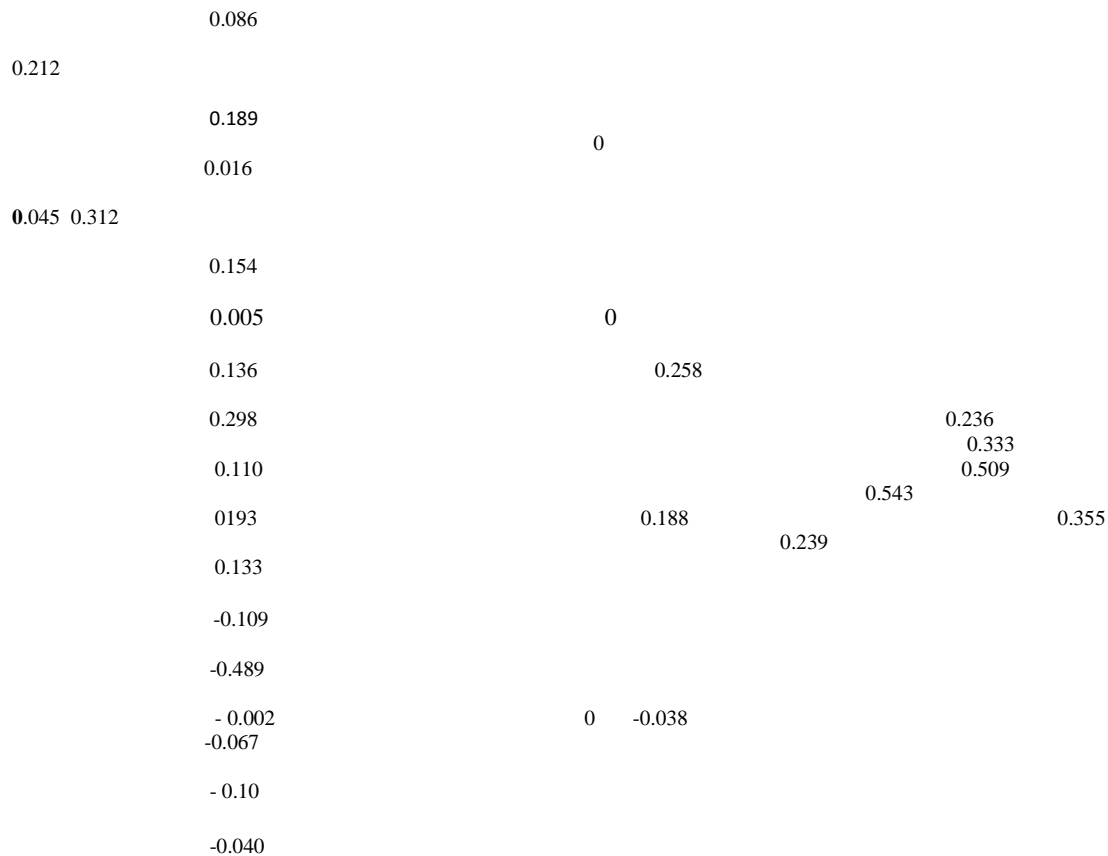
The regression coefficient table shows the strength of the different variable items uses for the study. Based on the selected dimensions of EES measured, figure 1 above demonstrates the level of impacts of each item used to measurement. The findings of the availability and accessibility of the financial EES COVID-19 (IM) shows that there is a low financial assessment of the COVID-19 (IM), at ($\beta = 0.312$ at $p = 0.000$) as most people embarked on businesses through the support of their personal or family saves ($\beta = 0.662$; $t = 28.512$ at $p = .000$) and availability and access to loan and equity finance show an ($\beta = .086$; $t = 2.79$ at $p = .005$) while government grant accessibility is ($\beta = .016$; $t = -.500$ at $p = .617$) and the support of private foundation, NGO'S etc., is ($\beta = .019$; $t = -.602$ and $p = .548$) while support of cooperative society ($\beta = .212$, $t = -7.005$ and $p = .000$).

The analysis of business support dimension of EES COVID-19 (IM) also has a low significant effect on entrepreneurial emergency of SMEs ($\beta = 0.258$, $p = 0.004$) as indicated that industrial association support has ($\beta = 0.045$, $t = 3.431$, $p =$ and 0.036), network support has ($\beta = 0.154$; $t = 5.010$; $p = 0.000$), technical expert shows ($\beta = 0.005$; $t = -.165$; $p = .245$) while mentor ($\beta = 0.136$; $t = -1.163$; $p = 0.000$) and apprenticeship training and skills ($\beta = 0.298$; $t = 10.050$; $p = 0.000$)

In the same manner, the low effect of business policies dimension of EES COVID-19 (IM) on the entrepreneurial emergency was confirmed at ($\beta = 0.188$, $p = 0.10$) shows that tax incentives has ($\beta = .110$; $t = 2.248$ and $p = .025$), cost of starting a business ($\beta = .193$; $t = 2.239$ and $p = .005$), business registration policy ($\beta = 0.133$ $t = 2.26$, and $p = 0.008$) while has ($\beta = .109$; $t = -3.327$ and $p = .001$)

Figure3: PLS Analysis





In the same vein, the analysis of infrastructural dimension of EES COVID-19 (IM) of, shows that assess to free Medicare has ($\beta = -0.489$. $t = -6.200$, and $p = .000$), electricity has ($\beta = -.002$; $t = -.068$ and $p = .946$), road is ($\beta = -.067$; $t = 0.749$ and $p = .081$) while water accessibility is ($\beta = -.010$; $t = -.334$ and $p = .738$), and internet availability is ($\beta = -0.040$; $t = -1.192$; $p = .642$)

From the overall results, we, therefore, conclude that

H0₁: financial accessibility COVID-19 (IM) has a significant positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial micro businesses in Nigeria.

H0₂: business supports COVID-19 (IM) has a significant positive impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial micro businesses in Nigeria

H0₃: business policy COVID-19 (IM) negatively impacts the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs in Nigeria

H0₄: infrastructure availability COVID-19 (IM) has a significant negative impact on the emergency of the entrepreneurial SMEs in Nigeria.

Discussion and Implication

This paper draws upon the quantitative survey of data gathered from 11140 SMEs in South-West geopolitical zones in Nigeria to examine the extent to which individual dimensions of EES impact on EE. Previous studies conclude on the positive impacts of EES on the entrepreneurial emergency (Al-Abri, Rahim, and Hussain, 2018, Acs, et al, 2017, Spiegel, 2017, Audretsch and Belitski, 2017, Stam, 2015). The findings draw attention to the different items of the dimensions of EES COVID-19 IRM. The study confirms the impact of some COVID-19 (IM) on the SMEs emergence in the South-West geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

The study focused on the key elements that characterized EES COVID-19. The study untangles the influence of the EES COVID-19 on entrepreneurial emergency. The overall results indicate statistically significant impact with all our hypotheses minus hypothesis 4.

H₁ analysis depicts a significant positive impact of COVID-19 (IM) of financial availability on entrepreneurial emergency, however, there is low availability and accessibility of funds among the SMEs in Nigeria. Most of the targeted group did not assess the grant. The condition attached for the assessment of the loan and funds is not obtainable by many SMEs. The individual dimensions of financial availability and accessibility show that the greater percentage of the source of funds for SMEs in Nigeria is personal of family saves followed by cooperative loans support. Very low percentage have accesses government grant and foundations like NGO's. The study is consistent with other previous findings like the Nigeria Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (NACCIMA 2012) which proves that only 6% of Nigeria SMEs accesses the various entrepreneurial government and foundations intervention to SMEs.

The result on business support COVID-19 (IM) concurs to the previous studies of Boter, and Lundström, 2005 which concluded a very low participation rate of businesses support on small business while, Cravo, and Piza, 2016 observed that very little is known about the impact of business support interventions on SMEs. The low impact of business support of COVID-19 can be attributed to high contagious nature of the virus. This may not allow physical training, even on the job training, network or any form of the large gathering.

The low impact of government policies on SMEs emergency as proved by the study was a confirmation of other previous findings of Eniola, and Entebang (2015) and Akawu, Charles and Olanrewaju (2018), while Ibrahim and Muritala, A (2015) study proved a negative relationship between monetary policy measure, however, policy inconsistency has been identified to constitute a negative impact on firms (Akawu, Charles, and Olanrewaju, 2018).

The negative impact of infrastructure indicates that it does not support entrepreneurial emergency in Nigeria. Obokoh and Goldman (2016) observed the current level of infrastructural deficit in Nigeria as the major hindrance to businesses creation as it increased operation cost, decrease profitability and productivity. This discourages emergency of entrepreneurship. Babatunde, Afees and Olanrewaju (2012) established a bi-directional causal relationship between infrastructures and SMEs creation and the level of the outdated and lack of infrastructure which has remained a paramount barrier in an entrepreneurial emergency in Nigeria.

Suggestions

The results also indicate the need to strengthen infrastructure services delivery to facilitate market access and reduce the cost of doing business. There is a need for more investments in key infrastructure like electricity, transportation (air, land, rail, and sea), communications (internet, telephone), etc. OECD, 2016 There is also a need to encourage and improve the business supportive mechanisms through information, training, technology, innovation, etc.

References

- Aarikka-Stenroos, L., Peltola, T., Rikkiev, A., and Saari, U. (2016). Multiple Facets of Innovation and Business Ecosystem Research: The Foci, Methods and Future Agenda. Paper presented at the ISPIM Innovation Symposium.
- Abatecola, G. (2012). 'Organizational Adaptation'.An Update.*International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 20(3), 274–293
- Acs, Z. J., Stam, E., Audretsch, D. B., and O'Connor, A. (2017). 'The Lineages of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Approach'.*Small Business Economics*, 49(1), 1-10.

- Agwu, M.A. and Luke, G.R. (2014). 'Entrepreneurship Development and Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria: A Survey of Public Opinion in Selected Nigerian Cities'. *Business & Entrepreneurship Journal*, 3(2), 67-84
- Ahmed, H. G., Alhassan, S. M., and Alshammari, F. D. (2017). 'Social Welfare Scheme; A Neglected Component of Public Health Care Services in Nigeria'. *MOJ Public Health*, 5(3), 101-104
- Akawu, F.A., Charles, A. and Olanrewaju, A.P. (2018). 'Impact of Government Support on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Development in Nasarawa State: Evidence from Keffi L.G.A'. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Public Policy, Administration and Development Strategies (IJARPPADS)* 3(1), 90-105
- Al-Abri, M.Y., Rahim, A.A. and Hussain, N. H. (2018). 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: An Exploration of the Entrepreneurship Model for SMEs in Sultanate of Oman', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 9 (6), 193 – 206
- Alvarez, S.A., Barney, J. B. and Anderson, P. (2013). Cited Schumpeter (1934) Creation Theory and Kirzner, I. (1973) Discovery Theory in "Forming and Exploiting Opportunities: The Implications of Discovery and Creation Processes for Entrepreneurial and Organizational Research". *Journal of Organizational Science*, 24 (1), 301-317.
- Angulo-Guerrero, M.J., Pérez-Moreno, S. and Abad-Guerrero, I. M. (2017). How Economic Freedom Affects Opportunity And Necessity Entrepreneurship In The OECD Countries. *J Bus Res*, 73:30–37
- Aregbeshola, B. S., and Khan, S. M. (2018). 'Determinants of Catastrophic Health Expenditure in Nigeria'. *The European Journal of Health Economics*, 19(4), 521-532.
- Audretsch, D., Heger, D., and Veith, T. (2015). 'Infrastructure and Entrepreneurship'. *Small Business Economics*, 44(2), 219– 230.
- Audretsch, D. B. and Belitski, M. (2017) 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Cities: Establishing the Framework Conditions'. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 42 (5), 1030-1051.
- Babatunde, O.A., Afees, S.A., and Olasunkanmi, S.I. (2012). 'Infrastructure and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Multivariate Approach'. *Research Journal of Business Management and Accounting*, 1(3), 030 - 039,
- Bamfo, B. A. and Kraa, J .J. (2019). 'Market Orientation and Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Ghana: The Mediating Role of Innovation', *Cogent Business & Management*, 6:1, doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2019.1605703
- Bhawe, N., and Zahra, S. A. (2017). 'Inducing Heterogeneity in Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: The Role of MNEs'. *Small Business Economics*, 1-18.
- Bishop, P. (2019). 'Knowledge Diversity and Entrepreneurship Following an Economic Crisis. An Empirical Study of Regional Resilience in Great Britain, *Entrepreneurship reg. dev.* 32, 496-515
- Blumberg, B. and Pfann, G. (2016). 'Roads Leading to Self-Employment: Comparing Transgenerational Entrepreneurs and Self-Made Start-Ups', IZA Discussion Paper No. 9155

- Boter, H. and Lundström, A. (2005). 'SME Perspectives on Business Support Services: The Role of Company Size, Industry and Location', *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 12(2):244-258,
- Braidford, P. and Stone, I. (2016). "Providing Business Support to SMEs – How to Encourage Firms' Engagement", *Zarządzanie Publiczne*, 4(38), 45-61.
- Breslin, D.(2011). Evolution and Entrepreneurship.In Mole, K and Ram, M. (Eds), Perspectives in Entrepreneurship: A Course Text, Palgrave, London, pp. 107-119
- Nylund, P. and Viardot, E., (2020). 'The Impact of the 2008 Financial Crisis on Innovation: A Dominant Design Perspective'. *J. Bus. Res.* 110, 360–369.
- Brown, R. and Mason, C. (2017), "Looking Inside the Spiky Bits: A Critical Review and Conceptualization of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems", *Small Business Economics*, 49(1), 11-30.
- Bygrave W. D. (2003). 'The Entrepreneurial Process [Online] Available at <http://catalogimages.wiley.com/images/db/pdf/0471271543.excerpt.pdf>
- Caiazza, R., Belitski, M., and Audretsch, D. B. (2019). 'From Latent to Emergent Entrepreneurship: The Knowledge Spillover Construction Circle'. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 1–11.
- Cravo, T. and Piza C. (2016). "The Impact of Business Support Services for Small and Medium Enterprises on Firm Performance in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A meta-analysis", *Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 7664, World Bank, Washington D.C.,
- Cunningham, J. A., Menter, M., and Wirsching, K. (2017). 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Governance: A Principal Investigator Centered Governance Framework. *Small Business Economics*. 52, 545–562
- Doern, R., Williams, N. and Vorley, T. (2019). 'Special Issue on Entrepreneurship and Crises: Business as Usual? An Introduction and Review of the Literature'. *Enterprises. Reg.Dev.* 31, 400–412.
- Eniola, A.A. and Entebang, H. (2015). 'Government Policy and Performance of Small and Medium Business Management International'. *Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 237-248
- Gartner, W. B. (1985). 'A Conceptual Framework for Describing the Phenomenon of New Venture Creation'. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(4), 696-706
- GDA (Global Data Analysis), 2020. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Executive Briefing. Global Data
- Haruna, U., Sulaiman, I. and Isa, T.A. (2018). 'The Role Financial Institutions in Financing Small and Medium', *International Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 4(4), 82-90
- Hooper, D., Coughlan, J. and Mullen, M. (2008). 'Structural Equation Modelling: Guidelines for Determining Model Fit'. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 6(1), 53-60.
- Ibrahim, T .M. and Muritala, A. M. (2015). 'Does Government Policies Improve Business Performance? Evidence from Nigeria,' *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 2(2), 143-159

- Isenberg, D. (2011), "The Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Strategy as a New Paradigm for Economic Policy: Principles for Cultivating Entrepreneurship", available at www.innovationamerica.us/images/stories/2011/The-entrepreneurship-ecosystem-strategy-for-economic-growth-policy-20110620183915.pdf (accessed 6 August 2019)
- Kasabov, E. (2015). Start-Up Difficulties in Early-Stage Peripheral Clusters: The Case of IT in an Emerging Economy. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 39(4), pp. 727–761.
- Katz, J. A. and Gartner, W. (1988). 'Properties of Emerging Organizations', *Academy of Management Review*, 12 (3), 420-441
- Kuckertz, A., Br€andle, L., Gaudig, A., Hinderer, S., Arturo, C., Reyes, M., Prochotta, A., Steinbrink, K.M. and Berger, E.S. (2020). 'Startups in Times of Crisis – A Rapid Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic,' *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*
- Kuckertz, A., Kollmann, T., Krell, P., and St€ockmann, C. (2017). 'Understanding, Differentiating and Measuring Opportunity Recognition and Opportunity Exploitation', *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 23(1), 78–97.
- Kuratko, D. F., Fisher, G., Bloodgood, J. M., and Hornsby, J. S. (2017). 'The Paradox of New Venture Legitimation within an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem' *Small Business Economics*, 49(1), 119–140.
- Lehner, O. M., and Harrer, T. (2019). 'Crowdfunding Revisited: A Neo-Institutional Field-Perspective', *Venture Capital*, 21(1), 75–96.
- Moira, D. (2015) "The long term returns of attempting self-employment with regular employment as a fallback option," *Labour Economics*, Vol. 35, pp. 26–52.
- Moore J (1993). 'Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition'. *Harvard Business Review*: 76-86
- Moore, J. (1996). 'The Death of Competition: Leadership and Strategy in the Age of Business Ecosystems'. New York: HarperBusiness
- Muhammad, F., Abdulkareem, J. H. and Chowdhury, A. A. (2017). 'Major Public Health Problems in Nigeria: A Review'. *South-East Asia Journal of Public Health*, 7(1), 6-11
- Mujahid, S, Mubarik, S. and Naghavi, N. (2019). 'Prioritizing Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: A Proposed Framework' *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 9(51), 1-21
- Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N. and Walmsley, A. (2017), "The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education: A Systematic Review and Research Agenda", *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2). 277-299
- Obokoh, L.O., and Goldman, G. (2016). 'Infrastructure Deficiency and Performance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Nigeria's Liberalised Economy', *Acta Commercial* 16(1), 339.
- OECD (2016), "New Rural Policy: Linking Up For Growth. OECD", available at www.oecd.org/rural/ruraldevelopment-conference/documents (accessed 4 September 2019).
- OECD (2020), Covid-19: SME Policy Responses, OECD, Paris, https://oecd.dam-broadcast.com/pm_7379_119_119680-di6h3qgi4x.pdf
- OECD, (2019), "Support Services for SMEs (Dimension 5) in the Western Balkans and Turkey", in *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019*: OECD Publishing, and Paris.

- Ooi, Y.K. and Nasiru, A. (2015). 'Entrepreneurship Education as a Catalyst of Business Start-Ups: A Study on Malaysian Community College Students', *Asian Social Science*; 11(18)
- Parwez, S. (2017) 'Community-Based Entrepreneurship: Evidence from a Retail Case Study'. *J Innov Entrep* 6(14), 2-16
- Patriotta, G. and Siegel, D. (2019). 'The Context of Entrepreneurship'. *Journal of Management Studies* 56(6) 1194-1196,
- Peter, F. D., Adegbuyi, O., Olokundun, M.A., Peter, A.O., Amaihian, A.B. and Ibidunni, S.A. (2018). 'Government Financial Support and Financial Performance of SMEs', *Academy of Strategic Management Journal* .17(3), 1-10
- Petrucchi, D. (2018). "The Incubation Process Of Mid-Stage Startup Companies: A Business Network Perspective", *IMP Journal*, 12(3), 544-566,
- Rahi, S. (2017). 'Research Design and Methods: A Systematic Review of Research Paradigms, Sampling Issues and Instruments Development'. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences*, 6(2), 1-5.
- Runyan, R. C., Cornelia, D., and Swinney, J. L. (2008). 'Entrepreneurial Orientation versus Small Business Orientation: What are their Relationships to Firm Performance'? *Journal of Small Business Management*, 46(4), 567-588.
- Rusu, V.D. and Roman, A. (2017). 'Entrepreneurial Activity in the EU: An Empirical Evaluation of Its Determinants', *Sustainability*, 9, 1679, 2-17
- Sharma, G. and Kulshreshtha, K. (2015). "Challenges and Opportunities of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies", *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 2 (3), 1-8.
- Spigel, B. (2017). 'The Relational Organization of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems'. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(1), 49-72.
- Stam, E. (2015). 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Regional Policy: A Sympathetic Critique'. *European Planning Studies*, 23(9), 1759–1769
- Stam, E. (2017). 'Measuring Entrepreneurial Ecosystems. U. S. E. Discussion paper Series Nr. 17-11-Utrecht University.
- Stoica, O., Roman, A. and Rusu, V.D. (2020). 'The Nexus between Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth: A Comparative Analysis on Groups of Countries', *Sustainability* 12(1186), 2-19, '
- Suominen, A., Seppänen, M., and Dedehayir, O. (2016). 'Innovation Systems and Ecosystems: A Review and Synthesis'. In 2016 XXVII ISPIM Innovation Conference International Society for Professional Innovation Management ISPIM.
- Valkokari, K. (2015). 'Business, Innovation, and Knowledge Ecosystems: How They Differ and How to Survive and Thrive Within Them'. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 5(8), 17-24.
- Vogel, P. (2013). 'The Employment Outlook for Youth: Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems as a Way Forward'. 443-449
- Walsh, G.S., and Cunningham, J.A., (2016). Business Failure and Entrepreneurship: Emergence, Evolution and Future Research. Found. *Trends in Entrepreneurship*. 12, 163–285

EFFECTS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NPOWER SCHEME ON THE NATION'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: A STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN ENUGU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF ENUGU STATE.

By

Ogbu Obinna Samson&Mbah Eusebius Chinedu

Department of Public Administration

Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Abstract

The place of educational activities for the over all development of the nation's resources cannot be over emphasized. This is borne from the fact that education is the only sector of the economy, that has the human component as both it input and output. However despite harvest of programmes marshalled out by successive administrations in favour of the manpower need of our educational system, the human resources need of our schools have remained on a high increase. This situation is not unconnected to inadequate supervision and remuneration measures, that have bedevilled the system over these years. The above prompted the researchers to examine the Effect of Federal Government Npower Scheme on the nation's educational system: A study of selected schools in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State. In carrying out this study, three research questions were formulated which formed the basis for the construction of the questionnaire. A sizeable related literature on the subject was reviewed and the opinion of the researchers incorporated on each section of the review. The researchers used both primary and secondary sources of data collection, with structured questionnaire as the major instrument used to elicit information from 174 Npower volunteer teachers, who constituted the sample size out of 318 population of the study. However, out of 174 questionnaire that were distributed, 150 questionnaire representing 86% were used for data analysis and testing of hypotheses. ANOVA formular was used for testing the research hypothesis. The findings revealed that Npower programme has significantly improved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study; inadequate supervision and remuneration have negative impacts on empowerment programmes in the selected schools under study. The study recommended significant measures for sustaining empowerment programmes, such as collaborative effort between both state and federal government in equipping and supervising institutions that enhance empowerment programmes; increment in volunteers stipends as a reflection of the approved minimum wage; And constant and periodic appraisal of empowerment programmes in order to match policies with practices.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The place of educational activities for the overall development of the nation's resources cannot be over emphasized. This is borne from the fact that education is the only sector of the economy that has the human component as both input and output resources. It has been argued beyond reasonable doubt that the human component remains the most valuable of all the resources of nation. According to Eze(2010:5), human resources represents the highest asset of any organization. This is because no matter how endowed with financial material investment without capable hands in the organization or nation is bound to fail.

The development strands of any nation cannot be divorced from the productive nature or effort of it youths. The youth consist of about 70 percent of the population of a nation especially in Nigeria setting. Therefore it is base on the picture painted above that successive government of the federation since independence have initiated various youth empowerment programme with divers colourations and nomenclatures. This is with the sole aim of deploying educated youth into useful ventures, all in a bid of meeting up with the

human resources need of the Nigeria system (educational system). This becomes needful as the entrepreneurial abilities of the people can be strengthened or weakened by the prevailing environment and such conditions are made possible by government of the time (Nnamani, 2009:279).

Youth empowerment is a term that is used to express the effort put in place by government in order to make the youth self reliant and less dependent on white kola jobs. Therefore, since every government is known by the policy it made while in office, different administrations or governments that emerged to power had in one way or the other initiated policies or programmes aimed at making the youths self-reliant. For instance, during Babangidas regime, the Directorate for Social Mobilization which was popularly known by the acronym MAMSER was introduced. It was aimed at increasing political participation and sensitizing Nigerians to their rights and obligations as well as generating or awakening among citizens, the respect for value like honesty, Justice, Fair play, patriotism and most importantly was achievement of self reliance for the youth Nwosu, (2008:76).

Previous administration before the above programme also established Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, War Against Indiscipline etc. by OlushegunObasanjo, ShehuShegari, and MohammoduBuhari respectively. These programmes were design to eradicate poverty and empower the youths through agricultural revolution and fight against corruption.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) also came up under the Babangida's administration and it had more impact than many of the other Poverty Alleviation Programmes of the past. The programme had been on for many years now. Ex-President OlusheguObasanjo in 2001 introduced National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) with the aim of reducing poverty especially absolute poverty. NAPEP and NAPEC (National Poverty Eradication Council) coordinated and supervised various other institutions including Ministries and developed plans and guideline for them to follow with regards to poverty reduction.

Furthermore, in order to tackle vicious circle of poverty in the nation, the President OlusheguObasanjo led administration birthed a policy to alleviate the malady lurking around the economy. This of course brought about NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy), and it replica in both state and local government with acronyms SEEDS and LEEDS respectively.

The immediate past President GoodluckEbele Jonathan in 2012 established Sure-P as a medium of reinvesting the federal government savings from fuel subsidy removal on critical infrastructure projects and social safety net programmes with direct impact on the citizens of Nigeria.

Moreso, current president MuhammaduBuhari has also introduced Npower scheme under its Social Welfare Investment Programme. This scheme is designed to be run in batches involving graduates who will be employed for two years to cover areas such as N-agro (agricultural extension officers), N-teach (volunteer teachers) and N-health (health workers) all in a bid of meeting the human resources need of the nation through this programme.

Nevertheless, despite these harvest of programmes that Nigeria governments have established in different administrations, the human resources need of the nation especially in our educational system has remained on a high increase. This is evident as most schools today suffers from acute lack of trained, qualified and experienced teachers who could boost the productive of our educational system towards national development. It is therefore base on this back drop that the need to research on the Effect of the Federal Government Npower scheme on the Nations Educational System: A Study of Selected Schools in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State has risen.

Statement of the Problem

The human resources need of our educational system has remained on a high increase despite harvest of policies marshalled out by successive government of the federation, especially in a bid to meet up with the personnel needs of our educational sector. This is crystal clear as our school system still faces acute lack of personnels who will be readily available to teach the students. However reasons abounds for this prevailing state of affairs.

Firstly, this could be as a result of poor supervision mechanism. It has been noticed over times that most empowerment programme initiated by successive government of the federation, just like the Npower

Scheme, lacks adequate supervision mechanism that will help in supervising these volunteers to know if they are actually discharging their duties. In Enugu State the supervision mechanism is too weak, because it is made up of volunteers themselves who undertakes this task without additional stipend. This therefore leads to compromise as volunteers goes to work when they wishes.

Furthermore, the stipend often paid to this volunteers is usually poor when compared with the salaries of other federal workers. This therefore account to the general feeling of dissatisfaction and discouragement noticed among these volunteers. The general perception of most of the volunteers is that the scheme lacks economic benefit that is when considering the distance to be covered in relation to the pittance often given to them as monthly stipends. This therefore account to the reason while most of them only report to school once or twice weekly while others have absconded since the system lacks adequate supervision mechanism that could discipline them appropriately.

The above perennial situation has aroused the curiosity of the researchers that they have decided to examine “The Effect of the Federal Government Npower Scheme on Educational system: A study of selected schools in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State”.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine whether Npower Programme has improved the quality and quantity of staff in our school system.
2. To examine the impact of supervision on performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools.
3. To examine the impact of remuneration on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools.

1.4 Research Question

The following research questions were developed as basis for the study;

1. Has Npower programme improved the numbers and quality of staff in the selected schools?
2. What is the impact of supervision on the performance of Npower Volunteers in the selected schools?
3. What is the impact of remuneration on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools?

1.5 Hypothesis

Ho: Npower programme has not significantly improved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

The Meaning of Npower Programmes A Youth Empowerment Programme

The Npower Programme is one of the four cardinal programmes under social investment programme initiated by the federal government, designed to empower the youth. This is a graduate empowerment initiative by the Federal Government designed to train graduates as either Volunteer Teachers, Health workers or Agricultural Extension Agents for a period of two years, with thirty thousand paid as stipends to each volunteer on monthly basis.

The programme is designed to assist young Nigerians between the ages of 18 to 35 to acquire and develop life-long skills for becoming change makers in their communities and players in the domestic and global markets and given a stipend of N30,000 monthly.

However it is worthy to note that in the area of graduate considerations, this programme is computed made up of the following categories:

1. N-Teach: This comprises of the beneficiaries of the scheme who are engaged to work as volunteer teachers in our school system for a period of two years.
2. N-Agro: This comprises of the beneficiaries of the scheme who are engaged to work as agricultural extension officers for a period of two years.
3. N-Health: This comprises of the beneficiaries of the scheme who are engaged to work as health workers in various public health institutions for a period of two years.

Youth is the quality or state of being young. It also means the part of life following childhood or the period of existence preceding maturity. It also means youth is the time of life between childhood and adulthood (maturity). Youth in our context can be regarded as those persons between the age of 18 and 35 years.

According to oxford advanced learners dictionary 8th Edition, the word empowerment is from a verb empower which means to give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in.

The concept of youth empowerment is defined by Attah (2016:23) as attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and power to make decisions and implement change in their own lives. Youth empowerment therefore can be seen as a process whereby children and young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives. Youth empowerment becomes feasible only when youths take action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Youth empowerment aims to improve quality of life through the development of individual capacity. This is however achieved through the participation of the youths in empowerment programmes. Therefore, from the above illustrations and definitions we can rightly define youth empowerment as a term that is used to express the effort put in place by government in order to make the youth more production or self-reliant through skill acquisition.

Effects of Empowerment Programmes on Youth

1. **Skill Acquisition:** One of the core objective of empowerment programmes on teaming youth is skill acquisitions. Empowerment programmes avails the youth with the opportunity to acquire new skill necessary for their productive contribution to the nation. For example, Npower scheme, sure-p e.t.c.
2. **Crime Reduction among the Youth:** According to Olewe and Anga (2000:191) educated unemployed does not only lead to negative thinking but they constitute the most dangerous in every society. Therefore, in order to prevent the scenario painted above by Olewe and Anga, successive governments have initiated different empowerment programmes with divers colourations and nomenclatures, with the sole aim of engaging the youth into a productive ventures thereby reducing social vices.
3. **Creation of Jobs:** The major aim of empowerment programme is usually job creation which could be in the form of self-employment or as a lee way to a paid employment. For example Npower programme in Nigeria is a new federal government empowerment programme that has already provided jobs to over 200,000 Nigerian graduates in December 2016. At the present about 300,000 graduates names have been shortlisted in addition to the previous existing 200,000 graduates.
4. **Self-Reliance:** The essence of the skills that a given empowerment programme provides for it beneficiaries is usually design to make them self-reliance with less dependent on white collar jobs.
5. **High Standard of Living:** Empowerment programmes leads to high per capita income per head of it beneficiary. This invariably culminate into high standard of living among the beneficiaries whose lots have been improved by the empowerment programme.

Challenges of Youth Empowerment Programmes in Nigeria

1. Change in Administration: In a democratic setting, there is always room for periodic opportunity given to the masses to choose their leader or change the government in power. This to all extent has been the reason why most empowerment programmes had met their untimely end at the

- expiration of the government that introduced them. Every government so to say is known and recognized by policy they make, this account to lack of continuity inherent in most empowerment programmes in the face of changes in administration.
2. Poly communalism: In prismatic societies such as Nigeria there is often a high incidence of poly-communalism. Poly communalism implies a situation where officials apply the rules to serve the sectional interest of their own communities (Abah, 2009:69). A heterogeneous society such as Nigeria demands that all interest must be carried at the same pace to avoid marginalization. However the reverse is usually the case as public officials out of Nepotism and favouritism places Sectional interest far above national interest in implementing empowerment programmes.
 3. Over Population: Every empowerment programmes has the required number of beneficiaries it is design to cover. These beneficiaries are usually few when compared to the large population of willing, able and qualified citizens who could not be enlisted due to the limited number of beneficiary required. This to a large extent account to why the impact of most empowerment programmes are not often felt, as the number of people who could not benefit from a given programme outnumbers the few beneficiaries .
 4. Illiteracy: Most empowerment programmes are usually design with educational qualification as a prerequisite for accessing it. However the rate of illiteracy among the youth is usually alarming. Most youth are clamoring for government empowerment but lack the minimum educational qualification needed for their enlistment. Until the minimum educational requirements for most empowerment programme are met most empowerment programmes will remain elusive to many persons. This becomes imperative as effective use of physical capital itself is dependent upon human capital (Abah, 2009:25).
 5. Corruption: According to united nation postulation, corruption is simply the abuse of public office for private gain. Corruption is a bane of any progressive society. In as much as corruption is a global issues, its operation in Nigeria is alarming. Infact corruption walks in four legs in Nigeria. This perennial situation can be likened to what Abonyi (2005:125) called bureaucratic bifurcation of interest. That is a situation where by public officials pursue their personal interest at the detriment of general interest. Most public officials uses empowerment programmes as a medium of extorting money from unsuspecting youth with the promise of ensuring that they are enlisted as beneficiaries.
 6. Insecurity: Insecurity just like corruption appears to be a global issue that demands adequate attention both internally and externally for it to be addressed. Insecurity could be in the form of internal insurrection or external aggression. In the Nigeria context we have had so many insecurity challenges that have been controlled, yet we still have some that we are still battling with till date, for example Boko haram insurgency, Fulani headsmen killings etc. All this internal challenges to a large extent has limited the impact of most federal government empowerment programmes in Nigeria.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

The theoretical foundation adopted for this study is Human Capital Theory. According to Eze (2010:195) the concept of Human Capital was originally coined by Schultz (1961, 1981). Human capital simply means the knowledge skills and abilities of the people employed in an organization and it is the most important element in an organization's intellectual capital.

The Human Capital Theory posits that individuals possess skills, knowledge and abilities which confer on them the status of Human Capital which they express in their work. These individuals own and control the attributes and may decide to or not manifest them in the work place. This theory also posits that if the employer desires to benefit from the utilization of such Human Capital in his organization, a negotiation and eventual settlement must be reached with the individual concerned. In the modern world, human capital does not just happen. It is planned for and appropriate institutions, structure, and environment created to bring it to fruition.

Therefore as this theory tend to be appreciated by scholars, and government at all works of life, so is it imperative to Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State. This implies that the only way the manpower capacity of this volunteers could be utilized must be by creating an avenue for their capacity deployment and usage through empowerment programmes with attractive reward system. This will make the volunteers to be more committed and dedicated to their school duties.

2.3 Empirical Review

Ndamu (2017), carried out a research on Impact Assessment of Government Empowerment Programmes on Youth Participation in Entrepreneurial Activities in Adamawa State Nigeria. Data were gathered from a sample of 384 respondents, using policy performance evaluation questionnaires (PPEQ). Out of the 384 questionnaires administered 376 were duly completed and returned for analysis. Tables, frequency distribution, simple percentages and Pearson product correlation co-efficient were employed to analyse the data collected. From the analysis, it was found that the government youths empowerment programmes have at different times supported youth participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Ugoani and Ibeenwo (2015:28), carried out research on entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria. A study of the National Directorate of Employment, the survey research method was used for the study. Data analysis was done through Pearson's techniques. The result showed a very strong positive correlation between entrepreneurship development and employment generation.

Ekong (2016:32) carried out a research on Skills Acquisition and Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria with a case study of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Akwalbom State. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources for the period of 1987-2012. After the analysis, the study revealed that a positive line exist between skills acquisition by NDE and unemployment reduction in Akwalbom state even though not without daunting challenges.

Adetayo, Oke and Aderonmu (2015:141) carried out a research on a topic titled Assessment of Entrepreneurship and Employment Generation Among University Graduate in Nigeria. The relationship among entrepreneurial education training, university type, employment generation and entrepreneurs performance were tested using t-test and Pearson product movement correlation. The study concluded that increased entrepreneurial education and training had led to increased employment generation among university graduates in Nigeria.

Final slyOluseye, Adebayo, Olulanu, Adesola and Omonike (2017:49) carried out research on Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Self Employment Initiative Among Nigeria Science and Technology Students. Simple percentage ranking correlation and regression analysis techniques were used to analyse the questionnaires. The result obtained indicates that entrepreneurship education is a good policy and it has positive effect on self employment initiatives.

2.4 Summary of the Reviewed Literature

The concept of youth empowerment and development programmes has remained a center of attraction or academic discuss to researchers and scholars in recent years.

Many have written on this subject matter under consideration. For instance Ugoani and Ibeenwo (2015:28) resolved in their research that there exist a very strong correlation between entrepreneurship development and employment generation. This therefore enhances the commitment and dedication of workers to their duties.

Ekong (2015:32), Adamu (2017:72) and Oluseye et al (2017:49) all carried out research in this respect, it is worthy to note that their major point of emphasis and resolution is that there exist a strong correlation between youth empowerment programmes and its impact on youth empowerment generation.

However, despite the above harvest of research made in consideration of the topic under study, none of such has been carried out research on examining the effect federal government Npower programme in the Nation's Educational System. It is therefore this gap that this research tends to fill.

Methodology

A survey design was adopted for the study. Krejcie and Morgan formula of 1970 was used to obtain 174 sample size out of 318 population size who were Npower volunteers posted to selected schools under study in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State. These schools include; National Grammar School Nike, Trans- Ekulum Girls Secondary school, Community High School Emene, St. Joseph College Emene and St. Patrick College Emene. Final analyses were made from 150 questionnaire copies used out of 174 copies distributed. Tables and frequencies were used during data analysis while ANOVA was used for testing the research hypothesis.

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the observed F value is greater than the critical F value (Okeke, 2001).

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretations

Research Question one

Has Npower programme improved the numbers and quality of staff in the selected schools under study?

The responses made as regards to the above research question are summarized in the table below:

Table 4.1.1 The Effect of Npower Programme in the Selected Schools Under Study.

Statements	S.A	A	U	D	S.D	Total
Npower Programme has helped to increase the number of academic staff in the selected schools.	15	10	0	5	5	35
Npower Programme has helped to increase the number of non academic staff in the selected schools	8	5	1	12	15	41
The Npower volunteers are posted as assistant teachers to assist the permanent teachers in the selected schools.	18	7	3	7	5	40
The programme has helped to provide more capable hands for enhancing students discipline and control	10	8	2	6	8	34
Total	51	30	6	30	33	150
Percentage	34%	20%	4%	20%	22%	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

From table 4.1 above, we observed that out of the 150 questionnaire that were used after return, 51 respondents representing 34% strongly agree that Npower Programmes has improved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study, 30 respondents representing 20% agree to the above notion, 30 respondents representing 20% disagreed to the notion, 33 respondents representing 22% strongly disagreed to the notion, whereas 6 respondents representing 4% were undecided on the issue. The above analysis implies that Npower Programmes has improved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study.

Research Question Two

What is the impact of supervision on the performance of Npower Volunteers in the selected schools under study?

The responses made as regards to the above question are summarized in the table below:

Table 4.1.2 The Impact of poor supervision on the Performance of Npower Volunteers in the Selected Schools.

Statements	S.A	A	U	D	S.D	Total
Poor supervision increases laxity among the Npower volunteers posted in the selected schools under study.	11	9	2	8	10	40

Some of the Npower volunteers only come to school when they felt like coming due to poor supervision mechanism.	16	10	2	6	8	42
Due to poor supervision some of the volunteers have not resumed work after their first day of assumption.	12	9	1	4	1	27
Some of the Npower volunteers have refused to adhere to school rules and regulations due to poor supervision.	9	8	4	9	11	41
Total	48	36	9	27	30	150
Percentage %	32%	24%	6%	18%	20%	100%

Source: Field survey 2019

From table 4.2 above, we observed that out of the 150 questionnaire that were used after return, 48 respondents representing 32% strongly agree that poor supervision has a negative impact on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study, 36 respondents representing 24% agreed to the notion, 27 respondents representing 18% disagreed to the notion, 30 respondents representing 20% strongly disagreed to the notion, whereas 9 respondents representing 6% said nothing. This implies that poor supervision has a negative impact on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study.

Research Question Three

What is the impact of remuneration on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study?

The responses made as regards to the above research question are summarized in the table below:

Table 4.1.3. The Impact of Poor Remuneration on the Performance of Npower Volunteers in the Selected Schools

	S.A	A	U	D	S.D	Total
Due to poor remuneration most of the Npower volunteer teachers only come to school when they have classes.	16	9	1	6	8	40
Some of the Npower volunteer teachers have absconded from their place of primary assignment due to poor remuneration.	13	4	3	7	10	37
Poor remuneration affect the economic justification of covering a long distance on daily basis to school by some volunteer teachers living far away from the school.	14	7	0	5	6	32
Poor remuneration has made many Npower volunteer teachers to engage in other personal business which conflict with their official assignment in the school.	17	7	2	6	9	41
Total	60	27	6	24	33	150
Percentage %	40%	18%	4%	16%	22%	100%

Source: Field survey 2019

From table 4.3 above we observed that out of the 150 questionnaire that were used after return, 60 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that poor remuneration has a negative impact on performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study, 27 respondents representing 18% also agreed to the notion. 24 respondents representing 16% disagreed to the notion, 33 respondents representing 22% strongly disagreed to the notion, whereas 6 respondents representing 4% said nothing. This implies that poor remuneration has a negative impact on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study.

Test of Hypotheses
Hypothesis Test One

Ho: Npowerprogramme has notsignificantlyimprovedthe quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study

From table 4.1.1 The responses of the Npower volunteers are summarized in the table below.

Responses	Frequency	Total
Strangle agree	4	51
Agree	4	30
Undecided	4	6
Disagree	4	30
Strongly disagree	4	33
Total		150

Sources: Field Survey 2019

From table 4.1.1, ”the value for the hypothesis is computed below using Analysis of Variance(ANOVA);

Correction factor (c.f)=1125

Crude sum (S) = 1533

Sum of variation (SST) =408

Between sum of squares (SSB) =256.5

Error of squares (SSE) =151.5

Number of sample(K) =5

Number of repetition in each equal sample (n) = 4

Source of variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares(SS)	Mean square	F-ratio
Between samples	4	SSB =256.5	64.125	6.349
Within samples	15	SSE =151.5	10.1	
Total	19	SST =408		

Source: Field Survey 2019

Observed value from the table above is =6.349

The critical value is F.05 (4,15) =3.0556.

Decision = since the observed F value is greater than thecriticalFvalue we reject Ho and conclude that Npowerprogramme has significantlyimproved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools.

Summary of Findings

1. Npowerprogramme has significantlyimproved the quality and quantity of staff in the selected schools under study.
2. Poor supervision has a negative impact on the performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study. This is because poor supervision increases the rate of laxity and indiscipline among the Npower volunteer teachers.
3. Poor remuneration has a negative impact on performance of Npower volunteers in the selected schools under study. This is evidence as some of the volunteers have absconded their place of primary assignments for their private businesses.

5.2. Recommendations

The researchers recommendthe following

1. Federal government should always work in collaboration with it state counterpart in order to ensure that various institutions that enhances Youth Empowerment Programmes are well provided for.
2. Federal Government should set a supervisory body that will collaborate with it state counterpart (Post Primary School Management Board) in maintaining a close watch through constant

- supervision of the performance of Npower volunteer teachers, in order to ensure that the goal of the programme is achieved.
3. Government should ensure the reflection of the approved minimum wage, on Npower programme which will help to better the lots of these volunteer teachers.
 4. There is obvious need for constant or periodic appraisal of Youth Empowerment Programme in order to match policies with practice. This could be realized through appropriate enhancement of both the state and federal appraisal mechanisms.

Conclusion

The outcome of the above study clearly proved that Npower programme has significantly improved the nation educational system, despite of its challenges such as poor remuneration and weak supervision mechanisms bedeviling its implementation since inception till date.

References

- Abah N.C (2009), *Development Administration: A Multi-disciplinary Approach*. Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.
- Abonyi N.N (2005), *Trends in Modern Public Administration*. Enugu: John Jacob's classic publishers Ltd.
- Adetayo O. Oke A. and Aderom O. (2015), *Assessment of Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation among University Graduates in Nigeria*. European Journals of Business and Management 7(23) 2222-2839 (online)
- Eze F. O.(2010), *Human Resources Management: Strategy, Theory and Applications*. Enugu: Ogbu Printers and publishers.
- Ikediegwu N.P (2007) *Educational Finance and School Business Management*. Enugu: Cheston Agency Ltd.
- National Social Investment Programme (2016) Retrieved from Statehouse.gov.ng/policy/economy/national-social-investment-programme.
- Ndarnu R.K (2017), *Impact Assessment of Government Empowerment Programmes on Youth Participation in Entrepreneurial Activities in Adamawa State-Nigeria*. International Journal of Advanced Studies in Economics and Public Sector Management 5 (2) 2354-4228 online.
- Nnamani (2009), *Politics of Development and Under Development*. Enugu: John Jacob's classic publishers Ltd.
- Nwosu H.N (2008), *Laying the Foundation for Nigeria's Democracy: My Account of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election and its Annulment*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited.
- Obasi I.N (2008), *Research Methodology in Political Science*. Enugu: Academic Printing Press.
- Odiba I.A and Aku C.A (2005) *Understanding Classroom Management and Organization*. Enugu: Mable Creations.
- Ofo (2016), *Federal Government of Nigeria N-Power Programme for Young Nigerians*. Retrieved from www.opportunitiesforafricans.com/federal-government-of-nigeria-n-power-programme-2-16-for-young-nigerians.
- Okeke, A.O (2001), *Foundation statistic for business Decision*. Enugu: Macro Academic publishers.
- Oluseye A.M, Adebayo K.F. Olulanu O.I Adesola O.O and Omonike A.O (2017) *Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Self-Employment Initiative among Nigeria Science and Technology Students*. Journal of Education and Practice 8(15) 2222-288x (online).

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

By

Ojile, Barnabas Audu

Kogi State University Anyigba

Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of Covid-19 on religious practices in Nigeria. Religious organizations and other places throughout the world experience lockdown which affected all programmes of activities. The study explores how religious leaders carried out their ministry during Covid-19 pandemic. These research make use quantitative and review of literatures being the methodology. Findings show that religious leaders adapted to the situation by exploring other possible means to perform their religious activities through the use of internet. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies are made available.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Religious Leaders in Nigeria.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has an extremely significant impact on the functioning of societies, as well as many sectors of economic life. It is very difficult to forecast the directions and depth of necessary changes during the development of the pandemic. This is due to the fact that different scenarios and the pace of development of COVID-19 are considered in different countries. Thus, public policies used in the fight against pandemics are also different in individual countries. Assessments of social, economic, and cultural effects of the pandemic must be multidimensional, and thus, subject to significant uncertainty (Sukowaki and Ragleb 11).

The coronavirus pandemic is developing very rapidly on a global scale. It is understandable that it has a very significant impact on the whole social life, including religious life. Religious practices, which have, by their very nature, a community dimension in almost all religions, in Christian denominations as well, are also changing under the influence of the pandemic. The purpose of the article is to examine the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on religious practices in Nigeria.

The coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic gripped the world with a shock, thereby overwhelming the health system of most nations. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel human coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, which began in Wuhan, China on December 8, 2019, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020 (WHO, 2020). With over seven million cases globally as of June 7 (2020): Following this WHO declaration, the Coronavirus Preparedness Group was constituted on January 31 in Nigeria (a country with 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory [FCT]). WHO categorized Nigeria as one of the 13 high-risk African countries with respect to the spread of COVID-19. Nigeria is also among the vulnerable African nations, given the weak state of the healthcare system (Marbot, 3). In Africa, there are still communities without healthcare facilities, apart from the scarcity of health workers (Amzat, 9). The projection is that Africa could bear the final burden of the COVID-19 pandemic if the countries do not institute effective measures to combat the pandemic.

Sociologically, the pandemic has caused global social disruption by limiting global social relations. The idea of “social distancing” negates regular social interaction, which is the bedrock of human society (Amzat and Razum, 8). A contagious disease of global health importance also disrupts the usual norms of close physical contacts since the disease transmits through contact with individuals who already contracted the disease. COVID-19 deglobalizes the world in terms of human migration with airports shut, and social events (sports, festivals and the like) postponed indefinitely. The "stay-at-home" campaign and proscription of (large) social gatherings mean that social interaction has been limited.

Globalization, which signifies compression of time and space, aids the transmission of diseases on a global scale, facilitating the spread of COVID-19. The world has been witnessing global trade, movement of people, and the globalization of health (Youde, 10). The global transmission of diseases is one of the dysfunctions or latent functions of globalization, which offers both opportunities and catastrophes. The world is a global village; hence the health of individuals is intrinsically linked irrespective of distance. Beck (14) and Giddens (19) introduced the idea of risk society theory. The theory is concerned with the unintended and unforeseen side effects of modern life, which back fire on modernity (itself) (Wimmer and Quandt, 7). These side effects change human society: a health risk in Wuhan (China) becomes a pandemic, through human migration, affecting all countries of the world, with several thousands of deaths. As the world is being de-territorialized, facilitating trade, communication, and information, it is also prone to (health) risks. Beck (4) noted that the world reflects the creation of health hazards, which jeopardize human living conditions at a global level.

The first month of COVID-19 in Nigeria (February 27 – March 27, 2020)

According to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the training of the rapid response teams across the 36 states in Nigeria was concluded in December 2019. On January 28, the NCDC further revealed that a Coronavirus Group had been set up to activate its incident system to respond to any emergency. Additionally, the NCDC worked with 36 states including FCT in Nigeria to activate their emergency operations centers to manage and link up with the national incidence coordination centers (Ihekweazu, 4). Although the government had strengthened the surveillance at the airport since January 2020, Nigeria recorded its COVID-19 index case that was imported from Italy, on February 27. This raised concerns about the effectiveness of airport surveillance and, by extension, the country’s general preparedness. The index case (an Italian) had visited some other states of the federation before testing positive for COVID-19. The pre-COVID-19 preparedness was grossly inadequate.

Table 1

Timeline of Coronavirus Outbreak in Nigeria (February 27-June 7, 2020).

Incidence of Coronavirus	February 27 – March 27 Number	(first 30 days) Percentage
Total positive cases	81	
Total discharged	3	3.7% (of positive cases)
Total deaths	1	1.2% (of positive cases)
Incidence of Coronavirus	February 27 – April 27, 2020	(first 60 days)
Total positive cases	1337	12.2% (of the total tests)
Total discharged	255	19.2% (of positive cases)
Total deaths	40	3.0% (of positive cases)

Total tests	10,918	
Incidence of Coronavirus	February 27 – June 7, 2020	(first 100 days)
Total positive cases	12486	16.3% (of total tests)
Total discharged	3957	31.7% (of positive cases)
Total deaths	354	2.8% (of positive cases)
Total tests	76802	

According to Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, 2020; Worldometer, 10) other neighboring countries that are already battling with hundreds of COVID-19 cases. When COVID-19 forced some of them to return to Nigeria, many returned positive for COVID-19. From the first index and other imported cases, there has been a continuous spread across other states through inter-state travels.

During the first 30 days of COVID-19 in Nigeria, the disease distribution was elitist. The majority of those who tested positive were returnees from abroad (NCDC, 2020). Air travel is predominantly elitist in Nigeria because of the high rate of poverty. The political elite also bore the early brunt of COVID-19 with three state governors and some political appointees testing positive for COVID-19. Due to the (initial) trend, the initial perception was that COVID-19 was a disease of the elite, who returned from international travels or had contact with the political bourgeoisie. Such perception, which has not dissipated, undermined control efforts. Sooner than expected, there was evidence of community transmission as COVID-19 broke the class boundary. It then became the responsibility of every Nigerian to take preventive responsibility.

Efforts are being made to reduce the timing (Akor et al., 6). Due to limited testing and treatment resources, the Federal Government (FG) has targeted only those in pressing need of testing. Therefore, those to be tested are the following:

1. returnees from overseas trips who are symptomatic within 14 days of their arrival (the returnees were advised to self-isolate for 14 days upon return to Nigeria),
2. persons who had contact with confirmed cases and developed symptoms within 14 days of contact,
3. those having COVID-19-related symptoms of unknown cause,
4. and persons residing in areas with a moderate or high prevalence of COVID-19.

The number of molecular laboratories with the capacity to test for COVID-19 increased from five to 23 (as of June 7). Currently, private molecular laboratories are not being used for COVID-19 testing in Nigeria. Over three months after the index case was confirmed, more than one-third of the 36 states are without a testing laboratory. Samples are to be sent to Abuja or any of the available molecular laboratories if any case is suspected from the states without testing centers (Michael, 11). Although there is no cure for the COVID-19 infection, the NCDC revealed that the treatment of COVID-19 patients harmonizes with the guidelines from the African Centers for Disease Control. Additionally, the Federal Government is making efforts to eradicate the virus by directing the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovation [CEPI] to oversee three agencies (the Nigerian Institute for Medical Research [NIMR], the Nigerian Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development [NIPRD], and the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control [NAFDAC]) that will research and find a cure to the virus (Ifijeh, 19). NAFDAC has accepted some local herbal remedies for testing.

Table 1 shows the rate of recovery from COVID-19 as of June 7, 2020. Treatment of positive patients takes an average of one month. Most of the patients who succumbed to the infection in Nigeria reportedly had severe underlying health conditions, which became complicated by the coronavirus disease (NCDC, 2020). Following international best practices, the

NCDC has made a prescription for safe burial practices with minimal risk to the deceased's loved ones. COVID-19 requires competent laboratory diagnosis and stringent care procedures. Therefore, home management by primary caregivers (relatives) should not be an option, although the PTF is considering it due to limited resources and facilities. The virus is highly contagious; hence, it requires PPE, which is even inadequate for those in the front lines. If implemented, the option of home care might lead to an upsurge in the burden of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

Against the backdrop that the lockdown of Religious Institutions and other public places have prevented pastors from performing their pastoral ministry in the traditional ways through physical contacts, churches had to find other means of holding their church activities, and pastors had to explore alternative means of performing their pastoral ministry. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to find out the effects of the COVID-19 lock down on Religious Practices in Nigeria. It also look at how pastors can be more effective in their pastoral ministry, when the churches are re-opened for congregational religious worship.

Covid-19-Pandemic Lockdown

As part of the efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, governments throughout the world started to restrict gathering of large number of people in public places and movements from one place to the other, especially inter-state and cross-border movements, and advocate stay safe or stay at home. It also involves what is termed social (or preferably physical) distancing –“a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease” where “schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be cancelled.” (Agilkaya 1) This restriction is popularly known as lockdown. With the advent of a COVID-19 case in Nigeria on February 27, 2020, the Nigerian governments at the federal and state levels started imposing series of lockdown measures. (Peterson 2) Undoubtedly, this lockdown affected churches and the ways pastors are performing their pastoral ministry among the church members (Oyelola 7).

Population and Instrument Used for Data Collection

The targeted population of this study was selected Nigerian pastors in ministry. The instrument used to collect data for the study was sent to respondents through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, and the respondents sent in their responses through WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and email. As occasions demanded, there were further correspondences with some of the respondents through WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and phone calls. The researcher adapted and employed this means for his data collection because of the current situation in the world that discouraged people from moving from one place to the other and the advocacy for social/physical distancing and staying safe. The time frame of this research is the months of March to July 2020.

Data Presentation and Discussions of Results Number of Respondents

Out of one hundred and fifty (150) Religious leaders that were contacted through WhatsApp Messenger, one hundred and seventeen (117) responded. This represented seventy-eight per cent (78%) of the total number of people contacted. With this percentage, the researcher is of the opinion that this method of data collection is considerable better for more effective and more result-oriented in the field of research.

Years of Experience in Religious Practices

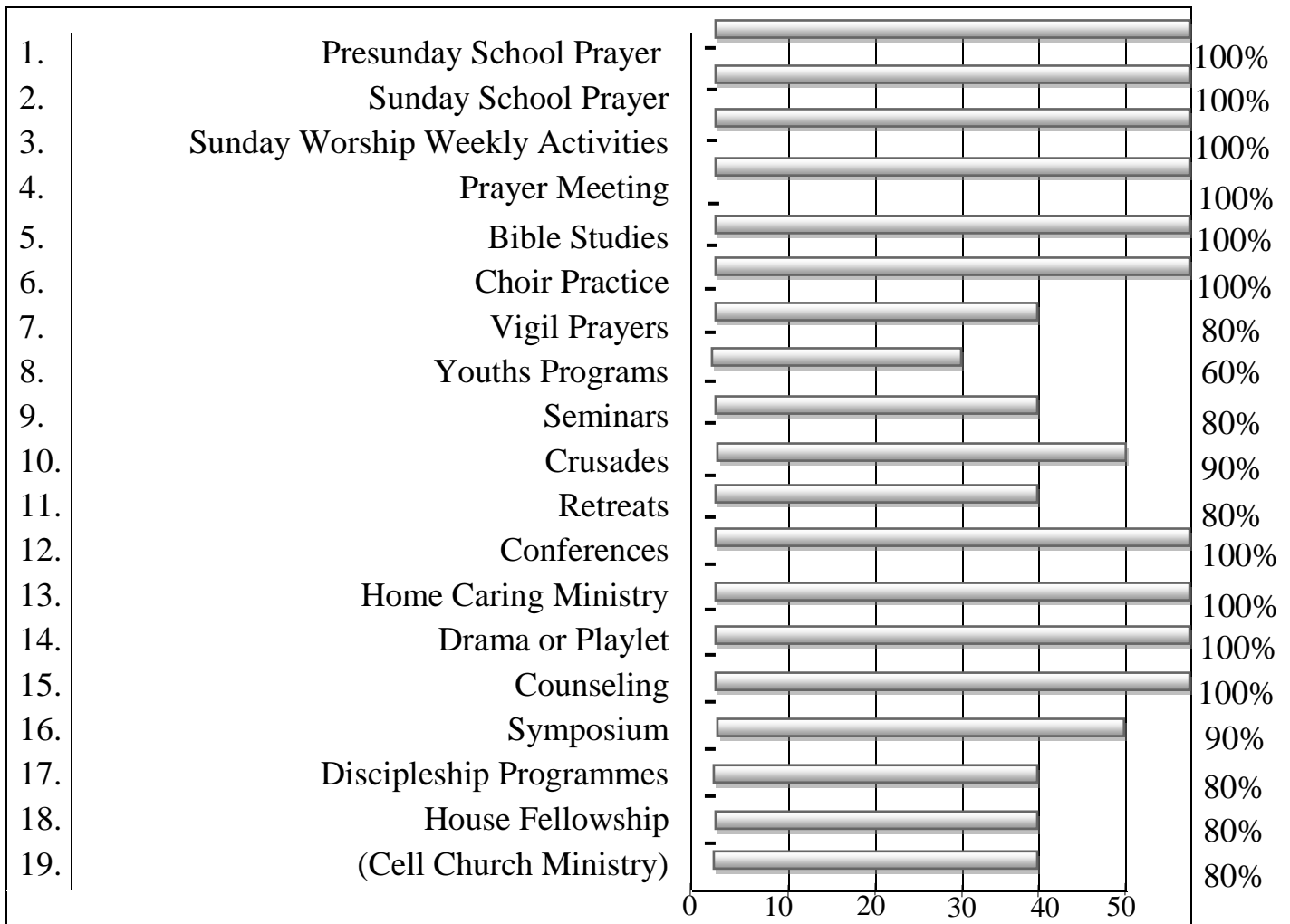
Figure 1: Years of Experience

9 years	18%
10-19 years	34%
20 years and above	48%

From the number of pastors that responded as shown in Figure 1, twenty-one (21) respondents that represent eighteen per cent (18%) have had pastoral ministry experiences for less than 9 years, forty (40) respondents that represent thirty-four per cent (34%) have had pastoral ministry experiences between 10 and 19 years, while fifty-six (56) respondents that represent forty-eight per cent (48%) have had pastoral ministry experiences for at least 20 years. This result shows that most of the respondents are experienced pastors in their pastoral ministry. It is has to be noted here that few of these respondents are missionaries while some are teachers in pastors' training schools. This exception is reflected in the responses of these particular pastors.

Major Traditional Ways of Religious Practices before Covid-19 Pandemic Period in Nigeria

Figure 2: Major Traditional Ways of Religious Practices before COVID-19 Pandemic Period Activities



It is evident that as their main responsibility, Religious Leaders have been performing their pastoral ministry in various ways before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents identified some of these ways as represented by Figure 2. These responses do not mean a respondent chose only one response. The respondents had the opportunity of identifying as many ways as possible. The responses indicate that each of them has been using many ways to perform his pastoral ministry before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

A quick glance at the Figure 2 shows that attending (and in most cases presiding over) regular church activities (43 respondents representing 36%) is most noticeable means of pastoral ministry among the respondents. These activities include the conventional gatherings mostly on Sundays and some other days during the week. Preaching from the pulpit is the second most recognizable way many of the respondents (42 respondents representing 35%) indicated as the traditional way of engaging in pastoral ministry before the COVID-19 pandemic period. Two other more recognizable ways are uses of some technological tools (27 respondents representing 23%) and uses of social media and other Internet platforms (25 respondents representing 21%). This indicates that some of the respondents are technologically inclined in their pastoral ministry. Other ways that have respondents between 10 and 20 (representing 8% and 17%) are prayer from the pulpit, Bible study and teaching sessions, house fellowship/cell group sessions, and printing of religious literatures.

Ways of Religious Practices During COVID-19 in Nigeria

Figure 1:

S/NO.	PROGRAMS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Facebook Messenger	63	42%
2.	Zoom	42	28%
3.	Email	24	16%
4.	Text Messages	28	19%
5.	Recorded Messages	18	12%
6.	Whatsapp Groups	81	54%
7.	Media Platform	47	31%
8.	Telegram	16	11%
9.	Conference Call	13	9%

A question was posed to the respondents on how they are doing pastoral ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This is a subjective question that allowed the respondents to give as many answers as possible. As shown in Table 1, there are still some traditional ways of pastoral ministry like facebook messenger church (63 respondents representing 42%), zoom (42 respondents representing 28%), Email (24 respondents representing 16%), Text messages (28 respondents representing 19%), Record Messages (18 respondents representing 12%), Whatsapp (81 respondents representing 54%), Media Platform (47 respondents representing 21%), Telegram (16 respondents representing 11%), C conference (13 respondents representing 9%). However, most of the ways indicated as shown in Table 1 as the ways of pastoral ministry during the pandemic are Internet-inclined (369 responses representing 315%). This clearly indicates that apart from the earlier identified traditional means of pastoral ministry, various aspects of the Internet ministry take a very major role in the pastoral ministry of respondents to their church members during the pandemic.

Findings

Some of the respondents used the opportunity of the research to bear their minds on the effects of the pandemic lockdown on Religious activities and especially performing pastoral ministry in a time like this. Some of these opinions are given here. A respondent was of the opinion that "...the development and the exposure brought about by the experience of COVID-19 has obviously created a shift from what Religious Leaders have been doing before the outbreak of the pandemic and what [they] have to do after we overcome the pandemic." This respondent went further to say that Religious leaders that are not ready to adapt with this shift may be overtaken by time and become irrelevant in their ministry in the post-COVID-19-pandemic world.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Pastors should be more concerned about the needs and situations of their church members apart from the traditional weekly messages during Sunday worships. Church members are going through a lot of challenges occasioned by the pandemic. This is the time that pastors should be more passionate to show that they really care for the church members. This care can be in form of visitation (if possible), phone calls, sending of encouraging text messages, leading the church to give monetary or material tokens to needy church members, and other ways that will make the church members to feel the positive impacts of the pastors and the churches in their lives and situations. Pastors are enjoined to be more dynamic in the way they are conducting their church activities and other aspects of pastoral ministry. They are to make necessary adjustment in their service plans and messages (through sermons and Bible teachings). The age of parochialism is over. New innovations are needed in pastoral ministry to combat the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has posed to the world.

Recommendations

The following recommendation are made available

1. Religious leaders should embrace the use of the social media and other technological tools in their religious practices.
2. Churches and mosque should invest more in their multimedia ministry by training Pastors and Imam how to use several tools to enhance the multimedia ministry, and by training some followers to assist the leaders in the use of technological tools for ministry.
3. Religious leaders should consciously teach their members to be able to stand without depending on their leaders during this trying time.
4. Religious leaders should train some committed followers some pattern of doing ministry so that such trained people will be able to assist their leaders in future ministry.
5. Multi-religious ministry that will involve a group of persons who are committed to serve God by serving other members of religious groups to achieved its mission and responsibilities should be encouraged even in the remote or smallest religious groups.
6. Prompt efforts should be given to visitation and carrying of members through phone calls and sending text messages.
7. Little emphasis should be placed on large congregational gathering while more emphasis should placed on detracted that will build members up in their spiritual life.

Suggestion for Further Study

Sequel to the outcome of the study, the following are recommended for further study:

1. Managing with challenges of post-COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Follow-up and visitation to cell Church/ Large fellow fellowship system.
3. Effectiveness of multi-Religious Ministry in the Contemporary world.

Works Cited

- Ragheb, Mustafa. Risk quantification. *Nature*, 2020, 2.
- Sułkowski, Łukasz. Covid-19 Pandemic; Recession, Virtual Revolution Leading to De globalization? *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 2020, 1–11.
- “Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak”. Retrieved from March 28, 2020, [1https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf).
- Peterson Ozili, 2020 “Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis: The Nigerian experience and structural causes”. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2020. Retrieved June 7, 2020 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3567419>.
- Oyelola A. Adegboye, Adeshina I. Adekunle, and Ezra Gayawan (2020). “Early Transmission Dynamics of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Nigeria”. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 17, 3054. Retrieved May 30, 2020 from <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17093054>, 2020, 7.
- Chukwuka Onyekwena and Mma Amara Ekeruche. “Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Nigerian economy”. Retrieved June 10, 2020 from 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/04/08/understanding-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-on-the-nigerian-economy>
- Akor O, Jimoh A, John-Mensah O, Ramoni R, Oke J. Nigeria “not testing enough people” as COVID-19 spreads. *Daily Trust*; 2020. <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/nigeria-not-testing-enough-people-as-covid-19-spreads.html>
- Amzat J, Razum O. *Towards a Sociology of Health Discourse in Africa*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.; 2018.
- Amzat J. Faith effect and voice on early marriage in a Nigerian state. *SAGE Open* 2020:1–9, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244020919513>, 2020.
- Beck U. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. New Delhi: Sage; 1992.
- Giddens A. *Runaway world: How Globalization is shaping the World*. London: Profile Books; 2002.
- Ifijeh M. COVID-19: Lagos Establishes Sample Collection Centres in 20 LGAs THISDAYLIVE, 2020. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/04/19/covid19-lagos-establishes-sample-collection-centres-in-20-lgas/>
- Ihekweazu C. Steps Nigeria is taking to Prepare for Cases of Coronavirus. 2020. <http://theconversation.com/steps-nigeria-is-taking-to-prepare-for-cases-of-coronavirus-130704>.
- Marbot O. Coronavirus Africa Map: Which Countries are Most at Risk? 2020. <https://www.theafricareport.com/23948/coronavirus-africa-which-countries-are-most-at-risk/>
- Michael I. COVID-19: Gombe Set to Establish Testing Center » Latest News. *Tribune Online*; 2020. <https://tribuneonlineng.com/covid-19-gombe-set-to-establish-testing-centre/>
- Wimmer J, Quandt T. Living in the risk society. *J Studies* doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616700600645461>, 2006;7(2):336–47,
- Worldometer. Coronavirus Update (Live): COVID-19 Virus Outbreak. Worldometer; 2020. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.
- Youde J. *Globalization and Health*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Little field Publishers; 2020.

RELIGION AND MENTAL COLONIZATION: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART AND ARROW OF GOD

By

Austin Chibueze Okeke

Department of Theatre and Film Studies

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The primordial concept of religion stems from its basic impact on the minds of adherents. Its strong grip, many a time, can be a major determinant of perceived character and general behaviour of the individual. This, in a much serious sense, could translate to mental colonization. This essay, adopting an inter-disciplinary approach, seeks to examine the extent of religious impact in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. The texts explore some intriguing socio-cultural norms whose overt manifestation in given circumstances are tell-tale of religious zeal and adamance.

Keywords: Religion, Mental, Colonization, Socio-cultural, Inter-disciplinary.

Introduction

Chinua Achebe is one of the foremost African writers whose works have garnered quite a huge acclaim from the global literary community. Quite a lot of research has equally been done on various aspects of his writings bordering on His Novels and the Environment, the Subject of Christianity in his works, the Portrayal of Religion in his works, Clash of Cultures in some of his works, and many more. None, however, has bothered to write on the aspect of Mental Colonisation on account of religion in his works. This paper, therefore, seeks to isolate and examine certain incidences in two of his trilogy plays, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* using both texts as primary sources of information, to address the above subject. The paper argues that there are better ways to impress the relevance of one's religious beliefs and viewpoints other than through the means of violence. It also puts forward the view that certain customs and traditions which place unnecessary tasks on adherents could also be mellowed or expunged in its entirety.

Background of the Study

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* were both set during the colonial period of Eastern Nigeria. The texts explore the traditional cum, the somewhat inimical impact of, the Western presence in Umuofia, Umuaro, Okperi, Mbanta, and some other neighbouring communities. Okonkwo and Ezeulu are custodians of the mother traditional culture with its adept religious implications. In both novels, "Achebe shows the importance of religion in Igbo society and how intertwined religion and community are with one another thus making it impossible to discuss one without also discussing the other" (Kristian Moseley 2017, p.3)

The Concept of Religion and Mental Colonisation: A Brief Discourse

Religion has been defined as "something one believes in and follows devotedly; a pointer or matter of ethics or conscience." (dictionary.com) A people's identity could also be tied or attached to their religious inclination. For Arthur L. Greil and Lynn Davidman "religion is intimately bound up with people's identity, their sense of who they 'really' are (Religion and Identity, 2007, P.533). Colonisation, on the other hand, is the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area. Colonisation usually comes with a baggage, as it involves, among other things, a somewhat alteration of the existing culture. Writing on Religion and State in Postcolonial Africa:

Challenges and Opportunities, Jaco S. Dryer observes “colonialism to a great extent disrupted and even destroyed the traditional social, cultural, economic and political structures that existed before the colonial period(2007, p.3). One tool, apart from political power, which colonialism employs to stamp its presence and influence in most geographical locations (especially with the African experience), is the influx of missionary activities which, sometimes, present subtle but aggressive outlook. In his 2003 article titled “Conversion to Christianity: The Colonization of the Mind”, Stanley Brian opines thus:

Missionary activity always holds an implicit psychological violence, however discretely it is conducted. It is aimed at turning the minds and hearts of people away from their native religion to one that is generally unsympathetic and hostile to it ... Missionary activity and conversion, therefore, is not about freedom of religion. It is about the attempt of one religion to exterminate all others (p.539).

Because the idea of religion is largely a thing of the mind, its influence sometimes tends overboard as certain adherents act irrational in the bid to express loyalty. In such instances, such overbearing influence of the said religion could be said to exert a degree of mental colonisation. This study shall, against this backdrop, x-ray aspects of the incidences in the primary texts which buttress this notion.

Issues of Religious Mental Colonisation in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*

In *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* Achebe explores the potency of Igbo spirituality and religious life and how it “dies an ignominious death when confronted by Christianity”. According to shmoop.com/study-guides/:

Christianity is backed by the white man's military and political power. As a result, Christianity is also identified with the source of their power. When the people of Umuaro are faced with famine because the chief priest of Ulu refuses to break tradition, the catechist at the church offers protection so the people can harvest their yams. When Ezeulu's son Obika dies, the people interpret that as a sign that Ulu was punishing his priest. With Ezeulu's power broken, Umuaro turns to the Christian God for help (web—24/09/20).

The Reverence of the Python

One incident which stands out in both texts of Achebe is the reverence accorded the python. In both Umuofia and Umuaro the python is extolled as sacred and, therefore, deemed untouchable.

Describing the hallowed animal, Achebe writes:

The royal python was the most revered animal in Mbanta and all the surrounding clans. It was addressed as ‘Our Father’, and was allowed to go wherever it chose, even into people’s beds. It ate rats in the house and sometimes swallowed hen’s eggs. If a clansman killed a royal python accidentally, he made sacrifice of atonement and performed an expensive burial ceremony such as was done for a great man. No punishment was prescribed for a man who killed the python knowingly. Nobody thought that such a thing could ever happen. Perhaps it never did happen (*Things Fall Apart* pp.126-7).

One cannot but note that the level of veneration accorded the python in Achebe’s context is so much at variance with that prescribed in the Holy bible. In the book of Genesis, at the Garden of Eden incident where the serpent deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, the judgment pronounced by God, according to Genesis was:

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shall thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis Chapter 3, verse 14-15 KJV).

This, therefore, explains the wonderment of the Christian communities in both texts, as well as their daring moves against the sacred animal, since they consider the animal cursed as well as man’s enemy of some sort, above all, they saw the challenge of desecrating the worship of the animal as a show of true faith and

superiority as well as a potential course for Christian martyrdom. Stirring up the Christian community in relation to their faith against the pervading notion about the python Mr. Goodcountry challenges thus:

If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for the faith...You must be ready to kill the python...You address the python as Father. It is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian (Arrow of God p.47)
Now with this level of inspiration, Oduche must have felt the blood warm in his veins as he ventured to experiment with the python (p.50).

The untoward reverence accorded the python, by the heathen communities in both texts is on account of religion, or better still, religious worship, and this blinding reverence occasioned the art of a lofty burial ceremony prescribed for anyone who accidentally killed the python. It was also on the strength of the heightened fear and awe about the personality of the serpent that no provision was made for punishment in event of a purposeful killing of the serpent or, as in Oduche's case, the imprisonment of the serpent. The question would arise "Of what economic value is the serpent in such communities, since they could neither be eaten nor sold?" Or "Why hold a mere animal in such high esteem?"

On the part of the Christian community, one would also wonder at the ultimate motive behind the killing or imprisonment gesture. Was the challenge to kill the python an act of worship to the Christian God or a mere proof of superiority of one religion over another? Even when Mr. Moses Unachukwu dared to rationalise and condemn the plot by recounting the genesis of the tradition as well as other villages that adhere to the same practice, his opinion met with very stiff opposition from the now popular Mr. Goodcountry who retorts thus: "A story such as you have just told is not fit to be heard in the house of God. But I allowed you to go on so that all may see the foolishness of it" (p.49).

Punishment over a Female Crime

Okonkwo's banishment from Umuofia over the unintentional killing of Ezeudu's son and the subsequent destruction of his houses, animals and barn in appeasement of the goddess, are all tell-tale of the dark religious principles that govern his community. One would have wondered if there was no other dimension to their show and or carriage of justice than that. Could he, for instance, not have been given a lesser punishment than a seven-year banishment from his community. No thought was given to the general implication of such a decree on, not just the individual concerned but, his family as a whole. One would have thought that asking him to pay a huge fine in addition to temporarily denying him of certain privileges in the community would have sufficed, more so, considering that the act was not deliberate. Decrying the practice, Obierika, Okonkwo's friend laments "Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently?" (*Things Fall Apart* p.100)

Many a practice that goes on in the name of tradition is very inimical as well as counterproductive. A typical example is the level of degrading treatment accorded widows in certain parts of the world. In Africa, for instance, most particularly, some parts of the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, when a man dies the widow is often blamed for his death and in some cases, is made to swear and drink the bath water of the late husband's corpse. And, regarding inheritance, she is stripped of virtually everything that belonged to the late husband. Writing on the subject of "Disinheritance of a Widow" in her Inaugural Lecture titled "Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices: Reflections on Inadvertent Weapons of Retrogression in Community Development", Catherine Oreh 2014, observes thus:

This is a situation where a widow is not allowed to inherit any property of her husband. Igbo land is mainly a patriarchal society in which a widow is seen as a chattel of her husband and his family. As a chattel she is incapable of owning or inheriting a property but she qualifies to be inherited herself. The only exception is if the woman has a living male child who can inherit part of his father's property and through him the mother may benefit. It is worse in a matrilineal society where the members of the man's maternal family, particularly the man's brothers, sisters and their children dispossess the dead man's biological children of their father's property (16).

One thing that appears to be ignored is that customs and traditions or traditional practices should be geared towards the wellbeing of the citizenry; therefore, any practice or custom that tends towards irrationality should be readdressed and if possible, changed just like the elders of Umuaro would encourage Ezeudu to

do over the date for the New Yam Festival. Hitherto, the custom of the land was that Ezeulu only calls for a new festival when there is only one yam left from the last, but given that unforeseen circumstances had prevented that from happening, and knowing that not announcing the new date would likely result in untoward hardship and impecuniosity for the community, the ten representatives of Umuaro then approached Ezeulu to ask for change. Achebe writes:

...Nnanyelugo deftly steered the conversation to the subject of change. He gave numerous examples of customs that had been altered in the past when they began to work hardship on the people. They all talked at length about these customs which had either died in full bloom or had been stillborn. Nnanyelugo reminded them that even in the matter of taking titles there had been a change. Long, long ago there had been a fifth title in Umuaro—the title of king. But the conditions of its attainment had been so severe that no man had ever taken it, one of the conditions being that the man aspiring to be king must first pay the debt of every man and every woman in Umuaro (*Arrow of God* p.209).

The request from the ten elders above was not to mark the beginning of change for an existing inimical custom. Time was in Umuaro when it was customary to put marks on people's faces, but that had to change when the community became uncomfortable with it.

Also, regarding breaking the week of peace in Umuofia, Ogbuefi Ezeudu, who was the oldest man in the village, revealed to two men who came to visit him that the punishment for breaking the Peace of Ani had lessened in their clan. According to him:

My father told me that he had been told that in the past a man who broke the peace was dragged on the ground through the village until he died. But after a while this custom was stopped because it spoils the peace which it was meant to preserve (*Things Fall Apart* p.25).

With all the instances in the texts above it is evident, according to Pala Mull, Ç. (2017), that "Achebe also emphasizes the capacity to realize the shortcomings of the system and change for the better within the culture." (Clash of Cultures in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* p. 1899)

The Killing of Ikemefuna

In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's role in the execution of Ikemefuna was worthy of note in that it was partly a case of feigned reverence to the decree of the gods, but more so a blind response to the whims of human ego. Obierika, Okonkwo's good friend, blamed him for his role in the boy's death, and Okonkwo snapped as the following dialogue ensued between them.

OKONKWO: You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die.

OBIERIKA: I do not. Why should I? But the Oracle did not ask me to carry out its decision.

OKONKWO: But someone had to do it. If we were all afraid of blood, it would not be done.

And what do you think the Oracle would do then?

OBIERIKA: You know very well that I am not afraid of blood...If I were you I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth...

OKONKWO: The Earth cannot punish me for obeying her messenger. A child's fingers are...

OBIERIKA: That is true, but if the Oracle said that my son should be killed I would neither dispute it nor be the one to do it.

Reading through the above dialogue, one would have felt that Okonkwo was an eager patron of the gods, but evidence has it that he merely hid behind the injunction of the gods, as Solomon O. Iyasere (1992) would observe, "to protect his own ambition and the fear of being deemed weak by the rest of the community" (Cited in Galvin & Galvan, 2008, p.108). To further lend credence to the assertion above, "Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna... He did not sleep at night. He tried not to think about Ikemefuna, but the more he tried the more he thought about him." (50)

The Osu Caste System

'Osu' is a name given to the outcasts in Igboland; they are a set of people who have been sacrificed to certain gods. The Osu group is considered inferior and they suffer a lot of discrimination from

the people who consider themselves as the free-born. “The Igbo people”, according to Victor Dike, “refer to the Osu in varied names; they are referred to as Adu-Ebo in Nzamin Onitsha. In the Nsukka area they are referred to as Oruma; and Nwani or Ohualusi at Awgu area. These names...have the same connotation in Igboland. The people referred to by the names are regarded as sub-human being, the unclean class, or slaves” (2002,pdf).

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe, in the words of a Christian convert, describes the osu thus:

He was a person dedicated to a god; a thing set apart—A taboo forever and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born. He was, in fact, an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste—long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An osu could not attend an assembly of the free-born, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest.

In spite of all the negative opinions about the osu, the Christian community, led by Mr. Kiaga, admitted them into the fold without discrimination; two joined at first “and soon they were among the strongest adherents of the new faith. And what was more; nearly all the osu in Mbanta followed their example (p.126). They were given free hand to the extent that one of them ventured to kill the sacred python.

The strong belief against the osu in the texts is so loud. Even among the Christian community there was still this feeling of foreboding about them. It was so strong that one of the Christian converts had to give up his faith instead of cohabiting with the osus.

The Character of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*

This paper cannot be complete without devoting a segment at least to talk about the personality of Okonkwo. Okonkwo was the connoisseur and an avowed custodian of tradition whose fame started from his youthful days. Achebe introduces him thus:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino... (Okonkwo) was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look...When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often. He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, use his fists. He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had no patience with his father (1958, p.3).

Okonkwo disliked his father Unoka because he was a very lazy man. “Okonkwo was a very wealthy farmer...had married his third wife. He had taken two titles and shown incredible prowess in two tribal wars...although Okonkwo was still young, he was already one of the greatest men of his time (p. 6). Okonkwo understood tradition and would not give in to any infiltration by any other foreign religion. He was already serving his seven-year banishment in Mbanta when he learnt of the presence of the whitemen. The notoriety of the Whiteman’s presence in Mbanta so much annoyed Okonkwo that he counseled that they should be chased out of the village with whips for peace to reign. And when he sensed the confusion of the elders over the killing of the sacred python by a Christian convert he warned:

Let us not reason like cowards...If a man comes into my house and defecates on the floor, what do I do? Do I shut my eyes? No! I take a stick and break his head. That is what a man does. This people are daily pouring filth over us, and Okeke says we should pretend not to see. [Okonkwo made a sound full of disgust. This was a womanly clan, he thought. Such a thing could never happen in Umuofia] (p.127).

At Okonkwo’s return to Umuofia, a series of ugly events happened; an Egwugwu masquerade was unmasked in public by Enoch, a Christian enthusiast. The Egwugwu masqueraders felt insulted and destroyed the church. The elders, including Okonkwo were lured to the District Commissioner’s office at

the Headquarters. The men were detained, humiliated, and equally extorted before being released. Okonkwo swore vengeance on the whiteman.

On returning to Umuofia, the elders convened a meeting to plan their next line of action; five messengers from the white man came to order that the meeting be stopped. Okonkwo challenged and withstood the head messenger who proved very tough. Achebe narrates:

In a flash Okonkwo drew his matchet. The messenger crouched to avoid the blow. It was useless. Okonkwo's matchet descended twice and the man's head lay beside his uniformed body. The waiting backcloth jumped into tumultuous life and the meeting was stopped. Okonkwo stood looking at the deadman. He knew that Umuofia would not go to war. He knew because they had let the other messengers escape. They had broken into tumult instead of action. He heard voices asking "Why did he do it?" He wiped his matchet on the sand and went away.

By the next morning Okonkwo had hanged himself. Okonkwo had felt betrayed by everything including his own community; prior to his return he had told himself that there was a limit to the white man's intrusion into the traditions and custom of the land. He had strongly believed that Umuofia would never tolerate the white man's nonsense, but unfortunately, it did.

The death of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and the surge of the heathen community in Umuofia to the Christian thanksgiving, after they had been let down by Ezeulu, the representative of the gods in *Arrow of God* strikes one as the victory of the foreign religion over the traditional. Again, when one further examines the circumstances that transpired around Okonkwo's corpse, it would appear that the traditional religion is leaving so much to be desired in its demands.

Okonkwo's lifeless body hung on the tree, a statement in martyrdom yet the same tradition he so eloquently protected and died for would not allow its citizens to as much as touch his body let alone give him a hero's burial, worst still, he would be buried in the Evil Forest. And when Obierika would accuse the white man in his statement thus: "That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself" (165), that would be fallacious because ironically, it was the same tradition he so much fought to protect that earned him the martyr's death. Again, it was also the foreign tradition which the white man represented that enabled him to bring down Okonkwo's body for burial.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to take a cursory look at the uncanny and overwhelming influence of religion on the minds of adherents. It looked at certain incidences and practices which involved the practitioners of the traditional and those of the foreign Christian religions in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. The paper decried the sometimes irrational actions of adherents who are often blinded by zeal, and which usually translates into untoward violence and sometimes, fatality. Lastly, the paper posits that customs and traditions or traditional practices should be geared towards the wellbeing of the citizenry and that if any practice or custom tends towards irrationality it should be mellowed and if possible, changed.

References

- Achebe, C. (1958) *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann
- (1964) *Arrow of God* London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd
- Oreh, C.I. (2014) *Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices: Reflections on Inadvertent Weapons of Retrogression in Community Development*. 80th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Dike V. E. (2002) "The Osu Caste System in Igboland Discrimination Based on Descent." A Paper Presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) London: Thomas Clarkson House
- Dreyer, J.S. (2007) "Religion and State in Postcolonial Africa: Challenges and Opportunities" (University of South Africa)
- Galvin, E and Galvan, F. (2008) "God(S) Fall(S) Apart: Christianity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" in *Journal of English Studies* Volume 5-6, pp. 105-117 Alcala, University Press.
- Greil, A. I. and Davidman, L. (2007) "Religion and Identity" in *The Sage Handbook of the*

- Sociology of Religion* Ch. 26 p. 533. Oxford: Blackwell
file:///c:/users/user/desktop/for%20article%20on%20religion/religion%20and%20identity.pdf
- Moseley, K. (2017) "The Portrayal of Religion in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" Degree project in English Literature Centre for Languages and Literature Lund University.
- Mull, Pala Ç. (2017). "Clash of Cultures in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". 6 (35), s.1893-1902. Researchgate Pdf
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/>
- Stanley, Brian (2003) "Conversion to Christianity: The Colonization of the Mind?"
Vol. 92, No. 366
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_mentality(pp.105-6).
- Solomon I.O. (1992). "Okonkwo's participation in the Killing of His 'Son' in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A Study of Ignoble Decisiveness." *College Language Association Journal*. 35 (3): 303-315.

BAD GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC, NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

Olise, CharlesNnamdi, Emeh, Ikechukwu Eke, Attama, PaulinusIkechukwu

&

Udenze, Chukwudike

Department of public Administration and Local Government,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This study provided an in-depth discourse on the hurdles posed by bad governance and social infrastructural deficit in management of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The contemporary global socio-economic development hitches in developing countries like Nigeria orbits around the problems of bad governance which manifests paucity of social infrastructures. Premised on qualitative descriptive design and anchored on public expenditure theory, the study found out key elements of bad governance and areas of infrastructural deficits that hampers the effective management of Covid-19 in Nigeria. Feasible recommendations were made to remedy the quagmire.

Keywords: Governance, Bad Governance, Social infrastructural deficits, Covid-19, Nigeria.

Introduction

Every human society revolves and aspires towards development. The realization of the development situates on the governance which entails concerted efforts to guide, steer and regulate citizens' activities through the power of different systems and relations so as to maximize the public interest (Keping, 2018). The major aim of governance in any society is to ensure transparency through the instrumentality of administrative, political and economic agencies and attain equity in the relationship between the rulers and ruled. In this context, governance centers on the nature of mutual interaction among social actors as well as between social actors and public administration, and it contains the meaning of 'ruling together' with aim of helping individuals realize their potential for improving the quality of their lives (Muhammad, 2015). In a broader view, the notion of governance has been in the human civilization since the time that the people learned how to live in one community or society through the process of making decisions and implementations of certain laws, rules and policies in order to live orderly and harmoniously in one environment (Muhammad, 2015).

Governance is categorized as "Good Governance" when there are manifestations and presence of rule of law, safeguard of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability and openness (Etoungue in Muhammad, 2015). The nonexistence of bad governance heralds prudence harnessing and distribution of national resources to meet the needs of common man, decentralization of means of production and exchange, suitable basic needs, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens (Essien, 2012). Bad governance presupposes the deviation or non-existence of core elements of good governance. The United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) cited in Coker & George-Genyi (2014) assert that bad governance includes governments that are ineffective and inefficient, not transparent, not responsive to the people, not held accountable for their actions, inequitable and exclusive to the elites, non-participatory; do not follow the rule of law and lacking policies that are consensus drive.

Governance in Nigeria and Africa in general has been marred by political and bureaucratic corruption with attending consequences of eroding the capacity of the state to deliver services efficiently, provide security and maintain peace, order and social stability. When deep-seated, corruption generates poverty and turns

resource-rich countries into low-income, backward societies (Essien, 2012). Social infrastructure which is central to governance plays a vital role in improving competitiveness, facilitating domestic and international trade, and enhancing the continent's integration into the global economy. It is one of the dominant factors, ensuring the satisfaction of basic human needs, as well as the development of the state and its territory (Elena, Mikhail, Andrey, Olga, & Elena, 2016).

In Nigeria, weak infrastructure base has hindered the delivery of social and economic benefits to Nigerians, a simple symptom of defective governance according to the Nigeria National Planning Commission (Nigeria National Planning Commission, 2015). The estimated financing requirement to close Nigeria's social infrastructure deficit amount to a whopping sum of \$3 trillion (Ajimotokan and Orizu, 2020). The decay of our infrastructure in Nigeria which mostly occurs as consequence of bad governance has overtime, negatively impacted on our competitiveness globally, making it difficult for us to fully diversify and grow the economy; speaking of bad roads, inadequate health system, poor education infrastructure, etc. (Oyeleye, 2019). Bad governance has manifested adversely on the human wellbeing through the paucity of social infrastructures such as health, education, transportation, electricity etc. for the citizenry. Bad governance negates the expected and desired performance in addressing social issues in sectors like education and health of any country.

The recent outbreak of Coronavirus known as Covid-19 in Wuhan China which drastically became a pandemic within a short of time and has affected over 214 countries of the world (Henrik, Byron & Sergio (2020), countries all over the world is litmus test to level of good governance and infrastructural composition of various nations. Different countries have deployed divergent measures such as distribution of palliatives, total and partial lockdown, etc in combating the pandemic. The success and failure of measures adopted by any country is hinged on the level bad governance and infrastructural development which has direct bearing on the socio-economic lives of the people.

Many studies have examined the effect of bad governance and infrastructural deficit on different aspects of social enclaves such as "Bad governance on Development Progress" (Wael, 2013), "Peace, Security and Sustainable Development" (Coker & George-Genyi, 2014), "Democratic Process and Development" (Essien, 2012), "Bad Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria" (Umana2020), "Infrastructure Deficit and Challenge of Growing Nigerian Economy (Ali, 2016) etc. However this study focused on bad governance and infrastructural deficit in combating Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Specially, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. X-ray the areas and implications of bad governance in managing covid-19 in Nigeria,
2. Assess the areas and implications of infrastructural deficit in managing covid-19 in
3. Identify viable policy options.

Review of Relevant and Related Literatures

Relevant literatures for this study were thematically reviewed under the following headings:

1. Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria: Cases, Death and Management
2. Governance and Bad Governance: An Overview
3. Social Infrastructural and Infrastructural Deficit

Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria: Cases, Death and Management

At the end of 2019, there was report that a cluster of patients with pneumonia of unknown cause was linked to a local Huanan South China Seafood Market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 (Zhu N, Zhang D, Wang W, Li X, Yang B, Song J, et al. (2020). Record has it that as at 14th July 2020, which is seven months from the day of the outbreak, COVID-19 has affected 214 countries of the world (Henrik, Byron & Sergio (2020) with **13 079 218** cases, 7,733,004 recovered/discharged and **572 662** deaths (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). The COVID-19 which is

described as most deadly in the 21st century has devastating effects on the socio-economic indicators globally.

Nigeria is one of the countries in Africa that has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic through an index case of a 44-year old Italian citizen, who was diagnosed of COVID-19 in Lagos State on 14th February, 2020. The country has recorded 33,153 cases, 13,671 recovered/discharged and 744 deaths as at 13th July 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). The number of deaths may seem relatively low considering the population which is projected to be over 200 million, there is need to put into consideration that older population which are described as highest risk target of the virus stands at about 6.4 million people which is the 3.1% of the population. This is aside from other vulnerable populations such as those with pre-existing underlying health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, other cardiovascular diseases, and cancers (Ohiya, Adeleye, Bakarey&Tauseef, 2020).

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the country, the Nigeria government through her agency, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) which is her national public health institute with the mandate to protect Nigerians from the impact of communicable diseases of public health significance, has initiated various preventive measures and coping strategies for COVID-19. These measures which took health and non-health measures form includes Testing, Isolation, Tracing, public Enlightenment, palliatives and Lockdown physical/social distancing, tax relieve, hygiene measures are in conformity with the guidelines initiated by global and continental organizations such as World Health Organization in order to combat the spread of the virus. (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020)

However, there have been divergent views on the assessment of these measures and their level of performance in the management of pandemic. In assessing the determinant factors that shapes the behavior of Nigerian's in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines, Kalu, (2020) opined that poverty, lack of trust in the government, ignorance, denial, and misplaced religious zealotry have negatively impacted on the behavior of Nigerians. About 80% of Nigeria's population lives on daily income, with no savings to serve as a financial buffer during the lockdown. The hunger experienced by these persons and their families leads to poor compliance with COVID-19 prevention guidelines. Several cases of civil noncompliance and enticement of law enforcement agents to gain passes, as well as an increase in criminal activities has been recorded due to the government's inability to provide social safety nets for the teeming number of vulnerable citizens (Chukwuorji&Iorfa, 2020).

Taken into cognizance the estimated number women of child-bearing age in Nigeria that suffer from chronic malnutrition that stands at 2 million children and 7%(UNICEF, 2015; USAID, 2018), the total lockdown measure was difficult to be complied by Nigerians. This is because the loss of income and the accompanying destitution could be a pathfinder for numerous other sicknesses and deaths (Chukwuorji&Iorfa, 2020). The physical/social distancing were relatively attainable at the early stage due the federal and state governments directive for school closer, ban of social activities like marriages, religious gathering, inter-state movement, aviation, markets, which lasted for couple of months before the eventual gradual lifting of the ban apart from school (Oshoko& Abu 020).

Governance and Bad Governance: An Overview

Governance is complex and multi-faceted concept with no single generally accepted definition. The concepts of Governance and Government are used interchangeably in some literatures but governance is more than a governmental activity. It is almost as a new social contract based on partnership between government, private sector and different civil society organizations; which entails better mobilizing for society's capabilities, and more rationality for public administration affairs (Wael, 2013). Obadan in Coker & George-Genyi (2014) agrees with the above conceptualization and states "that governance encompasses the state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes, and policy formation and implementation capacity. Other indices include development of personnel, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within the political system" It is the ability of the government to efficiently and effectively promotes the economic well-being of its people.

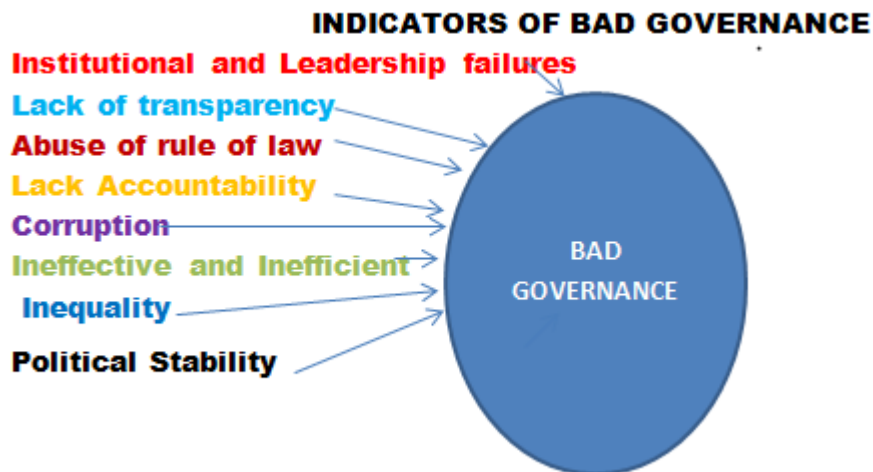
The above views on the concept of governance addressed the subject matter in bits; however, the definition propounded by the Commission on Global Governance is more detailed and exhaustive. The commission defined governance in a research report titled *Our Global Neighborhood* issued in 1995 as follows:

“Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.” It has four features: governance is not a set of rules or an activity, but a process; the process of governance is not based on control, but on coordination; it involves both public and private sectors; it is not a formal institution, but continuing interaction (Keping, 2018, pp: 3).

In spite the divergent views on the concept of governance by different authors, it can be deduced that governance entails process and activities of the state geared towards effective utilization of political, economic and administrative authorities and national resources in effective and efficient initiation and implementation of policies for the betterment of the citizenry. These activities are meant be carried out within the purview of law.

On the other hand, bad governance can simply be described a departure from the values of good governance. Wael (2013), identified the following eminent manifestations of bad governance with emphasis on Egypt to include: Acute corruption (absence of accountability, lack of effective institutional control, Predatory coalition between the ruling party and business Lack of transparency of rules, laws and processes, Level of public sector wages, Examples by the leadership), Deplorable bureaucracy, Rule of law and administration of justice, Economical policies and trends.

Broadly speaking, Owoye and Bissessar (2009) see bad governance as a symptom of institutional and leadership failures, explicitly “manifested by its long list of dictatorial leaders, non-free media and undemocratic elections”. In summary, the elements of bad governance are presented in the chart below.



Sources: *Author’s compilation*

Social Infrastructural and Infrastructural Deficit

The term infrastructure generally entails basic structures, systems and facilities that enable accomplishment socio-economic goals. Social Infrastructure is a subset of the infrastructure sector and

typically includes assets that accommodate social services such as housing, health and education facilities (Hardwicke, 2008). Argy et al. in Han, Yusof, Hai & Ismail (2012) further differentiate social infrastructures into hard social infrastructure (e.g. hospitals) and soft infrastructure (e.g. social security). Social infrastructure may also involve a wider range of partners including in most cases various government agencies, private companies and non-profit organizations together with a selection of user groups, freelance scientists, independent consultants as well as academic research institutes (Open et al., 2005). On the relevance of social infrastructure towards the general wellbeing, Teriman, Yigitcanlar & Mayere (2010) opined that it provides response to the basic needs of communities and to enhance the quality of life, equity, stability and social well-being. It also acts as the building block for the enhancement of human and social capital. Hall & Jones (1999) describe it as ‘the institutions and government policies that determine the economic environment within which individuals accumulate skills, and firms accumulate capital and produce output’. The table below captures the major examples of social infrastructure assets:

Examples of Social Infrastructure Assets	
Sector	Examples
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical facilities • Ancillary infrastructure (e.g. offices, car parks, training facilities)
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools (primary and secondary) • Tertiary facilities • Residential student accommodation
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State or Council housing • Defence force housing
Civic and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community & sports facilities • Local government facilities • Water and wastewater treatment
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus stations • Park and rides • Availability-based roading (excluding demand-risk toll roads)
Corrections and Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prisons • Court houses

Source: NZSIF (2009). *What is Social Infrastructure?* Retrieved on 17/07/2020 from <http://www.nzsif.co.nz/Social-Infrastructure/What-is-Social-Infrastructure/>

Latham & Jack (2019) have elevated the place of social infrastructure to another level by asserting that Social infrastructure helps in recognizing the public dimensions of often overlooked and undervalued spaces. It draws attention to the breadth, depth, and textures of sociality that can be afforded by different urban environments.

From above views on the social infrastructure, a working definition of social infrastructure deficit can be deduced as the inadequacy of social infrastructure required to meet the social needs of citizenry. It is a gap between the demand of social infrastructure by the citizens and its supply by the government. The infrastructure deficit is the result of a steady decline in government infrastructure spending, combined with a steady increase in the cost of building additional infrastructure (Sherraden, 2011).

Methodology

The study used qualitative descriptive approach. Keeping in view the nature of research of the objectives, the researchers utilized robust data from official documents and evidence from official documents and relevant agencies which include: Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC), amongst others to carry out this study.

Theoretical Framework

Public expenditure theory that was propounded by Adolph Wagner (1835-1917), who developed a “law of increasing state activity” and was later reviewed by Peacock and Wiseman (1967) (UKEssays, November 2018) is deployed to this study. The public sector has a role to play in the society to ensure the smooth running of economic activities. Also, the goals of government are sometimes numerous and have several stakeholders involved. Therefore, to avoid chaos, efficiency and equity should guide public spending (Hindrizia & Myles in (Amadi & Alolote, 2020).

Hindrizia and Myles (2005) explain that efficiency concerns the smooth running of public activities. Efficiency entails the meticulous and conscientious organization, collecting and monitoring of government revenue and expenditure towards services delivery to the stakeholders. Efficiency projects fairness in distributing public goods among stakeholders. The public expenditure theory is deployed to this study based on Wagner’s law known as law of increasing state spending. Cosimo, Lorenzo, and Marco (2015) explain that the law is premised on four principles, as follows: that growth results in increased complexity because there are new and continuing increases in public expenditure; that public expenditure increases result in urbanization and externalities; that the goods supplied by the public sector should have a huge income elasticity of demand; and that growth results in an increase in demand with a resultant increase in public expenditure.

Public expenditure generally presupposes the spending by the government of any country on collective needs and wants in terms of providing education, healthcare, housing security, etc. Social infrastructure is one of the key pillars of public spending. Social infrastructures are necessary for not only nurturing public life, but also for addressing and preventing some of the most pressing concerns of contemporary urban life: countering social isolation, negotiating difference, and creating places for all regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality, or income (Klinenberg, 2002) which good governance entails. In many countries of the world, citizens expect provision of social services out of the public purse which is composite of taxation and other generated revenue. The infrastructures provided through public expenditure enhance the socio-economic life of people and their general wellbeing. This study projects that if there is efficiency and fairness in government spending through social infrastructure provision, the citizens and other stakeholders will have fair share and taste of desired public goods such as quality health care system, education, water, etc. which infers the absence of bad governance.

Results

- Weak transparency/accountability and abuse of rule of law are key elements of bad governance that impedes the effective management of Covid-19 in Nigeria.
- Infrastructural deficits in the Nigerian health, water and education sectors hamper the effective management of Covid-19 in Nigeria.
- Social infrastructural revamp, proper safeguard of human rights and re-orientation of security agencies, appropriate demographic documentation, proper auditing of the administration of covid-19 funds and prosecution of culprits, inbuilt monitoring mechanism and collaborative partnership are strategic measures to alleviate the hurdles and enhance Covid-19 management in Nigeria.

Discussions

1. Weak Transparency/Accountability and Abuse of Rule of Law are Key Elements of Bad Governance that Impedes the Effective Management of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

• Weak Transparency/Accountability and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria

Transparency and accountability are core elements of good governance. It entails to the publicity of political information. All citizens are entitled to the information on State policies that are related to their own interests, including legislative activities, policy-making, legal provisions, policy enforcement, administrative budget, public expenditure and other relevant political information. The higher the degree of transparency is, the higher the level of good governance will be. The transparency and accountability questions that emerged in the Covid-19 management in Nigeria revolves around the utilization of donated funds, distribution of palliative and implementation of social investment programmes (cash transfer and National Home Grown school feeding).

In realization of the level of challenge facing the country in responding appropriately to the pandemic both at the federal and state level, there was instant formation of Coalition Against COVID (CACOVID) to mobilize private sector resources toward supporting the government's response to the crisis. (Eribo, 2020). The coalition intervention were in the form of cash, medical equipment, palliatives, construction and equipping of isolation centers, buildings, etc With notable amongst them are CBN and Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu, Mike Adenuga, etc. (Okwumbu, 2020, Benson, 2020). However, the bone of contention and worries of Nigerians was on the judicious spending of the fund and answerability of it. Intriguing questions were raised on why is all the money going to government or to put it bluntly, to the ruling party and what has government, so far, done with the billions of cash received in the name of the poor and vulnerable populations? (Azu, 2020). The implication of questioning the government's credibility and prudence in utilizing the fund has devastating effects on the trust of citizenry towards the number of cases reported and level of compliance to Covid-19 guidelines stipulated by the government. In emphasizing the necessity for transparency in deployment of Covid-19 funds, Oxfam led coalition of NGO's demanded for transparency on the Federal government's part in the utilization of a further \$3.4 billion emergency support loan from the IMF that was granted in response to the pandemic.

On the issue of palliative distribution by the federal government, the local newspapers have been flooded with reports of lopsided distribution of palliatives based on political and sectional prejudices following the government's announcement when the lockdown was instituted that it would leverage the distribution mechanism of the Conditional Cash Transfer program it created in 2015 to distribute the palliative (Eribo, 2020). The fright of transparency and accountability did not go unnoticed in the eyes of Non-Governmental Organizations and international agencies. Eribo(2020) reported that Coalitions of NGO's and other CSO's including Upright4Nigeria led by ActionAid in Nigeria, whilst implementing their own palliative schemes in effort to make up for the lopsidedness of the federal government scheme on 22 April, demanded that all governments must disclose to citizens the value of all donations received and publish the list of beneficiaries of the palliatives. There has been also fear of palliative distribution along political and ethnic enclaves. Azu (2020) noted that a number of communities in the South east controlled by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), have complained openly of neglect in the distribution of relief materials at the height of the five-week lockdown between March and May, for example. It is quite disturbing that government is being associated with deployment of palliative as an instrument of marginalization in a nation with already tensed ethnic divide. The Nigerian Governors form admonished the presidency to reform distribution of palliatives to forestall crisis (Sanni, 2020).

National Social Investment Programmes which is the hallmark of president Buhari's administration which geared towards lifting millions of Nigerians out of poverty has been ongoing before the Covid-19 eruption. With the directive to shut the school down nationwide, the president's order through the ministry of Humanitarian to continue implementation of National Home Grown School feeding which is categorically meant for school children raised serious outcry from all parts of the country owing to the fact that the target groups are at home. Another programme that raised serious question of transparency is cash transfer

which the minister of humanitarian via the ministry, announced the distribution of the first tranche of N5 billion. This was criticized by leadership of National Assembly considering the approach of distribution making the vulnerable citizens who are affected by the Covid-19 not to fully benefit (Sanni, 2020).

Another aspect of controversy is the disbursing of N20, 000 Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) to the vulnerable in the society in which the minister Farouq reportedly claimed that over 2.6million households have so far benefited from the palliative. However, this triggered the curiosity on which what did the ministry deployed in identifying the poorest of the poor within short period of time. The issue was compounded as the minister could not vividly explain how they are dispatched to many towns and villages where people need them. All she assured was the ministry has a structure in place from the federal to the local government areas to reach the vulnerable people (Obinna, Iniobong, Odoh, & Kwen, 2020). The directive from President Buhari that the number of households in the so-called national social register be increased from 2.6 million to 3.6 million raised another intriguing question because it contradicted the president's special adviser on the social investment programme, SIP (Maryam Uwais) last update on the number of people in the register which was 700,000. Furthermore, given that, according to the World Bank, nearly 50 per cent of the Nigerian population lives in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 a day), who qualifies to be on the register? Olu, F. (26th April, 2020).

- **The Abuse of Rule of law and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria**

Essentially, rule of law entails that law is the supremacy of law above every citizen and equality before the law. The immediate goal of rule of law is to regulate citizens' behavior, manage social affairs and maintain a normal order in social life, while its ultimate goal is to protect citizens' basic political rights, including freedom and equality.

Obedience to the Covid-19 rules and regulations in Nigeria seem to be selective for ruling against the ruled. Nigerian scenario showed cases where governmental officials who are expected to be the harbinger of law compliance are found to be the aberrant of law. One of the major guidelines in combating the spread of coronavirus as stipulated by World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted by federal of government of Nigeria is social distancing. Regrettably, this was severely violated during the burial of Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President MuhammaduBuhari who was tested and confirmed being positive and died out of Coronavirus infection. The secretary to the government of the federation, Boss Mustapha who doubles as the chairman of the task force Mustapha was amongst those sighted at the burial Saturday morning. Several senior government officials and politicians were also seen in the crowd (Alabi, 2020), which culminated to SGF being sued to court by a lawyer (Oladimeji, 2020). The implication of this deviance is the legal and moral justification in arresting and prosecuting of ordinary found on the street in search of means of livelihood.

Another area of bad governance in the management of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria is the abuse of rule of law which manifested in the form of violation of fundamental human rights via the brutality of security agencies and violation of Covid-19 guidelines by some government authorities. At the declaration of lockdown at different times in various states in Nigeria, there were multiple reports of maltreatments and loss of lives to the brutality of security forces in different parts of the country.

There have been pockets of reported cases of brutality of the security operatives on Nigerians. In Delta state, there was a case of mishandling of health workers and case of the young man in Warri who lost his life to this brutality (Akubo, Olaniyi; Oludare&Muanya, 2020). In Anambra state, this highhandedness by the security operatives unfortunately claimed lives of two youths at New Tire Market Area of Nkpor, Anambra State (Nwaiwu, 2020). Regrettably in Rivers state, a female Police Officer met her untimely death on Thursday 23rd, April 2020, after she was shot dead by a colleague, Sergeant BitrusOsaiah **Rivers State** while on duty. In Abia state, a commercial vehicle driver, AmobiIgwe, was killed by an officer of the Nigeria security and Civil Defense Corps, Eke Richard along Umuahia-Aba Expressway in Umuikea, Isialangwa South Local Government around 7.10am. On Friday, the 17th of April 2020, drunken police

officers, not on official duty, led by an Assistant Superintendent of Police killed a young man identified as IfeanyiArunsi in EbemOhafia area of Abia State (Social Action, 2020). The National Human Rights Commission, a government agency, reported that within 3 weeks into the lockdown, 18 persons were extra judicially killed by some security personnel who were brutally enforcing the lockdown (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020b).

2. Social Infrastructural Deficits in the Nigerian Health, Water and Education Sectors also Hamper the Effective Management of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

- **Health Sector Infrastructural Deficit and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria**

Global economic and development experts have often said that for any nation to be considered strong economically, and on human capital development, it must have given priority to the education, and health (Ifijeh, 2019). Generally, Health sector is usually in the forefront in contending with any form of health issue. Countries of the world heavily rely on their health sector to combat any epidemic or pandemic at any given time. The implication is that the success or failure of health sector of any nation in combating any disease outbreak depends on their health infrastructural facilities and human resources potency. Nigerian health sector has been described as weak (Adeyi, 2016), which is evidenced by the lack of an adequate infrastructure, poorly remunerated workforce, inadequate facilities and medical logistics, and an unreliable health information system (Adeloye et al., 2017; Nnadozie, Iorfa, & Agonsi, 2015).

To emphasize deplorable state of health sector in Nigeria, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates, sometime in 2018, in expressing the manifestations of government’s failure to prioritize health, told the now-defunct National Economic Council that Nigeria was “one of the most dangerous countries in the world to give birth” and had the “fourth worst maternal mortality rate in the world, only ahead of Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and Chad.” Olawunmi, 2020

The Coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria was high mountain to climb for her health sector putting into consideration the infrastructural facilities such as ventilators, test kits, etc. needed to contain and treat the Covid-19. This occurred as consequences of low allocation to the health sector in the annual national budget which over years, has never exceeded six percent as against the 15% benchmark of the annual budget agreed upon by African Union in the Abuja Declaration of 2001 which Nigeria was part of (Ifijeh, 2019).The allocation to health sector in Nigerian annual budget in the past ten consecutive years is presented below.

Table 2. Nigerian Health Sector Allocation from 2010 to 2020

Year	Amount	Percentage %
2010	N164.9bn	3.7%
2011	N266.7bn	5.4%
2012	N282.8bn	5.8%
2013	N279.2bn	5.7%
2014	N262.7bn	5.63%
2015	N237.6bn	5.78%
2016	N257.5bn	4.14%
2017	N377.4bn	5.17%
2018	N340.46bn	3.95%
2019	N365.77bn	4.1%
2020	N427.3bn	4.15%

Sources: Uzochukwu et al. (2015), Ifijeh (2019), Nigerian budget (2020)

The governance of health service delivery which include health care financing, knowledge and information, human resources and commodities and equipment are largely determined by the availability

of quality infrastructures. The 2020 national budget in which lowest appropriation was accorded to health sector among the three key development sectors (Security, Education 653.94bn with 6.32 and Health N427.30bn with 4.14%) is a glaring indication of where federal government places health sector. The breakdown of the proposed 2020 allocation for health sector which stood at N427.3 billion for estimated 200 million Nigerians, allotted #2000 to each Nigerian for health care services for the entire year. The implication is that this covers salaries of all health workers in the Ministry of Health, the fueling of the ambulances and the generating plants, the rehabilitation and or construction of new hospitals, the drugs for Malaria, Polio, Child Vaccination, Tuberculosis, Meningitis, HIV/AIDS and of course cancer diagnosis machines. The list continues to even health research, training and health promotion (Olufemi 2019). The assessment of readiness to combat the Coronavirus in Nigeria showed an awful result with statistics of 71 hospitals with 350 intensive care units with each having between one to 20 beds for over 200 million estimated people (Ogundipe, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak equally brought to fore the age-long debate, more so as the elite who are in the habit of jetting out in search of better healthcare overseas are all now holed up in the country with what the ‘forsaken’ health sector has to offer (Olawunmi, 2020). The regrettable scenario of infrastructural deficit in the era of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria is showed in the consistent complaints and threats of strike by the health workers as result lack of primary protective equipment (PPE) which unfortunately had claimed lives of their some workers. (Akor and Jimoh 2020). The issue of non-payment due salaries and allowances especially hazard allowance which was pegged at five thousand naira (Ochelle, 2020) is clear indication of misplaced priority of health sector in Nigeria.

- **Education Sector Infrastructural Deficit and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria**

Globally, education sector has proven to be a catalyst for all round development through its enormous contribution in the human resources development, researches and development, etc. These vital roles have attracted significant attention and priority to the sector in most countries of the world. The mandate to contribute national development by education sector especially technical colleges and tertiary institutions is anchored largely on the availability and utilization of needed infrastructural facilities.

Nigerian Education sector at all strata has experienced reoccurring crisis which centered on poor funding and infrastructural deficit. This is evidently shown in the allocation to education sector in her annual budget which has persistent fall below the 26% benchmark specified by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for developing countries (Ibara in Ololube, 2016). The allocation to Nigerian education sector within the last ten years is shown below.

Table 1. Nigerian Education Sector Allocation from 2010 to 2020

Years	Amount	Percentage%
2010	N339.6bn	9.32%
2011	N393.8bn	7.37%
2012	N468.3bn	9.86%
2013	N426.5bn	10.21%
2014	N493bn	10.63%
2015	N492bn	10.75%
2016	N483bn	7.92%
2017	N455bn	7.41%
2018	N496bn	7.04%
2019	N512bn	7.1%
2020	N541bn	6.9%

Source: *eduplana (2020)*

The above table indicates the amount allocated to the education sector and its attending percentage of the entire budget. The implication is that Nigerian education sector has not been allotted ample financial resources required for effective achievement of desired targets.

The outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria has adversely affected the school system at all levels that led to its closure on 19th of March, 2020 as a response to the pandemic (Amorighoye, 2020). Series of efforts to reopen amidst the Covid-19 in Nigeria has been hampered by paucity of infrastructural facilities that enhances distant learning. Although some state government like Anambra and Lagos state swiftly initiated “Anambra Teaching on Air” and “Radio and TV lessons for students in public schools” respectively (Nworah, 2020, Amorighoye, 2020). Nevertheless, many families that earn below \$1 per day and coupled with harsh economic realities faced due to lockdown, the purchase of radios or TV might be a trade-off that they cannot afford.

The radio and television imitative could not meet the demands of tertiary institutions where some courses are practical designed. This buttresses the long unabated saga between the federal government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which centered on revitalization of Nigerian University system and amongst others (Ezigbo, 2020). The major implication of this infrastructure decay and inadequacy in Nigerian education sector is the inability of Nigerian universities to join the efforts of their counterparts in searching for vaccines and drugs for Covid-19. The E-learning platform facilities that could have ensured continuity of academic activities for the students are not in existence in these universities. By implication, the unanticipated disruption of scholarly or professional advancement for the 94% of university students in public universities may increase the burden of mental illness among these students and predispose them to social vices (Chukwuorji&Iorfa, 2020). Consequently, there has been huge spike in armed robberies and violent crimes during the period of the lockdown in some cities in Nigeria.

The guidelines that were issued by the federal government through the Covid-19 taskforce team for reopening of schools and the mandate to meet up with the guidelines before 29th of July (Umeh, 2020), practically seem not obtainable by government owned schools not to talk of private schools which has drained financial base due to the closure of school and consequently have not been able to pay their workers. Some of the items in the guidelines which include amongst others: fumigation and disinfection of schools, provision of learning facilities, ventilated classrooms and TLCs-use solar power and alternative energy sources for electricity, and boreholes for water (Adedigba, 2020) are not feasible considering the time frame and enormous resources required to set up these.

Access to Clean Water Deficit and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria

The outbreak of Coronavirus which has frequent handwashing with soap and water as its simplest and preventive measures has placed a serious reality check on the availability and access to clean water all over the world. The issue of access to clean water is a global challenge. Statistics shows that 785 million people in the world one out of ten do not have clean water close to home. While 2 billion people in the world closely one out of four do not have a decent toilet of their own. Around 310,000 children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases caused by poor water and sanitation. That's around 800 children a day or one child every two minutes. Every £1 invested in water and toilets returns an average of £4 in increased productivity. Just £15 can provide one person with clean water (WaterAid 8 May 2020).

In Nigeria, the ordeal of having access to clean water has been a recurrent issue in spite the fact that Nigeria is a party to the United Nations Declaration of the Right to Water, which entitles every one living in Nigeria to sufficient, affordable, safe and acceptable water for personal and domestic uses (Glaaas, n.d.). Some striking data that explains the extent of lack of access to good water and its attending implications to human health in Nigeria are presented below.

60 million (32%)
people lack access
to clean water in
Nigeria

150 million (79%)
people lack basic
handwashing
facilities with soap
and water .

70,000 number of
children under 5 that
die from diseases e
very year

Only 7% of schools and 5% of health facilities
in the country have combined basic water,
sanitation and hygiene facilities

Source: Banwo & Abdulmalik (2020). https://www.wateraid.org/ng/sites/g/files/jkxooof381/files/wateraid-nigeria-covid-19-situational-map--updated-june-11-2020_0

The above information on the hygiene and sanitation reports in Nigeria prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 mostly centered on lack of access to clean water. Consequent upon the non-availability of treatment or vaccine for coronavirus and rate of community transmission in Nigeria, access to clean water ought to be what people should rely on to maintain personal hygiene. This is because coronavirus spread through droplets from a person coughing or sneezing, and potentially via contaminated surfaces. Good hygiene is key to avoiding spreading it – and catching it.

The rural dwellers in Nigeria have been described to more vulnerable to the contacting and transmitting the virus considering the Levels of access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in rural communities. More so, the changes in climate is piling pressure on water resources that are already overstretched due to inadequate infrastructures, poor water management and insufficient government funding (WaterAid, 2020). Notwithstanding that government launched an emergency action plan in November to address water problems, the plan has not made desired in impact (Voanews, 2020).

3. Policy Options

Consequent upon the observed trend of bad governance and infrastructural deficit which hampers the management of Coronavirus in Nigeria, the following recommendations below are offered in order to alleviate the challenges:

❖ **Social Infrastructure Revamp**

Social Infrastructures are key drivers to socio-economic improvement of any nation. Growth and development of most countries of the world are juxtaposed to their level of social Infrastructural advancement. Inadequate investment in social Infrastructures in Nigeria has positioned it in a deplorable state. In expressing the level of infrastructural decadence in Nigeria, Umar Gambo Jibrin who is the Executive Secretary, Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), asserted that for Nigeria's infrastructure deficit to ameliorated, a whopping sum of \$3 trillion is needed in the next 30 years (Ajimotokan and Orizu, 2020). This calls for an urgent primacy towards social Infrastructural advancement through annual budget and synergy with other partners (international, NGOs and Individuals). This is not merely for Covid-19 combat but current and future wellbeing of Nigerians.

❖ **Proper Safeguard of Human Rights and Re-orientation of Security Agencies**

The essence of law is to regulate social interaction and behaviour. Every citizen is expected to be controlled by rules and regulations irrespective of the status, race, tribe etc. Law should not bend for any individual or class; violation of the law ought to face the same sanction as stipulated in the constitution. On the other hand, the fundamental duty of government is to protect lives and properties of the citizens

through security agencies. There is need to tailor Nigerian security operatives towards this prime mandate of government and draw a distinct line between civil and criminal matters and lawful ways of handling each matter. In a case of recklessness or unlawful action of security personnel, justice should be done.

❖ **Appropriate Demographic Documentation**

One veritable tool for effective and efficient policy/programme initiation and implementation is availability and accessibility of correct data. Data management in Nigeria has been of the one major menace to policy makers taken into consideration that Nigeria carried out her census in 2006, every other data are premised on projections. This constitutes major hurdle to palliative distribution in Nigeria during Covid-19. There is an utmost need for a holistic social register compilation should capture the demographic realities of Nigerians such as unemployed, aged, disabled, etc. this enhances easy identification and access of a particular target group for a distinct programme or policy.

❖ **Proper Auditing of the administration of Covid-19 Funds and Prosecution of Culprits**

Auditing which is an objective examination and evaluation of the financial statements of an organization in order to ensure that the financial records are a fair and accurate representation of the transactions they claim to represent is veritable instrument to achieve transparency and accountability in both private and public spending. The fear and questions raised by many Nigerians as regards to the effective and efficient utilization of all the funds raised for Covid-19 management will be allayed through an independent external audit. However, any traces of foul play, should be severely and legally sanctioned in order to serve as deterrence to other public office holders who manage public resources.

❖ **Inbuilt Monitoring Mechanism**

The gap between a proposed programme or project and its outcome is bridged by effective monitoring and evaluation. Allocation and releasing of funds by government for particular programme(s) just like in the case of Covid-19 are not an assurance for realization of stipulated goals. There should be an integral mechanism right from the planning stage on how to monitor the progress of the programme. The inbuilt monitoring team should inculcate not just government agencies but Non-government organizations as well in order to ensure prudence in allocation, expenditure and transparency.

❖ **Collaborative Partnership**

It is a glaring fact that international agencies have partnered with Nigerian government in provision of social amenities such as UNICEF through WASH programme, ADB, etc. However, considering the enormous resources required in revitalizing the infrastructures in Nigeria, there is need for synergy with more developmental partners (International, National, Non-Governmental Organizations, Corporate Organizations and Individuals) in the form of Public private Partnership through well-articulated attractive framework in order to fill the infrastructure gap.

Conclusion

Good governance in the past few decades has occupied significant discourse in the development of many nations. Development experts in recent years have emphasized 'good governance' as a prerequisite for development. Deviation from good governance which has been described as bad governance in the course of our discussion, impacts negatively in every aspect of human endeavour more importantly, on infrastructural development. The Covid-19 pandemic experience has exposed the adverse role of bad governance and social infrastructural in responding to such outbreak and human wellbeing in general which is an evidence of poor public expenditure. In summation, bad governance which mostly births the infrastructural deficit is a virus every nation especially developing ones like Nigeria should avoid by all means if they are to attain any social, political and economic advancement.

References

- Akor, O and Jimoh, A (24th April 2020). 77 Nigerian Health Workers Infected With COVID-19, Lassa Fever. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202004240022.html>
- Alabi, M. (20th April, 2020). Nigeria: Abba Kyari's Burial - SGF Denies Issuing Statement Over Violation of Lockdown Rules. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202004210022.html>
- Ali, A.K (28th July 2016). Infrastructure deficit and challenge of growing Nigerian economy (1). Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://punchng.com/infrastructure-deficit-challenge-growing-nigerian-economy-1/>
- Adedigba, A. (13 July 2020). Nigeria: COVID-19 - Nigerian Govt Releases New Guidelines for Resumption of Schools. Retrieved on 19/07/2020 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202007140055.html>
- Adeloye, D., David, R. A., Olaogun, A. A., Auta, A., Adesokan, A., Gadanya, M. Iseolorunkanmi, A. (2017). Health workforce and governance: The crisis in Nigeria. *Human Resources for Health*, 15, 32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12960-017-0205-4>
- Adeyi, O. (2016). Health system in Nigeria: From underperformance to measured optimism. *Health Systems and Reform*, 4, 285–289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23288604.2016.1224023>
- Ajimotoke, O and Orizu, U. (5th August 2019). Nigeria Requires \$3trn to Solve Infrastructure Deficit, Says FCDA. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/201908050055.html>
- Akubo, J.; Olaniyi, S.; Oludare, R. & Muanya, C. (April 17, 2020). Outrage over killings during lockdowns. Retrieved on 3/6/2020 from <https://guardian.ng/news/outrage-over-killings-during-lockdowns>
- Amadi, K. C. & Alolote, I. A. (2020). Government Expenditure on Infrastructure as a Driver for Economic Growth in Nigeria. *Journal of International Business Research and Marketing*. 5(2) pp. 20-26.
- Amorighoye, T.A (2nd June 2020). COVID-19 has exposed the education divide in Nigeria. This is how we can close it. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/education-nigeria-covid19-digital-divide/>
- Azu I. (25th June, 2020). Using Covid-19 Donations to Give Charity A Bad Name. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/opinion/3643-using-covid-19-donations-to-give-charity-a-bad-name>
- Banwo, K. & Abdulmalik, O. (13th April, 2020). Halting The Spread Of Covid-19 And Other Infectious Diseases In Nigeria Through Universal Access To Water, Sanitation And Good Hygiene. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from https://www.wateraid.org/ng/sites/g/files/jkxoof381/files/wateraid-nigeria-covid-19-situational-map--updated-june-11-2020_0.pdf
- Benson, E.A (18th April, 2020). Updated: List of all companies and billionaires that have contributed to COVID-19 relief fund. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/18/list-of-all-companies-and-billionaires-that-have-contributed-to-covid-19-relief-fund/>
- Chukwuorji, J.C., & Iorfa, S.K. (2020). Commentary on Coronavirus pandemic: Nigeria. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. DOI: 10.1037/tra0000786
- Coker, M.A. & George-Genyi, M.E. (2014.) Bad governance: The bane of peace, security and sustainable development of Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*. 3 (5) pp. 1121-1146

- Cosimo, M., Lorenzo, G., & Marco, M. (2015). Wagner's law and Peacock and Wiseman's displacement effect in European union countries: A panel data study. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 5(3), 812-819
- Elena V. F., Mikhail V. V., Andrey V. K., Olga V. R. & Elena E. K. (2016). Development of Social Infrastructure in the Management Practices of Local Authorities: Trends and Factors. *International Journal of Environmental & Science Education*. 11, (15) 7421-7430
- Essien D. E. (2012). Manifestations of Bad Governance on the Threshold of African Democratic Process and Development. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 9 (2), pp. 22-42
- Ezigbo, O. (30th March, 2020). ASUU Demands N1.1tn for Universities' Revitalization. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/03/30/asuu-demands-n1-1tn-for-universities-revitalization/>
- Eribo, S (30 June 2020). In Nigeria, philanthropy's COVID-19 response raises questions. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/nigeria-philanthropy-covid-19-response-raises-questions/>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (14th July 2020). COVID-19 situation update worldwide, as of 14 July 2020. Retrieved on 14/07/2020 from <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>
- Glaaas (n.d.) Sanitation, Drinking-water and Hygiene status overview in Nigeria. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/glaas/en/
- Hall, R. and Jones, C. (1999). Why Do Some Countries Produce So Much More Output Per Worker Than Others? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(1): 83-116.
- Han, W.S., Yusof, A.M., Hai, T.K & Ismail, S. (2012). A Conceptual Review of Social Infrastructure Projects. <http://www.ibimapublishing.com/journals/CIBIMA/cibima.html>. DOI: 10.5171/2012.222039.
- Hardwicke, L. (2008). Transition to Smart, Sustainable Infrastructure. In P. W. Newton (Eds.), *Transitions: Pathway Towards Sustainable Urban Development in Australia*. (pp. 599- 608). Victoria: CSIRO Publishing.
- Henrik P., Byron M. & Sergio H. (14th July 2020). Tracking coronavirus' global spread. Retrieved on 14/07/2020 from <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/health/coronavirus-maps-and-cases/>
- Hindrizia, J., & Myles, G.D. (2005). Theories of the public sector. *Intermediate Public Economics* (pp.69–87). Cambridge: MIT Press
- Ifijeh, M. (5th September 2019). Nigeria: How Poor Funding Is Killing Nigeria's Health Sector. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/201909050446.html>
- Kalu, B. (2020). COVID-19 in Nigeria: A disease of hunger. *Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(20\)30220-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(20)30220-4)
- Keping, Y. (2018) Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis *Fudan J. Hum. Soc. Sci.* 11 pp. 1–8
- Klinenberg, E. (2002). Heat wave: A social autopsy of disaster in Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226026718.001.000112>
- Latham, A. & Jack, L (2019). Social Infrastructure and the Public Life of Cities: Studying Urban Sociality and Public Spaces.” *Geography Compass*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12444>.

- Muhammad A. (2015). Governance and Good Governance: A Conceptual Perspective *The Dialogue*. 10 (1) pp. 66-77
- Nwaiwu, C. (2020). Police in Anambra shoots two to death over enforcement movement restriction. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/police-in-anambra-shoots-two-to-death-over-enforcement-movement-restriction/>
- Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (15th April, 2020) National Strategy to Scale Up Access to Coronavirus Disease Testing in Nigeria.
- Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (13th July 2020). COVID-19 NIGERIA. Retrieved on 14/07/2020 from <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/>
- Nigeria National Planning Commission. (2015). *National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan*. Abuja. Retrieved on 10/07/2020 from <http://dawncommission.org/governance-and-challenges-of-infrastructural-deficit-in-nigeria>
- Nnadozie, E. E., Iorfa, S. K., & Agonsi, U. A. (2015). Contributions of psychological detachment from work and perceived organizational support in work-life balance among health workers. *Nigerian Journal of Psychological Research*, 11, 9–16.
- Nworah, U** (12th May 2020). Education in Anambra during COVID-19 lockdown. Retrieved on 26/06/2020 from <https://guardian.ng/opinion/education-in-anambra-during-covid-19-lockdown/>
- NZSIF (2009). What is Social Infrastructure? Retrieved on 17/07/2020 from <http://www.nzsif.co.nz/Social-Infrastructure/What-is-Social-Infrastructure/>
- Obinna, E. Iniobong, I. Odoh I., & Kwen, J. (12th April, 2020). Controversial palliatives tear Nigerians apart. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://businessday.ng/lead-story/article/controversial-palliatives-tear-nigerians-apart/>
- Ochelle, F. O (26th June, 2020). Exclusive interview with Dr. Olaokunsoyinka, board chair of the health workers fund to support covid-19 front liners in Nigeria. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <http://venturesafrica.com/qa-with-dr-olaokun-soyinka-board-chair-of-the-health-workers-fund/>
- Ogundipe, S. (30th March, 2020). Coronavirus: Nigeria has 350 ICU beds for 200 million people. Retrieved on 15th from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/384840-coronavirus-nigeria-has-350-icu-beds-for-200-million-people.html>
- Ohiaa, C., Adeleye S., Bakarey B., & Tauseef, A. (2020). COVID-19 and Nigeria: putting the realities in context. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*. 95 pp.1-3
- Okwumbu, R (5th April 2020). Nigeria's top billionaires have donated to support the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/05/top-10-nigerian-billionaires-and-their-contributions-to-the-fight-against-covid-19/>
- Oladimeji, R. (30th April 2020). Lawyer sues SGF over social distancing at Kyari's burial. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://punchng.com/lawyer-sues-sgf-others-for-violating-social-distancing-at-kyaris-burial/>
- Olu, F. (26th April, 2020). COVID-19 is a fertile ground for aggravated corruption in Nigeria. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/covid-19-is-a-fertile-ground-for-aggravated-corruption-in-nigeria/>

- Olufemi, J.** (7th November 2019). Nigeria budgets N2, 000 for the Healthcare of each citizen in 2020. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/health/health-features/361373-nigeria-budgets-n2000-for-the-healthcare-of-each-citizen-in-2020.html>
- Olufemi, J.** (7th November, 2019). Critical issues on FG's 2020 healthcare budget. Retrieved on 19/07/2020 from <https://www.thecable.ng/critical-issues-on-fgs-2020-healthcare-budget>
- Oppen, M., Sack, D. & Wegener, A.** (2005). Germany: Private-Public Partnerships in Personal Social Services. New Directions in a Corporatist Environment in G. Hodge and C. Greve (Eds), the Challenge of Public-Private Partnerships: Learning from International Experience, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, Pp.269-89
- Oshoko, F. & Abu, D.** (29th June 2020). School resumption, flight resumption, interstate movement and lockdown in Nigeria new rules. Retrieved on 14/07/2020 from <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-53203252>
- Oyeleye, S.** (10th Dec. 2019). Governance and Challenges of Infrastructural Deficit in Nigeria. Retrieved on 10/07/2020 from <http://dawncommission.org/governance-and-challenges-of-infrastructural-deficit-in-nigeria/>.
- Sanni, K** (10th April 2020). Governors request data on vulnerable persons from minister. Retrieved on 16/07/2020 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/387046-governors-request-data-on-vulnerable-persons-from-minister.html>
- Sanni, K** (15th April, 2020). Coronavirus: Reform distribution of palliatives to forestall crisis, Governors tell Buhari. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/coronavirus/387970-coronavirus-reform-distribution-of-palliatives-to-forestall-crisis-governors-tell-buhari.html>
- Sherraden, S** (3rd February 2011). The Infrastructure Deficit: Policy Paper. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://www.newamerica.org/economic-growth/policy-papers/the-infrastructure-deficit/>
- Social Action** (29th April, 2020). Human Rights Violations during COVID-19 Lockdown In Nigeria. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <http://saction.org/human-rights-violations-during-covid-19-lockdown-in-nigeria/>
- Teriman, Suharto, Yigitcanlar, Tan, & Mayere, Severine** (2010) Social infrastructure planning and sustainable community: example from south east Queensland, Australia. In: Proceedings of the Business and Social Science Research Conference 2011, 3-4 January 2011, Novotel World Trade Centre, Dubai.
- Umana, K.** (28th January 2020). Bad Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://researchcyber.com/bad-governance-and-insecurity-in-nigeria/>
- Umeh, K.** (18th July, 2020). FG to review decision on school resumption, says Nwajiuba. Retrieved on 19/07/2020 from <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-to-review-decision-on-school-resumption-says-nwajiuba/>
- UNICEF.** (2015). Annual report 2015. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Annual_Report_2015_En.pdf
- UKEssays.** (November 2018). Review Of Theories On Government Expenditure Economics Essay. Retrieved on 20/07/2020 from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/economics/review-of-theories-on-government-expenditure-economics-essay.php?vref=1>
- USAID.** (2018). Nigeria: Nutrition profile. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/Nigeria-Nutrition-Profile-Mar2018-508.pdf>

- Uzochukwu, B., Ughasoro, M. D., Etiaba, E., Okwuosa, C., Envuladu, E., Onwujekwe, O. E. (2015). Health care financing in Nigeria: Implications for achieving universal health coverage. *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice* 18 (4) 437-44
- Voanews (1st March 2020). Millions in Nigeria Lack Access to Clean Water. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://www.voanews.com/africa/millions-nigeria-lack-access-clean-water>
- Wael O. A. (2013). Bad Governance and Failure of Development Progress in Egypt Causes, Consequences and Remedies. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 3 (4) pp. 39-60
- WaterAid (8th May 2020). Nigeria cannot defeat COVID-19 pandemic without improved access to clean water and good hygiene practices by citizens. Retrieved on 15/07/2020 from <https://www.wateraid.org/ng/media/nigeria-cannot-defeat-covid-19-pandemic-without-improved-access-to-clean-water-and-good>
- Zhu N, Zhang D, Wang W, Li X, Yang B, Song J, et al. (2020). A novel coronavirus from patients with pneumonia in China. *New England Journal of Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2001017>.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A HUMANIST RESPONSE

By

OtegbuluChukwuebuka Gabriel

School of General Studies (Humanities Unit)

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

EzeanyaChioma Winifred

Department of Philosophy

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

The present COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world has indeed redefined the way human beings view the world and their fellow human beings. There seem to be perhaps more than ever the consciousness not just to preserve the human race but also to highlight the value and status of human beings in their relation to the world as well as the protection of their interest. This paper, therefore, investigates how a humanist analysis of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic can deepen interpersonal relationships. This paper argues that human beings need to do more to improve their situation and protect their interest in order to overcome the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research methods are expository, analytical and evaluative.

Keywords: COVID-19, Humanism, Humanist, Humanness, human beings.

Introduction

Humankind has always been confronted with various pandemics, but never has any of these pandemics, in recent time, questioned the basic values of human existence/relationship as the coronavirus (COVID- 19) pandemic has done. Since the discovery of the novel coronavirus in Wuhan province of China towards the end of 2019, the spread of the virus has been very sporadic. As at the time of my writing this paper, globally, 31,175, 205 has been infected and 962,076 deaths. In the United States of America (USA) about 6,829, 956 were infected and about 200, 000 deaths – making it more than any death toll in America in a year. Scientists are afraid that the figures given may not be exact as there is the possibility that these figure may be less than the actual figure. Scientists predict that these figures will still rise significantly in the nearest future if care is not taken owing to the fast spread of the virus. The reason for the fast spread is as a result of the mode of transmission of the virus. It can be contacted through physical contact, touching of ones face with unwashed hands especially after shaking the hands of an infected person or touching a surface that is assumed to have been exposed to inhabiting the virus, air born transmission and so on.

As a result of the fast spread of the virus certain terms have emerged in order to help curtail the spread of the virus such terms are lockdown, social distancing, physical distancing, no handshake, and mask up. However, in as much as these epidemiological techniques and interventions are meant to help contain the spread of the coronavirus, it has also affected human relationship and existence. Sonis, Kennedy et al (2020) observe that, people especially COVID- 19 patients already feel some degree of isolation as people are constantly encouraged to distance from each other. This poses a big challenge to humanists who must ensure that the basic values of humanism are not lost as a consequence of the pandemic.

Presently, there is an increasing demand to emphasize the basic values of humanism amidst the burden imposed on humankind by the coronavirus pandemic. This call is paramount because in the struggle to survive the economic, social and psychological burden of the pandemic there is the tendency for human being to forget those values which upholds their humanness. This paper, therefore, seeks to investigate how a humanist interpretation of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic can deepen interpersonal relationships. This paper argues that human beings need to do more to improve their situation and protect

their interest in order to overcome the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research methods are expository, analytical and evaluative.

COVID- 19: The New Pandemic

In December 2019, there were reported cases of a series of pneumonia in Wuhan, China (Lu, Stratton & Tang, (2020). However, in January 2020 a thorough analysis from the lower respiratory tract samples reveals that the pneumonia is caused by a new virus severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2) (Huang, Wang et al, 2020). While on February 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease caused by SARS CoV 2 COVID- 19. On 11th March 2020, because of the spread of the virus to over 114 countries and about 118, 000 persons infected and 4000 deaths recorded, WHO declared the disease a pandemic.

Coronaviruses belong to the coronaviridae family in the Nidovirales order. They are minutes in size and contain a single stranded RNA as a nucleic material, size ranging from 26 to 34 kbs (Shereen, Khan et al, 2020). They have typical crown like appearance when viewed with an electron microscope. This crown like shape is as a result of the presence of glycoprotein spike on its envelope (Perlman & Netland, 2009). There are four genera of CoVs namely alpha coronavirus, beta coronavirus, delta coronavirus and gamma coronavirus. The first two are present in bats and rodent, while the other two are present in avian species (Yin & Wunderink, 2018).

In the past, Coronaviruses were thought to infect only animals until the world witnessed an outbreak of coronavirus in human beings in 2002, in a province called Guangdong, China. The virus was known as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Reports from studies show that about 8000 persons were infected with SARS and 776 deaths recorded (Shereen, Khan et al, 2020). In 2012, some Saudi Arabian indigenes were diagnosed with another coronavirus named Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and about 2428 were infected and 838 deaths recorded. The emergence of COVID- 19 raised serious concern as to what could have led to its existence and fast transmission in human beings. Thus, scholars such as Gennaro, Pizzol et al (2020) are of the view that SARS CoV2 in human being can either be as a result of (a) natural selection in animal host before zoonotic transfer or (b) natural selection in humans following zoonotic transfer. And that the reason for its fast transmission is as a result the genetic recombination event at S protein in the RBD region of SARS-CoV2 (Shereen, Khan et al, 2020). The SARS CoV2 (COVID-19) as well as SARS and MERS are believed to belong to the beta coronavirus family.

Patients with COVID-19 disease are known to exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, dyspnea, head ache, sore throat and rhinorrhoea. In addition to the respiratory symptoms are gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea and diarrhea. However, some patients who are asymptomatic can transfer the virus to another person through respiratory droplet. The concern about the coronavirus is the ease with which it is transmitted from one person to another and also the danger it poses to human life. It is as a result of these concerns that humanists are concerned with the effects it poses on the affairs of human beings with regards to saving humankind and protecting their interest.

Humanism: Meaning, Content and Tenet.

Humanism is not just a philosophical position, or a particular life stance, or worldview or an existential orientation but also a tradition that has a historical background. Before we look at this historical context of humanism with regards to it being a tradition, it is good that we first look at the etymology of the term. The term humanism (humanismus) was first used to apply to the revival of clerical learning in European Renaissance and the tradition of thought ignited by such revival; it later came to refer to a contemporary attitude of the mind. (Copson, 2015). The attitude of the mind that emphasizes man and his status, importance, powers, achievements, interests or authority. The term humanism has been widely misconstrued, because of the many ways some scholars have tried to apply it. However, in this paper the term will be applied positively in order to help us appreciate its benefits.

Historically, humanism has its origin from the Renaissance, even though some scholars argue that it dates back to the time of the Sophists, Socrates and Cicero when they introduced social, political and moral

issues as it relates to human beings. However, it was the Renaissance humanists, Desiderius Erasmus (1469-156), Thomas more (1478-1535) and Michael de Montaigne (1533-1592) who systematized the understanding of humanism to mean an attitude of life that is non theistic and non-religious. They did this by adopting a critical position towards the cultural conditions of their time, especially toward religion (Duyndam, 2017). One can say that their aim was to correct the dominant theocentric worldview and to enthrone a more anthropocentric interpretation of the universe. In other words, their aim was to place man and his interest at the centre of every discourse. Therefore, for Renaissance humanist, humanism refers to an approach to life that were distinguished by the valuing of human beings and human culture in contrast with valuing gods and religion, and by affirming the effectiveness of human reason applied to evidence in contrast to theological speculation and revelation (Lippmann, 1929; Copson, 2015).

The Renaissance humanism emphasis on a more anthropocentric world view is as a result of the revitalization of classical sources. This brought about enormous innovation in literature, art and Religion. It is in the sense of the revitalization or rebirth of classical sources that we can say that humanism is a tradition. Here tradition is understood as trans-dare, meaning passing on or giving back. A humanist tradition within a culture can be understood as passing on something from sources of that culture which may have been lost forgotten or observable (Duyndan, 2017). The reason for this passing on of revitalized culture or sources is primarily for the sake of humanity, in the sense of humanness. As Duyndan(2017) observes the Renaissance humanist drawing richly from the sources of antiquity, propagated the meaning and beauty of human life, to counter the prevalent thinking of abstract; rigid and theocentric medieval scholasticism. This is because for him this type of thinking and its ideas does not fit into the humanist conception of human life that is humanness.

The 15th century English renaissance witnessed a development in the history of humanist. The humanist of the era emphasized the ability of the individual to think for oneself. In other words, the emphasis is on the individual's autonomy. The 19th century Enlightenment philosophers advocated for freedom and education in the wake of industrialization. Thus, humanism in the era of Enlightenment is synonymous with freedom, autonomy and dignity of the human person. These values has to be passed on to further generations. Humanism as a tradition therefore, is the critical passing on of meaning and values that are brought forward in different times and context for the sake of humanness. Humanist traditions are "always connected to other traditions, ideas, and movements in the culture that humanism is also part of" (Duyadan 2017). Hence, we can talk of Christian humanism, Islamic humanism, Jewish humanism e.t.c.

It is good for us to note that in whatever culture or form humanism appears, one of its basic beauty is that it is self-critical, in other words is shuns all forms of dogmatism. Its self-critical nature is what ensures the safeguarding of humanness in an era of crisis. Humanism self-critical nature is because it aims at articulating, exploring, and calling attention to values that constitutes humanness. Hence it is for the sake of humanness that humanism criticizes what falls short of its standard (Duyndan, 2017). When we talk about 'humanness' what do we actually mean. The university of humanistic studies, defined humanness in terms of meaning in life and humanization. Hence a human life is a meaningful life in just circumstances. A meaningful life can be understood as a life in which basic needs for meaning are jointly fulfilled, such as purpose, moral worth, self-worth, competence, comprehensibility, connectedness and excitement (Duyndam, 2017). According to Derkx(2013) the humanist has four basic convictions on making life meaningful.

1. That all persons should be treated equally, since all human person are entitled to human dignity.
2. The belief that all religious and worldview orientations in knowledge are context dependent, because they are hermeneutically accessible products of culture.
3. That people has the responsibility to use their freedom to develop themselves in relation to their fellow human beings. This development entails caring for themselves and others, caring for nature and environment and developing personal talent and abilities.
4. That life is ultimately all about the fate of specific, unique, physically and mentally vulnerable, and irreplaceable people, who can love and be loved and are making effort to find meaning in life.

From these principles or convictions, we see that humanism's main focus is to protect the interest of human beings as well as project humanity and humanness. Humanism, therefore, stands for values like

liberty, responsibility, justice, solidarity, pluralism, art of loving and sustainability. It is based on these values that Duyndam (2017) defined Humanism as that which “holds an open world view, a stance of critical thinking and the virtue of self-reflection and dialogue-acknowledging and promoting the autonomous and responsible roles of human being in shaping their lives” (p.8). Also following the same line of argument, the International Humanist and Ethical Union (Byelaw 5.1) defines Humanism as “a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic and it does not accept supernatural views of reality”. The point in all this is that humanism as a worldview is aimed at redirecting the attention of human person to the fact that he/she has to seek a way to better his/her life and find meaning in it. In other words, it is a certain attitude to life in which a human being realizes that he does not live in isolation but in connection with other human beings and as such tries to highlight those values that seek to protect their interests. A humanist, therefore, is one who promotes the values and principles of humanism.

Humanism in The Wake of COVID-19 Pandemic.

The crisis raised by the COVID – 19 pandemic is not just a health crisis or challenge, it more or less exposes the crisis of post-modern humanism; a brand of humanism that tends to present the principle of humanism in theory but deviates from it in practice. Ever since the global outbreak of this pandemic there has been various speculations or conspiracy theories as to the origin and the rapid spread of the virus. While generally pandemics are caused by poor public health systems, there are other possible long lists of causes which are viral mutation rates, poor refrigeration and food storage techniques which brought about wet markets, struggle for political and economic power and so on (Bishop 2020). However, authors like Bishop (2020) argue strongly that the COVID – 19 pandemic was caused majorly by the Chinese food policy which encourages open wet markets which serves as an avenue where pandemic traces its jump from animal reservoirs to human beings. As highly possible this point of view may be, the truth or that the COVID-19 pandemic challenges humanists to be true to their principles both in theory and in practice. For the humanist, the COVID-19 has posed a lot of questions on some of the values of humanism like human dignity, purposeful/meaningful life, communication, work or employment security, empathy and so on. We shall briefly take on these to see how COVID-19 has questioned these values.

Human Dignity

The idea of human dignity is closely linked with the idea of human rights. The United Nations declaration on human rights states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (United Nations 1948). This statement, therefore, presupposes that all human beings should be treated equally irrespective of race, colour and class. Human dignity has to do with “the combination of elements of ‘internal capability’, in the form of bodily health, and ‘external capability in the form of ‘having control over one’s environment” (Nussbamm, 2011, PP.33.34). From this, we agree with Dhungana (2020) that human dignity has to do with one’s self-worth as human beings as well as the state’s commitment to ensure and provide protection and promotion of human well-being. However, the COVID-19 pandemic experience exposes how unrealistic the UN declaration on human dignity and human rights may likely appear.

For instance, on March 22nd, 2020 the Nepali migrants who wished to re-enter the country through India as a result of the growing risk of community transmission were denied entry by the Nepali government (Basnet, Koirala, Pandey & Koirala, 2020). The decision of the Nepali government to seal the border to her citizens who were faced with the growing threat of coronavirus, loss of means of livelihood, were forced to take some life-threatening measures such as crossing a river that flows between Indo-Nepal borders (Bdu, 2020). However, when the media & public criticisms of the action of the government on the plight of stranded migrants were growing stronger, the Indian and Nepali government decided to set up a quarantine centre along the border, and to provide them with food and shelter (Giri, 2020). Unfortunately, 8 weeks into the agreement, neither government managed to ensure that the basic quarantine facilities

meets basic standards of health, hygiene and security. It was reported by the media that migrant were saying ‘This is a jail, not a quarantine facility’ (Daudel, 2020). This statement implies that the facilities fall short of what is consistent with the World Health Organization standard which calls for respect and dignity to be maintained in quarantine centres. (WHO, 2020).

In the United Stateof America, the human dignity is manifested in the poor health care facilities available to people of colour especially blacks. Mtshali (2020) argues the one of the reason for high COVID - 19 mortality rate for Black Americans is because black people are less likely to be referred for COVID-19 testing and medical care. She further pointed out that when taken to the hospital black people’s complaint are less likely to be taken seriously and when they are listened to they are being refused test multiple times or being given little or no attention. The death of Deborah Gatewood, a black nurse who worked for 31years in a Detroit hospital, but was denied treatment by doctor’s four time shows how much human dignity which is one of the basic values of humanism has been neglected in the wake of COVID -19 pandemic. Wingfield (2020) in his study also demonstrated how black and Latino patients and health care workers are been neglected and denied COVID – 19 treatment. Human dignity should be upheld at all cost no matter the situation or circumstance.

Unemployment/ Reduction in Work Force

There is no doubt that the novel Coronavirus has meted untold hardship especially in the economic life of nations, companies and even families. As a result of the economic change initiated by the COVID -19 pandemic there has been uncertainty and fear which are palpable in relationships, work, and our inner lives and in our means of survival (Blustein, 2020). What most people consider paramount now is the capacity to survive. The COVID -19 pandemic has sheltered the illusion of security at work place. Many are not afraid so much of the virus killing them as they are afraid of dying of hunger. This fear is occasioned by the loss of work or employment which has posed a serious existential terror especially in the wake of the pandemic.

The International Labour Organization (2020) while articulating the humanitarian and existential crisis occasioned by the pandemic pointed out that the impact of the pandemic has broad and deep ripples in societies. Since the quarantine order was put in place the levers that drive work are seriously compromised. Organisations and businesses are closed; the economy has ground to a halt and millions of people are over the globe are losing their jobs. The uncertainty created by the pandemic with regards to the massive unemployment was a seed sown prior to the pandemic. The unfairness and inequality that exist at work place created the conducive atmosphere for the aura of fear and uncertainty to thrive. Smith (2015) describing the condition of workers who earn the minimum wage notes that they live far below the poverty line and they struggle with vast problems created by lack of resources. Blustein (2019) further observe that workplace, historically, has emerged as the location of exposure to racism, sexism, interpersonal bullying and other forms of marginalization. The implication of this type of atmosphere is that when the lockdown was initiated as a necessary measure to curb the pandemic, worker with knowledge economy comfortably worked from home whereas those without access to technology and knowledge economy lost their jobs or are forced to work in conditions where they are exposed to the virus (Blustein, 2020).

Empathy and Communication

Empathy is all about fellow feeling, while communication is about interpersonal interaction and relationship. These two are part of the essential values of humanism. However, the COVID -19 pandemic has somehow exposed how deficient we are in these areas. With the mode of transmission of the virus, isolation, physical distancing and social distancing have become necessary to curb the deadly coronavirus. As a result, people tend to distance themselves socially and physically from patients who suffer from the virus. Sonnies (2020) observe that patients who suffer from the deadly coronavirus especially aged patients are face with greater challenges in terms of communication, empathy or compassion and less than ideal care environment. This observation is *ad rem* owing to the fact that older patients especially those who suffer from either hearing or visual impairment may not be able to enjoy the gains of video or telephonic

alternatives. Such people need the attention of family members as health care workers may be guiding against being infected even with personal protective equipment (PPE).

Sonis (2020) while describing the plight of patients observed that ‘for patients with cognitive impairment, there is also substantial medical risk associated with being separated from family members or caregivers; those with dementia may demonstrate behaviours such as fidgeting, wandering, or increased aggression to communication pan. Hunger, or need for toileting, and without the presence of family at the bedside to aid in interpretation; these needs are at risk of going unmet’ (p.500). Besides those with health challenges, there has been reduction in social activities and interpersonal contact since the pandemic, and this is posing a serious challenge to fellow feeling and interpersonal communication. There are certainly voids that phone or video calls cannot fill in human life. The isolation and social distancing necessitated by the pandemic can really cause mental breakdown and can even pose a big challenge to family bonding and social interaction. And when this is heavily affected empathy and communication within a network of relationship will be shattered.

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

With the measure brought out to check the spread of the novel coronavirus, family life in most homes were heavily affected as there were several cases of domestic violence and child abuse. All over the world, many communities were put on lockdown to check the spread of the virus, this mass effort to save life put many family relationships at risk especially abusive ones (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). In many countries of the world, there has been report of rise in cases of domestic violence and abuse as a result of the pandemic. For instance, Brazilian government reported 40-50 per cent increase in cases of domestic abuse, while in Spain the increase is up to 20 percent. In the United Kingdom (UK) UK, 25 per cent increase of domestic violence and abuse was reported during the stay at home imposition (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). Some of these cases were as a result of unemployment, reduced income, limited resources and lack of social support necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic. There is this fear that “the growing global trend of increasing reports of domestic violence cases is likely to continue throughout the pandemic and may only represent a “tip of the iceberg” as many victims still find themselves trapped with the perpetrator and unable to report the abuse” (Campbell 2020, p.2). This concern is very serious as any form of abuse or violence on a human being affects humanness, which humanism tries to protect.

A Humanist Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed changed a lot of things. It has questioned the strength of a lot of institutions, as well as the economic, political and social organisations in many countries. The pandemic affected human life and even the way human beings organise their affairs. The general language now is survival. As such humanism and also humanists must find new ways of communicating its principles so that the interest and life of the human person is protected especially during a pandemic like this.

It is quite true that at the critical moment of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the imposed lockdown, many countries, institutions, organisations and individuals made serious effort to ease the burden imposed by the pandemic such as tax reduction, distribution of protective materials such as hand sanitizers, face mask, PPE, distribution of food items especially to the less privileged, and other humanitarian gestures. All these notwithstanding, so much still need to be done by humanists to sink the ideals of humanism deep into the society and individuals.

Humanism places man at the centre of the universe. In other words, it recognises the power of human beings to use their rational ability in finding means of making life more meaningful and purposeful. Human kind will have to, therefore, seek their own interest by preserving the natural order of things and ensuring harmony in the universe. The COVID -19 pandemic has created extra-ordinary challenge in the health care system, the economy and in our life (CDC, 2020). Therefore, human beings as well as government and policy makers must find proactive measures to first ensure that these areas which directly affect the wellbeing of human being are sufficiently protected. Secondly, that similar pandemic does not occur by coming up with policies that will ensure that such viruses which have their natural habitat in

animals do not find their way in human beings. If such pro-active measures are not taken and human beings ceases to exist then humanism will have no relevance.

The value and dignity of human life and human relationship must as a matter necessity be prioritized over anything. This is because human beings have that inherent worth in them which transcends race, class, ethnicity and statues. This is why Kant in his categorical imperative states that human beings should never be considered as a means, but rather as an end. The government must therefore ensure that human dignity is upheld in every strata of societal life irrespective of race or Class or social status. Human beings should be treated equally. Humanists should, therefore, ensure that every government of the world must enforce disciplinary measure on hospitals or institution that encourage human indignity or racial distinction in their affairs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed affected the warmth people experience in their relationship with people as measures are put in place to ensure social and physical distancing. Human beings now more than ever need to work on new ways to increase inter-personal interaction and compassion without disregarding measures put in place to curb the virus. Fellow feeling and interaction and caring for one another are the things that make life worth living. Human relationship reminds us that we do not exist alone, but that our life becomes more meaningful when we discover that we live in a network or web of relationships.

To overcome the burden of the pandemic, people need to engage in purposeful activities that give value and meaning to their lives. Having a sense of purpose reduces the stress and undue exposure to mental ill health. As the COVID – 19 pandemic has aroused the feeling of fear and uncertainty, engaging in a goal-directed activity may be one of the ways of managing the stress brought about by the pandemic (Mckinght&Kashdan, 2009). Engaging in meaning full activity can be a critical way of fostering purpose and meaning in life. Such purposeful activity include writing, drawing, learning skills like tailoring, bricklaying, electrical work, carpentry, bakery and so on. Therefore, active engagement of both the ‘head’ and ‘hand’ is very crucial in periods like this.

Conclusion

The preservation of human life and the general welfare of human beings is paramount. But it cannot not be achieved in isolation of human beings. The reality of the pandemic confronts us every day as well as the treats that it poses. The choice of creating a better world within and after the pandemic lies in our hands. The pandemic may have hit us so much that things are taking new dimension in a manner that we never envisaged. But the overall concern is that in the midst of this pandemic, human beings must rationally find a means of enhancing and protecting their common interest as well as that of their environment, thereby improving human relationships. Humanism provides us with the raw materials for effecting this, but the problem is translating the humanists’ ideals into practice.

References

- Badu, M. (2020, March 30). Nepalis are Swimming across the Mahakali to get Home. Retrieved 31 July 2020, from <https://kathmandupost.com/sudurpaschim-province/2020/03/30/nepalis-are-swimming-across-the-mahakali-to-get-home>.
- Basnet, S., Koirala, S., Pandey, B., Koirala, J. (2020) COVID-19 Containment Efforts of a Low-Resource Nation: The First Four Months in Nepal
- Bishop, J. P., & Fitzgerald, M. J. (2020). Norming COVID-19: The Urgency of a Non-Humanist Holism. *The Heythrop Journal*.
- Blustein, D. L., & Guarino, P. A. (2020). Work and Unemployment in the Time of COVID-19: The Existential Experience of Loss and Fear. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 60(5), 702-709.
- Bradbury-Jones, C., & Isham, L. (2020). The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence. *Journal of clinical nursing*.
- Campbell, A. M. (2020). An increasing risk of family violence during the Covid-19 pandemic: Strengthening community collaborations to save lives. *Forensic Science International: Reports*, 100089.
- Copson, A. (2015). What Is Humanism?. *The Wiley Blackwell handbook of humanism*, 1-33.
- Cureus, 10.7759/cureus.8946

- Dhungana, N. (2020). Human dignity and cross-border migrants in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. *World Development*, 105174.
- Di Gennaro, F., Pizzol, D., Marotta, C., Antunes, M., Racalbutto, V., Veronese, N., & Smith, L. (2020). Coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) current status and future perspectives: a narrative review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(8), 2690.
- Duyndam, J. (2017). Humanism as a positive outcome of secularism. In *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*.
- Fritz, S., Milligan, I., Ruest, N., & Lin, J. (2020). Building community at distance: a datathon during COVID-19. *Digital Library Perspectives*.
- Giri, A. (2020, March 31). Nepal and India agree to take care of and feed each other's citizens stranded on the border. Crossings to remain closed. Retrieved 25 July 2020, from <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/03/31/nepal-and-india-agree-to-take-care-of-and-feed-each-other-s-citizens-stranded-on-the-border-crossings-to-remain-closed>.
- Harvard University Press (2011)
- Huang, C., Wang, Y., Li, X., Ren, L., Zhao, J., Hu, Y., ...& Cheng, Z. (2020). Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *The lancet*, 395(10223), 497-506.
- Lu, H., Stratton, C. W., & Tang, Y. W. (2020). Outbreak of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan, China: The mystery and the miracle. *Journal of medical virology*, 92(4), 401-402.
- Nussbaum, C. (2011) *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development*
- Paudel, R. (2020, April 9). COVID-19: Our government failed us, say Nepalese workers stranded at border. Retrieved 28 May 2020, from <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/health/covid-19-our-government-failed-us-say-nepalese-workers-stranded-at-border-70337>
- Perlman, S., & Netland, J. (2009). Coronaviruses post-SARS: update on replication and pathogenesis. *Nature reviews microbiology*, 7(6), 439-450.
- Shereen, M. A., Khan, S., Kazmi, A., Bashir, N., & Siddique, R. (2020). COVID-19 infection: Origin, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses. *Journal of Advanced Research*.
- Sonis, J. D., Kennedy, M., Aaronson, E. L., Baugh, J. J., Raja, A. S., Yun, B. J., & White, B. A. (2020). Humanism in the Age of COVID-19: Renewing Focus on Communication and Compassion. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 21(3), 499.
- United Nations. (1948, December 10). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.
- White, A. E. (2020). Purpose as a Powerful Resource in the Time of COVID-19. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 60(5), 682-689.
- World Health Organisation. (2020, February 11). Key considerations for repatriation and quarantine of travellers in relation to the outbreak of novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV. Retrieved 28 May 2020, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/key-considerations-for-repatriation-and-quarantine-of-travellers-in-relation-to-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

DISRUPTION OF FARMING ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNAL CONFLICT THAT AFFECT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF CROSS RIVER STATE

By

Bassey, Ugo Samuel

Department of Sociology

University of Calabar

Calabar

&

Onyema, Okwu Augustina

Department of Sociology

University of Calabar

Calabar

Abstract

The menace of communal conflict is on the rampage in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The problem appears more complex with the difficulty posed by its socio-economic consequences on the warring communities. Hence, the study focuses and examines the meteoric rise in communal conflict in Nigeria has led to economic degradation so much that warlords have exploited the situations for arbitrariness and subjugating innocent citizens to underserved brutality. However, it should be pointed out that everybody abhors conflict in whatever form, because the long run effect is that, agricultural (i.e.) economic and other sundry production activities stalled. As a result more people are thrown out of jobs, social amenities are destroyed, relationships amongst persons and groups strained. Evidence indicate that Nigeria is a land of diversity with people of different groups and communities with divergent norms, customs, values, taboos, ethnic and political ideology which periodically can led to frequent clashes resulting from economic, socio-cultural and political demands in an endowed country, regrettably, a nation with a sizeable land mass, located in an earthquake and tsunami free zone of the world, can feed the entire continent of Africa and provide employment for her citizens if her resources are efficiently harnessed especially in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. A cross sectional survey research was conducted to generate data to answer the research questions as well as test the hypothesis. The sample size of 700 was computed for the study, using Yamane (1967) formula for deriving sample size from a finite population. The in-depth interview (101) was conducted by the researcher with seven (7) respondents purposively selected from the seven Local Government Areas that make up the Southern Senatorial District in Cross River State. Non-parametric test (Pearson product moment correlation) statistic was used to test the hypothesis of the study at 0.05 level of significance. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of the study showed that the socio-economic consequences of communal conflict on agricultural activities are perceived to be higher in the study areas. This study recommended among other things encourages communities to live in peace and tolerate one another especially in the face of conflict, implement laws against incessant communal conflict and public sensitization on the danger of conflict in our communities.

Key words: Communal Conflict, War, Criminal Violence, Agricultural Activities and Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State

1.1 Introduction

Following the wide spread of communal conflicts in Nigeria, communal conflicts is a phenomenon that is currently generating a lot of concern globally; especially in countries like Nigeria where it is highly prevalent. However the focus of this study is communal conflicts and disruption of farming activities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State like every human associations, the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State are not self-sufficient. As a result, they intermingle with one another in the course of their historical development (Bassey, 2019). Also, Ladi (2010) observes, any nation that has conflict, unemployment, political instability and security challenges cannot be said to be in the path of greatness and development, because these divisive forces contribute greatly to the incidence of violent crimes, such as murder, destruction of lives and property, mass killing, rape, arson and even destruction of farm products.

However, the big questions that demand urgent answers are: (1) What can we do to minimize the rising cases of communal conflict in our society? (2) Should we encourage United Nations and other bodies to settle dispute by peaceful means, in conformity with justice and international law, settlement of disputes situations, which might lead to breach of peace. To achieve this, various governments, organizations, community leaders, etc. are expected not to use force in their inter-state relations, but to settle their disputes through peaceful means.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Definitely, during and after communal conflict, lives are negatively affected, occupations and business are disrupted, production of subsistence practice halted, which could lead to chronic shortage(s) of food and refugee problems. Violence resulting from communal conflict can undo development gains achieved in income generation distributions, and farming activities.

1.3 Research question

How does communal conflict affects farming activities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

1.4 Research objective

To ascertain if communal conflict affect farming activities that negates the socio-economic development of the study area.

1.5 Research hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between communal conflict and disruption of farming activities.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Communal conflict

Communal conflict in this context implies the struggle for power and control over political and economic necessities of survival, as individuals and as identifiable autonomous social groups struggle or advantages (Otite, 1999). Communal conflict also involves communities within the local and state boundaries, here, communities with separate multi-dimensional identities and multiple users of resources engage in struggles over boundaries, and such conflicts are not often single-issue conflicts (Ruspensinghe, 1995) cited in (Bassey, 2019).

However, communal conflicts arises when two distinct groups come into disagreement and these groups define themselves using ethnic, national or religious criteria to make claims to land, power and values/customs over the other consequently, land as one of the major causes of conflict that degenerate and hamper socio-economic development in Nigeria and many African countries, and growth in consumption principally sustains it (Ayuk, 2015).

2.2 Types of conflict

For the purpose of this study, these types of conflict shall be examined

- **Ethnic conflict:** This is one of the most destructive and pervasive conflicts in Africa, especially, since the end of cold war. Williams (2006) maintained that ethnicity is to bind the individual to a group with belief that awareness of a common identity constitute its principal features and that this consciousness shares some common socio-cultural elements and if threatened can cause conflict.

- **Class conflict:** Class conflicts in Nigeria and indeed all over the world are based on political and economic issues. The distinguishing features in class conflict is possession of economic, political, ideological, wealth, intellectual prowess, powers and values by a segment of the society over the other groups (Williams, 2006). The relationship with the means of production by groups at the social basis of each society defines classes.

2.3 Consequences of ethnic and communal crises

Ethnic and communal crises in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State and Nigeria as a whole have far reaching consequences of negative dimension.

- (1) **Loss of lives and property:** Since the return of democracy on May 29, 1999, Nigeria has lost an estimated 50,000,000 people in all the ethnic, communal (and even religious) crises that have rocked the country. Similarly, one can estimate the property lost at 5 trillion naira. Nigeria is one country that is not at war, yet, has lost more people and property than those who have been fighting ceaselessly for the past ten years (Ihejiamaizu, 2002).
- (2) **Insecurity:** Even after the crises, fear of insecurity grips the people. They no longer feel safe and protected. In Abi today, no Ebijakara man can cross to Ebom without the company of at least two fierce looking battle ready police or soldiers. The warring community of Ebijakara residents are displaced and dying in thousands because of economic hardship (Bassey, 2019).
- (3) **Mistrusts in interpersonal relations:** The people lose confidence in one another. The recent Adim and Agwagune football clashes at Abini Biase Local Government Area in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State on June 20, 2008 in which so many young boys were slaughtered and about 3 youths were declared missing is also a good point. The current Abanwan and Urugbam communal conflict is another notable one. Consequently, the party that suffered more casualties is threatening hell and brimstone, and thinks that reconciliation is far-fetched.
- (4) **Increased cost of development:** Bassey (2009) maintains; it has become fashionable for government to provide relief materials and pay compensation to victims of communal crises. Consequently, government embarks on rehabilitating buildings, electricity, water, roads and bridges, money that would have been invested on eradication of poverty is spent to replace things destroyed by intolerant warring communities.

2.4 Communal conflict and farming activities

Farming activities are usually halted and affected whenever war breaks out. In Africa, farmers live in nucleation and journey daily to their farms, which tend to improve social interaction among residents who tend to react in the same manner violently to socio-economic opportunities, especially those pertaining to agricultural land use.

Similarly, land in a typical rural area is put to various uses which, for the purpose of simplification can be dichotomized into agricultural and non-agricultural uses. Sometimes rural land use is commonly equated to agricultural land use and the non-agricultural land use is also important because it represents the focal areas of activities which directly or indirectly relate to, and whose socio-economic significances depend on the success of Agriculture.

2.5 Theoretical framework: Routine activity theory (RAT)

The proponents are Felson and Cohen (1976) routine activities theory which is one of the theories of environmental criminology, assumed that conflict and crime are normal within an environment and will be committed depending on the circumstances. RAT states that for a conflictual event to occur, there must be a convergence in time and space of three factors. These are the presence of motivated offender and the presence of a suitable target (person or object i.e. farmers, land, houses and crops).

Whether or not these elements converge or coincide in a product of activities (day to day) movement of potential target and offender. The theory makes it obvious that those who participate in communal conflicts and criminal activities lack capable moral, family and community guidance. Based on this theory, communal conflict occur when unconventional methods are used to seek redress to what is believed to be wrong or right and also communal conflict that give rise to criminal violence would reduced if not eliminated, if conventional means like dialogue, consultation, advocacy, etc. are employed.

3.0 Research methodology

The study adopted the survey design and the study area was Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. These comprise Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Areas, respectively.

The population of the study consisted of the seven Local Government Areas in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The Southern Senatorial District is where these communities subsist with their population as male (99,485), female (96,786), total = 196,271 (NPC, 2006 Census). In all comprising those gainfully employed, self-employed, farmers and traders. They were better disposed to supply dependable information on communal conflict that lead to socio-economic consequences in those communities. The study made use of systematic and purposive sampling methods. The systematic sampling was used to select 7 warring communities out of the entire seven Local Government Areas of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. To draw respondents for the study, the purposive sampling technique was used. In other words, warring communities in each of the Local Government Areas that comprise the Southern Senatorial District selected were purposively selected. This involves visiting each warring communities and making enquiry with the locally constituted conflict resolution committees. Data were elicited from warring communities using two different methods, namely: Questionnaire (quantitative), focus group discussion (qualitative). A total of seven hundred (700) respondents participated in the study. The researcher assisted by three research assistants gave questionnaire to respondents in each of the sampled Local Government Areas. The process continued in all the selected communities until a sample of 700 respondents was drawn. For the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) four warring communities were selected using simple random sampling method. Six respondents formed each of the FGD panel and this was achieved through the contact persons from each of the warring communities selected. Data collected from the questionnaire were used for empirical test hypotheses. The method used was the Pearson product moment correlation statistical analysis.

4.0 Result

The hypothesis states that there is little significant relationship between communal conflict and disruption of farming activities that leads to socio-economic consequences. In some selected warring communities in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

The independent variable was communal conflict while the dependent variable was Agricultural activities in some selected warring communities. The Pearson product moment correlation was adopted to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Analysis of Pearson product moment correlation on the relationship between communal conflict and disruption of Agricultural activities that hampers development gains (n = 700)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r_{xy}
Communal conflict	3,208	5,873			4,326	0.29
Disruption of Agricultural activities			4,466	6,117		

* $p > 0.05$, $df = 698$, critical $r = 0.194$.

Given that the calculated r-value of 0.29 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.194 at 0.05 levels of significance with 698 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is significant relationship between communal conflict and disruption of Agricultural activities in warring communities of the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

5.0 Discussion of findings

The findings of this study revealed that there is a positively significant relationship between communal conflict and disruption of Agricultural activities in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The positive correlation of 0.284 obtained in the analysis the hypothesis indicates that communal

conflict statistically significantly disrupt agricultural activities in the warring communities of all the Local Government Areas of Senatorial District, while lack of employment increases the risk of communal conflict that relate seriously to socio-economic woe in the society.

The above findings are consonance with the views of Conkling, Berry and Ray (1980), that communal conflict would be relatively reduce if economic and development indices which measures up standard of living are available and guaranteed. Because Agricultural gains which is a kind of self-employment provides the mechanism for building or rebuilding the legitimacy and authority of Government. No peaceful, conflict free society, good governance nor sustainable development can be achieved without the provision of peaceful atmosphere to enable the farmers engage in Agricultural activities (self-employment) that would alleviate poverty for the citizens. However, if a country's citizens are unemployed they will be recipe for violence and this will lead to disruption of Agricultural activities (i.e. socio-economic woe). This position was confirmed in Abanwan and Urugbam communities in Biase Local Government Area during the interview session with the youths; excerpts of response from the interviewee (Bassey, 2020).

Consequently, to achieve development, local resources and expertise must be mobilized to meet the basic needs of the community, contribute to community advancement and empowerment to deliver essential services which trickledown effect is employment that will alleviate poverty and reduce conflicts and crime.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that there is need to come out with policies or legislature that will out-law these dangerous disruptions. Moreso, government should organized sensitization campaign, peace committee among villages and also by the idea of arbitrary demarcation of boundaries by government.

Secondly, the emergency method of using force always to quell conflict should stop, rather government should employ other methods like negotiation, mediation, advocating and take seriously warning signs of potential conflict situation, because often times, these signs are taken for granted. If these methods as mentioned above are employed, they could forestall impending devastating and communal conflicts.

7.0 Conclusion

The result of this study shows that communal conflict has socio-economic consequences on the Agricultural gains in the rural warring communities of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State and is seriously influential by the attitude of village chiefs/warlords. The main objective of this study was to examine how communal conflict serves as a template disturbance to Agricultural activities in warring communities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. In line with the result and findings of the study, it could be concluded that communal conflict has a negative impact on the Agricultural activities.

Generally, this has exposed a lot of interesting facts aside from the major variables involved in the research. Poverty was seen to be endemic and pervasive among the teeming youth of these communities that is why they go all out to fight for even trivial matters.

References

- Akiwola, K. (2008). *The territorial imperatives of socio-communal conflict. The Nigeria experience*. Lagos: Empire Publications.
- Alimba, C. N. (2014). Title: Probing the dynamics of communal conflict in Northern Nigeria.
- Ayuk, A. (2015). Communal conflict and criminal violence in Nko and Onyeadama communities. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Sociology Department, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Barash, D. & Webel, P. (2002). *Peace and conflict studies*. Washington DC: Sage Publication.

- Bassey, U. (2009). Communal disputes and social conflict in Yakurr Local Government Area. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, Sociology Department, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Bassey, U. (2019). Socio-economic consequences of communal conflicts in Cross River State. A study of Biase communal conflicts. A Ph.D Dissertation carried out in the Department of Public Administration, University of Calabar.
- Gesiye, A. (2010). Causes and cures of conflicts in Nigeria: Communal conflict, civil war and the state: *African Journal Online*. Retrieved of February 3, 2013.
- Ihejiamaizu, E. C. (2002). *Sociology of Nigerian rural society*. Owerri: African Scholars Publishers.
- Johan, B. & Emma, E. (2004). Communal conflict, civil war and the state: Complexities, corrections and the GSL of Sudan.
- Ladi, P. (2010). Boko Haram and it elusive remedy. *The Nation*, 12 August, 11.
- Lebaron, M. & Bruce, G. (1993). *Conflict and culture: Research in fire communities in British Colombia*. Ontario: University of Victoria Institute for Dispute Resolution.
- Lederach, J. P. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse: University Press.
- Lyam, A. (2001). Internal boundaries and communal crisis in rural underdevelopment. *International Journal of Social Science and Public Policy*, 4(2), 36-44.
- Otite, O. (1999). Community conflict in Nigeria. Management, resolution and transformation. Bookgoggle.com>politicalscience>general.
- Williams, I. (2006). A philosophical analysis of conflict in Africa. In I. O. Albert (Ed) perspective on peace and conflict in Africa: Essays in honour of General (Dr.) Abdulsalam Abubakar.

THE WRITER AS A HISTORICAL WITNESS: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND POETIC RESPONSES

By

Gabriel OcheUkah

Department of English Language and Literature
AlvanIkoku Federal College of Education, Owerri-Nigeria

Abstract

There has been no other time in recent history when the relationship between literature and history has been clearly expressed in poetry. Perhaps, some people may argue that the responses of the creative writers have been too soon, but the suddenness and the spontaneity have been matched with equal dose of objectivity and literary imagination. In a recent anthology of covid-19 entitled: *World on the Brinks: An anthology of Covid-19 Pandemic* edited and published in August 2020, the poems' themes range from the origin of the virus in Wuhan, China, the global lockdowns, shutdown of world economy, the race for vaccines, the myths, the science and the politics of the covid-19 pandemic, and the rumours and fears generated during the period. The poems document the historic pandemic as creative literature and presents the writer as witnesses to history. Very specially, the poems show the dynamic relationships between literature and society and literature and history for the benefit of humanity.

Introduction

The role of literature in the society or the extent to which the society influences literature or the inter-dependent nature of literature and the society has been a much talked about or debated topic over the ages dating back to the ancient past. BernthLindfors opined that:

Writers have served not only as chroniclers of contemporary political history but also as advocates of radical social change. Their works thus both reflect and project the course of Africa's cultural revolution (22).

This is not surprising because the most basic definition of literature is that it reflects the society or mirrors the society depending on one's choice of expression. The bottom line is that literature and society are like Siamese twins of which any surgical procedure for their separation cannot end successfully. No writer writes in a vacuum or in isolation of happenings in the society. Any writer who is bereft of knowledge or ignorant of happenings in the society is either a bad writer or the irresponsible proverbial man who goes chasing a rat that has come out of his burning house. To this end, the more reflective a work of art is the more useful it then is to the society.

Little wonder, ancient scholars like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides, Aristophanes, Sophocles and many others of their time were conscious of the role of Literature in the society. Plato for instance was worried about the damage a badly portrayed art can bring on the society. He was particularly concerned about the youths who would have lost their place as leaders of the future due to exposure to harmful art. To curb this trend, Plato recommended censorship of the art in order to ensure that what artists were churning out were fit for the society. Aristotle for instance laid the foundation for literary criticism, of which literary examination, interpretation, evaluation and analysis have been hinged all these years. Basically, Aristotle fathered the guiding principles and philosophical instruments or criteria used to determine what literary work is tragedy or comedy or tragi-comedy, to mention but these few. In other words, the activities of these scholars were indicative of the fact that literature needs to have social ambience in order to be relevant.

A journey through the history of Literature will show clearly that Literature has always reflected the prevailing circumstances, currents, tempo and spirit of the period in which it was composed or written. Right from the Classical Period, and continuing through the Medieval Period, Renaissance, Neo-classical, Romantic, Victorian, Modern and the Contemporary periods of Literature, the dominant themes as seen in

the Literature of the varying periods had always been a cacophony of the peculiarities and prevailing circumstances of the period. In other words, the society is daily captured by the writers in their literature such that in the future one only needs to read through the literatures of a particular period in order to have an idea of what has taken place in the past.

The classical period reflected the achievements of the ancient civilizations of the Greeks and the Romans. Writers of this period reflected subjects covering a vast range of issues bedeviling their societies ranging from politics, economy, conflicts/wars, racism, gender and to family. Apart from the basic peculiarities of the periods, many of the themes mentioned above cut across all the periods. The Medieval Period for instance had a peculiar character of making God the centre of everything else while intellectualism which used to be top priority during the Classical was relegated to the background. This is why, in some quarters, the Medieval Period was described as the dark age. The Renaissance Period came with rebirth of learning which had been abandoned during the preceding period and reformation of ideas especially in science, religion and politics for the betterment of humanity. The Neo-classical Period was a journey back to the Classical times; it was a reinvention of Classical writings with a little touch of newness. The Romantic Period was a clear breakaway from the preceding period because rather than emphasize adherence to laid down rigid rules and strict conventions earlier established and championed the Neo-classical, there was emphasis on individuality, artistic freedom and a heavy dependence on the emotional state of the writer. The Victorian Period was a time when literary artists focused more on societal issues. In fact, Victorian novels are better known as novels of social problems. The utilitarian value of literature was better manifest during this period as the literature of the period, especially the novels, dwelt more significantly on social problems with the view of correcting social malaise through the instrumentality of literature. The succeeding periods—the Modern and the contemporary—have indeed also aggressively engaged the society.

In Africa, for instance, the likes of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Elechi Amadi, Abubakar Gimba, Toni Durowaku, Ngugiwa Thiongo, Ngugiwa Miri, Lewis Nkosi, Peter Abraham, Nadine Gordimer, Femi Osofisan, Nyi Osundare, Samsudeen Amali, Idris Amali, J. P. Clark, etc have in their various ways responded to topical issues with the view of using literature as a tool for social engineering and mass mobilization and orientation. It is therefore not surprising how writers have swung into action with their pen at the inception of the covid-19 and the eventual global pandemic that followed.

Literature and History: Strange Bird-fellows?

Commenting on the relationship between literature and History, Edwin Onwuka says:

The significant impact of literature and history on society cannot be overemphasized. The relationship among them has continued to attract critical attention since Plato. That affinity has been explored so much by African writers that it has assumed the status of a literary ideology peculiar to Africa (59).

This further affirms the argument that literature and history have always been in an affinity. Since literature educates and informs in addition to the principal function of literature which is entertainment, history definitely has proven time and time again to be a very reliable source to learn from. This is why, often times, when things get so bad in the society commentators always blame the masses and the leaders for not learning from history. This is because nothing is actually new. Things just wear a little different looks from what it had been in the past.

While some writers of literature depend on historical documents to tell their own imaginative reconstruction of the past, other writers engage happenings as living witnesses or as historical witnesses. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Chimamanda Adichie only reconstructed the history of the Biafran Civil War unlike much older writers who wrote about the war they witnessed and even participated in. All the contributors to the anthology of poetry we shall be discussing are all historical witnesses to the covid-19 pandemic.

Survey of Select Poems in Covid-19 Anthology

Perhaps the first poem of the anthology set the tune. The poem “When Corona Comes Calling” by Ade’ Adejumo laments the helplessness of man in the hands for the deadly virus. In the four stanzas of the poem, the poet captures the various ‘vain’ efforts in a frantic and desperate attempt to wage the advancing wheel of the virus. According to him:

When corona comes calling,
Borders snap shot their mouths,
Like metal snares
At the season of vigilant waits.

The closure of borders worldwide and road blocks in the streets were actions of governments all over the world to fight the virus to a standstill. During the peak of the crisis in Italy, the Prime Minister was once seen pleading with some youths who defied the government’s instructions by coming out to play to go back and stay safe indoors. It was the tale all over the world and television stations had different adverts capturing the safety and danger of being indoors and outdoors respectively. In the second stanza, the poet lampoons tyrants who “...lay supine like serpents Bereft of their slithering wiles”. Coronavirus, no doubt, was a leveler of all men. For the first time in many years, if not decades, both the common man and the big leaders were afraid of a force together. There was a world leader captured on camera, shading tears while surrendering to God. The third stanza captures the protocol of washing of hands which became a ritual just to curtail the virus. The fourth and the last stanza compares the virus to an invisible missile fired which has led to a shattering of global wisdom, theories and science put together.

Siza Amah painted a perfect picture of the way the world was connected as one giant village being tormented by the virus. According to him:

The world is a pendulum
Staggering like it had spent the night in a tavern
Tossing the pandemic virus around its cardinal points (209)

The literary effect created in the imagery of the swinging of the pendulum from one cardinal point to the other presents the helplessness and unprepared manner in which the inhabitants of the world are confronted by the virus. As the pendulum swings, it simply surprises people with the virus and all its accompanied troubles such as death, shortage of medical facilities, scarce resources such as funds, hunger in the land due to stoppage of daily activities, etc. In the second stanza, the poet in his poem “The World on a Swing” laments how everything thing else has come to a standstill except time which he says is fleeting as days turn:

...to weeks
And weeks into months
Months, soon into years (209).

Many governments are having a headache as to what to do about time that has been lost to the pandemic. Students have lost entire session, jobs have been lost and so very many people have to resort to the painful reality of starting afresh. The uncertainty in the world has been well captured by the poet as he expresses pessimism as to whether the pendulum ‘Will remain stationary or continue oscillating’ (209).

In UsangOkpaUsang’s poem ‘Mr Quarantine’, we are introduced to another disturbing attitude that greeted the virus at the initial stage. This same attitude can be said to be responsible for the devastation that stared humanity in the face and brought the whole world on its knees. In h

Is first stanza of the poem, he captured it succinctly:

It all started in the thick forest of Asia
We all sing a popular song “e no concern us”
Now we parade like masquerades
Now we parade like lost Son’s (228).

When the virus started ravaging China in fourth quarter of 2019, many world leaders didn’t see it coming close to them. Some said it was Chinese or China virus. Many Africans were of the opinion that the virus could not infect an African or pose any threat to an African. Even when it was ravaging Italy early this year, the same attitude was seen even among leaders of powerful countries. One of the leaders said it was

an ordinary flu and would go away miraculously. Some people blame the rampaging virus on the sins of the countries the virus was initially ravaging. When later on the virus spread to all nooks and crannies of the world, the poet reported in the last stanza that:

We all look up to the CROSS
Where our help comes from

Looking unto God is the last resort after all the blame games or to be put in the poet's language "e no concern me" attitude had been displayed at the initial stage of the pandemic. History will have it that at a point the whole world—Christians, Muslims, Atheists, Traditional believers, Judaists and a host of adherents of other religions wished quietly and openly that help could come from the supernatural realm and science.

On solutions to the pandemic and the race for vaccines, Adebajo Adebago in his poem 'Vaccines' captures the many sides of the covid-19 vaccines ranging from its politics, its business, the rumours it brought, the propaganda that came with it, the conspiracy theories that were propounded or greeted the race for the vaccine and not forgetting Madagascar's much touted drink that turned out impotent against the virus. The poet captures the race for the covid-19 vaccine to the activities of those who farm bees and how bees are harvested. According to him in the first stanza:

Given that it's the apiaries to rupture the buzz of bees;
The adroit fingers alone press the nature's sweetness of the bee.
Drainers of rivers assail the heavens of fishes;
Now that the water's finished from the back of the fishes, (5).

The poet is dismissive of the efforts or sacrifice of the vaccines researchers or creators. In fact, he accuses them of greed and avarice. He is suspicious of their sense of patriotism to the human race. He doubts their genuine commitment towards a common good of the whole world. He sees their strivings as the strivings of a bee farmer who want to get to the sweet honey which the bees have produced. The bee farmer has to sometimes endure being stung by bees in order to get to his prize. The same way the fisherman takes the pain to drain the rivers only to be availed with trapped fishes at the bottom of the river. As the efforts of the fisherman and the bee farmer is targeted at their own personal profit, so the poet feels the vaccine companies are pursuing their profits more than anything else. In stanza two the poet likened vaccine producers to tilling the soil for their own cultivation and harvest, in stanza three the poet talks about hewers who strive to fell logs for sales, and he also mentions the prize available to the squirrel after cracking the palm nuts with its teeth. All these are the various ways we put in efforts to achieve our personal goals in life.

The poet ends the poem with two lines that signal the much touted conspiracy theory about whether the virus was deliberately created at Wuhan or not. According to him:

But shall it be in the informed solutions
Or in the formed solutions?

The 'informed solutions' suggests that after creating the virus, the vaccine must have been created by the creators of the virus for commercial purpose. Many top pharmaceutical companies have been accused of commercializing the covid-19 pandemic and other pandemics before it. The 'formed solutions' referred to scientist who will eventually form or invent a vaccine for the cure of the virus.

Conclusion

The writers of the poems we have studied are indeed historical witnesses. This is because they have created the imaginative alternatives to the historical subject matter of the covid-19 pandemic. While historians are documenting the virus, creative writers are as well creating stories about the virus for the purpose of entertainment, information and education. Very clearly, the relationship between literature and history has been established by the poets because history is a major source of creative literature. This is because there is a lot to be learnt from history. A journey through the anthology we have studied shows clearly that the writers have documented the history about the coronavirus pandemic from different

perspectives ranging from its origin in Wuhan, its spread across the world, responses of governments all over the world, the deaths that came with it and the race for vaccines.

Works Cited

Adichie, Chimamanda. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Lagos: Farafina Publishers, 2006.

Aristotle. "Poetics" in Dukore, Bernard Ed. *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Wiston, INC, 1974.

Egbuta, Ikechukwu O. & ChukwuNnenna V. Eds. *World on the Brink: An Anthology of Covid-19 Pandemic*. Ikeja: Cityway Books Ventures, 2020.

Lindfors, Bernth. "Politics, Culture, and Literary Form" in *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2013. Pgs 22-30.

Ngugi, waThiongo. *Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement With Issues of Literature and Society*. Nairobi: James Currey Oxford EAEP, 1981.

Nwahunanya, Chinyere. *Literary Criticism, Critical Theory and Postcolonial African Literature*. Owerri: Springfield Publishers Ltd, 2012.

Onwuka, Edwin. "A Critical Review of the Impact of Literature And History on Society" in *Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, ISSN 2276-7169 October 2010, Vol. 1, No. 1, 59-65.

Plato. "*The Republic*" in Dukore, Bernard Ed. *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Wiston, INC, 1974.

FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CRISIS: THE CASE OF THE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

By

Meva'a Abomo Dominique & Ejuande Emmanuel Wonomu

Société Savante Cheikh Anta Diop (SS-CAD),

Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences,

University of Douala-Cameroon

Abstract

This paper probes into the problem of increasing number of Covid-19 infected persons in the North West Region of Cameroon despite the prescription of several barrier measures by the World Health Organization and the Cameroon government. In the same light, it analyses various strategies of stakeholders in the 19 Health Districts toward the fight against the pandemic. Data for the study were gotten from primary sources (field investigation, interview and empirical observation) and from secondary sources (statistical retrieving and documentary research) which were later treated with the input mask and Excel software. The results revealed that the migratory movement of the population, socio-cultural context of the area and the ongoing socio-political crisis are some of the root causes of the spread of the virus. Stakeholders' participation in the fight against corona virus is yet to meet expectations since negligence, ignorance and socio-cultural believes have gained the minds of the population. Consequently, some of the repercussions are increase number of deaths, loss of family ties and increase unemployment rates. Now therefore, community participation of all stakeholders would be as a panacea to eradicating Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon.

Key words: Covid-19, sanitary system, community reconfiguration, North West Region, pandemic

Résumé

Cette étude examine le problème du nombre croissant de personnes infectées par le Covid-19 dans la Région du Nord-Ouest du Cameroun malgré la prescription de plusieurs mesures barrières par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé et par le gouvernement du Cameroun. En plus, elle analyse les différentes stratégies des acteurs dans les 19 Districts de Santé en vue de lutter contre la pandémie. Les données de l'étude proviennent de sources primaires (recherche de terrain, entrevues et observations empiriques) et de sources secondaires (recouvrement statistique et recherche documentaire) qui ont ensuite été traitées avec le masque de saisie et le logiciel Excel. Les résultats révèlent que le mouvement migratoire des populations, le contexte socioculturel de la Région et la crise sociopolitique en cours sont quelques-unes des causes profondes de la propagation du virus. La participation des parties prenantes à la lutte contre le virus corona n'est pas encore à la hauteur des attentes puisque la négligence, l'ignorance et les croyances socioculturelles ont gagné l'esprit des habitants. Par conséquent, les répercussions sont: l'augmentation du nombre de décès, la perte de liens familiaux et l'augmentation de taux de chômage. Ainsi donc, la participation communautaire de toutes les parties prenantes serait une panacée pour éradiquer le Covid-19 dans la Région du Nord-Ouest du Cameroun.

Mots clés: Covid-19, système sanitaire, reconfiguration communautaire, Région du Nord-Ouest, pandémie

Introduction

Epidemic outbreak in the cities of developing countries is recurrent and the some local populations are familiar to such unfortunate situation (Esposito S. et al; 2020). The inhabitants are usually at the mercy of disease infection and contamination as their respective communities lack adequate hygiene and sanitary equipment to prevent the spread of diseases. This is opposed to the developed countries which have

advanced protective mechanisms against the spread of diseases in time and in space (WHO 2018, Meva'a Abomo *et al*; 2015). The African continent in particular has for long been experiencing series of epidemics ravaging the four corners of the continent. During the colonial era, Africa was named the white man grave on the bases of disease infection persistently taking away humans lives. At present, malaria fever is considered as a staple infection in the lives of more than 90% of each born and bred African, especially those residing in the tropical zones where there exist huge dense tropical rain forests with average temperature ranges from 20°C to 25°C, favoring the reproduction of mosquitoes.

The continent has also been witnessing the occurrence of dreadful disease infections like the Ebola, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and now the corona virus infection. The Covid-19 infection in Africa unlike in the developed and economically advanced countries has not had the same appreciations and effects. Though the pandemic is unbiased, the developed and the economically advanced countries like China, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Nepal, and the United States which registered the first cases of Covid-19 carried out community reconfiguration of the sanitary system as a means to curb the effects of the virus; whereas in Africa and precisely in Cameroon, it was more of an idle debate. In the North West Region of Cameroon, no single case of Covid-19 or 2019-nCoV was confirmed from the beginning of the outbreak till the month of April where the first case was confirmed on Monday 20, 2020 (RDPH 2020). Before a single case was confirmed and even after confirmation, the local stakeholders namely the State, the local populations, the civil society and the international community have undertaken measures to lessen the spread of the infection. Paradoxically, the Covid-19 situation in the area today is on the rise, with increasing number of infected person and increase death toll which are sustained by laxity and negligence to implement barrier measures established by the World Health Organization. Now therefore, this paper aims to give a response to the problem of increasing number of infected persons and deaths despite the many barrier measures prescribed by WHO and enforced by the government of Cameroon.

Methodology

Location of the study area

Cameroon is located at the coast of Guinea and the country comprises of ten Regions. The study area is located in the North West portion of the country and bordered to the north by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to the south by the West Region, to the east by the Adamawa Region and to the west by the South West Region. With a surface area of 17 300 km², the Region is situated on an average altitude of 1 550 m above sea level and has mountain chains of more than 3 000 m of altitude (NIS 2014). Figure 1 represents the study area with the various administrative demarcations.



Source : NIS 2020© Meva'a A.D. &Ejuande E.W.
Figure 1: Location of the North West Region of Cameroon

Data collection

The Leibniz's hypothetical deductive methodology was used to realise this study and it was basically on validating hypothesis from observation. The general method of the study has been the geographical method of investigation which comprises of four stages, namely observation, description, analysis and interpretation of facts of Covid-19 in different communities in the North West Region of Cameroon. Added to this, were the trans-disciplinary approach of research and eco-health approach which analyses the relation between humans and environment.

Primary data for the study were collected on the field while secondary data were collected from pre-existing scientific works in libraries, archives and the internet. The data were collected from the months of December 2019 (outbreak of the pandemic in China) to August 2020 (evaluation of the current situation in the North West Region of Cameroon). Qualitative data were collected through observation (*in-situ* observation and participating observation), and interview (direct and indirect interview) with the local stakeholders; while quantitative data were collected through survey (simple random survey and stratified survey). The qualitative data were analyzed with the help of MACTOR software while quantitative data were treated with the help of SPSS and Excel 2007.

Results and Discussion

I-Contextual situation of the area enhancing the spread of Covid-19

a-) Migratory movements of people and goods

Human beings are naturally mobile from the time of the early man who moved from place to place, practicing hunting and gathering (Rodriguez-Morales AJ, 2020). Biologists consider movement as one of the characteristics of living things among others like breathing, hearing, sensing and feeling. To the economists, movement can either be sustained by push factors or pull factors in different communities; the pull factors are those which attract a person to enter a given community. The local populations of North West Region are attracted to the towns of Yaoundé and Douala by employment opportunities, educational purposes, better living conditions, availability of social facilities and the desire to live in a peaceful environment. The push factors on the other hand comprise of repelling/driving aspects which project an individual from his/her area of residence to a different destination. Examples of such are unemployment, civil unrest (socio-political crisis of the North West and South West Regions), family pressure, superstition and any form of threat to human existence (Ogundimu, 2016).

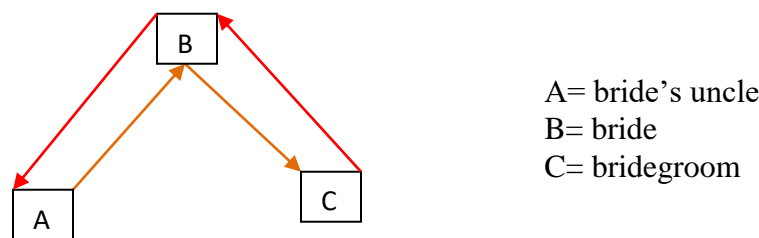
Migratory movement in the North West Region of Cameroon is more active with greater flux within the perimeters of the Region in the form of urban to urban, urban to rural, rural to urban and rural to rural than inter regional migration. The movement toward other Regions like the Center, Littoral and the West became intensified as of 2017 (a year after the outbreak of the socio-political crisis hitting the Region), where many residents relocated to these Regions for safety. The mastery of the situation in the late 2019 and the registering of the first cases of Covid-19 in Yaoundé and in Douala in February 2020 led to a backward movement to the North West Region by some displaced population. The return to the North West Region by this population is partly supported by the fear to be infected by the Covid-19 at the time the first cases were reported in Douala and in Yaoundé, and also due to the fact that others wanted to return to their normal activities to end a living rather than residing in the camps of the internally displaced population (IDP) or residing with a relatives and friends. During this time, no restrictions were placed on the movement of persons and goods, barrier measures were not enforced and the populations do not care much about being infected by the virus; this free movement of persons and goods to-and-fro from the North West to South West is as the pathway of the virus into the Region. Beside, some of the populations moving into the North West Region from Yaoundé and Douala have been in direct and indirect contact with their loved ones who returned from Europe on the 28th of February 2020, in a flight suspected of having Covid-19 patients. These populations were not quarantined before and after entering the North West Region. Furthermore, interurban and urban to rural movements in the North West Region of Cameroon is currently practiced with the overloading system of transport cars and motorcycles. It is common place to see 3-4 persons on a motorcycle parading the streets and villages in the study area. Such overloading system which violates the WHO recommendation of one meter distance from each other is a

contributing factor to the spread of Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon (Wei X, Li X, Cui J. 2020).

The movement of goods has equally contributed to the spread of the virus in the Region since the country continued importing goods from China and other countries till the month of February 2020 despite the reports of cases of Covid-19 in those countries. Though the Cameroon government later closed the national borders on March 24, 2020, this was however implemented at official entry/exit points; whereas, clandestine movements of goods and individuals continued along the areas of Baworo, Akwaya, Ejagam and Idenao. These areas are the main clandestine supply zones which permitted the infiltration of goods into the North West Region despite government restrictions on imports. Clandestine or informal circulations are often carried out within horrible contexts just to avoid official control and the actors involved do not care much on their health and that of others; they rather pay attention to escaping from the sight of decentralized territorial authorities in the area. Moreover, majority of those who move clandestinely do not undergo any medical checkup or screening before departure and so, their arrival at destination exposes the local population to disease infection especially if they had had previous contact with infected persons. Now therefore, clandestine movement of persons and goods from different geographical areas into the North West Region of Cameroon stands as a factor to the spread of Covid-19 (Shrikrushna Subhash Unhale *et al*; 2020).

b-) Socio-cultural system as factor of the spread of Covid-19

The two English speaking Regions of Cameroon namely the North West and South West Regions have a particular cultural system inherited from the British during the colonial period of 1884. The English speaking Regions also known as the “*Anglophone Regions*” inherited a cultural system which enables them to live in well structured communities whereby, cultural values like respect, tradition and loyalty are highly promoted. The tradition considers the greeting of an elderly person through the shaking of hands as sign of blessing to the younger generation, same as the imposition of hands on the younger ones by the elderly as sign of prosperity. In some traditional manifestations, the partakers drink from the same cup, eat from the same plate, break and eat cola nut together. Example here is traditional wedding were the bride’s uncle is the master of the scene as shown in figure 2.



Source: Field work 2020

Figure 2: High probability rate of the spread of Covid-19 in a traditional ceremony drink as a movement of the cup from A-B-C is denoted by the orange line on figure 2. After he must have drunk, the latter ‘C’ would return the cup of palm wine to his bride ‘B’ who would also handover to her uncle ‘A’ to drink from the same cup and seal the marriage. This second movement in an inverse manner from C-B-A is denoted by the red line on the figure 2. This represents a typical example among others whereby the corona virus can easily spread and infect many persons on the base of tradition. The first movement denoted by the orange line represents low probability of being infected by the virus if and only if ‘A’ and ‘B’ are not carriers. The second movement denoted by the red line represents high probability of being infected by the virus if ‘C’ happens to be a carrier. The same principle is applied to the sharing of cola nut, but the probability of spread is higher at this stage especially if the person sharing the cola nut is already infected by the virus or one of the partaker upstream is infected. Such traditional practices which require the

sharing of the same substance among groups of persons are recurrent in the Region and some villages like the *Esimbi, Batibo, Bali*, etc;do carryout such practices during traditional ceremonies.

Furthermore, the ignorance and negligence of some locals favor the spread of Covid-19 in different communities of the North West Region of Cameroon(Zhang L, Shen FM, Chen F, Lin Z. 2020). As earlier seen, shaking of hands and embracing are common practices in the Region, so, any attempt by a diligent youth to avoiding hand shake from an elderly person is considered as a sacrilege by the people of *Esimbi, Bafut, Bali, Batibo, Esu* and many others (Li F. 2016).

c-) Socio-political crisis as factor of the spread of Covid-19 in the North West Region

The socio-political crisis affecting the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon since November 2016 now portrays more negative effects on the health of the population in both Regions. Before the crisis, medical personnel moved from one health district to another without fear of being kidnapped or molested by whosoever, but the coming of the crisis imposed a turn around and a complete change of medical strategy of intervention. The crisis so far has led to the closure of hundreds of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and drug stores in the Region, medical personnel have fled from the Region for safety while others merely visit their post of work occasionally when the neighborhoodsare apparently calm or when tensions are lessen. The crisis has created more traumas in the communities, especially to those who have been either a direct victim or an indirect victim of kidnap and payment of ransom, harass, looting, sexually abuse and menace of death from unknown armed men(Spanjaard H, Khabib O. 2007, Ejuande E. W. 2017).

Many health centers which could have been active actors in the fight against Covid-19 are no more operating or are partially operating due to the persistence of the crisis. Medical personnel in the North West Region of Cameroon find it difficult to consecrate efforts in the fight against the corona virus ravaging the community, they consecrate more of their time and efforts to protect themselves from sudden and sporadic attacks on the field while little efforts is reserved to the fight against the virus itself. More than twenty medical personnel have lost their lives as a result of the crisis and the situation is more controversial since the government military accused the *amba boys (a set of armed men fighting for the liberation of the former British Cameroon –Ambazonia)* of being responsible for the deaths and the *amba boys* do likewise.In such a circumstance of the fear of the unknown, medical personnel in the Region are unable to carry on their duty properly and the patients in the hospitals are not receiving adequate treatment. The fear has equally restricted the movement of medical personnel from one health district to the other and even when they successfully arrive in a medical center to perform their duty, they do with lots of fear in mind because of frequent gunshots in the area, between the military and the *amba boys*. The fear of the unknown has led to the neglect of patients and in some cases, patients with different cases of illnesses like tuberculosis, malaria fever, typhoid fever and many others are grouped together for security purposes rather than laying emphasis on the health risk of contracting or being infected by a disease (Chen J. 2020).

The imposition of ghost town (lockdown) every Monday by the secessionists (*people who desire separation between the former British Cameroon and the French Cameroon*) is a factor contributing to the spread of the virus in the area. During the regular ghost town scheduled on Monday of the week, everything, be it businesses or movement of persons and goods come to a standstill; any person or business activity which dares to go operational automatically becomes the target of the secessionists. Moreover, the ghost town imposed by the secessionists often extends to 03, 05 and 07 days depending on their predefined agenda, in such a context the medical personnel are unable to intervene promptly in suspected cases of Covid-19 or in other cases which need medical assistance (Benvenuto D, *et al*; 2020).

It is therefore visible at this juncture that the ongoing socio-political crisis in the North West Region is a factor of the spread of Covid-19 in the area since more efforts are being converged toward self and family protection against the crisis rather than on the virus itself.

II-Community reconfiguration of the sanitary system

The entire sanitary system in the North West Region of Cameroon has undergone major reconfiguration process from the onset of the pandemic in the area. The reconfiguration process of the sanitary system is

carried out by each of the stakeholder and in various communities according to their social composition (Hemida M.G. 2019).

The State and the decentralized territorial authorities

Before the outbreak of the pandemic in the North West Region of Cameroon, the sanitary system had no major changes since most of the illnesses such as malaria, Chlamydia, dysentery, HIV/AIDS, rheumatism and many others were more of routine illnesses in the area. The government could manage these diseases called common place illnesses. The local hospitals like the Bamenda general hospital, the St. Elizabeth Catholic general hospital Shisong, Mbingo Baptist hospitals, Wum District Hospital, PMI Nkwen and the Bansa Baptist Hospital, had a trained team and infrastructure to contain patients suffering from these common place illnesses, though the management system and infrastructures were not sufficient to provide appropriate health care to the local populations in dire need.

The outbreak of the pandemic in Cameroon and in the North West Region in particular greatly imposed the urgent need of revising the sanitary system which was being neglected by the government and other stakeholders. It is on this base that the president of the republic of Cameroon H.E Paul Biya outlined strategic measures to fight against the pandemic on March 17, 2020; the initiative led to the publishing of texts, sensitization, training of medical personnel and the provision of sanitary equipment to the general public. The measures were a total of seven and some of them were: systematic wearing of facemask, local production of drugs, screening test, hydro alcoholic gel, creation of specialized Covid-19 centers, intensification of testing campaign, intensification of sensitization campaign, carry out essential activities and lay sanction on defaulters. They were not exhaustive since other measures were envisaged according to the evolution of the virus. The government later outlines a couple of protective and prevention measures against the virus which were to be implemented by the population of the North West Region of Cameroon as well as in all other Regions within the national territory. These measures are being reinforced by various decentralized authorities in their respective area of competences. Beginning from the Governor, the Senior Divisional Officers, Regional Delegations of Public Health, Education, Social Welfare, Sport and Physical Education, Fishery and Animal Husbandry and many others do pass out circular letters on the need to respect and fully implement the barriers measures. Moreover, in their various outings, these stakeholders sensitize the population through television programs (CRTV, Equinox, STV, and Canal 2), radio programs (CRTV Bamenda, Radio hot cocoa, and Gospel radio station), group sensitization and door-to-door sensitization. On June 07, 2020, some 5750 persons were sensitized and from the 06th of March to the 06th of June 2020, some 286 809 persons were already sensitized (RDPH 2020).

The government equally calls on each inhabitant put on facemask and practice regular hand wash during the day. School authorities on their part were to ensure that each student has a facemask worn properly to prevent infection or the spread of the virus in school premises.

Furthermore, the Cameroon government engaged in the training of medical personnel (special team of Covid-19) who would intervene in any suspected case of Covid-19 in the country. The trained medical personnel were to give further training to their colleagues at the Regional, Divisional and Sub-divisional levels. In the North West Region of Cameroon, all the 19 health districts have trained medical personnel who are ready to intervene in any suspected case of Covid-19 and the government has also earmarked appropriate hospitals or Covid-19 centers to receive patients and provide medical care. The creation of Covid-19 centers like the pandemic incident center was as a result of increasing number of cases from 01 on April 20, 2020 to 684 on July 27th 2020 (RDPH 2020). The creation of such centers is accompanied by the provision of basic necessary sanitary equipment. The Regional Delegate of Public Health (Covid-19 pandemic Incident Management for the North West Region) calls on the population to respect all barrier measures and do well to contact health personnel for assistance. The table 1 represents Health Districts and contacts of health personnel in the Region.

Table 1: Health Districts and emergency contact of health personnel in the North West Region

Health District	Contact	Health District	Contact
Ako	677775529	Ndop	679911853
Bafut	677802159	Ndu	654492203
Bali	677319374	Njikwa	677101901
Bamenda	679167140	Nkambe	650077258
Batibo	677364809	Nwa	674334230
Benakuma	675318490	Oku	675516307
Funding	677866226	Tubah	677412062
Kumbo East	675919418	Santa	678801756
Kumbo West	674283400	Wum	676375983
Mbengwi	674022962	Regional Delegation of Public Health	233361503/ 650335693/ 1510

Source: Regional Delegation of Public Health NW Region

The central government put in place a general telephone number 1510 to receive calls from all corners of the national territory but the strategy could not satisfy the majority of the population suffering from the corona virus. The Regional Delegation of Public Health for the North West Region came out with a new strategy of *one-Health-District one-emergency-contact* as presented in table 1. This strategy has permitted the rapid intervention of health personnel in any suspected case of Covid-19 in various communities.

The government efforts have not only been limited to the aforementioned, but extend to the provision of material equipment like buckets, soap, facemasks, hand sanitizers, hand gloves and many others to the local population and to the medical personnel. The material gifts destined to the local population are limited to soap, buckets, facemasks and hand sanitizers. This initiative has equally been sustained by the government national solidarity campaign launched to the general public, many individuals, companies and business organizations contributed to this government initiative. The table 2 represents selected number of donors in the plan.

Table 2: Selected donors of the Government solidarity campaign in the fight against Covid-19

Donors	Description/value
Jean de Dieu Momo	500 000 FCFA
Elections Cameroon	5 000 000 FCFA
MTN	10 000 000 FCFA
Express Union SA	25 000 000 FCFA
Contribution from Senate	100 000 000 FCFA
Groupe Baba Danpoulo	100 000 000 FCFA
Dangote	15 000 surgical masks, 1000 protective lenses, 4000 liters of alcoholic gel and many others

Source: MINSANTE 2020

The national solidarity campaign saw the donation of more liquid cash than material goods from the general public as presented on the table 2 with selected donors. The financial contributions yielded a total of one billion, six hundred and eighty seven million, four hundred and ninety-nine thousand, seven hundred and twenty seven (**1 687 499 727 FCFA**) francs CFA(MINSANTE 2020).

The president of the republic of Cameroon H.E Paul Biya gave material gifts to be distributed in the entire territory and the minister of territorial administration Paul Atanga Nji handed the portion destined for the

North West Region to the governor of the North West Region Adolphe Lélé Lafrique, who then dispatches to the Divisional and Sub-divisional Officers in their respective jurisdictions and to the beneficiaries (the local populations). Also, the government initially launched confinement strategy against the virus and it was relieved in the month of June, to permit students return to school and business activities to take on. Presently, the local authorities in the North West Region of Cameroon ensure that anybody suspected of being infected by the virus stays in Covid-19 centers for two weeks under observation before confirming whether it is positive or negative. The president of the republic further passed out decree № 2020/193 of 15 April 2020 to commute and remit sentences of prisoners as a measure to reduce overcrowding in prisons within the national territory.

Since the fight is a global one, all the various chieftaincies, councils and urban councils work hand-in-glove with the central government to see that the pandemic comes to an end in the North West Region of Cameroon. All the government efforts so far are being concretized by the local decentralized authorities. Beside the initiative from the central government, individual chieftaincy, council and Regional Delegation takes personal initiative of sensitizing, providing material gifts to their respective population to help combat the common enemy. They implement the government barrier measures at the regional level by ensuring that all gatherings should not exceed 50 persons and the local councils have set wash points in public places like the local markets and council areas.

Lastly, the government has put in place a special team of medical personnel in charge of burial. Once a Covid-19 patient dies, the medical team quickly intervenes to convey the corps directly to the grave. In cases where the bereaved family attempts to mount resistance, the medical team immediately calls for the attention of the police and gendarms who would intervene and permit the dead body to be transported to the grave; this is to prevent the loved ones to be infected by the virus.

Beside the carrots measures given to the population to fight against the virus, the government equally sets out coercive measures on defaulters which took effect on the April 13, 2020. The security forces combined (police, gendarms and the military) usually charge a penalty of 6000 FCFA to defaulters who do not move around with facemask.

-The local population

Historically, the indigenous populations of the North West Region are conservators of tradition and have high respect of traditional values; they also have a trans-generational cultural life and believe. Disease infection in the area is most often handled traditionally, except in special cases which require modern treatment methods. Cases of malaria fever, typhoid fever, injuries and fractures and a host of other infections/diseases are often treated traditionally. Since the first cases of Covid-19 were announced in Cameroon, the population of the North West Region engaged in a multiple defensive strategy to counterattack the pandemic. It is believed in the area that all existing treatment of malaria can help prevent people from the corona virus, so, the populations do constantly consume Artemisia, chloroquine and a combination of herbs and truck of trees. It is noted from field observations that more than 80% of the local populations prefer traditional method of treatment to modern treatment in the area (Lu H. 2020).

The pandemic situation in the area is like a revival of the basic principles of hygiene and sanitation which were taught and forgotten or neglected by the population but now, it has revived the sense of hygiene in the community. Though the populations are more conscious to practice personal hygiene, this is on the bases of facts and figures from medical personnel on the number of persons who have died of the virus. They are now engaged in constant hand washing exercise. Bucket of water or other reservoirs and soap are placed at the entrance of some homes to permit everyone entry the house to wash their hands; drinking spots and eateries do likewise. In the absence of running water and soap to wash the hands, the population uses hand sterilizer at home and out of the home. The local populations also collaborate with the government to respect barrier measures by putting on facemask; about 95% of the facemasks are locally made and the cost varies from 100 FCFA to 500 FCFA.

The pandemic has inspired the local populations to implement what they consider as preventive method against the virus. Since the populations in the Region prefer traditional treatment method to modern treatment, they consume more of natural herbs and locally made drugs. Some individuals have resorted to

drinking of warm water mixed with lime and fever grass(*Cymbopogon* or lemongrass) every mornings and evenings to protect themselves from the virus. Others do take chloroquine 200 mg, Artemisia 40g, Azithromycin 500mg, Paracetamol 500 mg etc; all these products are to combat against the symptoms of the virus which are; fever, headache, common cool, sweat, cough, difficulty to breathe, etc.

-The civil society and the international community

The role of the civil society and the international community are perceptible in multiple dimensions. The civil society comprises of local groups and associations, Non-governmental Organization (NGO's) and the elites of the area. On the other hand, the active actors under the banner of the international community are the Chinese government, the United Nations agencies like WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF and the doctors without borders known in French as *médecins sans frontières*(MSF).

One of the major efforts of the civil society has been the sensitization of the population, especially members of various social groups and associations. The success of sensitization method through socio-cultural groups and associations in the North West Region of Cameroon is due to the fact that close to 98% of the population belongs to social groups called "*family meeting, njangi, association of former students, etc.*" Most of these social groups and associations meet on a weekly base to discuss the affairs of their union, some of the associations do meet and discuss on their activities in the presence of the members while others do meet online through social media (WhatsApp groups, Google cloud meeting, instagram, facebook, etc). During such gatherings, the message of barrier measures is been preached to the members who later inform their respective family members. Local churches in the area constantly repeat the message of barrier measures to their members each time they meet. In some local churches like the Full Gospel church Benabinge, the leaders have printed the barrier measures and past on the notice board. The local churches just like the other social groups and associations have provided water and soap and/or hand sanitizer at the entrance of their place of gathering to permit members to wash hands before accessing the hall.

Some companies have contributed both in kind and/or in cash to the government national solidarity campaign to the fight against Covid-19. Example is the OLAM Cameroun S.A, Cameroon Petroleum Company and *Groupe Nobru* which contributed 50 million FCFA, 30 million FCFA and 20 million FCFA respectively.

The international community on its part has engaged in the provision of material equipment to the local populations and to the medical personnel. The Chinese government provided 5 000 mask KN95, 22 000 surgical masks, 2 000 protective eye lenses, 48 test kits etc; Addax Petroleum provided 225 000 protective masks, 75 000 medical gloves, 50 000 boxes of 14 tablets of 100mg hydroxychloroquine, etc. The WHO as well provided vehicles of the type 4X4 as a means to fight the virus. These material gifts were distributed to the ten Regions of Cameroon and the North West Region in particular benefited from these gifts. The international community through WHO and UNICEF also help to carry out screening campaign. In the Matazem and Widikum areas, more than 105 000 and 6 800 persons were screened respectively by the 05th of May 2020 (RDPH 2020). After screening, all positive cases presented no symptoms or mild symptoms were quarantined at Azam Hotel in Bamenda.

III-Repercussions of Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon

The pandemic situation of corona virus just like the lake Nyos gas disaster of the 21st August 1986 is among the worse situation the North West Region has known and the local population is suffering from the aftermath of the explosion, coupled with the present pandemic situation. The repercussions of the pandemic situation in the Region touch a multiple of sectors with varying magnitude of loses in properties, finances and in human lives (Chen Z.; Zhang W.; Lu Y *et al*; 2020).

On the social plan, the pandemic situation has been deteriorating from the onset with many new cases of persons infected by the virus and others dying on a daily base (Munster V.J. 2020). The pandemic situation in the Region is represented in the table 3.

Table 3: Reported cases of Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon

No	Health District	Cumulative number of positive cases	Number of recoveries	Number of deaths	Number of active cases
1	AKO	4	0	0	4
2	BAFUT	21	12	0	9
3	BALI	11	10	0	1
4	BAMENDA	467	317	51	99
5	BATIBO	5	3	1	1
6	BENAKUMA	0	0	0	0
7	FUNDONG	84	64	9	11
8	KUMBO EAST	23	21	1	1
9	KUMBO WEST	9	1	0	8
10	MBENGWI	4	3	0	1
11	NDOP	2	1	1	0
12	NDU	0	0	0	0
13	NJIKWA	0	0	0	0
14	NKAMBE	14	1	1	12
15	OKU	0	0	0	0
16	NWA	0	0	0	0
17	SANTA	16	11	0	5
18	TUBAH	18	12	0	6
19	WUM	6	2	1	3
	Total	684	458	65	161

Source: Regional Delegation of Public Health for the North West (RDPH), July 2020

Table 3 presents increasing number of infected persons and deaths in the North West Region of Cameroon. Bamenda represents the epicenter of the corona virus infection with a total of 467 positive cases, 99 active cases and 51 deaths as of the 27th July 2020 (RDPH 2020). This situation can be accounted for by the strategic position of the town which is also the capital city of the Region and receives the highest number of persons entering and leaving the town. The massive demographic movement of population from other Regions into Bamenda is usually unnoticed by the administrative authorities who are taken by surprise as the number of infected persons keeps swelling due to the absence of proper medical control of those entry the town. On this base, it is evident that massive demographic movement into the town of Bamenda without corresponding medical control and care would definitely leads to increase infection in the community. The statistics presented in the table 1 and showing zero case of Covid-19 in the Benakuma, Ndu, Njikwa, Oku and Nwa Health Districts do not in any way justify that these Health Districts are free from the virus infection since about a hundred persons have been quarantined while others prefer to hide themselves.

The WHO and the Cameroon government recommend the wearing of facemask as a means to prevent further infection in the society, but, the problem of the facemask identified in the North West Region is that the inhabitants use the same facemask for more than three days without replacement or washing. Such practice places the population at high risk of being infected by the virus or contracting other air borne diseases like tuberculosis, influenza, asthma, etc. In the health districts of Benakuma, Nwa, Oku and Bali etc, some inhabitants put on the facemask throughout the day irrespective of the social distance from others, this makes breathing difficult as some even suffocate in their masks.

The repercussions of the pandemic are also felt in the family setup and the education milieu. The persistent negative effects of the pandemic have led to the loss of family and social ties in the community. Today, family members cannot easily group themselves to discuss family issues as it was the case before the pandemic. There is a spirit of dissociation in families and in other social gatherings since the government restricted social gatherings to a maximum of 50 persons. In the same light, the academic calendar of the

Region has been distorted by the pandemic, students of the final year and those in higher levels of studies only resumed in the month of June while secondary school students in intermediate classes only went to school to collect their results. The pandemic situation made students not to complete their normal learning hours and teachers have not completed their programs for the year. Beside, the parents are economically poor, instead of permitting the children to register for holiday classes, they prefer to keep them at home, let them go hawking on the streets and villages, take them to farm, etc. Such a situation would definitely have a devastating effect on the young generation who are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow (Kern J. 2020).

On the economic plan, the pandemic has greatly paralyzed business activities in the North West Region of Cameroon (Ayittey F.K, *et al*; 2020). In Cameroon, the North West Region is among the first labor providers to agro industrial plantations located in the South West Region (the CDC, Delmonté, Palm'or), in the Littoral Region (SOCAPALM, CDC, PHP) and the West Region. Only few companies are based in the Region, some of them are; the Ndawara Tea Estate, Bamenda Palm Company, Bamenda Police Co-operative Credit Union Ltd, Bio Oil Investment Ltd, etc; and they recruit insignificant number of persons compared to the total population, so, the mass of labor force migrate to other Regions in search for employment as it has always been the case. Now therefore, the coming of the corona virus has rather amplified the existing unemployment situation and many employees of the private sector have been sent home under the pretext of technical leave while others have completely loss their employment as a result of the Covid-19. Most private enterprises in the Region have laidoff about one third of their employees while others which still have about half of theirs, do not pay regular salaries or complete salaries. Businessmen have loss more than half of their profit margins in the Region while other business structures have simply closed down activities. On the bases of these, the populations in the Region now have very low living standards compared to the pre-pandemic period. Moreover, the prices of some drugs consider to fight against the symptoms of Covid-19 have been on an increase at the beginning of the crisis. Before the pandemic, 40g of Artemisia was sold at 2000 FCFA but now the same quantity is sold at 3500 FCFA, lime of 3.5 centimeter in diameter was sold at 25 FCFA but now 100 FCFA.

On the religious plan, believers are of the view that true love is best expressed without restrictions, that is, each believer is free to give a hand shake as a means to express brotherly love. Paradoxically, the Covid-19 has made the government to outline barriers measures which greatly discourage the shaking of hands. Presently, there exist controversies in the religious and cultural milieu on the issue of hand shake. Many feel despise and frustrated when they are not given a handshake or when someone refuses to accept a handshake. Such a frustration leads to the loss of social ties in the community and installation of fear in the minds of the local populations.

Conclusion

This paper aims at analyzing the root cause of the increasing number of infected persons from Covid-19 despite the implementation of several preventive measures by different stakeholders in the North West Region of Cameroon and the various strategies of stakeholders in the 19 Health Districts to fight against the pandemic.

The study made used of primary and secondary data for analysis and the results reveal a set of factors responsible for the spread of Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon. Some of them are; uncontrollable movement of persons and goods in and out of the town, socio-cultural setting of the Region and the socio-political crisis ravaging the Region since November 2016. This prevailing situation has been at the base of community reconfiguration of the sanitary system of the Region where public and private stakeholders intervene to bring the pandemic situation under control. The reconfiguration concerns mostly the creation of pandemic center, training of health personnel, reorganization of the hospital framework, setting up of wash point in both public and private spaces, etc. Unfortunately, stakeholders' intervention is yet to bring significant changes to the situation, reason for which the repercussions are evaluated in terms of increase number of deaths to 65 persons, infected persons (684 persons) and those being tested positive (161 persons) as of July 27th, 2020 (Regional Delegation for the North West Region, Cameroon), increase rate of unemployment and loss of social ties.

In view of this, the paper proposes community participation of all stakeholders as a panacea to eradicating Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon. Each local community in the 19 Health Districts and the various stakeholders should strive toward the same direction of eliminating the virus. Digital platforms should be encouraged for the sensitization of the local population and the cost should be at the reach of the users. It further recommends the full implementation of barrier measures outlined by the WHO and those of the Cameroon government. Sanitary equipment like facemask, soap, bucket, hand sanitizer, testing kits, etc, should be made available to various communities especially the epicenter of Bamenda and other Health Districts with high number of infected cases like Fundong, Kombo East and Bafut, without neglecting Health Districts like Benakuma, Ndu, Oku, Njikwa and Nwa which have not yet registered infected cases of Covid-19. Local authorities must ensure that these barrier measures are fully respected and the local populations should be conscious enough for their wellbeing and those of others.

Bibliographic references

- Ayittey F.K, *et al*; 2020. *Economic Impacts of Wuhan 2019-nCoV on China and the World*. J Med Virol 10.1002/jmv.25706. doi: 10.1002/jmv.25706.
- Benvenuto D, *et al*; 2020: *The global spread of 2019-nCoV: a molecular evolutionary analysis*. Pathog Glob Health 1-4. doi: 10.1080/20477724.2020.1725339.
- Decree № 2020/193 of 15 April 2020 on the relieve of prison sentences to inmates
- Chen J. 2020: *Pathogenicity and transmissibility of 2019-nCoV-A quick overview and comparison with other emerging viruses*. Microbes Infect S1286-4579(20)30026-5. doi:10.1016/j.micinf.2020.01.004
- Chen Z.; Zhang W.; Lu Y *et al*; 2020: *From SARS-CoV to Wuhan 2019-nCoV Outbreak: Similarity of Early Epidemic and Prediction of Future Trends*. Cell Press
- Ejuande Emmanuel Wonomu (2017), *Implication of Nigeria in the Boko-Haram mixing war*, In: *Asymétrie Africaine Tome 2, le fardeau de Boko-Haram : leçons d'une expérience Afro-africaine a succès, mais soumise à l'usure asymétrologique*. Douala, Editions Cheikh Anta Diop, pp305-337
- Esposito S. *et al*; 2020: *History is repeating itself: Probable zoonotic spillover as the cause of the 2019 novel Coronavirus Epidemic*. Infez Med 28(1):3-5.
- Ganafei S., 2016: *Migration urbaine, environnement et santé à Bangui (République Centrafricaine)*, Mémoire de master académique, Département de Géographie, FLSH- Université de Douala, p60-62.
- Hemida MG. 2019. *Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus and the One Health concept*, Peer J7:e7556. doi: 10.7717/peerj.7556.
- Kern J. 2020 : *'Covid-19: après la disparition des symptômes, certains malades sont toujours infectés*. www.futura-sciences.com
- Li F. 2016. *Structure, Function, and Evolution of Coronavirus Spike Proteins*. Annu Rev Virol 3(1):237-261. doi: 10.1146/annurev-virology-110615-042301.
- Lu H. 2020: *Drug treatment options for the 2019-new coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*. Biosci Trends 10.5582/bst.2020.01020. doi: 10.5582/bst.2020.01020.
- Meva'a Abomo D. Fouda Martin & Nji Fogwe Zephania 2015: *De la faillite de la santé urbaine à la ville-santé au Cameroun : regard croisé entre acteurs, pratiques, défis et enjeux*, Vol.2, Collection Etude et Recherche Action pour le développement de l'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (avec comité scientifique international), Editions Universitaires Européennes, 248p.
- MINESANTE 2020 : *Rapport de situation COVID-19 au Cameroun, 27/04/2020*
- Munster VJ, Koopmans M, van Doremalen N, van Riel D, de Wit E. 2020: *A novel Coronavirus emerging in China-key questions for impact assessment* N Engl J Med 10.1056/NEJMp2000929. doi:10.1056/NEJMp2000929
- NIS 2014: Institut National de la Statistique du Cameroun, *Annuaire Statistique de la Région du Nord-Ouest*
- Regional Delegation of Public Health (RDPH) 2020: *Report on Covid-19 in the North West Region of Cameroon*

- Rodriguez-Morales A.J, *et al*; 2020:*Going global - Travel and the 2019 novel Coronavirus*. Travel Med Infect Dis 33:101578.doi: 10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101578
- Shrikrushna Subhash Unhale *et al*; 2020: *A Review on Corona Virus (COVID-19)*, World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences, Vol. 6, Issue 4, pp109-115
- Spanjaard H, Khabib O. 2007: *Chemical weapons*. In: Levy BS, Sidel VW (eds) *Terrorism and public health: a balanced approach to strengthening systems and protecting people*. Oxford University Press, New York, pp199 – 219
- Wei X, Li X, Cui J. 2020. *Evolutionary perspectives on novel Coronaviruses identified in pneumonia cases in China*. National Science Review.doi: 10.1093/nsr/nwaa009.
- WHO 2020 :*Rapport de situation COVID-19 au Cameroun, 27/04/2020*
- WHO. 2018: *World Health Organization. WHO MERS global summary and assessment of risk*. https://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/risk-assessment-august-2018.pdf (accessed on 29 January 2020).
- Zhang L, Shen FM, Chen F, Lin Z. 2020: *Origin and evolution of the 2019 novel coronavirus*. Clin Infect Dis ciaa112. doi:10.1093/cid/ciaa112.

COVID-19; REVEALING THE HYPOCRISY OF RELIGION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

By

IkechukwuOnah

Department at Philosophy
University of Nigeria Nsukka

&

Solomon, Chidi Alexander

Department of Philosophy
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

On several occasions, religious leaders have claimed access to knowledge of future events, similarly, they claim to possess divine power to cure different kinds of diseases including those without a medical cure. Furthermore, religious organizations emphasize the virtue of giving to the poor and helping the vulnerable. For them, giving is one of the most assured channels to the blessings of God. On a similar note, the world has witnessed a technological revolution of unprecedented nature in the 21st Century. Scientists have affirmed readiness to adequately identify, analyze, and address any challenges that may arise on our planet within a short time. With all these claims, in less than a year, Covid-19 has hundreds of thousands of people, impoverished nations and individuals, uttered the normal performance of human activities, created a vacuum between family and loved ones, etc yet we live in an era where technology and religion claim to have the answer for almost all our problems. One would also expect religious institutions to be on the front line when it comes to aiding the poor and vulnerable to survive the economic hardship imposed by Covid-19. **This paper critically analyzes the hypocrisy of technology advancement and religious institutions. Hypocritical judgments arise in situations where moral behaviours falls short of moral claims.** Hence, this paper analysis the contribution of both religion and technology within the framework of their claims, with a view of showing that their achievements fall short of their claims especially in combating Covid-19

Introduction

The world is battling a health crisis of a rapidly spreading virus. Since the identification of the first case in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan China, an effective vaccine is yet to be developed. The virus has affected almost every country of the world, thus making it a global health emergency that requires every innovative measure for its containment and treatment. The pandemic does not discriminate along with age, gender, or racial lines. Apart from being a global health threat, the COVID-19 pandemic also constitutes an economic threat to people of all ages, races, and gender. The COVID-19 has resulted in the suffering of millions of people around the world, especially among developing countries, thereby making them the epicenter for humanitarian needs. The economic effects of the COVID-19 are instituted by the contagious nature of the virus which has forced countries to adopt a stringent measure of containment. These measures cause lots of economic hardship to members of the community; however, given the situation, some members of the community are the worst hit.

The vulnerable members of the community find themselves in need of health and financial rescue, yet they cannot affect the much-needed change, due to preexisting circumstances they find themselves. Thus imposing a moral obligation on financially capable individuals and institutions to come to their aid. It is within the health and economic effect of COVID-19 that we take a close analysis of the contribution of religion and medical technological advancement in terms of cure or healing of those infected with the COVID-19, and efforts to aid vulnerable members of the community from the economic hardship imposed

on them by the virus. According to Matthew and Mazzocco, “Hypocrisy judgments are based upon the perception that moral behavior falls short of moral claims.”¹ It is a deviation between claims and actual behavior. Therefore, for this paper, hypocrisy is understood as a pretentious situation where claims exceed actual reality.

The Health and Economic impact of COVID-19

We live in a world where almost everything is evaluated/measure based on financial earnings and economic progress. This calls for great concern for poverty, especially at this time of COVID-19. Given the socioeconomic status of money, it has become the means of an economic relation, and financial gain seems to be the only reason for a sustained industrial efficiency and development.² However, the experience of poverty is becoming traumatic at a time when the world is unprepared for a pandemic. As such, global financial gains must be fostered vigorously. COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan china, ever since then, it has infected almost every country of the world.³ Its health emergency is threatening the people of all ages, and statues. However, its symptoms are more acute among old people, and those with an underlying medical condition.

Aside from its devastating health risk, the economic effect of COVID-19 has affected the masses more. To the poor, COVID-19 is not just a health situation but also a source of economic suffering.⁴ Due to the preventive health measures needed to contain the spread of the pandemic, poor, and vulnerable members of the communities are socially and economically affected⁵ This is evident because, with the growing number of people infected with the virus, countries in a bid to contain the spread of the virus areshutting down of business establishments and banning of economic activities involving the gathering of multiple people, banning of mass transportation, and movement in urban areas, closing of nationalborders, limitation of movement and many more. It’s no surprise that the COVID-19 inevitably slows down the economy.Thus the most affected will be those within the informal sectors and the SMEs.

According to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, it’s complex to project the level at which the COVID-19 pandemic will affect people's lives, food security, and livelihoods due to the speed with which the virus spreads across every nation of the world, and the adopted measure for containment by different governments.⁶ The rate of infection and spread in every nation has lead to a longer period of closed borders to stop the influx of more people, to avoid increasing the chance to have more people exposed to the virus. The health and socioeconomic consequence of COVID-19 are more severe, and this may outlive the pandemic.

According to UNOCHA;

The pandemic is spreading at the same time as many countries approach their annual lean season, the hurricane and monsoon season loom, and a number of already fragile countries have planned elections. Political stability and security will also be at stake... COVID-19 has the potential to significantly disrupt both food supply and demand... agricultural production, food prices and food availability will also be negatively impacted. Blockages of transport routes are particularly obstructive for fresh food supply chains and may results in increased levels of food loss and waste... during the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak, this factor in addition to acute agricultural labor shortages led to more than 40 percent of agricultural land not being cultivated.⁷

COVID-19 is a threat to food security on two grounds; first, COVID-19 is a health emergency with a great impact on an infected person, and the well being of those close to them. Second, to contain the virus, countries have adopted stringent restrictive measures directly affecting mobility, and the cost of doing business. Demand is also not left out in this regard.Due to global uncertainty, buyers would necessarily reduce their purchasing power. This is because precautionary measures will reduce their ability to spend.

The harsh economic effect of COVID-19 can already be felt in some of the world’s wealthiest countries; one can then imagine the nature of its impact on vulnerable countries where access to clean water, hospital bed for the sick e.t.c. cannot be guaranteed for the masses. Given the looming food insecurity caused by COVID-19, people with a high level of food insecurity vulnerability are to be prioritized in humanitarian response because they are the list prepared for the pandemic. For people battling with poverty, the

COVID-19 outbreak will be the worst experience; hence there is an urgent need for a concerted effort from all stakeholders to reach out to the vulnerable in a time like this.

Philanthropic/Humanitarian Response to COVID-19

Philanthropy provides the resources that sustain a moral community by laying the foundation for opportunities, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It mobilizes the mechanism for the reinvestment of wealth in ways that will ensure equal opportunities for the vulnerable members of the community. It involves putting wealth to work for the profit of all, this is done through the creation of avenue for redistribution of wealth accumulated in the past, and reinvesting it in opportunities capable of promoting equal opportunities and social stability in the community. Philanthropy involves the provision of financial and material resources to those who are not opportune to have them, with the general aim of helping them attain better height.

“The philanthropic response to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the sector at its best from launch of community – based rapid – response funds to the development of diagnostics and vaccines, philanthropy is showing up both to help flatten the curves in the short term and address the inequities the crisis will exacerbate over the long term. What’s striking is not only the scale of capital being committed by major philanthropists (at least \$10.3 billion in May 2020...) but also how it is given at record speed, with fewer conditions, and in greater collaborations with others.”⁸

Thousands of foundations all over the world have signed a public pledge, and individual donors are also making impacts in different nations of the world. Since the global outbreak of COVID-19, individual and institutional philanthropy has been responsive in various ways “some have doubled or quadrupled their payout rates, others will distribute 20 percent of their total assets, this year, and others have committed as much as \$ 1 billion to COVID-19 relief.”⁹ This is an indication that they realize that the pandemic requires an extraordinary response from all stakeholders.

Philanthropists often focus on global problems, for this reason, they invest in the common good of people living thousands of miles away, sometimes in other countries or continents. They hope to use this medium to combat global inequalities and injustice. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, many philanthropists are more focused in their backyards, accelerating local giving.¹⁰ Most of these philanthropists focus on national and global issues while ignoring local demands. As pointed out, with the pandemic, they are reminded that each of us comes from a particular community, and our continuer survival depends on the survival of our local community, and we are obligated to support the survival of our community. COVID-19 “is an opportunity for philanthropists to test and learn from a range of community – led and participatory grant – making models which they can then apply in their work across their countries and around the world.”¹¹ Philanthropic investment is gradually being better understood as an important part of the overall level of support provided by private individuals and organizations for COVID-19.

In her COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, the United Nations acknowledged the need for a global approach in combating the pandemic. This is because “failing to help vulnerable countries fight the corona virus now could place millions at risk and leave the virus free to circle back around the globe.”¹² As such, the “UN launched a US \$2 billion global humanitarian response to fight COVID-19 in 51 countries across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.”¹³ This effort is an acknowledgment of the lack of capacity by some countries to tackle the menace of COVID-19. An individual effort by countries certainly cannot be enough. No country can win the war in isolation. While some nations can comfortably manage the virus within her borders, it cannot stop the virus from circling back hence the need to reach out to other countries. Thus, there is an urgent need for solidarity with vulnerable countries where there are millions of people that cannot protect themselves. This is crucial for combating the virus.

Religious Hypocrisy in the Time of COVID-19

Arms giving in the Time of COVID-19: We have pointed out the devastating nature of the Covid-19 on the people irrespective of class and status. Also, because of the safety measures, it is clear that the interest of those who are most affected by the economic imbalance of such measures ought to be given the highest priority. Given this situation, people wonder, where religious institutions are. Questions such as these

floods the streets of the social network – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. The poor cannot improve or change their socio-economic condition, this has placed an unavoidable role on capable institutions and individuals to assist the poor in the struggle for economic sustenance at this time of COVID-19. “This ‘duty’ is neither a mere prescription of religion nor simple appeal to emotion. It is first and foremost, an intrinsic ethical obligation.”¹⁴ Almost all religions of the world emphasize arms giving as an intrinsic religious good for its adherents. Due to this call for arms giving, religious organizations have created a necessary obligation for themselves to care for the poor in a time like this. This is because it is the poor who are the most in need of economic liberation yet they lack the needed capacity to effect such change. Hence the need to assist them cannot be overemphasized. “The poor in society – those who are most in need of “liberation” are at the same time incapacitated by unjust burden of poverty which society imposes upon them.”¹⁵

Every religious organization teaches love – at least in its most minimal sense – and claim to aim at freeing humanity from the unjust and unnatural bondage imposed on them by circumstances. The problem of poverty and limited access to health facilities in low-income countries coupled with the current health crisis has risen to an international scale and has become an immediate global concern, affecting not merely individuals but entire nations. The problem of poverty and health crisis did not start with COVID-19. However, due to the COVID-19, the clamor for material aid, financial and economic assistance is intensified. The developing countries mostly found in Africa and Asia at this time is the center of international attention this is not to deny the fact that poverty affects also the people from the developed countries. Given the capacity and ability of several nations to adequately respond to the COVID-19 imposed economic situation, it becomes imperative to prioritize the interests of those affected most by this economic imbalance. At a time like this, people wonder, where religious piety is.

Questions concerning the contribution of religious institutions in aiding the poor at a time like this floods the streets of social media. This is not to deny that we have seen a handful of religious leaders assisting the poor by distributing palliative to them, and others engaging in cash giveaways. On the questions concerning if religious bodies have the responsibility of assisting the poor in such times, “Gutierrez in his quest to reinvent and re-contextualize this deep-rooted idea, touches on the fundamental aspect of solidarity with the poor and underprivileged. Gutierrez extensively discusses the church's role as a more authentic and radical witness of poverty.”¹⁶ COVID-19 is not just a sickness to the poor, but also another oppressor of the poor. Because the economic imbalance created by the pandemic makes the poor the most vulnerable. Such trying time places a moral and religious burden on religious organizations to do concrete acts of charity by sharing resources with those that need it the most.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented itself as a litmus test for religious organizations to put their social teachings – centered on giving – into practice. “A moral test that requires valuing human life and dignity when the scale of suffering, death, tension, decision, and isolation examines who we are, what we believe, and what type of society we are becoming.”¹⁷

Miracle in the Time of COVID-19: Due to the nature of miracles, as something that transcends the realm of human ability and natural cause, it excites wonder. Sherlock defines it as “an interruption of the order or course of nature.”¹⁸ And Hume regards it as “a violation of the laws of nature.”¹⁹ This tells us that for a miracle to take effect, it requires an extra force outside nature. Our concern is not to conceptualize what miracle is – such will take us off track – but to discuss miracle within the framework of COVID-19. Most times, a miracle is conceptualized within the context of a supernatural cause, hence giving it a religious significance.²⁰ This suggests that a religiously significant miracle requires a supernatural cause. Our reference to Miracle here is within a religious context.

“Many but not all of the religions of the world have as part of their traditions, claims of miracles. These miracles have different forms and plays different roles within each religion.”²¹ Most religious leaders have one thing in common; they claim to have access to influence supernatural violation of nature. Our interest here is on the healing of medical sickness. On several occasions, these religious leaders claim to have cured all sorts of diseases including AIDS. There are multiple testimonies to the effect of faith healing among religious believers. This is often achieved after the religious leader utters certain faith-based

declarations directly to the sick person, or through other mediums like, recommending items believed to possess healing powers – courtesy of the leader’s prayer over such item. On most occasions, the patient claims to have recovered instantaneously after accepting the divine declaration with faith.

In a world where the normal living of life has been greatly altered by COVID-19, and hundreds of thousands have died due to complications resulting from COVID-19, this is one of those times the world needs miracles more than ever. The need for faith healing is further emphasized by the failure of medical technology to find a cure for the pandemic. However, we are yet to hear such testimonies in its tens and hundreds or thousands as the case may be. Does this imply that religious leaders lack the sympathy to make a powerful declaration with healing potency or the distribution of anointed items with the potency to heal COVID-19 patients? On the other hand, does the failure of religious groups to heal their devotees infected with COVID-19 imply a lack of ability to heal sickness? To date, the reason for the lack of miraculous healing is not ascertained. This lack of miracle reveals something hypocritical about the religious claim to healing power. This is because religious leaders have claimed on several occasions to possess the power to heal every kind of sickness. However, COVID-19 has proved abortive in the demonstration of such power.

Technological Hypocrisy in the Time of COVID-19

Technology has been on the frontline in combating COVID-19, through the introduction of several innovative inventions. Websites and applications have been built to help monitor & track the spread of the virus. There have been collaborative efforts from scientists from around the world, intending to share knowledge and experience concerning the virus.

“Beyond social media and the internet in general, technology is also being used in the fight to reduce the spread of the pandemic by tracing infections, helping to isolate cases as well as potential cases. Singapore for example, has developed an application called Trace Together, which allows phones to exchange Bluetooth signals when their users are near one another, and are able to warn users of proximity to an infected person.”²²

The virus does not discriminate against race, nation, gender, etc. as such, like every global crisis, COVID-19 is drawing people together against a single enemy.

Most of us believe in the awesome powers of medical technology. We assume that medical technology is amazingly effective and that we are accomplishing better treatments and cure for every disease with the rapid use of new practice and pharmaceuticals. We believe that "there is always another scientific or technological breakthrough just around the corner promising to save even more lives; all at an affordable price."²³ However, in recent years, several diseases have proved abortive to medical remedy – even after decades of its identification. As difficult as we may find it to believe, the sad truth is that there has been a slowing down in the speed and success of medical technology. “New technologies such as the enormously expensive human genome project have provided only marginal benefits to date. We still do not have the answers to fundamental questions about the causes to common diseases and how to cure them.”²⁴ This failure of medical technology is troubling because given the level of technological advancement; people should not be dying as a result of certain diseases.

The failure of medicine to adequately address diseases has demoralized doctors. This and other factors contribute to the reduction in the rate of happiness among doctors.²⁵ These unrealistic expectations about the powers of medicine to solve the ills of modern life are further reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. We must keep in mind that due to the expectations from medical, technology in the modern era, not every death is seen as natural. This is because medical technology promises more than it can offer, the people expect a medical miracle for every disease. Although this does not imply the denial of the fact that everyone must die, of course, a human being is not immune to death.

Medical practitioners and the medical technology industries must step-up their games, they must stop assuming that their practice and impact are above average. The COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for the serious consequences of the exaggerated expectations from medical technologies. We must square-up with the fact that medical technology is not as efficient as we expect. People must manage their expectations of medical technological advancement. This is important because if we continue to expect

more than what medical technology can offer, then our anxiety will continue to increase. And confusion will cloud our reason, and obscure our progress.

The progress of medical technology is dependent on the adoption of a new perspective; we cannot continue to use new tricks for old challenges. Improvement calls for adaptation of a new perspective. It's important to point out that while doctors exaggerate the efficacy of medical technology, they (doctors) are aware of their abilities and limitation, and the patients expect beyond those abilities. This attitude of patients in the last analysis can be traced to the exaggeration of doctors and medical technologies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to square-up the gap between social teachings about giving to the vulnerable and the efforts made in assisting the vulnerable survive the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, religious institution should establish a welfare dedicated fund for the vulnerable – especially in times of economic down-turn. Also, religious leaders must adopt sincerity in their claim to healing powers and vision about future events; this will reduce the mush exaggeration about such powers among religious men and women, and the expectations of adherents. It is not out of place if faith leaders should provides schools and health facilities in locations where they are not sufficient for citizens.

Medical professionals must step-up their game to meet up with the expectations of patients. While medical professionals are aware of their limitation, they exaggerate the potentials of medical technological advancement, thus raising the expectations of patients. Thus patients expect more. Also, the counseling of patients should be intensified to help them guide their expectations, instead of expecting too much from doctors and pharmacists.

Endnotes

1. Mark A. Matthews & Philip J. Mazzocco “Perceptions of Religious Hypocrisy: When Moral Claims Exceed Moral Action,” *Review of Religious Research* (August 2017): line 166-167, DOI: 10.1007/s13644-017-0307-4.
2. Jabin Deguma J., Deguma, Melona C., Tandag, Jemima N., and Acebes, Harlene Marie B., “Where is the Church in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic: Preferring the Poor via G. Gutierrez’ “Liberation” and the Catholic Church’s Social Teaching in the Philippine Setting,” *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* Vol.3, No.2 (2020): 363, pp363-374.
3. World Health Organization, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation Report – 205 12 August 2020.(WHO, 2020), 2.Accessed 12 August 2020.https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200812-covid-19-sitrep-205.pdf?sfvrsn=627c9aa8_2
4. Radmilla Suleymanova “Developing countries face economic collapse in COVID-19 fight: UN.” Aljazeera News March 30, 2020,<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/developing-countries-face-economic-collapse-covid-19-fight-200330003332689.html>
5. Yolanda Wright and Luke Harman, “Coronavirus is a Devastating Blow to Children in Poverty.” Last modified March 26, 2020, Accessed August 23, 2020, <https://www.savethechildren.net/blog/coronavirus-devastating-blow-children-poverty>.
6. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) *Global Humanitarian Response Plan Covid-19; United Nations Coordinated Appeal April – December 2020*. (United Nations Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs, 2020), 17.Accessed August 15, 2020.<https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global-Humanitarian-Response-Plan-COVID-19.pdf>
7. UNOCHA *Global Humanitarian Response Plan Covid-19*, 17
8. Tracy Nowski, Maisie O’Flanagan, and Lynn Taliento, *A Transformative Moment for Philanthropy; Here’s how the Positive Changes in Individual and Institutional Philanthropy Sparked by the COVID-19 Pandemic can take Root and Grow*, (Washington, DC, McKinsey & Company. 2020): 2.
9. Nowski, O’Flanagan, and Taliento, *A Transformative Moment for Philanthropy*, pp3
10. Nowski, O’Flanagan and Taliento, *A Transformative Moment for Philanthropy*, pp4

11. Nowski, O’Flanagan and Taliento, *A Transformative Moment for Philanthropy*, pp5.
12. United Nations, *COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan: A Global Approach is the only way to Fight COVID-19, the UN says as it Launches Humanitarian Response Plan* (United Nation March 2020) <https://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/covid-19-global-humanitarian-response-plan>
13. United Nations, *COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan*
14. Degume et al, “Where is the Church in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic,” 364.
15. Deguma et al, “Where is the Church in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic,” 366.
16. Shannahan, C. The Violence of Poverty: Theology and Activism in an “Age of Austerity”. *Political Theology* 20, No3 (2019): 243-261. Quoted in Daguma et al 366.
17. Christopher White, “Catholic social teaching panel says coronavirus pandemic ‘a moral test’,” Last Modified March 30, 2020, Accessed August 19, 2020 from <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2020/03/catholic-social-teaching-panel-says-coronavirus-pandemic-a-moral-test/>
18. Thomas Sherlock, *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1843), 57. Quoted in Timothy McGrew, "Miracles," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.). (Spring 2019 Edition), Accessed, August 15 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/miracles/>
19. Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Tom L. Beauchamp (ed.), (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47
20. Timothy McGrew, "Miracles," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.). (Spring 2019 Edition), Accessed, August 15 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/miracles/>
21. Philip A. Pecorino 2001, *Philosophy of Religion*, Last Modified 2001 Accessed 15 August 2020 https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialSciences/ppecorino/PHIL_of_RELIGION_TEXT/default.htm
22. Hani Dabbagh (2020 May), “Technology in the Time of Covid-19” Last Modified, May 01, 2020, Accessed August 20, 2020 <https://www.gcsp.ch/global-insights/technology-time-covid-19>
23. Jeffrey Braithwaite 2014 “The medical miracles delusion” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 107, No.3 (March 2014): 92-93. DOI: [10.1177/0141076814523951](https://doi.org/10.1177/0141076814523951) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3938130/>
24. Braithwaite “The medical miracles delusion”
25. Richard Smith “Why are doctors so unhappy? There are probably many causes, some of them deep” *BMJ* 322, No.7294 (May 2001): 1073-1074. DOI: [10.1136/bmj.322.7294.1073](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.322.7294.1073) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1120219/>

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

By

Okafor Judith Nneka

Educational Management & Policy

NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

The virtual learning that many schools embarked upon as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown has adverse effects on students with various levels of vulnerability. Unequal access to the programmes worsened the inequalities in our education system. Such are veritable issues for education management. This paper examines the concerns of proper education management in these covid-19 circumstances, especially with regard to the disadvantaged. It advocates the role of the government and stakeholders in the adaptation of available materials to ensure the accommodation of students of all works of life.

Key words: covid-19, educational management and e-learning

Introduction

Nigeria runs a federal system of government with 36 states and her Federal Capital Territory at Abuja. There are 744 local governments in the country. Education is administered by the federal, state and local governments. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for overall policy formation and ensuring quality control, but is primarily involved with tertiary education. Secondary school education is largely the responsibility of the state and local governments, while primary education is largely managed by the local governments. The country is multilingual, and home to more than 250 different ethnic groups. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post basic education includes three years of senior secondary education (WENR, 2017). At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The latter is composed of polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and vocational and technical education. The academic year typically runs from September to July. Most universities use a semester system of 18 -20 weeks. Others run from January to December, divided into 3 terms of 10-12 weeks.

In the Nigerian context, it may be conjectured that the secondary school instructional time per academic year as allotted by the federal government is 180 days. This offers about 900 schooling hours. From experience, the time that remains after occasional school closures as a result of insurgency, terrorist attacks, teachers' strike, public holidays, extra holidays to commemorate the death of a leader or a historic event, is usually not more than 150 days which is about 750 hours. Also the time that remains after students absenteeism may be no more than 100-150 days which translate to about 500-525 hours per academic year. This analysis is intended to enable us to imagine the magnitude of further loss in instructional time already occasioned by the covid-19. If Nigerian schools are to bring about a remarkable improvement in students' achievement, there must be careful review of the variables that really constitute an instructional time and how they must be engaged with.

The 27th of February, 2020, is a remarkable day for Nigeria as the first case of the novel covid-19 was confirmed by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control. It was the case of an Italian who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020. And ever since then, Nigeria has experienced an exponential upsurge in the number of people infected with the corona virus. Covid-19, as the disease came to be popularly called, is an infectious disease which spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus which started from Wuhan in China is said to take 5-14 days before the symptoms begin to surface. This makes transmission easy, since contacts could be made with the already infected without knowing it. Therefore, in the bid to curtail the widespread of infection with the virus among its citizens, as

is the case of USA, Italy and other countries, the Nigeria government rolled out measures such as total lockdown, closure of interstate borders, closure of schools, markets and public places of gatherings. It enjoined working from home, working online, online purchases, worshipping online, distance learning or remote learning amongst others in order to mitigate the effects of the disease.

The closure of schools and the need not to let students fallow, coupled with the uncertainties about the duration of the lockdown led to the propagation and popularization of thee-learning experience. According to Obikaeze and Onyechi (2011) e- learning means formal and informal education that use electronic delivery methods such as internet based learning delivery packages, CD Rom, online video conferencing, website or e-mail to manage the relationship between teachers and learners. This took the place of the traditional face to face delivery of lessons and interaction between students, pupils and teachers. The adoption of this innovation in the education sector at this point is to ensure on-going learning for students even as they had to stay aware from school. However, it is obvious that some schools did not embark on this form of learning as a result of a number of debilitating factors. They include lack of requisite technology and amenities, lack of means to finance the purchase of internet access and online packages. In some areas and at particular points, poor network, lack of competent personnel, etc. also constituted hindrances.

Even in some homes, some parents do not have some of these facilities to assist students' learning. In many cases, students who live in communities with poor or non- existent internet connectivity and unreliable power supply also find it very difficult to participate actively. There are also cases of students that are physically challenged, and have little or no knowledge of the e-learning because no social facility was put in place for such. These lacks deepen the already existent social gaps between various categories of students and pupils as against the situation in the traditional learning settings where everybody has level play grounds. The long run adverse effect is obvious. These gaps and inequalities will show up later as weak skills in the workforce, thereby making it less likely for this category of young people to get well paid and satisfying jobs. When this happens, these young people will become nuisance to the society, championing courses that are not noble often in the bid to make ends meet.

Many schools did embark, in their own ways, on virtual learning. The coordination of the programmes became an issue for education management, given the myriads of problems they exposed in the already existent situation. There are not enough modalities put in place to achieve the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the innovation (UNESCO, 2020), especially in public schools. Hence, educational management, which is supposed to be the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the activities of an institution by utilizing human and material resources so as to effectively and efficiently accomplish teaching and learning, Nikam, (2010) discovered a new task for itself, having experienced failure to achieve its goal because many students were left out in the plan for, and execution of the online learning. Therefore, the need to examine and address the issues surrounding poor management of education especially of the disadvantaged students cannot be overemphasized. It advocates that government should ensure adequate funding of the education sector, provide an equitable and inclusive learning environment for the students to ensure continuity in learning for all, irrespective of their socio-economic background. This paper approaches this issues as follows:

Corona Virus Pandemic

Under an electron microscope, the outlooks of corona seem to have surrounded by a solar corona. According to the World Health Organization (2020), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). The name corona is a Latin word meaning crown. It came to be used to identify this family of viruses given their outlook under electron microscope. They seem to have been surrounded by a solar corona. Coronavirus disease in question at this point in time, is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. To differentiate it from the rest of the coronavirus family, it is called Covid-19. This virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. At various stages of coronavirus infection, the infected person experiences fever, fatigue, body pain, difficulty in breathing and shortness of

breath, dry cough, loss of sense of smell, taste among others. The Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the national body charged with the monitoring and management of issues surrounding developments in this regard instructs that once such symptoms are discovered, the infected person should quickly be taken to isolation centre, to enable corresponding tests to be run. If the test comes out positive, isolation and pharmaceutical management are begun. Contact-tracing, tracing the people who may have been in close contact with the person, is also embarked upon to ascertain their status, and by so doing limit the further spread of the infection.

There is yet no specific cure for covid-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials to test various potentials antiviral. Current management of cases aims at relieving the symptoms while boosting the body's immune system to enable it fight the illness. Although for most people, covid-19 causes only mild illness, it can make some people very ill. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes appear to be more vulnerable. The WHO has issued directives that can help to prevent the spread of covid-19. They include: washing of hands with soap and water, or cleaning with an alcohol-based hand rub or sanitizer, maintaining a safe social distancing from anyone who is coughing or sneezing, wearing a face mask when physical distancing is not possible, not touching your eyes, mouth or nose, covering your nose and mouth with bent elbow or a tissue when one coughs or sneezes, staying home if one feels unwell, and finally, if one has fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, one should seek medical attention.

Nigeria's story with covid-19 began on the 27th of February, 2020, when it confirmed its first case in Lagos State. An Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25th of February from Milan, Italy, through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport. He fell ill on 26th of February and was transferred to Lagos State Biosecurity Facilities for isolation and testing. The test came out positive. Since then, measures began to be taken by the government in order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria. According to Wikipedia, (2020) a Presidential Task Force (PTF) was established in the bid to give it the serious attention it needs. Pertaining to education, the Federal Ministry of Education directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allow students to go home as cases of reported covid-19 have been on the increase.

Covid-19 and its consequences are lasting longer than we may have envisaged. Many cases of infection and deaths are being reported despite efforts in the country to halt transmission through shutting down of transport, international airport, churches, schools, social events, quarantining some cities, enforcing the use of face masks among others. Though the country has begun to relax the lockdown gradually, yet the number of cases is still on the increase. As at 11th of September, 2020, 55,829 cases were confirmed, 43,810 recovered and 1,075 reported dead. This pandemic has really affected our academic calendar. The Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO) which were to have started in April were postponed to August 17th, 2020. The whole situation is depressing and the implications are enormous. Never in the history have many children and youths been out of school for months and at the same time. The consequences are better imagined. The closure of schools has now further compounded the situation with remarkable impacts on students, teachers, families, with and far-reaching economic and social consequences. According to UNESCO (2020), many social vices are associated with youths not actively engaged in schooling. Children and youths who are not in school are more susceptible to social vices such as alcoholism, substance abuse and other forms of criminal activities. Child abuse, child labour and early marriage as a result of economic difficulties, unguided sexual exposure, are some of the consequences of over five months of school closure. For as the saying goes, an idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Education Management in the Face of Covid-19

Education, as we know, is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world. It is therefore evident that the place of education in any forward thinking nation cannot be overemphasized. It is worthy to note that earlier before the outbreak, there have been several controversies and speculations on the state of educational system in Nigeria. Issues such as poor infrastructural development, poor welfare of staff and students, breach of contracts between management and teaching staff amongst others have been plaguing

our education system. The later has often led to strikes, an issue that has almost become a norm in the system, especially in the tertiary level. This is only a tip of the iceberg with regard to the poor condition of the education sector of our country when compared to other countries (UNESCO, 2020).

Education has a very systematic academic calendar in Nigeria. It is worthy to note that this academic calendar was disrupted as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. Most schools across the world are now missing either one or two academic terms as a result of schools closure, though many countries prioritize the re-opening of schools as soon as it is safe to do so, so that they will not see a complete reversal of the gains achieved in the education sector over the decades. In attempt to positively engage the children and also ensure that they are not left behind in their learning journey, many countries including Nigeria have adopted online teaching and learning. This is through the use radio, television and internet to aid access to education. In order to provide another window for learning, UNESCO, (2020) through its covid-19 education response, floated a platform tagged learning never stops, to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children and youths during this period of sudden disruption in the school system. Laudable as these initiatives appear, they may not be compared to the gains of the traditional classroom-based instructions, especially regarding the level playground they afford all the concerned, rich and poor alike. These new efforts may not achieve the set objectives given the limited access of poor children to television, electricity, internet and other social facilities needed to take advantage of the e-learning platforms.

Furthermore, the closure of schools was more of some kind of panic reaction. The closure was ordered by the government and the ministry of education without proper directives and without any clear-cut policy measures on how to mitigate learning disruptions for children. Even when the idea of e-learning began to gain currency, the issues around the digital divide were unaddressed. The sorry state of the Nigeria's education sector, the issues of the technology that would cater for the 46 million children affected in this regard, whether households, schools, teachers have the facilities, the competence to engage their children and students in remote learning, such crucial and basic questions were left unattended (UNESCO, 2020). The experience is that the temporary school closures came with high social and economic costs, with severe impact on especially children from economically disadvantaged background. Hence, a system of education management that will cater for all children becomes an issue to be addressed.

Education management, according to Babalolo (2006), is about evolving, strategizing, planning, organizing, directing and supervising the entire process of teaching and learning that takes place at all levels of the formal education system. In agreement, Nte (2005) recognizes the interaction of human and material resources in the process of educational management, and thus defines the term as being concerned with the building of human and material resources together for effective functional teaching and learning in schools. It is understood that the multifarious concerns of education management consists not only of teaching and learning processes in the classroom but also includes the activities of officials of the ministry of Education, state education commission, planning, supervision and inceptives.

However, the practiced academic programme of this third /promotion term was based on e-learning packages. This was dependent on the financial capacity of every institution involved. It was observed that during the e-learning, 40-50% of students in the country did not participate actively in the e-learning. Some schools have concluded theirs already, and have also given assessment based on computer based test (CBT). It is quite clear that not all students are computer literate. Many of them have little or no requisite knowledge about the operational of technological devices. Some parents could not afford the finances needed. Given the above, many could not participate in online learning. In such circumstances, how would one conduct or record assessment or evaluation? Who assures or guarantees that the assignments and the examinations given were done by those who should do them? The usual feedback through which students show how far or not they understood the taught, as happens in face-to-face learning encounter, was absent.

E-Learning in the Midst of Covid-19

Obikaeze and Onyechi (2011) define e-learning as formal and non-formal education that uses electronic delivery method such as internet based learning delivery packages, CD- Rom, online video conferencing, website or email to manage the relationship between teachers and learners. In addition, Nwokike (2010) defines e-learning as the use of computer as a key component of the education environment. Since

technology has permeated every sector of human existence and modern society and educational sector cannot be an exception. Over the years, stakeholders in the education sector have clamoured for technological advancement and innovations in learning. Such has the power to transform teaching by ushering in a new model of connected teaching. This model links teachers to their students and to professional content, resource and system to help them personalize learning. It is a very interesting means of instructional delivery in the 21st century. It is a technologically based method of teaching. Obih (2012) argues that learning is assisted only when the teacher uses technological based methods, like e-learning strategies.

Until the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, this seemed unrealizable. However, the pandemic seems to have quickened the embrace of these innovations despite various levels of unpreparedness and cost. Recall that the honorable minister of education, Adamu Adamu announced and encouraged all schools to begin to leverage on online learning platform to continue academic activities in the face of the lockdown at Abuja during one of their covid-19 conferences. Ever since this announcement was made, management of schools has struggled to get along, rolling out different means and strategies to achieve that. There have been myriads of problems in this regard due to the lack of even the most basic of the requisites. The result is that the achievement of the wished maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the innovation could not be. Therefore, Nigerian educational institutions need ICT to implement teaching and learning in line with global best practices. It is obvious that e-learning strategies of teaching and learning in Nigeria educational institutions is still in its infancy stage and have problems.

Some of the problems according to Mkpapa (2014) are: high cost of computer hardware and software, poor funding, poor network, lack of constant power etc. Mkpapa further argues that unless the power supply improves in Nigeria, many students especially those in rural areas will continue to encounter difficulties in the use of e-learning strategies. In agreement, Ilechukwu (2013) says that adoption of e-learning in instructional delivery in Nigeria is slow because of several factors on the part of government, teachers, students and society in general among others. He outlines the problems to include teachers' lack of relevant competencies, inadequate ICT infrastructure, lack of personal computers by students, low ICT literacy level, poor network connectivity etc. This paper, therefore, suggests the best way of teaching and learning online for all the students especially those in the rural areas, the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The Impact of Covid-19 on Education in Nigeria

- **Reduction in International Education:** Many international students studying in Nigeria have traveled back to their countries due to the COVID-19. The Nigeria government announced the closed down educational institutions to curtail the spread of COVID-19. Many Nigerian students schooling abroad have travelled back home due to closure of institutions across the world. International education has been affected negatively because of the outbreak the covid-19 pandemic. Many students studying abroad will be discouraged to continue their studies and many planning to study abroad cannot achieve their plans because many countries have placed travel ban. According to Mug (2020) conversely, the Chinese master plan to become the number one importer of international students is in question. University deans and recruiters will be hard pressed to recommend.
- **Disruption in academic programmes:** The Federal Ministry of Education directed all the educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down schools and allow students to go home. The directive was part of the country's overall strategy to contain the spread of the virus. This affected the academic activities of schools in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020) observed that the closure of all educational institutions from primary schools to the higher institutions affected the students' academic plans and programmes. The schools' internal examinations were abruptly ended with many schools not finishing their examinations. However, Hans (2020) argues that the global lockdown of educational institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning, disruptions in internal assessments, and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative. Many conferences, excursions and different school activities that were planned for the first and second quarters of the academic year, 2020 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Suspension/postponement of examinations: Many educational institutions had started their internal examinations before the incident of the covid-19 pandemic that led to the national shut down of all the educational institutions in Nigeria. Other external examinations like SSCE, NECO, BECE among others that were to be taken thereafter were postponed. Simon & Hans (2020) observed that the closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupted the teaching for students around the world. The closure also coincided with a key assessment period and many exams have been postponed or cancelled. Internal assessment was done using the continuous assessment (CAS) of the student in order to give information about the child's academic progress to the families and teachers.

Challenges of E-Learning in the Face of Covid-19

Despite the developments in telecommunications in Nigeria, more needs to be done in this regard. These developments afford new opportunities and many new challenges in general, and in the education sector in particular. One of these challenges with regard to e-learning is technophobia. This refers to the feeling of unease that teachers have over the use of new technologies as a result of their having not undergone ICT training. Most of the teachers did not have it as part of their training curricula at the basic levels. As a result they are afraid and unable to assist students develop the ability and knowledge necessary to make them use the e-learning effectively. And most of the students, on the other hand, have no computer education background. Some become afraid of operating one. Some go to the extent of hiring one expert or the other at a cost to fill their admission form, registration forms or other official documents meant to be filled online. However, the very few who have access to computer do not know how to make use maximal usage of it.

Lack of self-motivation: self-motivation is an essential requirement for e-learning. However, many of those who get involved with online learning lack this virtue much to their surprise. Some students after enrolling in distance learning programme, fall behind and nurture the idea of giving up, as difficulties in handling a technological medium and getting beyond the very basic begin to seem insurmountable.

Interactive radio/television: interactive instruction has been identified as the cheapest and most affordable. This is understandable in view of the nature of the radio as the most commonly affordable and accessible technology in the world. Instructional television is another approach though with high cost of production. It is estimated that millions of households in Nigeria have access to television. Nevertheless, such did not seem to have been very helpful with regard to the e-learning experience. Many a time, these instructional gadgets either failed to broadcast the programme at the stipulated time, or rather did outside the publicized schedule as a result of power failure or technical fault from the broadcasting station.

E-learning is challenged by the lack of social and technical facilities. These include computers and computer laboratories, internet and email facilities, videophone systems and teleconferencing devices, fax and wireless applications, digital library, digital classrooms, multimedia systems. Some schools or parents that have some of these facilities experience poor connectivity (Jegede and Owolabi, 2008). In many cases, children who live in communities with poor or non-existence internet connectivity and unreliable power supply find it very difficult to participate actively. The prolonged closures of schools tend to have a disproportionately negative impact on these vulnerable children. According to UNESCO, (2020), they have fewer opportunities for learning at home, and their time out of school may present economic burdens for their parents who may face challenges finding adequate food for prolonged duration of the stay-at-home. Inevitably, this digital divide will exacerbate the learning disparities among these children. It becomes imperative then to seriously seek alternative means and approaches in order not to leave behind students with little or no access to electronic communication.

Finance: the cost of accessing online learning is still very high in Nigeria. Some cannot afford the cost. Most students make use of cyber café whose charges go between 250 and 300 naira per hour despite their poor network services and slow rate of their server. Looking at the challenges faced by the education sector during this pandemic, it is obvious that Nigeria has a long way to go in preparation for the advancement and development that this pandemic has forced us to inculcate.

Maintenance and technical support: dearth of trained professionals and technical staff for the maintenance of the system pose great challenge. It is related to the problem of lack of skilled teachers for e-learning.

This makes it very expensive for students that have any of the gadgets to maintain when technical problems arise.

Another challenge is decline in the academic achievement of learners. It may be said that the closure of schools as result of COVID-19 shares some common characteristics with a school holidays. Even when many schools and families across the country are implementing various online curriculum, instructions, and progress monitoring resources to offset the disruption, the hardship brought about by the abruptness of Covid-19 and its unprecedented duration and effects, make enormous differences. Trauma, joblessness, and increase in the number of families facing food insecurity, homelessness, domestic violence, and even the illness or death of loved ones could make academic projections even bleaker for our most vulnerable populations (UNESCO, 2020).

Finally, inadequate social facilities for students with special needs: there has been little or no plan for students with physical impairments. These students were left out in the plan for online learning thereby bringing in inequality in education. There seemed to be no television broadcast through sign language interpreters, no closed circuit television for the dumb and deaf, no computers with special devices for operating complex function among others.

Way Forward

There is need for the use of this opportunity to step up our movement towards development and sustainability. The education sector is expected to maintain these innovations that have been made during this period of pandemic. There is need for the government to massively invest more in technology in the school system as a supplement to aid and ease teaching and learning. **Educationists see e-learning as leading to surprising innovations.** COVID-19 has shown us now that even if we are going to have brick and mortar classrooms, it does not hurt to have e-learning which is the new normal, because for a lot of institutions that had e-learning before, it was easier for them to quickly plan online platforms for their lecturers, more than those without e-learning. In Nigeria, many candidates are denied admission because the number of our higher institutions cannot accommodate everybody that needs university education.

In agreement, Akinleye (2020) says that all that is required is for the lecture notes to be in the electronic format to make it accessible online. He argued that e-learning, which could be in different forms, such as video telecast, lecture streaming and others, could also be very expensive, going by the income of the average Nigerian household. But because of the level of infrastructure and the cost of data, some parents may find this very expensive. They may not be able to afford this, especially if some of those lectures are going to be interactive, and may involve videography. To download such materials alone could be quite expensive, since it would require a sizable amount of data. In this case, the government should subsidize the money spent on data.

Government and stakeholders should provide these social facilities, computer, computer laboratories, internet and email facilities, videophone systems and teleconferencing devices, fax and wireless applications, digital library, digital classrooms, multimedia systems in our schools to aid e-learning. The reality of the digital divide in the country has to be strategically managed and maintained. Reaching out to millions of marginalized students must become a national priority in this time of crisis and beyond. They should also work with all the telecommunications in the country to improve their network services as well as the power sector, to ensure steady power supply to aid accessibility.

Government and stakeholders should encourage teachers to develop interest towards learning of ICT. They should also support training of teachers in the use of ICT. This will make them become experts and professionals; they will then train students, thereby making them computer literate. In this covid-19, they become the most vulnerable.

Government and education planners should as well take into note those students who are physically challenged, and develop course contents and means of delivery that integrate them. For instance those who are deaf would need sign language to keep up. Government and partners can help adapt the materials available to be used for both deaf and non-deaf learners. Print media can also be published in brail for children who are visually impaired. Radio programmes are particularly great for visually impaired learners. Therefore, government has to plan her education programme to also accommodate them.

Conclusion

The education sector in the post covid-19 times will have a new leaf. Things are not and cannot go back to what they used to be. The various inadequacies and gaps in our existing system, especially in the education sector, have been mercilessly laid open. It will be to the advantage of the system for government and other stakeholders in this field to cash into the opportunity of knowing these lacks and address them through adequate funding and training, curriculum development and enlightenment of the citizenry. The little gains that were made through the ingenious efforts of school managements even in the face of lack and inexperience can be strengthened through further engagements with those who have better knowhow. This includes effective tactics in the management of innovations, regulating the 21st century teachers using technology to drive strategy and regulation, building institutional capacity etc. There is also the need to improve upon the quality of the teachers, sharpen their knowledge of what the new normal in the profession has come to be, enhancing their understanding of how to navigate the current challenges which have caused halting schooling in Nigeria due to the pandemic. Ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all should be a priority programme for the government.

References

- Akinleye, O. (2020). *Clear as mud': schools ask for online learning assistance as corona virus policy confusion persists*". Retrieved on March 23, 2020 from, guardian.ng.
- Babalola, J.B. (2006). Overview of educational management. In Ezeugbor, C. Educational management; A new dimension. SCOA Heritage Publications
- Ilechukwu, L.C. (2013). The assessment of utilization of e-learning opportunities for effective teaching and learning of religion in Nigeria tertiary Institutions. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 5(3), 343-359
- Jaime, S. (2020). Educational challenges and opportunities of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/educational-challenges-and-opportunities>
- Mkpa, M.A. (2014). Education in contemporary Nigeria: Issues, challenges and the way forward. A keynote paper delivered at the first national conference at College of Agric and Science Education (CASE) held on 8th-12th July, 2014. at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Umuahia, Abia State.
- Nikam, R. (2010). *Educational administration. New Delhi: Anmol Publishers Ltd.*
- Nwokike, F.O. (2010). Economic implication of e-learning in Nigeria education system. A paper presented at the annual conference of the faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 22nd to 28th May
- Obih, S.O.A. (2012). New perspective in teaching education in the 21st century, what method? *Journal of faculty of education, university of Benin: Benin city*. (1), 32-40
- Obikaeze, N.J. & Onyechi, C. (2011). Availability and assessibility of e-learning facilities to students and teachers of Anambra State University. *Unizik Orient Journal of Education*, 6 (1&2), 62-67.
- Simon B, & Hans H, S,. (2020) Schools, skills, and learning: The impact of COVID-19 on education <https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200324065639773>
- UNESCO. (2020) *"Adverse consequences of school closures"*. Retrieved March 15, 2020
- UNESCO, (2020). *"Coronavirus deprives nearly 300 million students of their schooling: The Telegram"*. thetelegram.com. Retrieved March 15, 2020.
- Wikipedia (2020) Impact of the 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic on education. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_of_the_2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic_on_education
- Worldometer (2020) Coronavirus Cases: https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeAdvegas1
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/infographic-covid19>

PATTERNS OF VIOLENT CRIME IN NIGERIA

By

Onyegbu, Dominic Chukwuemeka

Social Sciences Unit, School of General Studies,
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria

&

Egbegi, Friday Raphael

Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria

&

Benjamin Okorie Ajah

Social Sciences Unit, School of General Studies,
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract

Fanaticism has brewed into different forms in the Nigerian context – and the gravest is religious fanaticism. It has taken hold of most clans, religions, and ethnic groups across Nigeria. Religion has always existed in Nigerian societies and also has fanaticism but the level of violence precipitated by this fanaticism is apparently unprecedented. This paper journeys into the beginning of religious fanaticism in Nigeria and its changing patterns of violence. It highlights the root causes of religious violence in Nigeria and visible patterns in this violence. At the end, the paper recommends that Nigerian governments initiate comprehensive programs to reconcile the religious differences that have evolved over time between Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religions. The paper adopted structural functionalism theoretical formation and gathered data from textbooks, e-books, journals, online articles, newspapers, and magazines.

Key words: Christianity, Crime, Islam, Religious fanaticism, Religious violence.

Introduction

Religious fanaticism entails violent and unreasonable religious enthusiasm. It is excessive irrational zeal to defend one's religion and consequently become destructive agent of religious disharmony in the society (Sulaiman, 2016; Balogun 1988; Sulaiman 2014). In Africa, Two dominating religious faiths are Christianity and Islam (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). In Nigeria, the two faiths are diametrically popular with Christianity highly practiced in Southern Nigeria and Islam highly practiced in the North (Ajah, Okpan&Nwokeoma, 2017; Sontag, 1990). Christians in Northern Nigeria see themselves as minorities as Moslems in the South also see themselves as minorities (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okpan, 2017). Neither faith has always used the notions of minority in positive sense, but often to imply less patronized faith, underrepresented or marginalized group (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). Both have used the excuse of minority, extinction, and righteous hunt for memberships to maneuver for domination of Nigeria's people and resources. This has been peaceful at some times and violently conflicting at other times (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okpa, 2017). At little other times, minorities and divisions exist within each religious group along the lines of beliefs, methods of worships, and expected outcomes of eternity (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). This is seen in Shiite and Sunni Moslem groups of Islam and orthodox and Pentecostal branch churches of Christianity. These divisions have always led to disparities and violent conflicts that break both constitutional laws and humanity principles. This paper is a journey into the root causes of religious fanaticisms in Nigeria, how the root causes have fermented violent crime patterns, and how these patterns of violent crime are changing because of changes in the root causes.

In July 2016, a Nigerian Islamic cleric purportedly ordered his followers to kill a Christian woman who does early morning preaching in her neighborhood (Isaac, 2016). The Islamic Cleric and his followers believed their understandings of God to be pure and much more correct compared to the preaching of the Christian woman (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). Even as both religions are unique in understandings of God and meaning of sanctity in human conduct, the cleric believed the ways of Islam to be supreme and was deeply irritated by the Christian woman's understandings of God (Sahara Reporters, 2016). The cleric mounted light warnings and then proceeded to order the woman to death. In another event, 15 predominately Christian communities in the same local government area in Plateau State came under intense attack from an armed Moslem group in August 2018 (World Watch Monitor, 2018). A Christian reverend, his wife and children were particularly burnt alive in their church building in that attack. The attack culminated with over 230 death casualties and more than 11,500 refugees who fled their homes (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). In each of these cases, Nigeria was not at war and neither was Islam at war with Christianity. Each was a case of group of people who misconstrued the teachings of Islam and were motivated by this error to behave violently against other people (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). Countless of such events have been recorded and a lot more have gone unnoticed. It usually starts from subtle and tiny places like Moslem sons disowning their fathers for being Christians or Christian brothers disowning their fellow brothers for being Moslems. From such little psychological and emotional intolerance, all forms of brutal violence brew and manifest in the bigger forms that shock the conscience of the world (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018; Armstrong, 2015). This is prevalent in multi-religious communities in Plateau and Kaduna states where sons murder their fathers for being Christians or for being Moslems. It all starts from these little segregations in the mind and keep growing till it consumes the conscience.

In a more drastic case, an influential Islamic cleric in Borno State called Mohammed Yunus developed his own radical belief versions of Islam. As a leader and teacher of Islamic principles, he quickly drew followers to his radical beliefs (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). He and his followers were locally referred to as Nigerian Taliban because the group held similarities in beliefs and conducts as Taliban, a renowned terrorist organization (CNN, 2018). The members considered themselves as noncitizens of Nigeria and failed to participate or obey any governance system that is not based on Sharia Law. Gradually, the group recused themselves from the general Islamic teachings and gatherings in Borno State and withdrew and lived in forests (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okpan, 2017). In 2003, the group began peddling attacks on government properties, institutions, Christians, Moslems, women, children, and without respect or pity to anything (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). In April 2014, the group orchestrated a suicide-bombing attack on a major market in Nigeria's capital that left over 70 dead casualties and 124 casualties severely injured (BBC, 2016). Between 2002 and 2018, the group killed over 100,000 casualties and displaced over 2million people from their homes (Sani, 2016). They divide Nigeria and humanity into infidels and faithful. Every member of their group or whoever practiced Islam to the terms of their dictate is considered a faithful and every other person is an infidel – Christians, traditional worshippers, atheists, other Moslems, and etcetera (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). They employ the most brutal methods and kill all nonmembers without judgment, negotiation or chance of redemption. Their operations have displaced millions and killed hundreds of thousands of people across the Lake-Chad Basin area of West Africa. They call themselves Boko Haram.

These constitute religious fanaticism. A fanatic is defined by Encarta Dictionary as an extremist; a holder of extreme or irrational enthusiasms or beliefs, especially in religion or politics (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018; Encarta Dictionary). Urban Dictionary in Okpa, Ajah&Okunola (2018) describes a religious fanatic as someone who takes a perfectly good creed and assumes that because they pretend to follow it, they are allowed to do anything they want even if they don't really follow the creed at all, usually insisting that if others do not follow their ways, they will be damned (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018; Urban Dictionary). The errors are not usually with the principles or creeds, but with the interpretations of the fanatic. As Salman Rushdie noted in his Satanic Verses, 'From the beginning, men used God to justify the unjustifiable' (Goodreads, 2019). Same applies to religious fanatics; they use perfect religious creeds or beliefs to justify their extreme and outrageous acts. A good instance is Mohammed Yusuf who exhorts

his followers to reject the state or any type of knowledge that contradicts Islam or Sharia law (Economist, 2019). Even when most states in northern Nigeria have implemented Sharia law, Yusuf insisted that his form of Sharia law was the only true form of Sharia law – and as such, killed and destroyed other Moslems that do not follow his definitions of Sharia law and Islam (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okpan, 2017). Others often call such acts Jihadism and brandish it as justifiable reason for extreme forms of Islamic beliefs. The Koran explicitly stated and rejected these interpretations and acts in the name of Islam.

Among the people there is he whose discourse on the life of the world pleases you, and he calls on God as witness to what is in his heart, yet he is an unyielding and antagonistic adversary. When he turns and leaves, he walks about corrupting the earth, destroying crops and livestock – God loves not corruption (Q2:204–205) – (Guardian, 2013:57).

In many corners of the world, such violent acts based on religious extremism are considered crime as they break major parts of constitutional and humanity laws of all countries and people (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). In United States, they are subtly referred to as ‘hate crimes.’ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) considers hate crime as a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias, against a given race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or ethnicity/national origin (Mokhtar, 2006). Such forms of violence and crime tend to involve more brutality, force, and highly motivated than other forms of crime. The constitutions of the United Kingdom identifies such offences as crimes motivated by religious prejudice and are punishable by law (UK Parliament, 2003). In many ways, religious fanaticized activities threaten Nigeria even to the level of its sovereignty. From destruction of government properties, murder of innocent citizens to obstruction of government activities or claim of sovereignty of Nigeria’s soil inside Nigeria, the Nigerian constitution is multiply breached as many crimes are committed in such acts.

The intention of this work is to understand the root causes of religious fanaticism in Nigeria by going from Nigeria to the rest of African countries, how these root causes have precipitated violent patterns, and changes in these violent patterns due to changes in root causes. This introductory section opens a window on how religion-related violence has fared in Nigeria in recent times. The first section studies the history of religious faiths in Nigeria and the emergence of the tripartite that make-up the current socio-religious status quo. The second section studies colonialism and yardsticks of religious control – and emerging patterns of religion motivated violence crimes in Nigeria. The third part looks at concerted efforts being made to tame religious fanaticism and related crimes in Nigeria. The fourth part details the theoretical formation of the paper and the last part suggests possible means to curb religious fanaticism and bring order to Africa’s religious front.

Genealogy of Religious Faiths in Africa

It is hard, if not impossible, to explicitly state dates and manners in which religion came to Africa. Nigeria was discovered religious with all the beliefs, rituals and components that make-up a full-fledged and functioning religious system (Igbo, 2012). Perhaps, one would agree with Edmund Burke who stated in his defense of religion that man is, by constitution, a religious animal (Lee, 2012). Nigeria already had working religious systems before the coming of Europeans or any foreigner. These forms of religions are called African Traditional Religion (ATR).

- **African Traditional Religion (ATR)**

Man is, by constitution, a religious animal is the best answer to how and when religion came to Nigeria. Many folks have tried answering similar questions on history of African Traditional Religion by implying that early Africans faced daunting challenges and conceded to the ideas of superior Supreme Being to seek help, others imply that early Africans were subdued by the awes of nature to worship natural things in their environment for favors and supernatural helps (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). Gabriel and Hillary (2014) suggest that African Traditional Religion actually emerged as a result of early Africans responding to mysteries surrounding their environments like huge rivers and rocks, and feeling a sense to recognize a supreme creator of all things (Gabriel & Hillary, 2014). These led to formation of key beliefs, rituals and eventually the African Traditional Religion. At best, these are all intelligent guesses and have no scientifically compelling data on how and when African Traditional Religion began (Igbo, 2012). The

difficulty in understanding how and when African Traditional Religion actually started is that there are no writings, records, museums or any form of repository that run across centuries and depict the actual stages in the development of African Traditional Religion and its worshippers. Igbo (2012) notes that the only form of knowledge passage in African Traditional Religion is oral communication, which is ineffective, not scientifically convincing, and difficult to track. Perhaps applying scientific methods to understanding African Traditional Religion is in itself an ineffective approach, maybe there should be another method of inquiry that will effectively unveil the histories, dates, and key players of African Traditional Religion in a way that is more convincing than mere words of mouth from people in the millionth positions of a profoundly long chain of storytellers.

The early traditional worshippers had diverse opinions and religious systems (Elu& Prince, 2015). With wide ethnic spread across Nigeria, so were religious beliefs and traditions. Majority of people in southeastern Nigeria were Ibos and believed in the mythology of Chineke (Igbo, 2012). The cosmological analogy has it that Chineke (Chukwu) is the Supreme Being, almighty that cannot be contacted directly by the living. The living has to go through intermediaries like 'ndimmuo' - which are spirits of dead relatives (Igbo, 2012). The 'ndimmuo' are usually summoned or reached by high priests, who are living, in religious rituals. Thus, the interaction goes from the high priests or priestess to 'ndimmuo' to Chineke (Supreme Being). The 'ndimmuo' are considered lesser Gods or Beings to Chineke, the Supreme and Almighty Being (Igbo, 2012). Offerings and rituals to these Gods are done with personal belongings in the forms of farm produce, livestock, etc. In some cases, human sacrifices are made but systems for the selection of whom to sacrifice were usually very much established and accepted by majority. The Ibo Gods preached peace, discipline, love, and goodness in human conduct (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). The governance systems in different enclaves were built around the deities or local religious systems of the people. The varieties were not much, but are significant at some points. The Ibo land was a vast land and people lived in groups or enclaves. One enclave could have human sacrifice as a key component of its tradition while the neighboring enclave abhors human sacrifice in its tradition. The governance systems were much linked to respective religious systems (Igbo, 2012). Governance was highly democratic and conducted through elders in each family or clans and decisions were highly unanimous. People feared and respected the Gods and obeyed the peaceful commands of their religions. Interpretations of Gods' principles were done by the high priests who were respected and are punished by the Gods if they misadvise the people. The priests usually advise the elders and leaders of the community – and the elders, more like legislative councils, make the final decisions (Igbo, 2012). With this form of decision-making process and interpretation of Gods' wills, random misinterpretations that often lead to fanaticism did not exist. Violence was almost negligible and only existed in inter-community wars which were mostly more political than religious.

In the north, majority of the citizens were Hausas. They lived under governance structure that looked like a monarchical system. Each enclave had a ruling class of priestesses that dictated the wills of the Gods (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). Unlike the Ibo traditions, Hausa traditions had both political and religious governance headed by the priestesses. The ruling class shaped interpretations of law, good conduct, and wills of the Gods. It is uncertain whether there was violence, killings or disagreements between the ruling class and the masses (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okunola, 2017). A common ATR in the region was Bori. Bori priestesses communed with the Gods in rituals employing ecstatic dance and provided healing and divination throughout the kingdom.

In Southwestern Nigeria, the Yoruba people lived under the cosmological belief that all humans who do good and help others in beneficial ways shall achieve transcendence and find their destinies in Orun-Rere (the spiritual realm of those who do good and beneficial things). Olodumare is considered the Supreme Being and is usually worship or prayed to through a priest of divination called Babalawo (Igbo, 2012). The masses feared and respected Olodumare and misinterpretations of God's wills were not common.

At the beginnings, the region called Nigeria was as diverse almost as it is today. People lived in enclaves and worshipped different Gods using different rituals. A common feature is that each region and enclave feared and respected their Gods, interpretations of wills of God came from respected high priests who are believed to be punished if they misadvise the people. Thus, random misinterpretations that often

lead to extreme or fanatic beliefs did not exist. Most of the religions preached peace, love and good conduct – and people believed, obeyed, and lived in relatively more peaceful environments from religious violence.

- **Coming of Islam**

Islam is noted to have visibly arrived Nigeria in the 11th and 12th centuries through trade, migration, and travels of Islamic wanderers and scholars. It is rumored that the old cities of Kanem and Bornu had been in contact with Islamic traders since as early as the 9th century, but many records are consistent with 11th and 12th centuries as the time Islam was visibly noticed in northern Nigeria (Kettani, 2004). As Islam spread, it connected many converts in northern Nigeria to a network of Islamic worshippers that ran across the whole of North Africa down to Middle East. Arabic was the major language of Islam and it quickly became the central language of trade and commerce across the borders in northern Nigeria. During the 15th century, the Malian Songhay Empire spread tentacles to Northern Nigeria's Hausaland and established a dynasty under Askiyya Muhammad (Harvard Divinity School, 2019). Trade brought the Hausa people to flourishing central cities like Kano and Hausa quickly became an important language in Kano to help locals communicate with the new traders. Hausa and Arabic became very popular languages for trade, Islamic literatures and scholarships (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). Islam spread and people became connected to Islamic scholarships, literatures and intellectual networks (Kettani, 2018). For several centuries, Askiyya Muhammad dynasty provided peace, spiritual supports, and security. The dynasty spread with Islam and reached considerable corners of the north.

In the 19th century, Usman Dan Fodio led a Jihadist war against religious syncretism in the north – proclaiming Islam as the only true form of religion and Allah as the only true God. Dan Fodio's principle was simple, convert to Islam or die (Kettani, 2004). He replaced Askiyya Muhammad and founded the Sokoto Caliphate. He fought against perceived injustices prevalent in the reigning dynasty. His wars quickly gained ground and spread across greater north and other regions that would later become Nigeria. Dan Fodio's styles of Islam was more brutal and violent than the earlier dynasty of Askiyya Muhammad (Kettani, 2004). Dan Fodio employed coerced conversion while earlier dynasties preferred more subtle methods. After the death of Dan Fodio in 1903, his aggressive methods of Islam were further propagated by his brother and son. In the same century, other individuals with even more aggressive and violent versions of Islam emerged (Ademolekun, 2018). There was the Maitatsine Movement propagated by Mohammed Marwa. He was born in northern Cameroon and migrated to Nigeria in 1945 where he started his controversial preaching on the Qur'an (Cavanaugh, n.d). Marwa spoke against the use of cars, watches, radios, and possession of money more than necessary. These ideologies were twisted and used as bases to attack government institutions, ordinary Nigerians, and every other thing that is not the Maitatsine Movement. By 1972, the movement had built impressive number of militant followers called YatTatsine. In 1980, YatTatsine's violent attacks on other religious figures and police attracted the attention of the Nigerian army (Crenshaw, 2000). With the army's involvement, more than 5000 lives were lost including the life of Mohammed Marwa. After Marwa's death, his movement was continued by his followers and intensified with more violence. Their riots caused death of over 3000 people in 1984, also killed 1000 in Yola and displaced about 6000 (Ademolekun, 2018). Other incidents of death and violence against the public were incited by the group. The major leader of Maitatsine Movement was arrested in 2014 in what is hoped to be a successful tame of the horror. Beside the Dan Fodio movement and Mohammed Marwa, other theories and brutal versions of Islam has also emerged like the Izala Movement, Darul Movement, Boko Haram, etc. There are absolute differences between these movements at some points, only relative difference at others points and zero difference at others. For instance, the Dan Fodio Movement and Boko Haram may not be totally comparable but they all started with ideologies and crafting a unique version of Islam – may be extreme and violent versions (Egbegi, Ajah&Okunola, 2018).

What is notable is that each version of Islam is highly connected to the governance system of the group or area where it exists. The head of the movement is usually the political and religious leader of such groups and rules as he wishes and twists mainstream ideas to suit his desires. The members usually believe the teachings not from shared beliefs but from the interpretations of the leader. Violence is usually less within each movement but intense and brutal between the members of the group and nonmembers

(Crenshaw, 2000). In each case, the first step to formation of any extremity in Islam is to reject the teachings of all other Islamic believers, then divide humanity into believers and infidels.

- **Coming of Christianity**

Trade brought Christianity to Nigeria in the 15th century. It was first introduced in the form of Roman Catholicism by Portuguese traders. This first wave of introducing Christianity to Nigeria was unsuccessful. Second wave came in the 1800s with the return of Roman Catholic Missionaries. It came to Benin Kingdom, it failed – then came to Itsekiri Kingdom, it succeeded. The first major convert of the Roman Catholic Missionaries was the son of Olu of Warri who got baptized and renamed to Sebastian (Vivian, 2018).

African Traditional Religion was already established before the coming of Christianity. Locals received the new beliefs with skepticism and disinterestedness. The local elders and chiefs were more interested in guns, goods and trade than the chants of Christianity (Igbo, 2012). The missionaries applied no pattern of force or coercion – and lived side-by-side with Nigerians without locals’ concern on what Christianity meant (Igbo, 2012). Sebastian of Warri later became the Olu of Warri and gave considerable entry support to the missionaries. However, unlike Northern Nigeria, Southern Nigeria was largely democratic and decentralized. The views of the king or Olu do not necessarily dictate the views of the elders or final decisions in a community. Christianity did not yet make much progress in entering Nigeria. The game changer was black missionaries who were former slaves from Nigeria that returned home with the missionaries to preach Christianity (Deji, 2019; Ademolokun, 2018). Locals, chiefs, and families saw people like them that speak their language – and started listening. Christianity started gaining plausibility and spread quickly through Southern Nigeria. The missionaries started making changes to matters that touched the nerves of African traditions like killing of twins, polygamy, human sacrifices, etcetera, and promoted campaigns to end such traditions. This started creating divisions within existing community structures and within the churches (Fitzduf, 2014). Some prospective converts became stalled by the ideological conflicts and a few converts saw the teachings as if though the church was trying to control them. Southern Nigerians were accustomed to independence in leadership and thinking – any act or gesture to gain absolute control of another person seemed irritating at best (Ademolekun, 2018). It seemed as the Europeans and Americans were controlling the locals both politically and ecclesiastically. The African Christians rebelled, broke away from the European churches and started forming their own churches. These movements brought major restructuring to Christianity models in Nigeria. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a former slave from Yoruba land, formed his St. Peter’s Church in 1853. Christ Church Army was carved away from Anglican Church in 1910. A few other churches also carved away from Christ Church Army with their own philosophies (Deji, 2019). Revolutions did occur in the trends of Christianity in Nigeria – but at no point was this engulfed in violence or killing or physical fights like the revolutions of Dan Fodio and few other Islamic clerics after him. Thus, the history of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria took separate parts – one violent and the other peaceful.

A Tripartite Status Quo

The history of religion in Nigeria started with the African Traditional Religion even though no particular date or timeline can be assigned to its beginning. In early Northern Nigeria, the systems of African Traditional Religion very largely controlled governance. In the South, the systems of African Traditional Religion had huge influence on governance but not to very large extent (Ademolekun, 2018). The legislature-styled governance system in Southern Nigeria made religion a second tier and subjective to final decisions of the elders (legislators). Islam came in the 9th century and Christianity in 15th century. Islam was introduced to Northern Nigeria and Christianity to Southern Nigeria – and both competed with Africa Traditional Religions in each region for ascendancy (Deji, 2019). Islamic promoters consistently used force, violence and killings to spread their faith in the north. Their motto was simple, ‘convert to Islam or die.’ This initial creed set a violent-styled tradition for Islam and subsequent promoters of Islam in Nigeria have employed violence in different forms and for different reasons to achieve their goals (Ademolekun, 2018). Promoters of Christianity employed ‘chatty-styled’ conviction method instead, talked to people about Christianity and hoped that they convert to Christianity. However, the teachings of

Christianity had much contrariety with local traditions of many communities in the South – and some point, created arguments, anger or hatred between converted community members and non-converted community members. It is expected that such ideological conflicts should have created major violent scenarios at some points, but extensive records of such violence do not exist or are not easily accessible.

A natural dichotomy took shape; Islam in Northern Nigeria, Christianity in Southern Nigeria, and patches of Africa Traditional Religion spread across all regions. The division is not intentional, but apparent, and has evolved over time. According to a survey by Pew Forum in 2010, Nigerian population is 48.8% Islam and 49.3% Christianity (Rolando, 2017). Almost 50-50 division, then the rest of the population belong to other religions mainly African Traditional Religions. This forms a tripod arrangement of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion as the main religious components in Nigeria.

Socio-Political Constructs of Religious Development in Nigeria: Before and After

In early Nigerian societies when the political arrangement called Nigeria was nonexistent, people lived in patches and a socio-political construct was uniquely associated with each patch (Ademolekun, 2018). Each socio-political construct was shaped by political, religious, and social norms. The constructs determined how people lived, imagined their futures, and were governed (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). In Warri Kingdom for instance, the decision of who becomes the Olu of Warri was partly determined by religious rituals. In all other patches, religions were parts of traditions and further shaped every aspect of human life from political behaviors to social relationships (Achunike, 2008). Understanding how these constructs are shaped is fundamental to understanding the root causes of violence and religious fanaticism in Nigeria.

Causes of Religious Violence in Earlier Nigeria

A key determinant of how societies are influenced in any age is need; based on the needs of the masses, a particular social norm, religious belief, political or leadership structure would survive or get completely waned (Ajah&Okoro, 2017). These needs vary from society to society and age to age. It could be need for land to farm or joke to laugh; or it could be need for infrastructure to support industry or swimming pools for relaxation (Chris, 2006). In Maslow's work on theory of needs, he identified physiological needs like needs for food, water, air and sleep as basics that man cannot survive without. Such needs were prevalent with early Nigerians and shaped the socio-political constructs of their time (Okiro, 2005). Since early Nigerians were peasant farmers, they did not have the technologies to control or predict rain and many aspects of their farming needs. Like all problems they could not solve, they resorted to religion and believed in God to solve their problems (Olalekan, Olokor, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). Other critical issues like infertility or delays in birth, health failures, low intensity of wind, they worshipped and prayed to their Gods for help. The high priests were always the points of contact with the Gods – and in key communal issues, the high priests advised the kings and elders. Political control remained with the kings and elders but religion held much sway that the high priests also influenced the masses and key decisions (Wantu, 2018). With this level of communal process in decision-making, misinterpretation of religious laws or rituals was unlikely. Often religious rituals and beliefs did bring divisions in some families; beliefs like view of twins as curse, human sacrifice, etc. But majority did believe in such rituals, and the few victims of such crudeness could neither resist nor justify them as crimes at the time.

Fears and hopes for eternity are other factors that religion used to shape the socio-political constructs of early Nigerians (Ademolekun, 2018). Each patch had an established belief on the origin of the earth and what happens after death. This brought a sense of need for people to secure a place for themselves and their families by following the commands of religion (Iheanacho, 2009). In places like Ibo land, the dead were respected and believed to help and protect their families. People aimed to secure good names and positions after death by absolutely observing religious rituals and commands.

With complete loyalty to religious beliefs, the masses were easily governed and no misinterpretation of religious commands significantly affected the people or patterns of worship. The complete loyalty benefitted the kings and rulers since the synchronicity kept governance very simple and easily controllable. The rulers had little oppositions and there was no motivation to misinterpret or

influence misinterpretation of Gods' commands (Wantu, 2018; Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). In places in the north, the ruling class was established and no opposing force existed. In southern Nigeria especially in Ibo land, the eldest in families were respected and they represented their families in governance and decision-making for the patches. Thus, there was zero conflict between existing political structure and religious structure – and masses wholeheartedly accepted both the religious and political order. Hence, about zero religious violence existed.

Causes of Religious Violence in Recent Nigeria

Just like in early Nigeria, the 'need' factor also plays a role in the socio-political constructs of modern societies. What people need or want, and what is considered important by any sect of people generally affects the causes of religiously motivated violence in that society (Okiro, 2005, Achunike, 2008). From the early Nigerians till date, the components of needs in Maslow's theory of needs still largely exist but other new elements of wants have also emerged. The new elements emerged as result of many changes in the societies that have affected the socio-political constructs of all the earlier patches or enclaves (Ajah&Okoro, 2017). Example is the coming of foreigners in the north and south who brought new lifestyles and expectations to Nigerian societies (Okiro, 2005). Such new lifestyles and expectations of life meant that locals will expect new things from the political and religious arrangements in their local societies – and these may not easily be provided since the local arrangements or leaders have no experience in providing such foreign expectations (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). Thus, changes will occur in the local arrangements that will not be absolute or instant but will be considerably visible. Maslow's physiological needs of water, food, health and air are still basically needed and given priority in recent Nigeria. However, new elements such as want of political power and religious domination exist and play new roles. Unlike in early societies where the patches were homogenous, recent Nigerians went through a colonial leadership that unified the patches and created a huge heterogeneous state with nonmatching experiences, religious beliefs, social arrangements, and expectations of life (Achunike, 2008). This new socio-political arrangement also means that Nigeria contains those multifaceted earlier patches with different elements that affect their need factors. New needs like wants to dominate the new union now exist – this is only because the society is now heterogeneous unlike in early Nigeria where homogeneity was steady since there was no unification and people lived in small groups (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnay, 2018). A good picture of this struggle or want to dominate is captured in the comments of Ahmadu Bello, Sultan of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria who urged people in the North in following words, "The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and have control over their future" (Deji, 2019; Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018; Francis, 2017). Want of domination has influenced the socio-political arrangement which is now propagated through religion and created a new model of intolerance. Since northern Nigeria is largely Islamic, the want to dominate the unification with Islam exists and has created bases for extreme behaviors (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). Christianity also poses intentions to spread its beliefs and recruit new members but the approach of Christians to finding and recruiting members explicitly abhors coercion and violence. This is unlike Islam whose historical interpretation allows rooms for coercive recruitment. Many Islamic clerics in the north embraced the historical possibility that Islam might permit coerced recruitment to preach violent annexation of lands and carnage of non-Islamic believers to followers with backings from Islamic scriptures even when the referenced scriptures are misinterpreted (Emeh, 2011). This is seen in the cases of Boko Haram, Izala Movements, and other sects that have violently attacked other people or government agencies in Nigeria.

The leadership model in the new unification is also novel and allows people to easily change role models and religious figures (Henry & Peter, 2018). The earlier people that lived in smaller societies had few religious leaders that interpreted religious laws and rituals – and there was no easy means to find or connect with similar cultures or more aggressive versions of their cultures. The implication is that even if anyone developed more radicalized versions of the religions at the time, it will be difficult to find support

or followers since no connecting precedence existed (Wantu, 2018; Achunike, 2009). But with trade across the border in northern Nigeria and coming of colonialism, these patches were exposed to foreigners and extremist ideas that could have failed hitherto now find references, supports, and sympathizers – and found acceptance to grow. This is seen in the case of Mohammed Marwa who was initially from Cameroon and was able to reference experiences in both Nigeria and Cameroon to establish the Maitatsine Movement in northern Nigeria, then people in Nigeria that probably had once thought of more radical versions of Islam in any similarity with the Maitatsine Movement now easily found leadership in Mohammed Marwa – a diversity system that did not exist in the smaller groups of earlier era.

Patterns of Violent Crime

The root causes of religious violence in Nigeria have also precipitated patterns of violence that have existed centuries after centuries since the beginning of human existence. At the beginning, before Nigeria had contacts with foreigners, religious violence existed on Interest-Based Pattern.

Interest-Based Pattern is a pattern of violence that is witnessed from people with conflicting interests who rather employ religious narratives as bases for their violence (Ajah&Okoro, 2017). In early cultures, people lived side-by-side in small groups and each group had unique religions and leadership structures. Due to the size of the groups, each group was highly homogeneous and chances of conflict or violence was minimal. Nonetheless, stories still abound of violence between groups and between leaders in each group (Emeh, 2011). Such violent scenarios were more political than religious but were often propagated with religious chants and rituals. In Ibo land, far down Southern Nigeria, the religious tradition covered everything. People hardly did anything without consulting or referencing ‘Chineke’ or ‘NdiMmuo (Igbo, 2012).’ The effect is that – once the warriors or fighters are convinced by the high priests that the opponents must be killed, the fighters go to war with much energy and almost get fanatic with killing or destroying the opposing groups (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). This was the first form of religious fanaticism and was obvious in wars that were mostly political. There is no record of any ancient religion in Nigeria that preached the killing of people in other groups as key ritual or permitted such interpretations. More often than not, wars in early days emerged from failed negotiations, prides, interests – desire to subjugate groups. Once the wars have commenced, fighters and warriors are then decorated with religious beliefs to the extent of being fanatic in killing opposing groups.

Changes in Patterns of Violence

Since the coming of foreigners with Islam and Christianity, many changes in the socio-political landscape of Nigeria have occurred. The small groups that occupied the geographical area currently called Nigeria have become politically unified under one government and most cultures have become mixed with other cultures (Achunike, 2009). The Interest-Based Pattern of violence still exists in this later stage of Nigeria but with changes in interest and models of propagation. Islam and Christianity came with much multi-polarity in religious leadership. Unlike in early days when high priests were few and series of processes are required for anyone to become a high priest, in recent times; anyone can call himself a pastor, priest or Imam over a period of a night. It has become too easy for anyone to attain the level of religious leadership without a set qualification, training or set of achievements. This created a careless multi-polarity in religious leadership and allowed many interpretations and interests to religious laws and doctrine (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2019). Thus, anyone that sees opportunity in destabilizing an existing system simply hires others to build followership through distorted religious teachings and then unleashes violence to the extent of total breakdown in social order (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). While some hire others to establish violence, others build the followership by themselves and initiate violence. There is no particular instance that can be cited to this theory but a key question that exemplifies it is – ‘how does religious violent groups like Boko Haram or killer herdsmen raise money to buy weapons, ammunitions, and other essentials that make their existence and successful operation possible?’

Method-Based Pattern emerged in recent times. It came as foreigners brought their religions to Nigeria and established considerable acceptance of these religions across diverse groups (Wantu, 2018, Ajah&Okoro, 2017). Those who assimilated the different new religions began to behave differently from

other people and worshipped differently. Nigeria, as we know it, became filled with different people, with different lifestyles and different modes of worship. It was at this time that Uthman Dan Fodio initiated his war against syncretism and made people in northern Nigeria to either convert to Islam or be killed (Okpa, Ajah&Okunola, 2018). This pattern of violence still exists today in diverse forms. An instance is the Imam in Abuja who recently ordered his followers to murder a woman because she was Christian. When there is difference in method of worship, there are usually also differences in lifestyle (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). When people of one religion cannot tolerate the sight of this difference and proceed to unleash violence on other people based on this difference, such scenario is Method-Based Pattern of religious violence. It is particularly difficult to know whether Boko Haram or Izala or any of the existing religiously violent groups belong to this pattern (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018). This reason is because their aims are rarely stated, often changes or are totally incomprehensible. It is however more plausible to believe that some members of such groups joined because their intolerance of religious differences in their communities. Method-Based Pattern emerges from the want of people to dominate their environment and other people in it with their own views and ways of life (Ajah&Okoro, 2017). When such goal is pursued to the level of fanaticism, a brutal model of serial killing is unleashed against other religions or cultures in communities.

Need-Based Pattern is a recent pattern that emerged as societies separated governance from religion (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018, Ajah&Okoro, 2017). In earlier days, when it fails to rain or sun gets too hot, people do not blame their leaders but pray to their gods for forgiveness and help (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi& Charles, 2018). At the time, people looked to their gods for solutions but at the guidance of the leaders. With coming of foreigners and unification of Nigeria, governance became separated from religion and people started looking to their leaders for solutions to their problems. When the governments fail to provide solution, individuals with ideas emerge, selling distorted and extremist ideas as causes of the problems and violence as solution; promising wealth, stability, and favor from God (Egbegi, Ajah&Ogbonnaya, 2018, Ajah&Okoro, 2017). People then follow; out of hunger, poverty, and frustration. Such patterns can be seen in the far north where poverty can be extreme and sickness can be severe. Violence emanating from this model is usually seen by perpetrators as only means of survival, as such, very brutal and merciless.

Theoretical Formation

The structural functionalism is the theoretical framework. The functional approach in Sociology was borrowed from the analogy of organism in the biological sciences in which all the body organs, in any living organism, have a kind of interconnectivity which links them together. Each of these organs plays a certain role for the survival of the organism. In any situation where any of the organs malfunctions, it is believed that this malfunctioning might affect the life of the organism Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer (Eteng, Echiegu, Eteng, Okereke, Otu&Nweke, 2007).

In this view, the functionalists, therefore, argue that the society is made up of groups and institutions which constitute the whole. They state further that each of these institutions that form the society plays a part for the survival of the system. From the foregoing, functionalists view society as a system, a set of interconnected parts which, together form a whole. This makes society the primary unit of functional analysis. The focus of attention is how the basic parts of the society, that is, the various institutions, such as the military, police, religious organizations, family, political, economic, legal, and educational institutions co-relate and function for the survival of the entire society (Ajah, Nwokeoma&Okpan, 2017). Indeed, the failure of political leaders to deliver on their campaign promises has escalated the incidence of religious violence in Nigeria thereby threatening the peaceful coexistence of the country. The country is gradually degenerating into Hobbesian State which was characterized by anarchy, nasty and brutish.

Other root causes like interests of religious leaders and intolerance by worshippers have also precipitated huge violence among each religion and outside religions as well. All these elements create a violent system that affects the whole of Nigeria. Religion is a key functional part of Nigeria society that

has the capacity to swiftly influence the whole parts of the Nigerian society with peace or violence – and addressing religious violence is one key way of addressing general violence in Nigeria.

Solution to Religious Violence in Nigeria

To address religious violence in Nigeria and Africa, the root causes have to be strategically targeted and dismantled. Two possible approaches are; a unification program that would reconcile the differences between/inside religions and an extensive care by governments to address the basic needs of citizens. Most people choose violence as optional alternative to poverty. Government should endeavor to provide basic infrastructure and healthy economy that will create jobs and enable people to live up to basic standards – and not fall prey to external interests or radical ideas that feed on poverty in order to get people to do their violent biddings. Since unification of the small groups that make-up Nigeria and other Africa countries, differences and frictions are expected. These differences often brew to become large basis for violence and religious killings. A comprehensive program by government officials to identify key points of differences between cultures and religions, and bring reconciliation to these differences will positively establish strong foundation of peace in Nigeria and Africa.

Conclusion

Man is, by nature, a religious animal. That insinuates that religion did not come to Nigeria or Africa with the foreigners. It has always existed and been part of the African people and systems. Foreigners brought Islam and Christianity to Nigeria – and both religions have made many changes in the Nigerian people and lifestyles. Early Nigerians, who practiced African Traditional Religion, had little or no religiously motivated violence compared with later Nigerians after the coming of Islam and Christianity. This paper has journeyed into the root causes of these changes and identified needs, interests, and methods at the basis of these change. The changes also precipitated changes in patterns of violence which the paper identified and studied. It also recommends extra efforts by governments to alleviate poverty and help people provide their needs, and intentional efforts to reconcile religious differences as major steps to curb religious violence in Nigeria.

1. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

2. Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

References

- Achunike, H. C. (2008). Religious practices in Nigeria as source of social conflict. *Journal of Liberal Studies*, 12 (1&2), 286–295.
- Ajah, B. O., & Okoro, I. T. (2017). Diagnosis and prognosis of the Nigerian recession. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22 (8), 41-48.
- Ajah, B. O., Nwokeoma, B. N., & Okpan, S O. (2017). Socio-economic implication of kidnapping and hostage taking in Southern Nigeria. *Journal of Law and Judicial System*, 6 (2), 51-59.
- Armstrong, K. (2015, March 10). The myth of religious violence. *Tricycle*. Retrieved from <http://www.tricycle.com>.
- Balogun, K.A. (1988). Religious fanaticism in Nigeria: problems and solutions. In Balogun, I.A.B. et. al. (eds.): *The place of religion in the development of Nigeria Ilorin*. Ilorin: Department of Religions, University of Ilorin .
- BBC News. (2016). *Nigeria violence: More than 70 killed in Abuja bus blast*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27018751>
- Cavanaugh, W. T. (n.d). Does religion cause violence? Retrieved from <http://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu>.

- Chris, O. (2006, October 7). Herdsmen kill parishioners; seek death of businessman Victor Nwankwo. *Vanguard*, P45.
- CNN.(2018). *Boko Haram Fast Facts*. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/09/world/boko-haram-fast-facts/index.html>
- Crenshaw, M. (2000). The psychology of terrorism: an agenda for 21st century. In *Political psychology*, 21, 404-420.
- Deji, O. (2019). *Christianity in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://the234project.com/arts-and-culture/nigeria/christianity-in-nigeria/>
- Economist. (2019). *The fight against Islamic State is moving to Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/07/14/the-fight-against-islamic-state-is-moving-to-africa>
- Egbegi, F. R., Ajah, B. O., & Ogbonnaya C. (2018). *Combating Boko Haram insurgency through a superior ideology: the role of the federal government*. *European Journal of Political Science Studies*, 1 (2), 13-22.
- Elu, J., & Prince, G. (2015). *The Causes and consequences of terrorism in Africa*. The Oxford Handbook of Africa and Economics.
- Emeh, O. (2011, 5 January). Analysing Nigeria's current crime surge. *The Vanguard*, P61.
- Encarta Dictionary
- Eteng, I. A., Emma-Echiegu, N., Eteng, M. J., Okereke, O. J., Otu, S., & Nweke, J. O. (2007). *Fundamentals of sociology*. Larry & Caleb Publishing Ltd
- Fitzduff, M. (2011). *Just enough to hate – not enough to love*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, P.147.
- Francis, A. O. (2017, August 23). Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 is not the “will of god”. *Vanguard Newspaper*, p63
- Gabriel, T. W., & Hillary, C. A. (2014). Religion: Past and Present in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)*, 17 (2), 156-174.
- Goodreads (2019). *Fanaticism Quotes*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/fanaticism>
- Harvard Divinity School.(2019). *Islam in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/islam-nigeria>
- Henry, U., & Peter, D. (2018, 23 April). Killings: Senate summons Buhari as herdsmen attack another Benue church. *Vanguard Newspaper*, p48.
- Igbo, P. (2012). *Treasure of Difference*. Enugu: Clacom, P10.
- Iheanacho, N. N. (2009).** A critical look at Contemporary Nigerian Christianity. *International Journal of Theology & Reformed Tradition*, 1, 104-117.
- Isaac, I. (2016, June 13th). Islamic cleric ordered youths to kill female preacher. *This Day*, P43.
- Kettani, H. (2004). Muslim population in Africa: 1950 - 2020,' *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, 1 (2), 1-13.
- Lee, W. (2012). *Burke was right: man is a religious animal*. Retrieved from <https://leeware.wordpress.com/2012/03/08/burke-was-right-man-is-a-religious-animal/>
- Mokhtar, B. B. (2006). *Religion, Religious Fanaticism and Hate Crimes in the United States*. Cairn Info. *Revue française d'études américaines*, 110 (4), 107-121.
- Okiro, M. (2005). *Proliferation of illegal arms and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria*. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation.
- Okpa, J. T., Ajah, B. O., & Okunola, R. A. (2018). Religious fundamentalism and sustainable development in Nigeria: understanding the intricacies. *Journal of Religion and Theology*, 2 (2), 12-18.
- Olalekan, A., Olorokor, F., Hanafi, A., & Charles, J. (2018, May 1). killing of Christians in Nigeria must stop, says Trump. *Punch Newspaper*, p 56.
- Rolando Y, W. (2017). *Religious Beliefs In Nigeria*. Worldatlas. Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-nigeria.html>

- Sahara Reporters. (2016). *How Suspected Muslim Fanatics Hacked Female Redeemed Church Preacher To Death In Abuja*. Retrieved from <http://saharareporters.com/2016/07/11/how-suspected-muslim-fanatics-hacked-female-redeemed-church-preacher-death-abuja>
- Sani, T. (2016, May 16th). *Shocking revelation: 100,000 killed, two million displaced by Boko Haram insurgency, Borno Governor says*. *Premium Newspaper*, p45.
- Sontag, F. (1990). Political violence and liberation theology. *JETS*, 33 (1), 85-94.
- Sulaiman, K. O. (2016). Religious violence in contemporary Nigeria: implications and options for peace and stability order. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 29 (1) 85 – 103.
- Sulaiman, K.O. (2004). Jerusalem as a uniting factor for Muslims and Christians: historical and scriptural grounds. *The IAFOR Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2 (1), 39-45.
- The Guardian* (2013, July 2). Doesn't religion cause most of the conflict in the world? *Guardian*, P13.
- UK Parliament.(2003). *Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales*. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldselect/ldrelof/95/9517.htm>
- Urban Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=religious%20fanatic>
- Vivian, F. (2018). *History of How Christianity came to Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://www.legit.ng/1145690-history-christianity-nigeria.html>
- Wantu, J. (2018, 25 April). Suspected herdsmen kill two Catholic priests, 17 others. *The Guardian*, P37.
- World Watch Monitor. (2018). *Nigeria: Pastor and three sons burned alive among at least 20 killed in latest Plateau massacre*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/nigeria-pastor-and-three-sons-burned-alive-among-at-least-20-killed-in-latest-plateau-massacre/>

RELIGIOUS FANATICISM AND CHANGING PATTERNS OF VIOLENT CRIME IN NIGERIA

By

Onyejegbu, Dominic Chukwuemeka

Social Sciences Unit, School of General Studies,
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria;

&

Egbegi, Friday Raphael

Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria

&

Benjamin Okorie Ajah

Social Sciences Unit, School of General Studies,
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract

Fanaticism has brewed into different forms in the Nigerian context – and the gravest is religious fanaticism. It has taken hold of most clans, religions, and ethnic groups across Nigeria. Religion has always existed in Nigerian societies and also has fanaticism but the level of violence precipitated by this fanaticism is apparently unprecedented. This paper journeys into the beginning of religious fanaticism in Nigeria and its changing patterns of violence. It highlights the root causes of religious violence in Nigeria and visible patterns in this violence. At the end, the paper recommends that Nigerian governments initiate comprehensive programs to reconcile the religious differences that have evolved over time between Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religions. The paper adopted structural functionalism theoretical formation and gathered data from textbooks, e-books, journals, online articles, newspapers, and magazines.

Key words: Christianity, Crime, Islam, Religious fanaticism, Religious violence.

Introduction

Religious fanaticism entails violent and unreasonable religious enthusiasm. It is excessive irrational zeal to defend one's religion and consequently become destructive agent of religious disharmony in the society (Sulaiman, 2016; Balogun 1988; Sulaiman 2014). In Africa, Two dominating religious faiths are Christianity and Islam (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). In Nigeria, the two faiths are diametrically popular with Christianity highly practiced in Southern Nigeria and Islam highly practiced in the North (Ajah, Okpan & Nwokeoma, 2017; Sontag, 1990). Christians in Northern Nigeria see themselves as minorities as Moslems in the South also see themselves as minorities (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2017). Neither faith has always used the notions of minority in positive sense, but often to imply less patronized faith, underrepresented or marginalized group (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). Both have used the excuse of minority, extinction, and righteous hunt for memberships to maneuver for domination of Nigeria's people and resources. This has been peaceful at some times and violently conflicting at other times (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpa, 2017). At little other times, minorities and divisions exist within each religious group along the lines of beliefs, methods of worships, and expected outcomes of eternity (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). This is seen in Shiite and Sunni Moslem groups of Islam and orthodox and Pentecostal branch churches of Christianity. These divisions have always led to disparities and violent conflicts that break both constitutional laws and humanity principles. This paper is a journey into the root causes of religious fanaticisms in Nigeria, how the root causes have fermented violent crime patterns, and how these patterns of violent crime are changing because of changes in the root causes.

In July 2016, a Nigerian Islamic cleric purportedly ordered his followers to kill a Christian woman who does early morning preaching in her neighborhood (Isaac, 2016). The Islamic Cleric and his followers believed their understandings of God to be pure and much more correct compared to the preaching of the Christian woman (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). Even as both religions are unique in understandings of God and meaning of sanctity in human conduct, the cleric believed the ways of Islam to be supreme and was deeply irritated by the Christian woman's understandings of God (Sahara Reporters, 2016). The cleric mounted light warnings and then proceeded to order the woman to death. In another event, 15 predominately Christian communities in the same local government area in Plateau State came under intense attack from an armed Moslem group in August 2018 (World Watch Monitor, 2018). A Christian reverend, his wife and children were particularly burnt alive in their church building in that attack. The attack culminated with over 230 death casualties and more than 11,500 refugees who fled their homes (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). In each of these cases, Nigeria was not at war and neither was Islam at war with Christianity. Each was a case of group of people who misconstrued the teachings of Islam and were motivated by this error to behave violently against other people (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). Countless of such events have been recorded and a lot more have gone unnoticed. It usually starts from subtle and tiny places like Moslem sons disowning their fathers for being Christians or Christian brothers disowning their fellow brothers for being Moslems. From such little psychological and emotional intolerance, all forms of brutal violence brew and manifest in the bigger forms that shock the conscience of the world (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018; Armstrong, 2015). This is prevalent in multi-religious communities in Plateau and Kaduna states where sons murder their fathers for being Christians or for being Moslems. It all starts from these little segregations in the mind and keep growing till it consumes the conscience.

In a more drastic case, an influential Islamic cleric in Borno State called Mohammed Yunus developed his own radical belief versions of Islam. As a leader and teacher of Islamic principles, he quickly drew followers to his radical beliefs (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). He and his followers were locally referred to as Nigerian Taliban because the group held similarities in beliefs and conducts as Taliban, a renowned terrorist organization (CNN, 2018). The members considered themselves as noncitizens of Nigeria and failed to participate or obey any governance system that is not based on Sharia Law. Gradually, the group recused themselves from the general Islamic teachings and gatherings in Borno State and withdrew and lived in forests (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2017). In 2003, the group began peddling attacks on government properties, institutions, Christians, Moslems, women, children, and without respect or pity to anything (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). In April 2014, the group orchestrated a suicide-bombing attack on a major market in Nigeria's capital that left over 70 dead casualties and 124 casualties severely injured (BBC, 2016). Between 2002 and 2018, the group killed over 100,000 casualties and displaced over 2million people from their homes (Sani, 2016). They divide Nigeria and humanity into infidels and faithful. Every member of their group or whoever practiced Islam to the terms of their dictate is considered a faithful and every other person is an infidel – Christians, traditional worshippers, atheists, other Moslems, and etcetera (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). They employ the most brutal methods and kill all nonmembers without judgment, negotiation or chance of redemption. Their operations have displaced millions and killed hundreds of thousands of people across the Lake-Chad Basin area of West Africa. They call themselves Boko Haram.

These constitute religious fanaticism. A fanatic is defined by Encarta Dictionary as an extremist; a holder of extreme or irrational enthusiasms or beliefs, especially in religion or politics (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018; Encarta Dictionary). Urban Dictionary in Okpa, Ajah & Okunola (2018) describes a religious fanatic as someone who takes a perfectly good creed and assumes that because they pretend to follow it, they are allowed to do anything they want even if they don't really follow the creed at all, usually insisting that if others do not follow their ways, they will be damned (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018; Urban Dictionary). The errors are not usually with the principles or creeds, but with the interpretations of the fanatic. As Salman Rushdie noted in his Satanic Verses, 'From the beginning, men used God to justify the unjustifiable' (Goodreads, 2019). Same applies to religious fanatics; they use perfect religious creeds or beliefs to justify their extreme and outrageous acts. A good instance is

Mohammed Yusuf who exhorts his followers to reject the state or any type of knowledge that contradicts Islam or Sharia law (Economist, 2019). Even when most states in northern Nigeria have implemented Sharia law, Yusuf insisted that his form of Sharia law was the only true form of Sharia law – and as such, killed and destroyed other Moslems that do not follow his definitions of Sharia law and Islam (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2017). Others often call such acts Jihadism and brandish it as justifiable reason for extreme forms of Islamic beliefs. The Koran explicitly stated and rejected these interpretations and acts in the name of Islam.

Among the people there is he whose discourse on the life of the world pleases you, and he calls on God as witness to what is in his heart, yet he is an unyielding and antagonistic adversary. When he turns and leaves, he walks about corrupting the earth, destroying crops and livestock – God loves not corruption (Q2:204–205) – (Guardian, 2013:57).

In many corners of the world, such violent acts based on religious extremism are considered crime as they break major parts of constitutional and humanity laws of all countries and people (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). In United States, they are subtly referred to as ‘hate crimes.’ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) considers hate crime as a criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias, against a given race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or ethnicity/national origin (Mokhtar, 2006). Such forms of violence and crime tend to involve more brutality, force, and highly motivated than other forms of crime. The constitutions of the United Kingdom identifies such offences as crimes motivated by religious prejudice and are punishable by law (UK Parliament, 2003). In many ways, religious fanaticized activities threaten Nigeria even to the level of its sovereignty. From destruction of government properties, murder of innocent citizens to obstruction of government activities or claim of sovereignty of Nigeria’s soil inside Nigeria, the Nigerian constitution is multiply breached as many crimes are committed in such acts.

The intention of this work is to understand the root causes of religious fanaticism in Nigeria by going from Nigeria to the rest of African countries, how these root causes have precipitated violent patterns, and changes in these violent patterns due to changes in root causes. This introductory section opens a window on how religion-related violence has fared in Nigeria in recent times. The first section studies the history of religious faiths in Nigeria and the emergence of the tripartite that make-up the current socio-religious status quo. The second section studies colonialism and yardsticks of religious control – and emerging patterns of religion motivated violence crimes in Nigeria. The third part looks at concerted efforts being made to tame religious fanaticism and related crimes in Nigeria. The fourth part details the theoretical formation of the paper and the last part suggests possible means to curb religious fanaticism and bring order to Africa’s religious front.

Genealogy of Religious Faiths in Africa

It is hard, if not impossible, to explicitly state dates and manners in which religion came to Africa. Nigeria was discovered religious with all the beliefs, rituals and components that make-up a full-fledged and functioning religious system (Igbo, 2012). Perhaps, one would agree with Edmund Burke who stated in his defense of religion that man is, by constitution, a religious animal (Lee, 2012). Nigeria already had working religious systems before the coming of Europeans or any foreigner. These forms of religions are called African Traditional Religion (ATR).

- **African Traditional Religion (ATR)**

Man is, by constitution, a religious animal is the best answer to how and when religion came to Nigeria. Many folks have tried answering similar questions on history of African Traditional Religion by implying that early Africans faced daunting challenges and conceded to the ideas of superior Supreme Being to seek help, others imply that early Africans were subdued by the awes of nature to worship natural things in their environment for favors and supernatural helps (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). Gabriel and Hillary (2014) suggest that African Traditional Religion actually emerged as a result of early Africans responding to mysteries surrounding their environments like huge rivers and rocks, and feeling a sense to recognize a supreme creator of all things (Gabriel & Hillary, 2014). These led to formation of key beliefs, rituals and eventually the African Traditional Religion. At best, these are all intelligent guesses and have

no scientifically compelling data on how and when African Traditional Religion began (Igbo, 2012). The difficulty in understanding how and when African Traditional Religion actually started is that there are no writings, records, museums or any form of repository that run across centuries and depict the actual stages in the development of African Traditional Religion and its worshippers. Igbo (2012) notes that the only form of knowledge passage in African Traditional Religion is oral communication, which is ineffective, not scientifically convincing, and difficult to track. Perhaps applying scientific methods to understanding African Traditional Religion is in itself an ineffective approach, maybe there should be another method of inquiry that will effectively unveil the histories, dates, and key players of African Traditional Religion in a way that is more convincing than mere words of mouth from people in the millionth positions of a profoundly long chain of storytellers.

The early traditional worshippers had diverse opinions and religious systems (Elu & Prince, 2015). With wide ethnic spread across Nigeria, so were religious beliefs and traditions. Majority of people in southeastern Nigeria were Ibos and believed in the mythology of Chineke (Igbo, 2012). The cosmological analogy has it that Chineke (Chukwu) is the Supreme Being, almighty that cannot be contacted directly by the living. The living has to go through intermediaries like 'ndi mmuo' - which are spirits of dead relatives (Igbo, 2012). The 'ndi mmuo' are usually summoned or reached by high priests, who are living, in religious rituals. Thus, the interaction goes from the high priests or priestess to 'ndi mmuo' to Chineke (Supreme Being). The 'ndi mmuo' are considered lesser Gods or Beings to Chineke, the Supreme and Almighty Being (Igbo, 2012). Offerings and rituals to these Gods are done with personal belongings in the forms of farm produce, livestock, etc. In some cases, human sacrifices are made but systems for the selection of whom to sacrifice were usually very much established and accepted by majority. The Ibo Gods preached peace, discipline, love, and goodness in human conduct (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). The governance systems in different enclaves were built around the deities or local religious systems of the people. The varieties were not much, but are significant at some points. The Ibo land was a vast land and people lived in groups or enclaves. One enclave could have human sacrifice as a key component of its tradition while the neighboring enclave abhors human sacrifice in its tradition. The governance systems were much linked to respective religious systems (Igbo, 2012). Governance was highly democratic and conducted through elders in each family or clans and decisions were highly unanimous. People feared and respected the Gods and obeyed the peaceful commands of their religions. Interpretations of Gods' principles were done by the high priests who were respected and are punished by the Gods if they misadvise the people. The priests usually advise the elders and leaders of the community – and the elders, more like legislative councils, make the final decisions (Igbo, 2012). With this form of decision-making process and interpretation of Gods' wills, random misinterpretations that often lead to fanaticism did not exist. Violence was almost negligible and only existed in inter-community wars which were mostly more political than religious.

In the north, majority of the citizens were Hausas. They lived under governance structure that looked like a monarchial system. Each enclave had a ruling class of priestesses that dictated the wills of the Gods (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). Unlike the Ibo traditions, Hausa traditions had both political and religious governance headed by the priestesses. The ruling class shaped interpretations of law, good conduct, and wills of the Gods. It is uncertain whether there was violence, killings or disagreements between the ruling class and the masses (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okunola, 2017). A common ATR in the region was Bori. Bori priestesses communed with the Gods in rituals employing ecstatic dance and provided healing and divination throughout the kingdom.

In Southwestern Nigeria, the Yoruba people lived under the cosmological belief that all humans who do good and help others in beneficial ways shall achieve transcendence and find their destinies in Orun-Rere (the spiritual realm of those who do good and beneficial things). Olodumare is considered the Supreme Being and is usually worship or prayed to through a priest of divination called Babalawo (Igbo, 2012). The masses feared and respected Olodumare and misinterpretations of God's wills were not common.

At the beginnings, the region called Nigeria was as diverse almost as it is today. People lived in enclaves and worshipped different Gods using different rituals. A common feature is that each region and

enclave feared and respected their Gods, interpretations of wills of God came from respected high priests who are believed to be punished if they misadvise the people. Thus, random misinterpretations that often lead to extreme or fanatic beliefs did not exist. Most of the religions preached peace, love and good conduct – and people believed, obeyed, and lived in relatively more peaceful environments from religious violence.

- **Coming of Islam**

Islam is noted to have visibly arrived Nigeria in the 11th and 12th centuries through trade, migration, and travels of Islamic wanderers and scholars. It is rumored that the old cities of Kanem and Bornu had been in contact with Islamic traders since as early as the 9th century, but many records are consistent with 11th and 12th centuries as the time Islam was visibly noticed in northern Nigeria (Kettani, 2004). As Islam spread, it connected many converts in northern Nigeria to a network of Islamic worshippers that ran across the whole of North Africa down to Middle East. Arabic was the major language of Islam and it quickly became the central language of trade and commerce across the borders in northern Nigeria. During the 15th century, the Malian Songhay Empire spread tentacles to Northern Nigeria's Hausaland and established a dynasty under Askiiyya Muhammad (Harvard Divinity School, 2019). Trade brought the Hausa people to flourishing central cities like Kano and Hausa quickly became an important language in Kano to help locals communicate with the new traders. Hausa and Arabic became very popular languages for trade, Islamic literatures and scholarships (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). Islam spread and people became connected to Islamic scholarships, literatures and intellectual networks (Kettani, 2018). For several centuries, Askiiyya Muhammad dynasty provided peace, spiritual supports, and security. The dynasty spread with Islam and reached considerable corners of the north.

In the 19th century, Usman Dan Fodio led a Jihadist war against religious syncretism in the north – proclaiming Islam as the only true form of religion and Allah as the only true God. Dan Fodio's principle was simple, convert to Islam or die (Kettani, 2004). He replaced Askiiyya Muhammad and founded the Sokoto Caliphate. He fought against perceived injustices prevalent in the reigning dynasty. His wars quickly gained ground and spread across greater north and other regions that would later become Nigeria. Dan Fodio's styles of Islam was more brutal and violent than the earlier dynasty of Askiiyya Muhammad (Kettani, 2004). Dan Fodio employed coerced conversion while earlier dynasties preferred more subtle methods. After the death of Dan Fodio in 1903, his aggressive methods of Islam were further propagated by his brother and son. In the same century, other individuals with even more aggressive and violent versions of Islam emerged (Ademolekun, 2018). There was the Maitatsine Movement propagated by Mohammed Marwa. He was born in northern Cameroon and migrated to Nigeria in 1945 where he started his controversial preaching on the Qur'an (Cavanaugh, n.d). Marwa spoke against the use of cars, watches, radios, and possession of money more than necessary. These ideologies were twisted and used as bases to attack government institutions, ordinary Nigerians, and every other thing that is not the Maitatsine Movement. By 1972, the movement had built impressive number of militant followers called Yat Tatsine. In 1980, Yat Tatsine's violent attacks on other religious figures and police attracted the attention of the Nigerian army (Crenshaw, 2000). With the army's involvement, more than 5000 lives were lost including the life of Mohammed Marwa. After Marwa's death, his movement was continued by his followers and intensified with more violence. Their riots caused death of over 3000 people in 1984, also killed 1000 in Yola and displaced about 6000 (Ademolekun, 2018). Other incidents of death and violence against the public were incited by the group. The major leader of Maitatsine Movement was arrested in 2014 in what is hoped to be a successful tame of the horror. Beside the Dan Fodio movement and Mohammed Marwa, other theories and brutal versions of Islam has also emerged like the Izala Movement, Darul Movement, Boko Haram, etc. There are absolute differences between these movements at some points, only relative difference at others points and zero difference at others. For instance, the Dan Fodio Movement and Boko Haram may not be totally comparable but they all started with ideologies and crafting a unique version of Islam – may be extreme and violent versions (Egbegi, Ajah & Okunola, 2018).

What is notable is that each version of Islam is highly connected to the governance system of the group or area where it exists. The head of the movement is usually the political and religious leader of such groups and rules as he wishes and twists mainstream ideas to suit his desires. The members usually believe

the teachings not from shared beliefs but from the interpretations of the leader. Violence is usually less within each movement but intense and brutal between the members of the group and nonmembers (Crenshaw, 2000). In each case, the first step to formation of any extremity in Islam is to reject the teachings of all other Islamic believers, then divide humanity into believers and infidels.

- **Coming of Christianity**

Trade brought Christianity to Nigeria in the 15th century. It was first introduced in the form of Roman Catholicism by Portuguese traders. This first wave of introducing Christianity to Nigeria was unsuccessful. Second wave came in the 1800s with the return of Roman Catholic Missionaries. It came to Benin Kingdom, it failed – then came to Itsekiri Kingdom, it succeeded. The first major convert of the Roman Catholic Missionaries was the son of Olu of Warri who got baptized and renamed to Sebastian (Vivian, 2018).

African Traditional Religion was already established before the coming of Christianity. Locals received the new beliefs with skepticism and disinterestedness. The local elders and chiefs were more interested in guns, goods and trade than the chants of Christianity (Igbo, 2012). The missionaries applied no pattern of force or coercion – and lived side-by-side with Nigerians without locals’ concern on what Christianity meant (Igbo, 2012). Sebastian of Warri later became the Olu of Warri and gave considerable entry support to the missionaries. However, unlike Northern Nigeria, Southern Nigeria was largely democratic and decentralized. The views of the king or Olu do not necessarily dictate the views of the elders or final decisions in a community. Christianity did not yet make much progress in entering Nigeria. The game changer was black missionaries who were former slaves from Nigeria that returned home with the missionaries to preach Christianity (Deji, 2019; Ademolun, 2018). Locals, chiefs, and families saw people like them that speak their language – and started listening. Christianity started gaining plausibility and spread quickly through Southern Nigeria. The missionaries started making changes to matters that touched the nerves of African traditions like killing of twins, polygamy, human sacrifices, etcetera, and promoted campaigns to end such traditions. This started creating divisions within existing community structures and within the churches (Fitzduf, 2014). Some prospective converts became stalled by the ideological conflicts and a few converts saw the teachings as if though the church was trying to control them. Southern Nigerians were accustomed to independence in leadership and thinking – any act or gesture to gain absolute control of another person seemed irritating at best (Ademolekun, 2018). It seemed as the Europeans and Americans were controlling the locals both politically and ecclesiastically. The African Christians rebelled, broke away from the European churches and started forming their own churches. These movements brought major restructuring to Christianity models in Nigeria. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a former slave from Yoruba land, formed his St. Peter’s Church in 1853. Christ Church Army was carved away from Anglican Church in 1910. A few other churches also carved away from Christ Church Army with their own philosophies (Deji, 2019). Revolutions did occur in the trends of Christianity in Nigeria – but at no point was this engulfed in violence or killing or physical fights like the revolutions of Dan Fodio and few other Islamic clerics after him. Thus, the history of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria took separate parts – one violent and the other peaceful.

A Tripartite Status Quo

The history of religion in Nigeria started with the African Traditional Religion even though no particular date or timeline can be assigned to its beginning. In early Northern Nigeria, the systems of African Traditional Religion very largely controlled governance. In the South, the systems of African Traditional Religion had huge influence on governance but not to very large extent (Ademolekun, 2018). The legislature-styled governance system in Southern Nigeria made religion a second tier and subjective to final decisions of the elders (legislators). Islam came in the 9th century and Christianity in 15th century. Islam was introduced to Northern Nigeria and Christianity to Southern Nigeria – and both competed with Africa Traditional Religions in each region for ascendancy (Deji, 2019). Islamic promoters consistently used force, violence and killings to spread their faith in the north. Their motto was simple, ‘convert to Islam or die.’ This initial creed set a violent-styled tradition for Islam and subsequent promoters of Islam in Nigeria have employed violence in different forms and for different reasons to achieve their goals

(Ademolekun, 2018). Promoters of Christianity employed ‘chatty-styled’ conviction method instead, talked to people about Christianity and hoped that they convert to Christianity. However, the teachings of Christianity had much contrariety with local traditions of many communities in the South – and some point, created arguments, anger or hatred between converted community members and non-converted community members. It is expected that such ideological conflicts should have created major violent scenarios at some points, but extensive records of such violence do not exist or are not easily accessible.

A natural dichotomy took shape; Islam in Northern Nigeria, Christianity in Southern Nigeria, and patches of Africa Traditional Religion spread across all regions. The division is not intentional, but apparent, and has evolved over time. According to a survey by Pew Forum in 2010, Nigerian population is 48.8% Islam and 49.3% Christianity (Rolando, 2017). Almost 50-50 division, then the rest of the population belong to other religions mainly African Traditional Religions. This forms a tripod arrangement of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion as the main religious components in Nigeria.

Socio-Political Constructs of Religious Development in Nigeria: Before and After

In early Nigerian societies when the political arrangement called Nigeria was nonexistent, people lived in patches and a socio-political construct was uniquely associated with each patch (Ademolekun, 2018). Each socio-political construct was shaped by political, religious, and social norms. The constructs determined how people lived, imagined their futures, and were governed (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). In Warri Kingdom for instance, the decision of who becomes the Olu of Warri was partly determined by religious rituals. In all other patches, religions were parts of traditions and further shaped every aspect of human life from political behaviors to social relationships (Achunike, 2008). Understanding how these constructs are shaped is fundamental to understanding the root causes of violence and religious fanaticism in Nigeria.

Causes of Religious Violence in Earlier Nigeria

A key determinant of how societies are influenced in any age is need; based on the needs of the masses, a particular social norm, religious belief, political or leadership structure would survive or get completely waned (Ajah & Okoro, 2017). These needs vary from society to society and age to age. It could be need for land to farm or joke to laugh; or it could be need for infrastructure to support industry or swimming pools for relaxation (Chris, 2006). In Maslow’s work on theory of needs, he identified physiological needs like needs for food, water, air and sleep as basics that man cannot survive without. Such needs were prevalent with early Nigerians and shaped the socio-political constructs of their time (Okiro, 2005). Since early Nigerians were peasant farmers, they did not have the technologies to control or predict rain and many aspects of their farming needs. Like all problems they could not solve, they resorted to religion and believed in God to solve their problems (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). Other critical issues like infertility or delays in birth, health failures, low intensity of wind, they worshipped and prayed to their Gods for help. The high priests were always the points of contact with the Gods – and in key communal issues, the high priests advised the kings and elders. Political control remained with the kings and elders but religion held much sway that the high priests also influenced the masses and key decisions (Wantu, 2018). With this level of communal process in decision-making, misinterpretation of religious laws or rituals was unlikely. Often religious rituals and beliefs did bring divisions in some families; beliefs like view of twins as curse, human sacrifice, etc. But majority did believe in such rituals, and the few victims of such crudeness could neither resist nor justify them as crimes at the time.

Fears and hopes for eternity are other factors that religion used to shape the socio-political constructs of early Nigerians (Ademolekun, 2018). Each patch had an established belief on the origin of the earth and what happens after death. This brought a sense of need for people to secure a place for themselves and their families by following the commands of religion (Iheanacho, 2009). In places like Ibo land, the dead were respected and believed to help and protect their families. People aimed to secure good names and positions after death by absolutely observing religious rituals and commands.

With complete loyalty to religious beliefs, the masses were easily governed and no misinterpretation of religious commands significantly affected the people or patterns of worship. The

complete loyalty benefitted the kings and rulers since the synchronicity kept governance very simple and easily controllable. The rulers had little oppositions and there was no motivation to misinterpret or influence misinterpretation of Gods' commands (Wantu, 2018; Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). In places in the north, the ruling class was established and no opposing force existed. In southern Nigeria especially in Ibo land, the eldest in families were respected and they represented their families in governance and decision-making for the patches. Thus, there was zero conflict between existing political structure and religious structure – and masses wholeheartedly accepted both the religious and political order. Hence, about zero religious violence existed.

Causes of Religious Violence in Recent Nigeria

Just like in early Nigeria, the 'need' factor also plays a role in the socio-political constructs of modern societies. What people need or want, and what is considered important by any sect of people generally affects the causes of religiously motivated violence in that society (Okoro, 2005, Achunike, 2008). From the early Nigerians till date, the components of needs in Maslow's theory of needs still largely exist but other new elements of wants have also emerged. The new elements emerged as result of many changes in the societies that have affected the socio-political constructs of all the earlier patches or enclaves (Ajah & Okoro, 2017). Example is the coming of foreigners in the north and south who brought new lifestyles and expectations to Nigerian societies (Okoro, 2005). Such new lifestyles and expectations of life meant that locals will expect new things from the political and religious arrangements in their local societies – and these may not easily be provided since the local arrangements or leaders have no experience in providing such foreign expectations (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). Thus, changes will occur in the local arrangements that will not be absolute or instant but will be considerably visible. Maslow's physiological needs of water, food, health and air are still basically needed and given priority in recent Nigeria. However, new elements such as want of political power and religious domination exist and play new roles. Unlike in early societies where the patches were homogenous, recent Nigerians went through a colonial leadership that unified the patches and created a huge heterogeneous state with nonmatching experiences, religious beliefs, social arrangements, and expectations of life (Achunike, 2008). This new socio-political arrangement also means that Nigeria contains those multifaceted earlier patches with different elements that affect their need factors. New needs like wants to dominate the new union now exist – this is only because the society is now heterogeneous unlike in early Nigeria where homogeneity was steady since there was no unification and people lived in small groups (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnay, 2018). A good picture of this struggle or want to dominate is captured in the comments of Ahmadu Bello, Sultan of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria who urged people in the North in following words, "The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and have control over their future" (Deji, 2019; Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018; Francis, 2017). Want of domination has influenced the socio-political arrangement which is now propagated through religion and created a new model of intolerance. Since northern Nigeria is largely Islamic, the want to dominate the unification with Islam exists and has created bases for extreme behaviors (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). Christianity also poses intentions to spread its beliefs and recruit new members but the approach of Christians to finding and recruiting members explicitly abhors coercion and violence. This is unlike Islam whose historical interpretation allows rooms for coercive recruitment. Many Islamic clerics in the north embraced the historical possibility that Islam might permit coerced recruitment to preach violent annexation of lands and carnage of non-Islamic believers to followers with backings from Islamic scriptures even when the referenced scriptures are misinterpreted (Emeh, 2011). This is seen in the cases of Boko Haram, Izala Movements, and other sects that have violently attacked other people or government agencies in Nigeria.

The leadership model in the new unification is also novel and allows people to easily change role models and religious figures (Henry & Peter, 2018). The earlier people that lived in smaller societies had few religious leaders that interpreted religious laws and rituals – and there was no easy means to find or

connect with similar cultures or more aggressive versions of their cultures. The implication is that even if anyone developed more radicalized versions of the religions at the time, it will be difficult to find support or followers since no connecting precedence existed (Wantu, 2018; Achunike, 2009). But with trade across the border in northern Nigeria and coming of colonialism, these patches were exposed to foreigners and extremist ideas that could have failed hitherto now find references, supports, and sympathizers – and found acceptance to grow. This is seen in the case of Mohammed Marwa who was initially from Cameroon and was able to reference experiences in both Nigeria and Cameroon to establish the Maitatsine Movement in northern Nigeria, then people in Nigeria that probably had once thought of more radical versions of Islam in any similarity with the Maitatsine Movement now easily found leadership in Mohammed Marwa – a diversity system that did not exist in the smaller groups of earlier era.

Patterns of Violent Crime

The root causes of religious violence in Nigeria have also precipitated patterns of violence that have existed centuries after centuries since the beginning of human existence. At the beginning, before Nigeria had contacts with foreigners, religious violence existed on Interest-Based Pattern.

Interest-Based Pattern is a pattern of violence that is witnessed from people with conflicting interests who rather employ religious narratives as bases for their violence (Ajah & Okoro, 2017). In early cultures, people lived side-by-side in small groups and each group had unique religions and leadership structures. Due to the size of the groups, each group was highly homogeneous and chances of conflict or violence was minimal. Nonetheless, stories still abound of violence between groups and between leaders in each group (Emeh, 2011). Such violent scenarios were more political than religious but were often propagated with religious chants and rituals. In Ibo land, far down Southern Nigeria, the religious tradition covered everything. People hardly did anything without consulting or referencing ‘Chineke’ or ‘Ndi Mmuo (Igbo, 2012).’ The effect is that – once the warriors or fighters are convinced by the high priests that the opponents must be killed, the fighters go to war with much energy and almost get fanatic with killing or destroying the opposing groups (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). This was the first form of religious fanaticism and was obvious in wars that were mostly political. There is no record of any ancient religion in Nigeria that preached the killing of people in other groups as key ritual or permitted such interpretations. More often than not, wars in early days emerged from failed negotiations, prides, interests – desire to subjugate groups. Once the wars have commenced, fighters and warriors are then decorated with religious beliefs to the extent of being fanatic in killing opposing groups.

Changes in Patterns of Violence

Since the coming of foreigners with Islam and Christianity, many changes in the socio-political landscape of Nigeria have occurred. The small groups that occupied the geographical area currently called Nigeria have become politically unified under one government and most cultures have become mixed with other cultures (Achunike, 2009). The Interest-Based Pattern of violence still exists in this later stage of Nigeria but with changes in interest and models of propagation. Islam and Christianity came with much multi-polarity in religious leadership. Unlike in early days when high priests were few and series of processes are required for anyone to become a high priest, in recent times; anyone can call himself a pastor, priest or Imam over a period of a night. It has become too easy for anyone to attain the level of religious leadership without a set qualification, training or set of achievements. This created a careless multi-polarity in religious leadership and allowed many interpretations and interests to religious laws and doctrine (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2019). Thus, anyone that sees opportunity in destabilizing an existing system simply hires others to build followership through distorted religious teachings and then unleashes violence to the extent of total breakdown in social order (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). While some hire others to establish violence, others build the followership by themselves and initiate violence. There is no particular instance that can be cited to this theory but a key question that exemplifies it is – ‘how does religious violent groups like Boko Haram or killer herdsmen raise money to buy weapons, ammunitions, and other essentials that make their existence and successful operation possible?’

Method-Based Pattern emerged in recent times. It came as foreigners brought their religions to Nigeria and established considerable acceptance of these religions across diverse groups (Wantu, 2018, Ajah & Okoro, 2017). Those who assimilated the different new religions began to behave differently from other people and worshipped differently. Nigeria, as we know it, became filled with different people, with different lifestyles and different modes of worship. It was at this time that Uthman Dan Fodio initiated his war against syncretism and made people in northern Nigeria to either convert to Islam or be killed (Okpa, Ajah & Okunola, 2018). This pattern of violence still exists today in diverse forms. An instance is the Imam in Abuja who recently ordered his followers to murder a woman because she was Christian. When there is difference in method of worship, there are usually also differences in lifestyle (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). When people of one religion cannot tolerate the sight of this difference and proceed to unleash violence on other people based on this difference, such scenario is Method-Based Pattern of religious violence. It is particularly difficult to know whether Boko Haram or Izala or any of the existing religiously violent groups belong to this pattern (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018). This reason is because their aims are rarely stated, often changes or are totally incomprehensible. It is however more plausible to believe that some members of such groups joined because their intolerance of religious differences in their communities. Method-Based Pattern emerges from the want of people to dominate their environment and other people in it with their own views and ways of life (Ajah & Okoro, 2017). When such goal is pursued to the level of fanaticism, a brutal model of serial killing is unleashed against other religions or cultures in communities.

Need-Based Pattern is a recent pattern that emerged as societies separated governance from religion (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018, Ajah & Okoro, 2017). In earlier days, when it fails to rain or sun gets too hot, people do not blame their leaders but pray to their gods for forgiveness and help (Olalekan, Olorok, Hanafi & Charles, 2018). At the time, people looked to their gods for solutions but at the guidance of the leaders. With coming of foreigners and unification of Nigeria, governance became separated from religion and people started looking to their leaders for solutions to their problems. When the governments fail to provide solution, individuals with ideas emerge, selling distorted and extremist ideas as causes of the problems and violence as solution; promising wealth, stability, and favor from God (Egbegi, Ajah & Ogbonnaya, 2018, Ajah & Okoro, 2017). People then follow; out of hunger, poverty, and frustration. Such patterns can be seen in the far north where poverty can be extreme and sickness can be severe. Violence emanating from this model is usually seen by perpetrators as only means of survival, as such, very brutal and merciless.

Theoretical Formation

The structural functionalism is the theoretical framework. The functional approach in Sociology was borrowed from the analogy of organism in the biological sciences in which all the body organs, in any living organism, have a kind of interconnectivity which links them together. Each of these organs plays a certain role for the survival of the organism. In any situation where any of the organs malfunctions, it is believed that this malfunctioning might affect the life of the organism Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer (Eteng, Echiegu, Eteng, Okereke, Otu & Nweke, 2007).

In this view, the functionalists, therefore, argue that the society is made up of groups and institutions which constitute the whole. They state further that each of these institutions that form the society plays a part for the survival of the system. From the foregoing, functionalists view society as a system, a set of interconnected parts which, together form a whole. This makes society the primary unit of functional analysis. The focus of attention is how the basic parts of the society, that is, the various institutions, such as the military, police, religious organizations, family, political, economic, legal, and educational institutions co-relate and function for the survival of the entire society (Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2017). Indeed, the failure of political leaders to deliver on their campaign promises has escalated the incidence of religious violence in Nigeria thereby threatening the peaceful coexistence of the country. The country is gradually degenerating into Hobbesian State which was characterized by anarchy, nasty and brutish.

Other root causes like interests of religious leaders and intolerance by worshippers have also precipitated huge violence among each religion and outside religions as well. All these elements create a violent system that affects the whole of Nigeria. Religion is a key functional part of Nigeria society that has the capacity to swiftly influence the whole parts of the Nigerian society with peace or violence – and addressing religious violence is one key way of addressing general violence in Nigeria.

Solution to Religious Violence in Nigeria

To address religious violence in Nigeria and Africa, the root causes have to be strategically targeted and dismantled. Two possible approaches are; a unification program that would reconcile the differences between/inside religions and an extensive care by governments to address the basic needs of citizens. Most people choose violence as optional alternative to poverty. Government should endeavor to provide basic infrastructure and healthy economy that will create jobs and enable people to live up to basic standards – and not fall prey to external interests or radical ideas that feed on poverty in order to get people to do their violent biddings. Since unification of the small groups that make-up Nigeria and other Africa countries, differences and frictions are expected. These differences often brew to become large basis for violence and religious killings. A comprehensive program by government officials to identify key points of differences between cultures and religions, and bring reconciliation to these differences will positively establish strong foundation of peace in Nigeria and Africa.

Conclusion

Man is, by nature, a religious animal. That insinuates that religion did not come to Nigeria or Africa with the foreigners. It has always existed and been part of the African people and systems. Foreigners brought Islam and Christianity to Nigeria – and both religions have made many changes in the Nigerian people and lifestyles. Early Nigerians, who practiced African Traditional Religion, had little or no religiously motivated violence compared with later Nigerians after the coming of Islam and Christianity. This paper has journeyed into the root causes of these changes and identified needs, interests, and methods at the basis of these change. The changes also precipitated changes in patterns of violence which the paper identified and studied. It also recommends extra efforts by governments to alleviate poverty and help people provide their needs, and intentional efforts to reconcile religious differences as major steps to curb religious violence in Nigeria.

3. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

4. Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

References

- Achunike, H. C. (2008). Religious practices in Nigeria as source of social conflict. *Journal of Liberal Studies*, 12 (1&2), 286–295.
- Ajah, B. O., & Okoro, I. T. (2017). Diagnosis and prognosis of the Nigerian recession. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22 (8), 41-48.
- Ajah, B. O., Nwokeoma, B. N., & Okpan, S O. (2017). Socio-economic implication of kidnapping and hostage taking in Southern Nigeria. *Journal of Law and Judicial System*, 6 (2), 51-59.

- Armstrong, K. (2015, March 10). The myth of religious violence. *Tricycle*. Retrieved from <http://www.tricycle.com>.
- Balogun, K.A. (1988). Religious fanaticism in Nigeria: problems and solutions. In Balogun, I.A.B. et. al. (eds.): *The place of religion in the development of Nigeria Ilorin*. Ilorin: Department of Religions, University of Ilorin .
- BBC News. (2016). *Nigeria violence: More than 70 killed in Abuja bus blast*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27018751>
- Cavanaugh, W. T. (n.d). Does religion cause violence? Retrieved from <http://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu>.
- Chris, O. (2006, October 7). Herdsmen kill parishioners; seek death of businessman Victor Nwankwo. *Vanguard*, P45.
- CNN. (2018). *Boko Haram Fast Facts*. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/09/world/boko-haram-fast-facts/index.html>
- Crenshaw, M. (2000). The psychology of terrorism: an agenda for 21st century. In *Political psychology*, 21, 404-420.
- Deji, O. (2019). *Christianity in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://the234project.com/arts-and-culture/nigeria/christianity-in-nigeria/>
- Economist. (2019). *The fight against Islamic State is moving to Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/07/14/the-fight-against-islamic-state-is-moving-to-africa>
- Egbegi, F. R., Ajah, B. O., & Ogbonnaya C. (2018). combating boko haram insurgency through a superior ideology: the role of the federal government. *European Journal of Political Science Studies*, 1 (2), 13-22.
- Elu, J., & Prince, G. (2015). *The Causes and consequences of terrorism in Africa*. The Oxford Handbook of Africa and Economics.
- Emeh, O. (2011, 5 January). Analysing Nigeria's current crime surge. *The Vanguard*, P61.
- Encarta Dictionary
- Eteng, I. A., Emma-Echiegu, N., Eteng, M. J., Okereke, O. J., Otu, S., & Nweke, J. O. (2007). *Fundamentals of sociology*. Larry & Caleb Publishing Ltd
- Fitzduff, M. (2011). *Just enough to hate – not enough to love*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, P.147.
- Francis, A, O. (2017, August 23). Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 is not the “will of god”. *Vanguard Newspaper*, p63
- Gabriel, T, W., & Hillary, C. A. (2014). Religion: Past and Present in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)*, 17 (2), 156-174.
- Goodreads (2019). *Fanaticism Quotes*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/fanaticism>
- Harvard Divinity School. (2019). *Islam in Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/islam-nigeria>
- Henry, U., & Peter, D. (2018, 23 April). Killings: Senate summons Buhari as herdsmen attack another Benue church. *Vanguard Newspaper*, p48.
- Igbo, P. (2012). *Treasure of Difference*. Enugu: Clacom, P10.
- Iheanacho, N. N. (2009).** A critical look at Contemporary Nigerian Christianity. *International Journal of Theology & Reformed Tradition*, 1, 104-117.
- Isaac, I. (2016, June 13th). Islamic cleric ordered youths to kill female preacher. *This Day*, P43.
- Kettani, H. (2004). Muslim population in Africa: 1950 - 2020, *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, 1 (2), 1-13.
- Lee, W. (2012). *Burke was right: man is a religious animal*. Retrieved from <https://leeware.wordpress.com/2012/03/08/burke-was-right-man-is-a-religious-animal/>
- Mokhtar, B. B. (2006). *Religion, Religious Fanaticism and Hate Crimes in the United States*. Cairn Info. *Revue française d'études américaines*, 110 (4), 107-121.

- Okiro, M. (2005). *Proliferation of illegal arms and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria*. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation.
- Okpa, J. T., Ajah, B. O, & Okunola, R. A. (2018). Religious fundamentalism and sustainable development in Nigeria: understanding the intricacies. *Journal of Religion and Theology*, 2 (2), 12-18.
- Olalekan, A., Olokor, F., Hanafi, A., & Charles, J. (2018, May 1). killing of Christians in Nigeria must stop, says Trump. *Punch Newspaper*, p 56.
- Rolando Y, W. (2017). *Religious Beliefs In Nigeria*. Worldatlas. Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-nigeria.html>
- Sahara Reporters. (2016). *How Suspected Muslim Fanatics Hacked Female Redeemed Church Preacher To Death In Abuja*. Retrieved from <http://saharareporters.com/2016/07/11/how-suspected-muslim-fanatics-hacked-female-redeemed-church-preacher-death-abuja>
- Sani, T. (2016, May 16th). *Shocking revelation: 100,000 killed, two million displaced by Boko Haram insurgency, Borno Governor says*. *Premium Newspaper*, p45.
- Sontag, F. (1990). Political violence and liberation theology. *JETS*, 33 (1), 85-94.
- Sulaiman, K. O. (2016). Religious violence in contemporary Nigeria: implications and options for peace and stability order. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 29 (1) 85 – 103.
- Sulaiman, K.O. (2004). Jerusalem as a uniting factor for Muslims and Christians: historical and scriptural grounds. *The IAFOR Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2 (1), 39-45.
- The Guardian* (2013, July 2). Doesn't religion cause most of the conflict in the world? *Guardian*, P13.
- UK Parliament. (2003). *Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales*. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200203/ldselect/ldrelof/95/9517.htm>
- Urban Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=religious%20fanatic>
- Vivian, F. (2018). *History of How Christianity came to Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://www.legit.ng/1145690-history-christianity-nigeria.html>
- Wantu, J. (2018, 25 April). Suspected herdsmen kill two Catholic priests, 17 others. *The Guardian*, P37.
- World Watch Monitor. (2018). *Nigeria: Pastor and three sons burned alive among at least 20 killed in latest Plateau massacre*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/09/nigeria-pastor-and-three-sons-burned-alive-among-at-least-20-killed-in-latest-plateau-massacre/>

COURTS IN NIGERIA AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE COVID-19 ERA

By

Obi-Ochiabutor, Clara Chinasa, PhD, & Akpangbo Ebube Hillary, LLB, BL.

Department of Private Law, Faculty of Law,
University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the world adversely in all spheres of human endeavour. It has brought in its wake challenges to access to justice, occasioning undesirable delay to law enforcement and justice delivery. Some of the critical issues include risks of spread of COVID-19 in detention centers, spike in the number of awaiting-trial detainees, sharp increase in criminality, elusiveness in the quest for access to justice in a timely, fair and effective manner; challenges of addressing the rise in domestic violence, undocumented migration, and making additional institutional reforms to strengthen the effectiveness of the justice chain in a radically shifted social context. Dispute resolution mechanisms appear to have become increasingly inefficient, with heightened cases of human rights violations and counter-discrimination globally. Access to legal services appears to have become unaffordable for victims of crimes. This study examines how courts in response to the pandemic have shifted from physical interface to virtual proceedings. We argue that while online interface may be pertinent, it still poses some challenges. Therefore, this study submits that online court processes should be used sparingly in custody matters. Given the criticality of physical proceedings in certain cases, measures should be taken to enthrone stable court processes such as categorizing justice services as 'essential service' and taking necessary steps to mitigate the suspension or postponement of these services. Health safety measures should be propagated for judicial officers. While steps should be taken in facilitating online functioning of judicial services at a larger scale, custodial matters should be determined by physical hearings.

Keywords - Courts, Justice, Covid-19, Virtual Proceedings, Pandemic, Justice Delivery and Physical hearings.

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused mass disruption around the world, with health systems and justice systems struggling to cope with new ways of operation. Whilst the impact on health systems and workers was the subject of much media attention and care, this was not necessarily the case in the justice sector which was considered as secondary. And this led to poor access to justice at the early stage of the pandemic, with accumulated results as at today. Court sittings and activities became shifted into remote style of working. Hearings became virtual, and physical sittings were halted and in very urgent cases, conducted sparingly. Till date, many courts are not digitized. Many do not have e-filing and other arrangements in place. Put simply, in many instances there is a continued reliance on paper-based exchanges. Not many courts in Nigeria had developed video conferencing facilities as a way of dealing with processes like interlocutory or final hearings. But in response to COVID-19, certain courts in the commercial cities of Nigeria rapidly adopted supportive technologies that enabled video conferencing and exchange of documentation using web-based platforms that include Teams, Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts and WebEx. Some courts already had existing online filing systems- via the instrumentality of front-loading and were therefore more prepared for remote working arrangements. Others have however, struggled with video conferencing, including data privacy and security-related concerns, and the peculiar difficulties that arise in relation to hearings. But in the process of adopting all these strategies and trying to contain their shortcomings, there were increasing cases of fundamental right infractions, delay in trials,

remand in custody beyond the statutory time, postponement of hearings and late judgment delivery. Cases of awaiting trial increased tremendously, yet more persons were arrested from day to day. More prisoners shared cell rooms and facilities. There were breakdowns in the law enforcement sector and the justice sector, occasioning police violence and vices, and most of these cases remain unreported in certain jurisdictions. The aim of this work is to highlight some considerations and strategic entry points for practitioners in ensuring access to justice in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasizes the importance of upholding the rule of law, protecting and respecting international human rights standards and basic principles of legality, including the rights to equality before the courts and to a fair and quick trial, as part of preparation, response, and recovery efforts in relation to the pandemic. This paper is divided into six parts. Following the introduction is a reflection on the Administration of Justice before the advent of Covid-19. Part three is on the effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Administration of Justice and Access to Justice while Part four deals with Issues and Challenges associated with Virtual Court Proceedings in Nigeria. Part five deals with the Recommendations while Part six concludes the paper.

2. Administration of Justice before the Advent of Covid-19: A General Reflection on Nigeria

Nigeria has not always been in a great place as it relates to access to justice and quick dispensation of cases. There have been cases of infractions of fundamental rights which have gone unaddressed. There have been adjournments which have lasted months and probably years before hearing on the next adjourned date. Indeed, Nigeria's adjudicatory and law enforcement processes have not always been satisfactory, even before COVID-19. The judicial process has been sluggish, distilling hopelessness on the common man. As at 2019, about 49,875 able-bodied and economically viable Nigerians were in pre-trial detention, and this number massively consists of 68.1% of the prison population.

There has also, always been insecurity problems and the Nigerian law enforcement mechanism have always appeared to fall short of expectations in combating terrorism and vices. Crime combating machineries are obsolete and the Nigerian Police Force has about 350,000 personnel for a country with a population of about 150 million people to be protected, Obaro [2014]. There is poverty in the country, escalated by consumptive cultures and weak institutions, Enemuo [2008]. In the 'Review of World Development 2018', Nigeria was ranked 157 out of 189 economies in Human Development Index; and was among the 'least liveable' nations. As such, Nigeria has been reported by authors as suffering the *Dutch Disease*, that is, an increase in the country's natural resources, but decreased price competitiveness and poor wealth management, Bature [2013].

Nigeria is also replete with poor leadership and dysfunctional institutions, Ugwu [2015]. In the *World Bank Report 2019* on 'Ease of Doing Business in Nigeria', Nigeria had been ranked 146 out of 190 countries, with report attesting that Nigerian businesses lacked access to credit. Nevertheless, politicians wield million-dollar assets and money in financial institutions abroad.

Furthermore, Nigerians are grossly denied the dividends of democracy. Elections are flawed and there is seldom evidence of political accountability. Tribal and social conflicts have always remained a malaise in Nigeria, hampering economic growth and growth in the justice sector. Owing to nepotism, meritocracy has always been sacrificed on the alter of mediocrity. Politicians have always capitalised on tribal sentiments to win elections, causing a divide in the social fabric of the nation, Dike [2010]. There has always been uneven distribution of wealth with a huge economic gap between the wealthy and the poor. And economic reforms like the *Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)* and the *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)* have not really brought succour to the masses, Karimu [2017]. Workers earn minimum wages bereft of credit whereas politicians amass maximum wages.

It therefore follows that with the above exposition, Nigeria has indeed not always been at a good place in terms of access to justice in any sector, unit or sphere. And no matter how it is perceived, COVID-19 has made this worse. The political leaders loot funds for palliatives and remain unaccountable. Hence, the need for a progressive approach to tackling these justice issues.

3. Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Administration of Justice and Access to Justice: Case Study of Delta, Enugu, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja

In various countries of the world, COVID-19 has become responsible not just for massive deaths, but also for undesirable delay to law enforcement and justice delivery. Today, courts and other legal institutions seldom convene physical hearings, giving room for increased use of virtual platforms, such as Zoom. Sometime ago, Courts had closed and readjusted their operations, which affected the provision of timely and fair hearings, contributed to increased case backlogs, and led to increased length of judicial and administrative proceedings. Certain groups, such as women and children have become more vulnerable to violence, and vices have increased tremendously. There are unaccounted cases of migration of refugees and asylum seeking, and those in detention centres are more acutely in danger of contamination and spread. Reduced court operations have consequently prolonged detention of pretrial detainees and prisoners eligible for early release. Without functioning judicial oversight, persons detained while emergency measures are in place to contain the virus may not be brought before a judge in a timely manner. In fact, the socio-economic impact of the crisis has led to justice-related implications and inequalities. Hence, specific efforts are required to improve access to legal services and legal information to empower people and communities to resolve their disputes, seek redress for rights violations, or counter discrimination on a range of issues including housing, employment, legal/residency status, access to health benefits or other social protection mechanisms.

There is an apparent struggle in the justice sector which is characterized by antiquated court systems grappling with the technologies, remote hearings and the electronic exchange of documents. The changes that were made across the court sector have also not been uniform. This is because some jurisdictions like Lagos and Abuja operate 'modern' courts (which could more efficiently leverage newer technologies), while in many other jurisdictions, courts continue to replicate traditional approaches to litigation that have been present for decades. In addition, responses varied as some parts of the justice system experienced an increase in workload, whilst others saw a reduction in demand. For example, there is increased demand in the criminal justice sector to reconsider bail and remand arrangements (so that, where possible, prison populations could be reduced). There is also an increased focus on domestic violence and family arrangements including a significant increase in the need for court orders relating to child custody and maintenance. And notwithstanding all these emerging issues, Courts are mostly still on recess and access to justice delayed because of the vagaries of COVID-19.

3.1 The Case of Delta State

Delta State in the Niger Delta has about a population of 4,008,391, comprising mainly the Urhobo, Ibo, Isoko and Itsekiri ethnic groups. The state has about 28 High Court Judges, 76 Magistrates, 57 Customary Court Judges, and 2 Customary Court of Appeal panels, with about 3,292 non-judicial court staff. While the Sharia courts in the state between 2002-2007 received about 55,683 cases and disposed of only 50,126 cases (92.8%), the High Courts received 1,237 cases out of which only 415 (33.8%) were concluded. The Magistrate Court received 2,281 cases within the same period out of which only 32.8% were concluded. While these statistics indicate high public trust in the Sharia Courts, same cannot be said for the other courts. Trials are conducted in years and there is lack of funds to prosecute appeals. There are many unreported breaches of rights and killings etc. In fact, like in other parts of Niger Delta, the rate of crime has always been high due to activities of militant groups in the region. With the lockdown, this has tripled. Yet, courts are on shutdown and conducting few remote hearings while these cases are compounding.

3.2 The Case of Enugu State

Located in the South-East region, Enugu was the headquarters of the old Eastern region, and has a long tradition of legal practice. It has a population of about 3,257,398 and the predominant ethnic group is Ibo. The State has about 25 High Court Judges, 51 Magistrates with 34 courtrooms, and 325 Customary Court Judges sitting in 108 Customary Courts. It has 1,785 judicial staff, comprising 878 junior and 907 senior staff. The High Courts' Registry receives an average of 2,317 cases with only 1,741 (74%) cases concluded yearly. At the Magistrates Court, an average of 1,468 cases are received yearly, and only about

1,117 (76%) are disposed of. At the Customary Courts, about 1,572 cases are received with roughly 61% concluded. There is also the Rent Tribunal that receives fewer than 300 cases, dealing mainly with small tenement related claims. From these, it is glaring that there is a deficit in access to justice and slow dispensation of cases. The pandemic certainly makes the case worse.

3.3 The Case of Lagos State

Lagos State is the commercial capital of Nigeria, with a population of 9,013,534, according to the 2006 Federal census, though the state government disputed the figure and claimed the state had more than 12 million inhabitants and rightly so, being most densely populated state in the country. The Lagos State judiciary is also the oldest in Nigeria. Its existence dates back to the period of the cession of Lagos Island to the British Government when it was established as the Colony Province Judiciary. In 1967, Lagos State was created as one of the 12 states in the country, and the state judiciary was established. By 2008, there were 53 High Court Judges, 111 Magistrates and 1,480 non-judicial court staff comprising 575 junior staff and 805 senior staff. 875 of the non-judicial staff assist Judges and Magistrates in courtrooms and 605 perform administrative and accounting duties. Today, over 6,005 cases are filed at the High Court, with about 3,325 (55.7%) concluded yearly. At the Magistrates Court, an average of 4,962 cases are filed yearly with about 1,952 (39.3%) concluded, representing nearly 44 cases per Magistrate. This thus discloses a poor state of dispensation of cases, even in the highest commercial city of Nigeria.

At this juncture, it is also worthy of note that Lagos State is one of the very few states in Nigeria that has instituted virtual court sessions. And this is because Lagos is predominantly ahead in sector-changes and adaptation. In 2007 for instance, the State government had already started to computerize the High Court Registry- an action that is only presently being taken in other jurisdictions in Nigeria.

3.4 The Case of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja

In 1991, Nigeria's capital was moved from Lagos to Abuja FCT. With a population of 1,405,201, according to the 2006 census and annual population growth of over 11%, the FCT has the fastest growing population in the country, with an estimated 2.85 million inhabitants by 2015 and more than 4 million by end of 2020. The Courts are under the Chief Judge of the FCT, with about 30 High Court Judges, 47 Magistrates, and 38 Area Court Judges. The FCT judiciary employs about a total of 2,627 staff, comprising 732 staff serving the courtrooms, and 1,895 staff working on administrative and related duties. An average of about 4,224 cases or more are filed yearly at the High Court Registry and 3,839(90.8%) concluded during the same period. At the Magistrates Court, an average of about 11,614 cases or more are filed yearly with less than 10,000 cases disposed. At the Area Courts, about 8,322 cases are filed yearly while about 7,890 (94.8%) are disposed of.

While the estimates of concluded cases in the FCT are relatively better, it still does not come close to satisfactory. Now, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant shutdown of Courts, the numbers of unaddressed cases have definitely increased, hampering access to justice.

4. Issues and Challenges Associated with Virtual Court Proceedings in Nigeria

4.1 The Constitutionality of Virtual Court Hearings

In construing the constitutionality or otherwise of virtual court proceedings in Nigeria, **section 36 subsections (1) and (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999** are pertinent. While section 36(1) seeks to ensure fair hearing for persons within a reasonable time, section 36(3) requires hearings to be done in public, therefore apparently raising a doubt as to the legality of the use of teleconferencing and video-conferencing tools for court hearings. But there should be more to this interpretation. **Section 36(1)** that "In the determination of his civil rights and obligations, including any question or determination by or against any government or authority, a person shall be entitled to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by a court or other tribunal established by law and constituted in such manner as to secure its independence and impartiality".

Section 36(3) then states that: “The proceedings of a court or the proceedings of any tribunal relating to the matters mentioned in subsection (1) of this section (including the announcement of the decisions of the court or tribunal) shall be held in *public*”.

In relation to section 36(3) above, in practice, there have been exceptions like cases of public morality and safety, *interest of justice* exception, public policy exception and cases under the Minister of Justice’s directions. Therefore, while it is arguable that virtual court hearings go in contravention of section 36(3) that requires hearings to be in public, we submit that the advent of COVID-19 qualifies as an exception to this rule bringing it under the scope of the ‘interest of justice’ exception. More so, section 36(1) provides that a person is entitled to fair hearing *within a reasonable time*, therefore embracing remote hearing is the only way to keep to this requirement of time.

Moreover, the Oxford Dictionary defines the word public as ‘done, perceived or existing in open view’. Applying this definition, it is pertinent to note that video conferencing of lawyers presenting their cases in virtual proceedings is still available for ‘open view’. For example, seminars or workshops conducted on Zoom and Microsoft Team still remain accessible to participants who can watch online or participate if allowed. And as for hearings and judgment delivery, same principles also apply. Alternatively, Judges can decide to sit in the court room, broadcast same on a virtual platform, and deliver judgment there, whilst opening same court room to a lesser public, and making it available for access to the larger public virtually. Therefore, it is our submission that virtual Court hearings are constitutional, especially in the light of the present circumstances in Nigeria. The constitutionality of virtual hearing was seriously challenged by Lagos State government and Ekiti State government respectively in two cases, namely, *A-G Lagos State v. A-G Federation & the National Assembly* (SC/CV/260/2020) and *A-G of Ekiti State v. A-G of the Federation & 2 Ors* (SC/CV/261/2020). On July 14, 2020, the Supreme Court, delivering judgment in both cases declared that virtual hearing is not unconstitutional or offensive to section 36 of the Constitution on the right to fair hearing. What is important is that whether it is a physical hearing or virtual hearing, both parties must be accorded a fair hearing. With regard to the requirement that hearings in court shall be public, the court held that the requirement is fulfilled if the public is given access to the virtual hearing. Thus, today, we have physical public hearing and virtual public hearing which has given rise to a new normal.

4.2 The Challenges of Virtual Court Proceedings in Nigeria

There are hitches which have been recorded in the course of the use and improvisation of the online court sessions. While some of these hitches are administrative and relate to the problem of adaptation in filing processes and effecting services online, there are technical hitches that ensue from the direct use of the requisite technologies (for example Zoom) in maintaining online correspondence. A lot of ‘old-fashioned’ lawyers find this hard to get by with. And in the process, there are often cases of interruptions in network connection, especially in Nigeria where network services are poor. There is little or no access to a good WIFI server system. The cost of data connection is increasingly becoming an issue of concern for average lawyers. Sometimes, when data connection is exhausted and in the process of filling it, a part of the proceedings is lost. There are issues associated with slow network in certain geographical regions, and sometimes a lawyer may have to travel to a better receiving region network-wise for court proceedings. In many jurisdictions in Nigeria, online proceedings are yet to be institutionalized and at the time, court proceedings are either fully halted or done in batches depending on exigency, and quite sparingly. This is a huge challenge to access to justice, because caseloads are piling up. And it appears as if exclusive physical hearings may yet be too reckless at the moment.

It has even been argued that the legal profession being a respectable profession with traditional values enshrined in physical conduct of proceedings, that online proceedings is an aberration of these standards. For example, it is arguable that a number of lawyers no longer keep strictly to the dressing regulations and that the presiding Judge may not even take notice of this in the course of proceedings.

4.3 The Case for Supervised Physical Hearings

Owing to the concerns in the preceding paragraphs, it has become glaring that physical hearings cannot be jettisoned. It is our submission that courts should fully resume physical proceedings while placing stringent measures for effective social distancing and observance of the COVID-19 Safety Regulations. Some arrangements in certain courts may have to be looked into, and a more spacious arrangement should be adopted especially in congested and busy courts. As rightly stated by the Chief Justice of Nigeria in the April Guidelines, not more than an average of ten(10) persons should be present in the Court at a time. In fact, in less spacious courts, only the Judge, the court clerk, the counsel and the litigants should be in court, while the proceedings would be recorded for the larger public. The services of a Supervisor/Regulator should be sought and he should be present in the court to ensure that these measures are complied with. Quick temperature tests should be conducted at the point of entry into the court premises, and everyone should be made to be with nose masks. As these masks can however be inconvenient especially for counsel in court, they could be allowed to put them out while arguing their cases in court, though this must be done with strict adherence to social distancing. Measures like furnishing running taps should be taken, to make certain at all strategic points within the Court premises that hands are frequently washed and sanitized. Medical Experts and Regulators should be kept handy to check for observation and testing of persons, and ensuring maximum compliance with the Regulations. When necessary that the press be allowed into court, a limited number of persons should be granted access. Judicial officers and court officials should also not be exempt from these protocols.

5. Recommendations: The Way Forward

Indeed, access to justice can be lifesaving and critical for the preservation of physical integrity in any sector, such as in cases of grave violence, or where release of detainees may help curtail the spread of the virus in prisons and detention centers. Given its criticality and the fact that most countries are increasingly becoming overwhelmed by the pandemic, International Organizations have a role to play. They could propose to their member states certain safeguards as; that states should categorize access to justice as 'essential service' and take necessary measures to mitigate the suspension or postponement of these services. Exceptions may be made only where continuation of this proposition is not practically feasible, or where its continued practice is not in the interests of justice or hampers the right to fair trial. These Organizations could from time to time maintain correspondence with their member states, while calling on them to continue to uphold the rule of law, international human rights standards and the rights to access to justice and due process. Other recommendations that they could propose include; that the exercise of emergency powers by the government of these member nations should be in line with constitutional and national legal frameworks as well as international human rights standards; and that safeguards preventing police violence, torture and other ill- treatment in detention facilities should be taken. Through their programmes and outreaches, they may render support to the justice sectors of member nations, including ensuring compliance with the COVID-19 Protocols for those rendering judicial services. Efforts can also be made in facilitating online functioning of judicial services at a large scale for an increased adjudication of disputes by providing technical experts for network improvisation and management.

There is need for these organizations to review how judicial and state institutions are functioning across the humanitarian-development nexus. Already weakened institutions are likely unable to respond effectively, further compounding mistrust in the state. The unchecked spread of misinformation can equally exacerbate conflict. Different parties may exploit the pandemic, stoking xenophobia and employing hate speech to foster divisions and increase tensions between populations. In contexts where unrest and social movements have been calling for governments to address inequality, injustice, and corruption, the crisis may serve to reinforce disparities and magnify tensions while vices like police violence and rape are perpetrated largely. As such, these organizations alongside the country's government should play joint role in proposing strategies for protecting the population, strengthening access to restorative justice for convicts so as reduce the already congested numbers in prisons, and providing reconciliatory mediation and other alternative dispute resolution for marital and domestic violence cases.

As the pandemic is significantly affecting progress on the 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development in all sectors, the government should combine forces with the relevant stakeholders to enhance sustainability in the justice sector. Also, actors in this sector namely; Judges, the Police, legal aid providers such as pro bono lawyers, community paralegals, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and correctional services – need to work together to take on a holistic and people-centered approach to resolving justice problems, Byrom [2019]. To facilitate this, the government could reach agreement with International bodies like the United Nations or International Monetary Fund, to empower developing member states to enhance their capacities in obtaining redress for grievances and achieving improved access to justice for Nigerians both home and in Diaspora. The ones in foreign prisons awaiting trial should be tried expeditiously and the ones who are to be deported should not be kept too long in detention facilities to reduce the likelihood of contracting the virus. This would aid in the reduction of the rates of pretrial detention in foreign prisons while improving access to justice. . Furthermore, encouraging free legal representation, advice and assistance for prisoners and detainees, including those in administrative detention, to secure release or use of non- custodial measures as alternatives to imprisonment.

6. Conclusion

It has become apparent that the human race has to learn to live with the corona virus. We must live our lives with the full knowledge and acknowledgement of its existence. No sector can continue to be on lockdown in perpetuity - not even a partial lockdown can be sustained with the present fall in the economy. This is in fact more so for the judicial sector. Access to justice is sacrosanct. Without it, whatever is remaining of the hope of the common man in the court is lost. The masses should be made to know that justice can still be served right and timeously too, because justice delay is justice denied. Indeed, the lockdown has posed serious impediments to hearing the cases of detainees and granting them bail or releasing them from prisons. Owing to the pandemic and the attendant lockdown, there has been an increased level of anarchy and miscreant activities in many regions in Nigeria. Looting and stealing have become rampant and cases of gang rape and robbery have increased tremendously, occasioning a breakdown in law and order. Police violence is also on the increase and there are unreported cases of domestic violence between spouses and abuse of children at home. Therefore, not just should access to justice be improved for detainees, access to justice should also be improved generally, so that defiant Nigerians can be made to realize that a crime is still a crime and that perpetuating vices come with the full force of the law. This thus informs the need for addressing the problems relating to remote court sittings and hearings, while complying with the recommendations set out in this paper above.

References

1. Bature, N.[2013](15)(5) The Dutch Disease and the Diversification of an Economy: Some Case Studies *IQSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science* 6.
2. Byrom, N.[2019] What We know about the Impact of Remote Hearings on access to Justice: A Rapid Evidence Review, <https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/impact-remote-hearings-access-to-justice> accessed 3 October, 2020.
3. Byrom, N. Digital Justice: HMCTS Data Strategy and delivering access to Justice; Report and Recommendations[2019]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/attachment_data/file/835778/DigitalJusticeFINAL.PDF accessed 3 October 2020.
4. Dike, E.[2010](12)(5), Review of the Challenges facing the Nigerian Economy: Is National Development possible without Technological Capability? *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 24.
5. Enemuo, [2008](4)(1), Financial and Legal Constraints to firm Growth, *Journal of Sustainable Development* 200
6. Karimu, A. [2017], Poverty as Development Challenge in Nigeria: An Assessment of Some Poverty Eradication Policies, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 9231.

7. Obaro, A. [2014](10)(8), The Nigeria Police Force and the Crisis of Legitimacy: Re-defining the Structure and Function of the Nigeria Police, *European Scientific Journal* 1.
8. Stevenson, A. (ed) 3rd edn., Oxford English Dictionary , Oxford University Press, United kingdom.
9. Ugwu, O. [2015](20)(6), Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria: The Challenges of Leadership, *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Sciences* 1.
10. OHCHR, COVID-19 Guidance, Access to Health Care, Justice, Emergency Measures, Stigmatisation, Xenophobia and Racism, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuring Access to Justice in the context of COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuring%20Access%20to%20Justice%20in%20the%20context%20of%20COVID-19.pdf) accessed 3 October, 2020.
11. The OECD, Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Justice *Online Meeting of the OECD Global Roundtables on Access to Justice* [28 april 2020]<http://www.oecd.org/governance/global-roundtables-access-to-justice/> accessed 3 October 2020.
12. The UNODC, LEDAP AND EU, Assessment of Justice Sector Integrity and Capacity in Ten Nigerian States[2007] report of a *Baseline study conducted by the legal defence and Assistance Project*[https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/publications/otherpublications/Assessment of Justice Sector Integrity and Capacity in 10 Nigerian States 20071.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/publications/otherpublications/Assessment%20of%20Justice%20Sector%20Integrity%20and%20Capacity%20in%2010%20Nigerian%20States%2020071.pdf) accessed 3 October 2020.
13. WHO, Interim Guidance on Preparedness, Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Prisons and other places of Detention.
14. World Prison Brief Data, Pre-Trial/remand Prison Population Trend [2019](1) *Prison Population Trend Publications* 3.
15. United Nations, UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Human Rights- We are in this together [2020][https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/ensuring access to justice in the context of covid-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/ensuring%20access%20to%20justice%20in%20the%20context%20of%20covid-19.pdf) accessed 3 October 2020.
16. United Nations, remote Court Hearings and Other Judicial Processes in Response to COVID-19 in Mission and other Fragile Settings [2020][https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuringaccess to Justice in the Context of COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuring%20access%20to%20Justice%20in%20the%20Context%20of%20COVID-19.pdf) accessed 3 October 2020.
17. UNICEF, Five Ways Governments are Responding to Violence against Women and Children during COVID-19 AND Access to justice [2020][https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuringaccess to Justice in the Context of COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuring%20access%20to%20Justice%20in%20the%20Context%20of%20COVID-19.pdf) accessed 3 October 2020.

DIGITAL PLATFORM DYNAMICS AND COVID-19 CRISIS ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN DOUALA V – CAMEROON

By

Nkumbesone Makoley Essone & Ejuande Emmanuel Wonomu

Société Savante Cheikh Anta Diop (SS-CAD),

Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, University of Douala-Cameroon

Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing the digital platform dynamics and the Covid-19 crisis on the educational system in Douala V-Cameroon, as well as the role of stakeholders in the fight against the pandemic. It portrays the ineffectiveness of digital platform in learning institutions as opposed to technological advancement. Data for analysis were gotten from primary and secondary sources and later treated. The results show that Covid-19 is an impediment to the educational system, learning institutions lack appropriate digital platform and some instructors and learners find it difficult to adapt to new technology.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, educational system, technological development, learning institutions

Résumé

Cette étude vise à analyser la dynamique des plateformes numériques et la crise Covid-19 sur le système éducatif de Douala V-Cameroon, ainsi que le rôle des acteurs dans la lutte contre la pandémie. L'étude montre l'inefficacité de la plateforme numérique dans les établissements d'enseignement par opposition aux progrès technologiques. Les données primaires et secondaires ont été collectées et analysées. Les résultats montrent que le Covid-19 est un obstacle au système éducatif, les établissements d'enseignement manquent de plateforme numérique appropriée et certains enseignants et apprenants ont du mal à s'adapter à la nouvelle technologie.

Mots clés: Covid-19, pandémie, système éducatif, développement technologique, établissements d'enseignement

Introduction

The society is becoming more of a global village with the interconnectivity of business activities at various stages in the chain; producers now have multiple media through which they can advertise and sell their goods within a relative short period of time. The integration of the technological devices is not only limited to business activities but it as well embraces the education milieu. The digital world is speedily penetrating the education milieu and technology is gradually being used to deliver education, knowledge and skills in new and innovative ways (Cox, S., Black, J., Heney, J., Keith, M., 2015).

The invention of more effective and efficient technological devices is backed by the high demand of these latter by the ever increasing population of seven billion today around the globe. Technological advancement depends more on the époque; as such, the first trace of technology used in classroom dates back in 1650 in the form of Hornbooks and wooden paddles with printed version (Wilson, Orellana & Meek, 2010). Later in the 19th century, pencils were introduced as a technological device of the time. Such evolution in technology would definitely proof in the future that the present once like mobile phones, multimedia, social media and online games are outdated ("Teach with digital technologies", 2019). By definition, digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. Once the data are processed, information is obtained and this permits instructors and learners to flow on the same frequency of understanding, this idea is backed by the findings of Archer, K., Savage, R., *et al*; 2014.

At present, a hand full of technological device inundates the society though their manipulation by the instructors and students remains a tug of war. Beside, these technologies have been benefited in the

classroom for a while now, but there is still no clarity on how to make use of them. Instructors and students of Douala V-Cameroon are not well versed with modern technology as a device for learning, limited numbers of them have access to these devices, learning institutions have limited number of computers as compared to the number of learners per session and most of the computers are outdated (ineffective). This paper is out to understand why the digital platform in most of the local learning institutions is not contributing significantly toward progress in education.

Methodology

Presentation of the study

Douala is located in the South Western portion of Cameroon, under the territorial delimitation of the Littoral region. In 2010, its total population was estimated to 2 755 011 inhabitants (General census of Cameroon 2010). Douala is situated on the estuary of Wouri at about 30 km from the Atlantic Ocean, close to the equator between latitude 4° and 4°10' North and between longitude 9°35' and 9°40' East (Nkumbesone 2020). Douala V comprises of 53 quarters inhabited by 1 931 977 populations, with a total surface area of 210 km² and a density of 9199 pers/km².

The area is characterised by a constant temperature of 26°C and abundant rainfall mostly during the rainy seasons (from the month of June to October). The Douala V Sub-division shares boundary to the north by the Yabassi Sub-division, to the South and East by Douala III Sub-division and to the West by Douala II and Douala IV Sub-divisions (Mawo V. 2018).

Data collection

This study made use of the hypothetical deductive methodology proposed by Leibniz which consists of validating hypothesis from observation. The general method adopted is the geographical method of investigation which comprises of four stages: Observation, Description, Analysis and Interpretation of facts and phenomena in the society. It also privileged the trans-disciplinary approach of research and eco-health approach which analyses the relation between humans and environment.

Data exploited within the framework of this study were collected from the months of March which represents the outbreak of Covid-19 in Douala, to the September month which represents evaluation period in this study

Qualitative data were collected through observation (*in situ* observation and participating observation), by observing the various actors manipulating the digital platforms; and interview (direct and indirect interview) with students, teachers and school administration.

On the other hand, quantitative data were collected through survey. The study area was sampled using the *quinary method* of investigation (G. Biyogo 2005, p. 65-66). The survey was carried out with a total of 250 questionnaires administered in respect to some geographic, socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-political and sanitary criteria of the area. Out of the 350 questionnaires, each school received a total of 50, to determine the rate of quantitative representation. Random sampling was applied in accordance to centre-periphery, demographic composition and social amenities of the area. The questionnaires were conducted on different field trips to seven schools (Ochidée College, Baho bilingual high school, GBHS Logpom, Collège Luc-Bel, Collège Lauréat, Laval bilingual college and Du Vaal bilingual College).

In all, primary data were collected on the field while secondary data were collected from schools' libraries (Ochidée College, GBHS Logpom and others).

Methods

The study used two types of questions and data in the questionnaires. The first set of questions were fixed choice questions in which the informant had to choose an item amid several modalities, it is equally in the form of "Yes" or "No" questions. On the other hand, the questionnaires had open-ended questions which permitted the informants to freely give their views on the dynamic of digital platform within the context of Covid-19 in their school. This exercise permitted the codification of responses from both questions types and later expressed as percentage for a better interpretation.

Secondly, the qualitative data were analyzed with the help of MACTOR software to evaluate the various roles of the actors within the framework of this study. On the other hand, quantitative data were treated with the help of SPSS, Excel 2007 and QGIS, Philcarto and Phildigit.

These processes have led to establishing the interrelation between the actors, given that the software played a specific role. SPSS 21.0 permitted to analyze socio-demographic data on the digital platforms dynamics, Excel 2007 granted access to further analyze data from SPSS and draw appropriate illustrative graphs. QGIS, Philcarto and Phildigit were used to locate the study area which ended with the production of a location map of the study area.

Results and Discussion

1- Typology of digital platform present in Douala V – Cameroon

In recent years reference to ‘digital technology in the classroom’ (DTC) is seen as digital processing system that promotes active learning, knowledge construction, inquiry, and exploration of scientific reasoning in time and in space between instructors and learners. So far, research and development have led to the creation of multiple digital devices which serve for many purposes especially education. The digital technology within the framework of the educational system has specific terminologies in respect to the use. Table 1 presents and summarizes the names of some common digital method of leaning identified in Douala V-Cameroon.

Table 1: Common digital terminologies identified in the learning institutions

Terminology	Definition	Example	Field observation
Personal Learning Network (PLN)	A PLN is an individual’s loose collection of links with other people or resources with the aim of facilitating an exchange of ideas that supports learning	Links can be through online interest groups like on Twitter, whatsApp, zoom meeting,	Most commonly use method in Douala V
Bring your own device (BYOD)	Learners bring their own technology into the classroom for use as part of the learning activity	mobile phone is used to browse the internet as part of a research activity	Common with students of higher institution of learning
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	A VLE is an e-learning education system that is web-based, but modeled on conventional face-to-face education. It provides access to courses, course content, assessments, homework, links to external resources etc	Moodle Blackboard	Very few higher institutions of learning operate on this
E-portfolios	Learners and teachers create an electronic catalogue of work that tracks their learning journey. This is usually online and often uses multimedia files	A student portfolio of artwork is presented online through an e-portfolio. This includes scans of their sketches, photographs of displays and visits to galleries, written reflections, and an audio logbook	Not very effective but in project

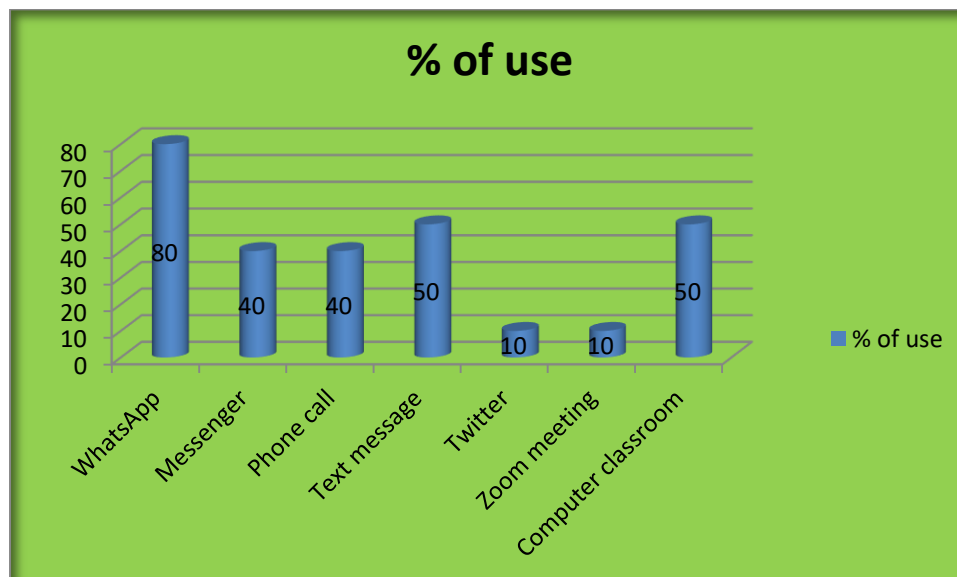
Flipped classroom	Learners discover new content before the lesson from online videos or resources and then apply this knowledge in more personalized work in the classroom	Learners watch a video at home about how sedimentary rocks are transformed into metamorphic rocks. In class they work in groups to collaboratively create a diagram explaining this process of transformation	Not very effective but in project
--------------------------	--	---	-----------------------------------

Source: Field work 2020

Findings on the dynamics of digital platform within the prevailing context of Covid-19 in Douala V-Cameroon led to the identification of common terminologies in learning institutions as presented in Table 1. Beside the computer classroom found in some few schools, Personal learning network (PLN) is the most common methods of learning between instructors and learners. Information is often shared through WhatsApp, messenger, facebook and twitter. Bring your own device (BYOD) is the second solicited method of leaning identified; students are allowed to bring cell phones laptops and tablets in school as a means to ease learning. However, this method is most common with students of higher institutions of learning than in secondary schools, though some secondary schools do permit students to come with such devices.

While the aforementioned two are gaining grounds in some learning institutions of Douala V-Cameroon, other methods of learning such as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), E-portfolio and Flipped classroom are still pending to be well implemented. Both teachers and students are contented with the available methods of learning.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in the Littoral Region of Cameroon, teachers and students were used to making use of the computer classroom on special occasions as the school timetable permits. Practical computer classes were usually once a week for the both lower and upper secondary school students with alternating hours of study. However, this pattern of learning drastically changed with the outbreak of the pandemic in Cameroon, hence, many schools in Douala V-Cameroon redefined their learning strategies by abruptly implementing other distant learning methods such as texting of messages, phone calls, sending of WhatsApp messages, voice and calls, creating of WhatsApp group chat, facebook, twitter and zoom meeting. Statistics on the digital platforms and the percentage of usage are presented on the figure 1.



Source: Field work 2020

Figure 1: Preferences of digital platforms

As seen from figure 1, the Covid-19 pandemic brought a shift of the learning system in favor of WhatsApp as a means to convey information from instructors to students and vice versa. In some schools like the Government bilingual high school (GBHS) Logpom, Collège l'Etoile and many others, teachers and students have created WhatsApp groups in various classrooms to enable smooth studies. Teachers often send lessons in soft copies, voice messages and text messages through this platform. The soft copies of lessons are usually in the form of PDF (Portable Digital Format) and Microsoft documents sent in the group while the voice messages simply explain the content of the lesson in the attached file (Becta Cook, D., Levinson, A., Garside, S., 2010).

The WhatsApp platform is most preferable due to its low cost, ease to use in distance areas and it is modern; the modernism attracts the youths who are often carried by fashion. The WhatsApp platform is the most solicited means 80% of interaction between teachers and students, and then followed by computer classroom equipped with many desktops and text messages representing 50% each. Messenger and phone calls occupy the third position but the phone calls are more expensive when the topic of discussion is broad and it limits the number of participants at a time. Zoom meeting and twitter are less solicited in teacher/student interaction but are occasionally used in administrative meeting (especially zoom meeting).

In the same light, the students of Douala V and its neighborhoods just as those in the triangles of Cameroon and abroad had access to virtual learning through the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) channel which the government put in place to assist both primary and secondary students. Some parents who can afford a TV set did encourage their children to follow lectures on the CRTV channel while other students whose parents could not afford a TV set relocated to their friends and neighbors house to follow virtual lectures.

2- Exploitation strategies of digital platform by stakeholders

The intervention of stakeholders in the management of digital platforms varies according to the type of actors and the level of awareness in the digital world.

At the level of the school, the administration has arranged a hall to contain the computers and it serves as the computer classroom. The computers are arranged in rows and columns depending on the capacity and practical computer lessons are organized according to the school's timetable per class. Before schools could resume in the month of June 2020, teachers were free to make use of the computer classrooms to deliver online lessons to students. After resumption in the month of June, the computer classroom often accommodates teachers and students who do online practical lessons. Most of the schools use the Wifi system of network and their preference is the Camtel network (Cameroon telecommunication network). Beside, students are at times requested to contribute money (100 FCFA each) to recharge the internet connection.

Considering the fact that students are prohibited from using mobile phones in school, they only make use of their mobile phones at home to access the online lessons. Those who are not able to have one do couple with their friends to be on the same platform of learning.

3- Repercussions of Covid-19 and the use of digital platform on the educational system of Douala V – Cameroon

The Covid-19 pandemic in Douala V portrays mixed blessing since transforming classrooms from analog to digital is not a blink of an eye. Just as any other epidemic situation in Africa like the Cholera and Ebola, the educational system of Cameroon is taken unaware in its more analog system of functioning (Nkumbesone M. E. *et al*; 2017). The digital platform dynamic within the context of Covid-19 has however underscored some positive aspects for consideration (Condie, R and Munro, B., 2007; Aristovnik, A., 2012).

Increase digital literacy and awareness: Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in Cameroon, about 65% of instructors never valued the digital platforms as a means of learning, a good number is not used to the internet for research purposes and worst of all is the fact that the elderly teachers of 40 years and above consider the internet as a matter of the youth. They mostly carryout research in local libraries and in school archives which are at their disposal. With the Covid-19 at hand, many teachers who have not dreamt of sharing lessons on social media found themselves exploring the digital world. Many students who were limited only to chatting with friends on social media had to redirect and realign their point of priority to meet up with the digital demand. At present, a good number of teachers and students are aware of the whatsApp platform of communication; some teachers, students and classrooms have been nicknamed whatsApp (Gallardo-Virgen, J.A., DeVillar, R.A., 2011). This has not been the only platform of learning as there are many others such as messenger, yahoo mail, Gmail and zoom meeting; but these platforms are not much solicited by students to share vital information (Biagi, F., Loi, M., 2013).

Relatively cheap and timely: The use of digital platforms during period of Covid-19 is not all that expensive when considering the series of airtime promotions proposed by telecommunication companies such as the Orange Cameroun SA, the MTN Cameroon and the Nextel Company. Users have multiple choices to make on the type of mobile network they prefer and each of the telecommunication companies proposes many different slots to the users of the network. The advantages of the slots are usually to have more airtime for calls, messages and to browse on the internet. There is equally daily package, weekly package and monthly package that runs from 50 FCFA to 10 000 FCFA depending on the user. Once a slot or a package is chosen, the user simply browses to receive lectures online unlike the pre-Covid-19 period where students were supposed to pay transport *to-and-froto* school and facing all type of risks from motorcycle riders. Moreover, the distant learning equally serves time and permits students to be more conscious, self determinant and encourages individual efforts (Clayton, J., 2011; Booth, S.E., 2012).

Foster dialogic and emancipatory practice: Dialogic practice explains a situation whereby students are active, engaged and empowered participants in a conversation from which learning emerges. It can be a topic in mathematics and equations in which the students engage in conversations about what they see on a monitor of the computer, without having to rely on terminology that they may not yet have (De Witte, K., Rogge, N., 2014). The teacher can then add the appropriate language into the conversation as they progress in the lesson. On the other hand, emancipatory practice refers to instances where a student's ideas go beyond the learning prescribed by the teacher or the established syllabus as they grasp knowledge from personal research to construct understanding(Wegerif, R. 2012;Luckin, R., *et al*; 2012).

Impediment of the digital platform to educational system

The use digital platform in learning institutions does not only secure advantages but it also has some weaknesses. Some of the shortcomings are:

Expensive nature: Possessing and managing a digital platform is not all that easy in institutions of learning in most developing countries like Cameroon. The economic crisis of the 90s spread its tentacles even after more than twenty years today; the situation is aggravated by the outbreak of epidemics of varied magnitude in the communities. Few schools in Douala V-Cameroon can today boast of owning and managing a computer unit; school administration does not lay emphasis in equipping and developing the digital domain of learning. Most of the existing digital equipment like desktops, Wifi network and cables are the products of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and gifts from donors (individuals, associations, NGOs and foreign bodies). Though present, these digital equipment often lack good management to keep them performing. The learning institutions in the private sector (Collège Lauréat, Collège l'Etoile, Baho bilingual high school, Laval bilingual college, Orchidée bilingual college and Du Vaal College) are often battling to pay bills: teacher's salaries, pay taxes to the government, electricity and water bills; while the government owned schools like GHS Akwa Nord and GBHS Logpom are busy implementing government requirement on the management of finances and others. Paradoxically as the case has always been, a good portion of the finances that came in from student's enrollment is absorbed in different charges and by the

government; this makes it difficult for the schools to buy better digital equipment of about 200 000 FCFA and difficulty to manage the existing once. Meanwhile, those learning institutions which manage to secure enough finances do not invest in the digital domain of learning. They continue waiting on gifts from within and out of the country (Aristovnik, A., 2013).

Furthermore, teachers and students are not left out from this financial constrain to access the digital platform of learning. The Covid-19 crisis led to increase use of digital platforms in the education milieu, but however, by imposing this platform as a means of learning the government of Cameroon did not consider the financial situation of teachers and those of parents and students to be able to have access to the digital platform. During the months of April and May 2020 when learning was mainly online, many teachers and students could not effectively take part since they had no laptops, desktops, tablets and even good telephones to browse on the internet. Those who managed to secure one were also confronted with the problem of airtime. From the moment school resumed in the month of June 2020 till present, sharing of information on digital platforms between teachers and students is a challenge especially when individual teacher or student is expected to buy recharge charge.

Over crowdedness: The rapid demographic growth rate observed in major cities in the developing countries usually generates traffic congestion, pollution in all its forms (air, water and land) and urban disorder. The urban population of Douala has kept on swelling as a result of the socio-political crisis hitting the English speaking Regions of Cameroon. Since the crisis began in November 2016 with the massacring, torturing and extrajudicial killing of innocent civilians in the North West and South Regions, more than 40% of the local populations have relocated to other French speaking Regions like Douala for safety. The internally displaced populations simply widen the gap between the demands of social amenities (schools, hospitals, water, etc.) and the supply of them. The pressure from this excess population is expressed on the limited learning institutions and limited digital platforms in schools in the form of overcrowding. Taking the case of Douala V-Cameroon and GBHS Logpom alone, the statistics of the overcrowding are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Number of computers per learning institution in Douala-V-Cameroon

Name of school	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	Total	№ of Computer
Orchidée college	665	545	594	403	563	289	527	3586	80
Baho BHS	234	209	197	166	307	233	345	1691	20
GBHS Logpom	551	477	365	288	402	376	492	2951	50
Collège Luc-Bel	184	133	166	190	345	201	307	1526	15
Collège Lauréat	267	243	209	188	373	221	385	1886	53
Laval bilingual college	240	230	243	201	434	345	460	2153	60
DuVaal college	209	178	188	256	304	221	431	1787	47

Source: Field work 2020

The results from field observations as presented in table 2 show that there is an acute deficit in the number of computers in schools to satisfy the pressing need of digital lessons. Taking the case of GBHS Logpom and its form one, there are five classrooms in the order of form one A,B,C,D and E with an average of 111 students per classroom. This large number of students does not usually study effectively during practical lessons with the few available 80 desktops. The same situation of overcrowding around few available computers is observed across most schools in Douala V-Cameroon. Only few schools own a projector

which is equally being used on rare occasions whereas, the initial objective was to facilitate learning process.

The overcrowding has been sustained by the socio-political crisis in the English speaking Regions which pushed many students to relocate into Douala V. Closely linked to this overcrowding is the problem of the spread of the virus and other transmissible diseases among teachers and learners. When the students are grouped around the few available computers, the risk of disease spread and other contaminations is obvious, since barrier measure of social distancing is not respected. Now therefore, overcrowding and the absence of sufficient digital equipment is a contributing factor to the spread of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases among teachers and students.

In the same order of reasoning, the digital platforms are not fully exploited by teachers and students because most of them are not computer literate. A good number of teachers still find it difficult to manipulate the computer within the framework of research and delivery of lessons to students. The students equally are more familiar with facebook and whatsapp mainly for vain discussions with their peers. They hardly use these platforms as a means of learning but rather as a means of distraction.

Conclusion

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in Cameroon has greatly affected the entire economy of the country with changes in the education sector and many other sectors. Some of the sectors like the education sector have been experiencing dynamism in both strategies and practices; the dynamism of the digital platforms within the context of Covid-19 in schools has been the main objective of this study. It further strives to understand the various roles of teachers, students and the school administration to revamp the digital learning process. A thorough analysis of data collected from some seven schools permitted to draft a typology of digital platforms such as whatsapp, text messages, and messenger and via the computer classroom where messages are sent through emails. Findings show that the digital platforms are of paramount importance to the direct actors (teachers, students and school administration) as well as to the indirect actors (parents, government and civil society); in the sense that it is less expensive to send a message to distant areas, enhances emancipatory learning and promotes digital literacy. The digital platforms equally have some shortcomings such as; expensive devices, overcrowding around few computers can contribute to the spread of disease and also the fact that some teachers and students do not know how to manipulate or divert the academic purpose of the devices to vain pleasures.

This paper therefore proposes the creation of special practical training sessions for teachers in each of the schools in Douala V-Cameroon on how to use digital platforms and deliver lessons to students. Once these teachers are well trained, they would intend to impact the digital knowledge to students in their various subjects (Beetham, H. and Sharpe, R. (2007). The school administration should put place a better management team with the aim of controlling all the digital devices, repairing and replacing devices which are damaged. Also, teachers should teach by example and should encourage the students to strictly use the digital platforms for academic purposes. The parents should as well encourage their children to embrace the digital learning system.

Bibliography

- Archer, K., Savage, R., *et al*; 2014. 'Examining the effectiveness of technology use in classrooms: A tertiary meta-analysis.' *Computers & Education: an international journal*. VOL. 78, 140-149
- Aristovnik, A., 2013. *ICT Expenditures and Education Outputs/Outcomes in Selected Developed Countries: An Assessment of Relative Efficiency*. *Campus-Wide Information Systems* 30, 222–230.
- Aristovnik, A., 2012. *The Impact of ICT on educational performance and its efficiency in selected EU and OECD countries: A non-parametric analysis*. *Turkish online journal of Educational Technology* 11, 144–152.
- Aristovnik, A., 2012. *The impact of ICT on educational performance and its efficiency in*

- selected EU and OECD countries: A non-parametric analysis.* TOJET: The Turkish online journal of educational technology 11, 144–152.
- Beetham, H. and Sharpe, R. eds (2007) *Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age: Designing and Delivering E-Learning*. London: Routledge.
 - Biagi, F., Loi, M., 2013. *Measuring ICT Use and Learning Outcomes: evidence from recent econometric studies*. European Journal of Education, Vol. 48, No. 1.
 - Booth, S.E., 2012. *Cultivating Knowledge Sharing and Trust in Online Communities for Educators*. Journal of Educational Computing Research 47, 1–31.
 - Clayton, J., 2011. *Investigating Online Learning Environments Efficiently and Economically*. Malaysian Journal of Distance Education 13, 21–34.
 - Condie, R and Munro, B., 2007. *The impact of ICT in schools – a landscape review*.
 - Becta Cook, D., Levinson, A., Garside, S., 2010. *Time and learning efficiency in Internet-based learning: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. Advances in Health Sciences Education 15, 755–770.
 - Cox, S., Black, J., Heney, J., Keith, M., 2015. *Promoting Teacher Presence: Strategies for Effective and Efficient Feedback to Student Writing Online*. Teaching English in the Two Year College 42, 376–391.
 - De Witte, K., Rogge, N., 2014. *Does ICT matter for effectiveness and efficiency in mathematics education?* Computers & Education 75, 173–184.
 - Ejuande E.W & Nkumbesone M.E. 2017: *Determinants of epidemiology risks in hospital milieu of Douala: case of the New-Bell health district*, In: *Dynamiques urbaines et Transformations Socio-Spatiales dans les Villes du Cameroun* : Regards croisés entre logiques, stratégies et pratiques d’acteurs, Douala, Vol thématique № 6, Editions Cheikh Anta Diop, pp305-337
 - Gallardo-Virgen, J.A., DeVillar, R.A., 2011. *Sharing, Talking, and Learning in the Elementary School Science Classroom: Benefits of Innovative Design and Collaborative Learning in Computer-Integrated Settings*. Computers in the Schools 28, 278–290.
 - Luckin, R., Bligh, B., Manches, A., Ainsworth, S., Crook, C. and Noss, R. (2012) *Decoding Learning: The Proof, Promise and Potential of Digital Education*. London: Nesta. www.nesta.org.uk/library/documents/DecodingLearningReport_v12.pdf
 - Nkumbesone *et al*; 2020: *Valorization of the cassava economy as a social livelihood between Bonaberi to Souza in the North-West of Douala-Cameroon*, In *Socio-Economic issues in Cameroon* Vol. 3, pp.111-131, KSP Books: Istanbul.
 - Wegerif, R. (2012) *Dialogic: Education for the Internet Age*. London: Routledge.
 - Teach with digital technologies. (2019). Retrieved 11 November 2019, from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/digital/Pages/teach.aspx>
 - Wilson, C., Orellana, M., & Meek, M. (2010). *The Evolution of Classroom Technology - Interactive Feature*. Retrieved 11 November 2019, from <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/09/19/magazine/classroom-technology.html?ref=magazine>

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

By

Gonee Barle Jonathan

Department of Political and Administrative Studies
University of Port Harcourt

Abstract

Since the COVID-19 index case was confirmed in Nigeria on February, 27, 2020, many things have changed. In spite of the constitutional declaration of Nigeria as a secular state, she is largely a religious country. Ergo, when religion sneezes, the country catches cold. Since the restriction on public gathering by the government; faith based organizations have adopted new ways of reaching out to their members. This article intends to highlight the effects of COVID-19 in Nigeria using the Social Response Theory by Serge Moscovici as the framework.

Key Words: Religion; Nigeria, Government, COVID-19

Introduction

Corona virus, also known as COVID-19 is a viral disease. The disease started in Wuhan, China on December 8, 2019 and has spread to almost all parts of the globe. The disease has overwhelmed the health systems of most countries especially the developing nations. Currently, worst hit are the developed nations with aged population. Developing nations, especially the ones with hitherto weak health and economic systems will by and large be overwhelmed.

The World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee advised all countries on the 23rd of January, 2020 to be prepared for containment, active surveillance, early detection, isolation, cases management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of COVID-19 (Brookings, 2020).

The World Health Organization then declared the novel human coronavirus disease outbreak, a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Following this declaration; the Corona virus Preparedness Group (CPG) was constituted on January 31, 2020 in Nigeria. The World Health Organization categorized Nigeria as one of the 13 high-risk countries in Africa with regard to the spread of COVID-19. Nigeria is also among the vulnerable African nations, given the weak state of the health system (Marbot, 2020). WHO, declared coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO).

The first case of Coronavirus was confirmed in Nigeria on February 27, 2020 when an Italian man on business trip from Milan arrived Lagos; he was tested for the virus and confirmed positive (Jacinta, 2020). The federal and state governments began to intensify efforts to contain the contagion by March, 2020, but it was late because by then, there were already 27 confirmed cases in the country. There is widespread concern that the fragile public health system in Africa's most populous country will be unable to cope with a rapidly spreading pandemic.

Policy makers in most parts of the world are wont to treating religious organizations as self-contained units. The Nigerian government and her policy makers always fall into the trap of excluding the religious community from the general public in terms of policy making as though they constitute a separate entity. In fact, the religious community is an integral part of the society- its economy and politics. More than 80% of people around the world adhere to one form of religion or another, that's according to Pew Research

(2012). In Nigeria, over 90% of people adhere to one form of religion or another (Pew Research, 2015). To view religion as a separate entity therefore obscures the complex and diverse nature of these communities and how they interface with the State.

On March 19, 2020, the Federal Government rolled out a set of guidelines to curb the spread of COVID-19 which included; lockdowns; stay-at-home orders; closure of schools, closure of borders, air and seaports; restrictions on social activities, including religious gatherings (Quartz Africa, 2020). Some of these measures did not go down well with some Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and their leaders, especially the closure of worship centres. This is because there is a yawning gap in trust and accountability between the citizens and the State (Chatham House, 2020).

Nigeria is a deeply religious country, so whatever impinges on Freedom of Worship sends shivers down the spines of the faith community. This paper takes a cursory look at the effects of COVID-19 on religious practices in Nigeria. We will also delve into some actions of government that has sent shivers down the spines of the religious communities and how they have been able to adapt to the changes to their ways of worship as occasioned by the various safety protocols imposed by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Worthy of note also are the contributions of religious leaders that has helped to cushion the damaging effects of the pandemic. There will be conclusion, and recommendations that will assist the government in their policy formulation and implementation as regards religious organizations. We do hope that the government will look into these recommendations before reeling out policies bordering on the Corona virus pandemic and subsequent health or natural disasters.

Theoretical Framework

As the covid-19 pandemic spreads and religious organizations are constrained to adopt behavioural changes including the restriction on the mode of worship and number of people to congregate, the Social Representation theory becomes a variable tool to explain the role of religious communities and their perception of government policies and actions on how to contain the spread.

Moscovici (1963), defined social representation as a multifaceted concept focusing on systems of values, ideas, images and practices. It concerns our everyday thinking that give coherence to our beliefs, ideas and connections we create “as easily as we breath” (Moscovici, 1998, p. 214). Social representation emerges as the by- product of our values, ideas and practices whilst individuals are trying to make sense of their physical and social environment (Moscovici, 1984). The knowledge is due to a common sense or simple naïve and natural knowledge that is different from scientific knowledge (Jodelet, 1989). It is knowledge, formed during interactions with others, then anchored in our traditions and ideologies (Moscovici, 1998).

Social representations are not to be seen as a logical and coherent thought patterns (Moscovici, 2000). Moscovici identified three types of social representations viz: Hegemonic, Polemic and Emancipated social representations. The one that relates to our topic is the Emancipated. It relates to subgroups that create their own version with “a certain degree of autonomy with respect to the interacting segments of society”. Moscovici, (1988:221). In our case, it is the way people perceive the existence, cure and spread of the corona virus. The position of some religious leaders and their flock concerning the COVID-19, typically exemplify the social representation theory.

Government Actions to Curb the Spread of the Pandemic

On the 19th of March, 2020, the Federal Government announced its first total lockdown to cover Ogun, Lagos, and the FCT, Abuja. It was to take effect on the 30th of March, 2020. It includes closure of air and seaports, closure of schools, ban on social gatherings including burials, parties, markets and religious congregations (Vanguard, 2020). Public gatherings were not to be more than 20-50 persons and they must observe COVID-19 protocols like wearing of face mask, social/physical distancing, washing of hands, use of hand sanitizers, among others (NCDC, 2020).

Religion is man's outward appearance to man indicating that he has a relationship with God, while faith is man's inward appearance to God, indicating the he has a connection with God. Therefore, religion needs external structures to indicate God's presence. The media wouldn't have been awash with comments, protests, pleas and outright curses from religious leaders and their followers if the lockdown did not infringe on the freedom of worship. Shutting down worship centres and banning religious ceremonies like Easter and Ramadan was the tipping point in the COVID-19 containment processes and how it affects the religious community.

The government also setup taskforce squads to implement the lockdown orders. Apart from the Presidential Task Force (PTF), individual states also have their own Task Force Squads to implement the NCDC safety protocols. Arrests were made in all the states. One of such arrests was trailed by allegation of selective justice. In Abuja, a group of security men led by IkharaAttah, invaded the Jesus Reigns Family Church in Apo District in March and arrested the Presiding Pastor during church service (Punch 2020). It was alleged that the same security team had earlier speared some Imams and worshippers in a mosque in Maitama District in Abuja from arrest.

In Uyo, the AkwaIbom State capital, Believers Love World Inc. aka, Christ Embassy has dragged the state government before a Federal High Court over the arrest and detention of its pastor, Pastor Emmanuel Effiong and a videographer, GabrielEkpa over alleged attack on COVID-19 Monitoring Team (Vanguard, 2020). It all started on a Sunday when the COVID-19 Monitoring Team stormed the church and arrested the duo over alleged violation of COVID-19 protocols. The AkwaIbom State government also arrested the General Overseer of the knowledge of God Ministry, Prophet Victor Elijah and some members of his congregation. A portion of the church was also destroyed over the violation of COVID-19 protocols. State Commissioner for Works, Akparawa Ephraim Inyangeyen explained that the G.O. and his flock were arrested due to violations of guidelines aimed at checking community transmission of the novel disease in the state (Vanguard, 2020).

In Aba the Abia State capital, the government sealed the Chapel of Answers International along Jubilee Road for violating the State Government's COVID-19 protocols (Vanguard, 2020). The Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezeunwo Wike personally supervised the demolition of Edemele Hotel and Prodest Home in Eleme Local Government Area in the State. The operators of the hotels were said to be operating during lockdown. They were also alleged to have housed COVID-19 Patients who refused to go to the quarantine centre. But the owners of the hotels denied the allegations, and instead accused the state government's task force officials of demanding for a bribe which they refused to give (BBC News, 2020).

Fun seekers in Lagos State were also arrested. The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP BalaElkana confirmed that 65 fun seekers were arrested at 84 Park Hotel located at Auguto Close, Oko Oba area on Wednesday April 29th, 2020 for violating the state lockdown order (Vanguard, 2020). Also, in Lagos, a total of 2,310 violators of the COVID-19 protocols have so far been arrested in five weeks, out of which 125 were minors. According to the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, ZubairuMuazu, a total of 3996 vehicles, tricycles and motorcycles were ready for the next phase (Vanguard, 2020).

Responses from Religious Leaders

Religion has replaced commerce, banking, agriculture, manufacturing etc., as the most efficacious means to primitive accumulation of capital (Ibrahim 2020). It is therefore understandable when some religious leaders viewed the government's restrictions on religious gathering occasioned by COVID-19 as an existential threat to their means of livelihood. Many are not surprised that these actors will fight back with all they've got. Many Muslim clerics actively promoted the Zionist thesis, arguing that it was a plot to place barriers between Muslims and their religious practice (Ibrahim, 2020).

The founder of Christ Embassy Church Pastor Chris Oyakhilome is one of the vocal men of God who have reacted to the restrictions on religious practices. He was said have broadcast a ‘baseless conspiracy’ that the corona virus is linked to the rollout of the 5G network, on his Love World Television Ministry on satellite around the world. In May, 2020, Love World Television Ministry; a Christian television channel founded by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome was sanctioned by the Office of Communication (OFCOM), the British broadcast regulator and prevented from airing “potentially harmful statements” about the COVID-19 pandemic (Ibrahim, 2020).

But in response to Oyakhilome’s 5G conspiracy’s theory, the founder of Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC); Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo criticized Pastor Chris for attributing the spread of the Corona virus to the introduction of the 5G network and Anti-Christ. In a short video circulated online, Pastor Oshimolowo described the news as fake and damaging to the Christian faith. He therefore warned Christians to beware of false prophets and quipped “if Corona virus is caused by 5G, why is it in his village that does not have 5G”? (Vanguard, 2020, p13).

Bishop David Oyedepo is the founder of Living Faith Church AKA Winners Chapel; one of the mega churches in Nigeria. Using his services and prayer sessions, which he now runs online; demanded for churches to be reopened. He sees no reason why the house of God should be closed by a secular authority. Oyedepo believes that the banquet hall of God should not be shut as believers are been fed there. He believes that whoever stops the church from fellowshiping is out to destroy God’s handiwork. The man of God believes that there must be a devil behind the actions of the government (DW News, 2020). Oyedepo however believes that COVID-19 will soon be a thing of the past. He said this through his son (who is also a senior pastor), while donating an ambulance and some personal protective equipment (PPE) to the Ogun state government (Vanguard, 2020). Apostle Johnson Suleiman, founder of Omega Power Ministry International, however blames China for creating the virus in order to topple the existing supper power. Though he was not explicit, but the inference was that there was a battle for supremacy between China and the USA. He predicted that in 2022 the world will witness something worse from same China (Vanguard, 2020).

ShaykhSaniYahayaJimgir is an Islamic scholar based in Jos and a senior figure within the Islamic Reform Movement Jama’ at Izalat al-Bid’awa-Iqamat al Sunna (Izala for short), the largest Salafi group in Nigeria. The cleric caused a stir with his incendiary sermons denouncing the coronavirus pandemic as yet another Western plot to stymie the practice of Islam (Hoechner, 2020). It is difficult to know the number of people who are swayed by the idea that the corona virus is fake in the predominantly Muslim Northern Nigeria (Hoechner, 2020).

Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua, the founder of Synagogue Church of all Nations was among Pentecostal Pastors who saw the restrictions on religious practices as satanic and uncalled for. He predicted that the corona virus would disappear after a down pour on March 27 (several days before a lockdown was imposed on the states of Lagos, Ogun and the FCT). But when March 27, passed and the cases of COVID-19 was on the increase; he backpedaled by saying that what he meant was that the virus would be halted where it began. Coincidentally, the virus actually dropped in Wuhan, China (the independent, 2020).

Another man of God, Primate Elijah Ayodele, also claimed that he was in possession of holly water and anointed oil that could cure COVID-19 (Daily Post, 2020). On April 13, one Good Heart Val Aloysius, founder of Father’s House International Church in Calabar, Cross River State asked the state government to gather all those with COVID-19 for him to heal. He was so sure of his ability that he put his life on the line by asking the government to hang him if he fails to make good his claims (Paradise News 2020). Rev. Father Ejike Mbaka of Adoration Ministry had a conciliatory message. He urged Nigerians not to fear, as God will heal the world, and cursed the virus. He admonished his followers not to fear as corona virus will go just as Ebola left (Vanguard, 2020).

Following the extension of the restrictions; Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Amichi, His Lordship Rt. Revd. Ephraim Okechukwulkeakor, has condemned clerics who continues to shut their doors to worshippers. In his rhetoric question he said, if the church closes its doors in times of trouble and disaster, where should the people run to? He further noted that the church is doing incalculable damage to itself and that the repercussions will manifest after the pandemic has died down (The Guardian, 2020).

The criticisms, protests and sometimes outright confrontations from religious leaders across the country may have informed the move by some State governors to relax restrictions at a critical period for the Easter celebrations. Among the governors were Wike of Rivers, Udom of Akwa-Ibom, Akeredolu of Ondo, and Diri of Bayelsa (Pulse Nigeria, 2020).

But it was not always confrontations; some religious leaders actually assisted the government by donating relief materials and medical equipment. For example, the General Overseer of Winners Chapel, Bishop David Oyedepo donated ambulances, test kits, food and other essential materials to Lagos and Ogun State governments (Nigerian Tribune, 2020). A group of Imams in FCT also donated relief materials to Area Council (Daily Trust, 2020).

The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye also donated 200,000 hand gloves, 8,000 hand sanitizers, 8,000 surgical face masks to the Lagos State government (This Day, 2020). Mountain of Holy Ghost Intervention Church General overseer, Prophet Chukwuemeka Odumeje also known as the Lion, doled out 500 cartoons of noodles, 3000 tubers of yam, bags of rice and other food items (BBC News, 2020). Pastor Tunde Bakare has chided religious leaders who are against the lockdown. He advocated for collaboration instead of confrontations. He therefore advised the mega churches to donate some of their halls to the government to be used as isolation centres (DW News 2020).

Effects of Covid-19 on Religious Activities

The coronavirus pandemic has impinged on charitable works by religious groups, religious rites, the congregation and pastoral care. All these go to show how the unilateral action of government to impose restriction has affected the religious community and by implication, the society at large. But it has also revealed the tenacity, generosity and creativity of religious leaders who have invented new ways to practice their faith and to serve the community under the lockdown, occasioned by the novel coronavirus (Marshall, 2020).

Many religious organizations provided and continue to provide vital social services like child care and hunger relief. Shutting down houses of worship to prevent the coronavirus, put the beneficiaries of these programmes in serious danger (Marshall, 2020). Ramadan and Eid-el-fitr, two revered Muslim festivals were casualties of the restrictions on religious practices imposed by government in order to prevent community transmission of coronavirus. In Nigeria, and most parts of the Muslim world, congregations for Taraweeh prayers were cancelled because mosques were closed due to the pandemic.

The great mosque of Mecca urged the Muslim world to prepare for Ramadan with precautionary and preventive health measures regarding acts of worship (Sing, 2020). The Council of Imams and Ulama in Kaduna State, suspended congregational Friday and five daily prayers that would host more than 20 people until further notice. Mallam Yusuf Armisgasiyyu, Secretary-General of the council insisted that the directive was in accordance with prophet Mohammad's teaching. The council also appealed to Muslim faithfuls to intensify prayers for Allah's intervention so that Kaduna State will be spared by the virus (Kazeem, 2020).

In a show of resilience most churches have adopted to changes occasioned by the pandemic. Online meetings have become the new trend because of its reach and cost effectiveness. Cloud technology is now the in thing. Church services, meetings and deliberations are now successfully streamed online via zoom, Skype and other online portals (Sunday Independents, 2020). Some families even try to create an atmosphere of church service at home by dressing up in their Sunday outfits with the head of the households even collecting offerings from the rest family members to give to the church (BBC News, 2020). Some ingenious pastors give account details online for members to pay their tithes, offerings and other donations and levies into.

The restrictions on social and economic activities, in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 has brought untold hardship to the poor masses. With no State social security or other safeguards, some of the restrictive measures like social distancing, lockdown, etc. are likely to lead to loss of income, means of livelihood, starvation, crime and even destitution (Rider & Usman, 2020).

Government Eases Restrictions on Worship Centres

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, Lagos state has been setting the pace in the fight against the disease. On August 1, 2020, Governor Babajide Sanwo-olu in his 17th briefing on the COVID-19 response, issued the following guidelines to worship centres as he relaxes the lockdown:

1. Only regular services/gatherings are permitted to hold, vigils and other non-regular activities remains banned.
2. Worshippers of 65yrs and above are advised to worship from home.
3. Services and other gathering must be held in well-ventilated halls.
4. Face masks are compulsory throughout the duration of service.
5. Proper environmental sanitation and goods sanitary conditions are mandatory in worship centres.
6. Temperature checks is mandatory before entering the building.
7. Regular washing of hands and the use of hand sanitizers is required.
8. National Emergency numbers must be displayed conspicuously on the door post of worship centres.
9. Handshakes, hugging and other affectionate displays are not allowed.
10. Offering boxes should be stationary to avoid contacts.
11. Flow of traffic in and out of worship centres must be organized (Niarametrics, 2020).

In spite of the announcement that mosques should reopen on the 7th of August, 2020, leaders of various mosques are not letting their guard down. For example, the manager of Shamsi Adisa Thomas Central Mosque, popularly known as Old Secretariat Mosques, GRA, Ikeja, Mutiu Ogundepo said that the mosque was fumigated twice before Friday prayer. To add to that, all COVID-19 protocols were observed. At the Alubarika Central Mosque, Ilasamaja, the Chief Imam, Muhammed Adetayo turned back worshippers who came without face mask (The Nation, 2020).

Speaking though the Chairman Media Committee, Oladele Bank-Olemoh, the G.O of Mountain of Fire Ministry said that MFM will not reopen immediately on the 9th of August as announced by the Lagos State government, but that the church will use this window to put in place, all safety protocols as stipulated by NCDC. In the meantime, services will continue to be held online (The Nation, 2020). Pastor Sam Adeyemi of Daystar Christian Centre is also of the opinion of putting safety measures in place before reopening fully for services. But others, like the Presiding Pastor of Shepherd Hill Baptist Church, Obanikoro, Rev. Israel Kristilere said that they would jump on the offer as his church had put in place safety measures to comply with NCDC rules. (The Nation, 2020).

Summary

As at Wednesday, August 26th, 2020, the total number of samples tested stood at 391,502, confirmed cases-53021, discharged-40,281 and deaths-1010. The percentage of the confirmed cases showed that male was 64% while female was 36% (NCDC).

According to the experts, dearth of reagents and test kits were responsible for the delay in the release of COVID-19 test results and by implication, the number of confirmed cases in the country (Punch Healthwise, 2020). On April 28, NCDC set a target of testing two million people in the next three months in a population of 200 million people (Punch Healthwise, 2020). Speaking at the daily Presidential Task Force briefing, the Director-General of National Center for Disease Control, Dr. Chikwelhekweazu confirmed that the lack of test kits was actually a challenge to the task force (Punch Healthwise, 2020).

The Nigerian government is facing tough times in a bid to contain the pandemic and also prevent a total collapse of the economy. In the absence of an effective vaccine or cure, social/physical distancing, safe hygiene practices and responsible lifestyle becomes the most viable options. The federal government must find culturally appropriate and sustainable ways to implement the World Health Organization's measures designed to contain the spread of the deadly Corona virus (Rider and Usman, 2020).

Religious organization are an integral part of the society and play a very important role in dealing with the effects of the pandemic, from the provision of material aids to helping people with mental and spiritual wellbeing. It is my belief that a synergy between FBOs and the government will improve public health outcomes within local communities during this period of the pandemic (Rider and Usman, 2020). Ultimately, religious institutions and their teachers have the capacity to transmit messages in positive ways, and their messages play a critical part in determining how diseases and other vicissitudes of life are understood by the public

Recommendations

According to Rider and Usman (2020), the following precautionary measures will help in resolving conflicts between religious leaders and government on how to tackle the pandemic:

1. Promotion of key health messages that chime with appropriate religious practices and teachings, drawing on the expertise and reach of religious leaders in their local communities.
2. Sensitization of health workers, security operatives and other relevant government agencies on how to implement government policies in such a way as to foster understanding, unity and sensitivity to religious teachings and practices with respect to their doctrines.
3. Debunking false teachings and conspiracy theories about the pandemic, especially those that have religious, ethnic and apocalyptic undertone and coloration that would risk escalation in the spread of COVID-19, unrest and civil disobedience in the communities. FBOs and government should work in synergy in order to sustain the gains made so far, in the fight against COVID-19.
4. Government should desist from criminalizing dissident religious leaders, but instead should seek to integrate them in the scheme of things.
5. There should be collaboration between government and religious leaders in order to be able to represent the interest of all religions and religious minorities in planning and crisis management
6. Government should desist from treating religious communities like a self-contained unit in course of formulation and implementation of policies
7. Regular consultations with religious leaders on issues of religion before policies are formulated. FBOs should also be inculcated into committees or bodies that will be saddled with the responsibility of implementing policies that touch on religion and their practice.
8. A ministry that will oversee religious matters should be created. That ministry should as a matter of necessity be headed by a religious leader. This will help douse down the tension that always erupt between the faith community, their leaders, and the government on policy formulation and implementation.

References

- Adebanjo, T. & Ogunlade, A. (2020, August, 8). Covid-19: what the Church needs to do. *The Nation Newspaper*.
- Adebanjo, T. & Ogunlade, A. (2020, August, 8). Low Turnout as Lagos Mosques Reopens. *The Nation Newspaper*.
- Adepoju, O. (2020, March, 11). Nigeria Responds to COVID-19, First Case Detected in Sub-Saharan. *Nature Medicine*.
- Agency Report, (2020, March, 2). Corona virus Will Disappear by 27th March, 2020 says T. B. Joshua. *The Independence*.
- Asuquo, B. (2020, April, 10). Gather all COVID-19 patients in Nigeria let me Heal them, Pastor tells Federal Government. *Paradise News*.
- Bayo, W. (2020, April, 9). Wike, 3 Other Governors Relax Restrictions on Religious Gatherings Because of Easter. *Pulse Nigeria*.
- Brookings, (2020). How will Nigeria respond to COVID-19? Thursday July, 2.
- Chatham House, (2020). Nigeria's political leaders Need to Win Trust to Tackle COVID-19, April, 23.
- Chukwuebuka, C. (2020, April, 19). COVID-19: Anglican Bishop Decries Clerics Neglecting Members. *The Guardian*.
- Dada, P. & Igoni, D. (2020, April, 9). Ondo, Bayelsa to Relax Restrictions for Easter Celebration. *The Punch Newspaper*.
- Gabriel, C. (2020, May, 23 p13). What Nigerian Pastors Said about COVID-19, *Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Harris, E. (2020, June, 24). Christ Embassy Sues Akwa-Ibom Government over Arrest, Detention of Pastor, videographer. *Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Hoechner, H. (2020). In Northern Nigeria, Distrust Jeopardize the Response to Coronavirus. April, 15.
- Ibrahim, J. (2020). COVID-19 in Nigeria: Once Again, Religion Stands in the Way. June, 29.
- Jacinta, C. (2020). Between Religious Freedom and Public Good: Reactions to Religious Restrictions to Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria, May, 20.
- Jimoh, A. (2020, April, 3). COVID-19: FCT Imams donate to Area Council. *Daily Trust*.

- Jodelet, D. (1989). *Les presentation sociales* Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Kazeem, Y. (2020). Africa's largest city is trying to Shut Down to Beat Coronavirus -That's Easier Said than Done, Yahoo, finance March, 19.
- Krippahl, C. (2020, May, 19). Nigeria's Religious Leaders Demand Lifting of COVID-19 Lockdown. *DW News*, Lagos.
- Marbot, O. (2020). Corona virus Africa Map: Which Countries Are Most at Risk?
- Marshall, K. (2020). What Religion Can Offer in the Response to COVID-19. May, 26.
- Moscovici, S. (1963). Attitudes and Opinions. *Annual Review of Psychology*.
- Moscovici, S. (1984). *Psychologiesociales*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Moscovici, S. (1988). Notes: Toward a Description of Social Representations. In F. Uwe. *The psychology of the social*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p 214.
- Moscovici, S. (2000). Fondation Maison des Sciences de home. Polity Press.
- NCDC, (2000). COVID-19 Protocols. NCDC. gov.ng Guidelines.
- NCDC, (2020). COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria: Situation Reports. March, 25.
- NCDC, (2020). COVID-19 Situation Report. Situation Report 180, August, 26.
- Nduka, O. (2020, April 8). Corona virus: Nigeria's Mega Churches Adjust to Empty Auditorium. *BBC News*, Lagos.
- Nduka, O. (2020, May, 11). Corona virus Lockdown. Two Hotels Demolished in Nigeria for Breach of Rules. *BBC News*, Port Harcourt.
- Nna, M. (2020, April, 9). Covid-19, Adeboye Donates Medical Supplies to Lagos. *This Day Newspaper*.
- Nwachukwu, J. (2020, April, 2). I cure all COVID-19 Patients- Primate Ayodele. *Daily Post*.
- Nwopara, C. & Alaribe, U. (2020, June, 18). Abia Government Seals Church, Shopping Mall for Violating COVID-19 Protocols. *Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Ogundele, K. (2020, March, 30). COVID-19: FCTA Enforcement Squad Arrest Pastor, Shuts Churches. *Punch Newspaper*.
- Ogundipe, S. (2020, March, 18). Nigeria: COVID-19 - Nationwide Lockdown Looms. *Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Olisa, C. (2020, August, 3). Lagos State Lists Conditions that Must Be Met by Churches, Mosques Before Reopening. *Nairametrics*.
- Omorogbe, (2020, March, 31). COVID-19 Winners Chapel Donates Ambulances to Lagos and Ogun State, Test kits, Food, Others. *Nigerian Tribune*.

- Onwuzoo, A. (2020, August, 3). With Less Than 1% COVID-19 Testing. NCDC May Not Meet 2m Target- Experts.*Punch Healthwise*.
- Onyegbula, E. (2020, April, 30). COVID-19: 65 Fun Seekers Arrested for Violating the Lockdown Order.*Vanguard Newspaper*.
- Pew, Research Centre, (2012). Global Religious Landscape. Dec, 18.
- Pew, Research Centre, (2015). Research Centre Report. *Quartz Africa*.
- Rider, C. &Usman H. (2020). COVID-19 and the Need for Government to Work with Religious Leaders. Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. April, 23.
- Singh, R. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Religion and Beyond. The Geopolitics. June, 26.
- The Eagle Online, (2020). COVID-19 Cases may Reach 39,000 in Lagos- Commissioner. March, 27.
- Uma, N. &Abiaziem, C. (2020, June, 7). What COVID-19 Taught Us-Clerics. *Sunday Independent*.
- Usman, E. (2020, May, 3). 2,310 Violators of COVID-19 Lockdown order, Arrested in Lagos.*Vanguard Newspaper*.
- WHO (2019).Corona Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report -37
- WHO (2020).Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19. March, 11.
- Yomi, K. (2020). Africa's Largest City is trying to Shut Down to Beat Coronavirus, March, 19.

JESUS' TEACHING ON "HEAL THE SICK" IN MATTHEW 10:8A AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE HEALING OF COVID-19

By

Samuel Sunday Alamu

Department of Christian Religious Studies and Philosophy

College of Humanity,

The Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

&

Mrs Oluwabukola Alaba Ifabiye,

Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary,

Abeokuta, Ogun State

Abstract

One common challenge facing Africa and the world at large is the problem of coronavirus which has claimed millions of lives and rendered several jobless and devastated all over the world, and yet, no particular solution has so far been discovered despite efforts by experts in the fields of science and medicine. The rate at which the virus spreads is quite alarming, posing serious threats to human survival. Using exegetical approach, this paper examined Jesus' teaching on "heal the sick" in Matthew 10:8a with particular reference to COVID-19.

Key words: Heal the sick, COVID-19, Matthew 10:8a, Nigeria, Africa.

Introduction

The teachings of Jesus in Matthew and the entire Gospels have become so profound in the church. This is evidenced by his disciples and various critics of his authoritative ministry in restoring life and dignity to humanity. Some have even accused him of distorting the Mosaic Law and calling himself God. The teaching of Jesus to "heal the sick" has therefore had profound influence on the wellbeing of his hearers. Various dimensions of Jesus' teaching, "to heal" could be found on the pages of the Gospels especially in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. The frequency of these words attest to the importance of healing as an integral part of church ministry.

Thus, the emergence of coronavirus in 2019, left Africa and the whole world in a state of confusion and Nigeria is no exception. Precisely, in December 2019, China identified and notified the global public health community about the emergence of a novel coronavirus among patients at health facilities in the Hubei province of the country. This novel coronavirus was identified as the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and its attendant illness as coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).¹ What is the relevance of this teaching to the fight against the problem of coronavirus that has become a global pandemic and provoked mixed reactions in the church? This is one of the questions churches around the world are grappling with as the World Health Organization recently declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Researchers and experts in the fields of science and medicine have been making efforts to find vaccine that will be used to curtail the spread of this pandemic but up till now, none has been discovered. As a result, millions of people have died and several are still lying critically on their sick beds across the globe.

The seriousness of the pandemic has also rendered many people jobless and both the economic and educational systems of most nations of the world. As a matter of fact, the havoc this has caused many individuals, families, religious and governmental organizations particularly in Africa cannot be over emphasized. Many who lost their beloved ones or jobs can better tell of the pains and agony they are still going through. The COVID-19 crisis can be seen as unprecedented in the history of the world. The emergence and spread of this virus was a sudden one. The global community is experiencing a terrible period due the spread of this pandemic. Different countries all over the world have issued guidance to their

respective states, which include measures such as quarantine, repatriations of citizens and preparedness at workplaces. Emphasis is placed on basic preventative measures by individuals and communities as prevention is believed to remain the most powerful tool to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All economies, businesses and financial systems have been challenged. Governments are confining people to their homes or encouraging the “stay at home” policy. Efforts of the government is perceived by some critics as “filling a basket with water”. Fear, anxiety, and exhaustion have made all people feel the cost. Although, this is a technological age, yet it seems, technology is giving little hope. In Africa, the health care systems are ill-equipped and even those in the west that are better equipped cannot even save the dying. Since most countries in Africa are economically poor, money and resources are inadequate to support interventions. Businesses do not see any hope in the immediate future, markets are crumbling and schools are closed down, making women and children suffer most. The presence of men and children at home which should have been a blessing is becoming a scare. The home has been hard hit.

Churches in Nigeria which are often made up of senior adults have found themselves at the center of the spread of COVID-19. Hundreds of people including Christians were asked to self-quarantine and take responsibility after they have been diagnosed with COVID-19. The concern of the churches over this scenario should therefore be rooted in the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 10:8a which says, “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (RSV). Because every person is made in the image of God, they are worthy of dignity and healthy life, which means that the church must take this teaching serious by caring for those infected with COVID-19 and the sick generally in this trying time.

Historical and Literary Context

The Gospel of Matthew is one of the four Gospels in the New Testament. It was not the first of the gospels to be written. However, it comes first before any other gospels and so becomes the first book of the New Testament. One of the reasons why the gospel might have such priority is its stronger connecting link between the Old and the New Testaments.² Under modern literary criticism, the Gospel of Matthew has been regarded as anonymous on the ground that there is no indication in the book or in any of the New Testament writing that Matthew wrote it. It has also been pointed out that the identification of Matthean authorship with Matthew, one of the disciples could not be easily admitted.³ Scholars have also argued consistently against Matthew’s authorship. Some have even gone to the extent of rejecting his authorship due to many reasons. One of such reasons is his heavy dependence on the document of Mark who was not one of the Twelve. Many also believe that the writer was a Jewish Christian whose community was engaged in the Hellenistic Jewish Christian mission.⁴ According to Keener, in the case of Matthew, to rely on such tradition might not be reasonable enough on the ground that same tradition also claims that the original gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew, which is not true of (Matthew) this gospel.⁵ However, since the author has never been known by any other name, Matthew who is also called Levi (Mark 2:14-17) is presumably the apostle (9:9; 10:3).⁶

However, there are those who hold to the belief that “attributions of authorship in the Gospels are generally based on church tradition rather than evidence in the biblical text itself.”⁷ For instance, “the universal testimony of the early church beginning with Papias (c. A.D. 135) is that the apostle Matthew wrote it and our earliest textual witnesses attribute it to him.”⁸ According to Eusebius, it was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (C.E 150) who first attested to Matthew as the author of his Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord about AD 130.⁹ In the same way, many early church fathers argued for Matthew as the possible author of the first gospel. These include Clement of Rome, Poly Carp, Justin martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origin.¹⁰ Despite all debates, this view has remains the popular understanding to the present day.¹¹ Some have also argued in support of Matthean authorship from the evidences available in the book itself. This is called internal evidences. According to Barbieri, “this book has more references to coins than any of the other three Gospels. Few of the terms used for coins in this gospels include ‘drachma tax’ (Matthew 17:24), a four drachma coin (17:27) and ‘talents’ (18:24)¹² and these are peculiar to Matthews Gospel alone being a former tax collector. Therefore, it can be said that regardless of these debates, the book continues to be known as “the Gospel According to Matthew”.

Although, only a little information is available about the man called Matthew, this little cannot be ignored. “Matthew came unto its prominent position in the second century church almost certainly because it had been the first of all the Gospels to be accepted by some great center of Christendom”.¹³ Matthew as Roman government hired tax collector, served under this government until he was called by Jesus. The work of a tax collector was a despised occupation in the land of Palestine. They were classified together with the prostitutes because Roman government placed heavy tax upon countries under her rule. Local people were normally hired to collect taxes on behalf of the Roman district administrators. The hired local tax collectors, in collaboration with the Roman government put additional burden upon their countrymen by collecting more than the government demanded. The excess, thus went into their pockets. This was the kind of work Matthew was doing before Jesus called him. “He collected taxes in Galilee, presumably in the customs office on the main highway from Syria to Egypt. Along that road, many travels and great quantities of merchandise entered Palestine.”¹⁴ The choice of Matthew as one of the twelve apostles reflects the Love of Jesus for sinners and the wisdom of his strategy. This attitude served as a powerful witness that a sinner could participate in the ministry of God if he has a changed heart. Jesus also demonstrated how it is possible in the Kingdom of God, the last can become first. Although scholars differ greatly in estimating the date, the Gospel According to Matthew was probably written before the destruction of the temple in AD 70. According to Keener, this theory reflects the position of some conservative scholars like Robert Gundry. Yet, some others as well thought it was written between AD 75 and AD 85 with the Jewish Christian readers in mind who were apparently in conflict with religious establishment of the Pharisee (Matthew 3:7; 5:20; 23:2-39).¹⁵ Structurally, the Gospel According to Matthew is a teaching Gospel. It contains five great blocks of teaching which according to Joe Kapolyo¹⁶ are

- The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)
- The Mission of the Twelve (9:35- 10:42)
- The Parable of the Kingdom (13:1-52)
- The Community of the Kingdom (18:1-35)
- The Woes of Legalistic Religion and the Signs of the End (23:1-26:25)

This way, Matthew presents Jesus as the perfect teacher whose teaching could be embraced by Christians particularly in Africa. Jesus also instructs his disciples to reach out with his love to the people that were not physically well. The emphasis of this teaching on healing the sick is to cater for the physical body of the people they (the apostles) were ministering to in the same manner they cater for their souls.

The Text of Matthew 10:8a

The text of Matthew 10:8a which reads, *ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε* is translated “heal the sick” (RSV). It is one of the four major instructions given by Jesus to the apostles in this verse. The word *θεραπεύετε* is also in a number of instances in this gospel. Some of these include 8:7 (*θεραπεύσω*, will heal); 10:1 (*θεραπεύειν*, to heal); 12:10 (*θεραπεῦσαι*, to heal); 17:16 (*θεραπεῦσαι*, to heal). In 10:8a, “heal the sick” could mean “heal the ailing”, “make whole”, that is, to be delivered of their ailment. The disciples were to carry out this mission as an important part of their ministry. This seems to be an appropriate instruction to the disciple in an environment such as Palestine. The tendency to be sick was present and there were truly many people with different kinds of sicknesses and disease. Human body is prone to sickness anytime anywhere. Sickness is alien to the body of either human being or animal but “healing is manifestation of God’s goodness and compassion in response to human suffering.”¹⁷ The Jews believed that every form of suffering was due to sin.¹⁸

Preaching and healing are integral components of the mission and the two are not separable. The healing ministry of the apostles encompassed the same kinds of miracles that Jesus had done in chapters 8-9.¹⁹ The effects of the gospel will not be complete if only the soul is the only part of the human body that is being taken care of. The body too is equally important as the soul. Therefore, Jesus commissioned the apostles not only to preach but also to heal the sick. It is only the healthy that can be active in the service of God. God is also interested in the wellbeing of every human being (3 John 1:2). A sound mind and body superior

to the indulgence of those sicknesses to which human bodies are prone, will express the meaning of the word used in verse 8a, (ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε). The wellbeing of every man and every woman must be paramount to any gospel preacher. This is important because their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and a person who is physically weak in his body will not be strong enough to be useful in the society. The apostles, therefore are to include healing ministry as part of their mission. The word “heal the sick” is a much more encompassing directive than it appears in this verse.

The word *θεραπεύετε* is from the root *θεραπεύω* (Therapeuō) which primarily signifies “to care for the sick, to treat, care or heal.”²⁰ This Greek word is frequently used in the gospels of Matthew and Luke but used only once in John’s gospel (5:10). The ministry of the apostle might not be much impactful unless the physical bodies of the audience were also taken care of. The order of the teaching of Jesus to his apostles is significant as seen in verses 7 and 8. First, as they go, they were to “preach” and then “heal”. Healing would simply authenticate their preaching ministry. The words “heal the sick” denote “caring for the ailing” in the society and this is not limited to one particular ailment. It refers to all kinds of ailments currently in vogue in the land of Palestine. The word *therapeuō* denotes primarily “to restore to health”. It is usually translated to “heal” but “cure” in Matthew 17:16, 18; Luke 7:21; 9:1; John 5:10; Acts 28:9.²¹ The task given to the apostles is a tremendous task, not by preaching to men about Christ alone, but of healing those who are sick of any kind in the society.

Exegetical Analysis of Matthew 10:8a

The text forms part of the second discourse: Mission of the Twelve (9:35-10:42). The first discourse being the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29). It occurred when Jesus called his disciples and gave them authority to carry out this task. “The authority given to them over evil spirits and sickness was an extension of Jesus’ own ministry”²²

He further commissioned them to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of heaven with the restriction not to go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. They were to go rather, to the lost sheep of Israel (10:5-6). The message was simple, “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.” They were to freely discharge this duty because they also have received it without any charge (10:8-10). The command to heal the sick is linked with the compassion Jesus had for the crowd that were without shepherd and the subsequent commissioning of the apostles (10:8). The command indicates that it is a continuation of the whole instruction from the previous verses. It is directly connected to verse 7, which states, “as you go, preach this message: ‘the kingdom of heaven is near.’” There are further instructions given in the text (10:8) which are also similar to the one given in the text under study. The disciples were to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, and drive out demons.” The instruction was borne out of his compassion he had on the crowd, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (9:36). Furthermore, the plenteous nature of the harvest as against the few labourers available moved Jesus to ask his disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field (10:37-38). Therefore, in answer to that request, Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (10:1).

Grammatical Study

ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε

Two main words surfaced from the text under study which demand a careful study in order to have a better knowledge of the passage. These words are “heal” (*θεραπεύετε*) and “the sick” (*ἀσθενοῦντας*).

Heal (θεραπεύετε)

The Greek word “*θεραπεύετε*” is translated in the text as “heal” and it comes from the verb “*θεραπεύω*” which means “to make whole”, “to care for the sick, to treat, cure, or to heal.”²³

The word “*θεραπεύω*” (*therapeuō*) primarily signifies “to serve as a *therapōn*, an attendant”. It is chiefly used in Matthew and Luke, once in John (5:10) and after the Acts, only Revelation 13:3 and 12”²⁴

According to James Strong, the word “θεραπεύω” means to wait upon menially, that is, to adore God or worship in a figurative sense. It could also mean “to cure or to relieve of a disease.”²⁵ Also, it often means “to serve, minister to, render service or divine service such as worship (Acts 17:25).”²⁶

Sick (ἀσθενοῦντας)

The Greek word ἀσθενοῦντας is translated in the text (Matthew 10:8a) as “the sick” (NIV) and it comes from the verb ἀσθενέω (astheneō) which literally means ‘to be weak or feeble’.²⁷

The word is derived from the word ἀσθενής (asthenes) which is a combination of ἀ (the first letter of the Greek alphabets) and σθενος (strength). It can be used to mean impotent, without strength or weak.²⁸

However, in this text, the Greek word, ἀσθενοῦντας (asthenountas) is present active participle accusative plural masculine of ἀσθεννής which means “without strength, weak, infirm” (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; 1Peter 3:7). It is often used to describe the “helpless (Romans 5:6), imperfect, inefficient (Galatians 4:9), feeble, someone without energy (2Corinthians 10:10), someone infirm in body, the sick (Matthew 25:39, 43,44), someone who is mentally or spiritually weak, dubious and hesitating (1Corinthians 8:7, 10, 9:22, 1Thessalonians 5:14). Finally, it could be used to refer to the afflicted, distressed, oppressed with calamities (1Corintian 4:10).²⁹

From the analysis carried out so far, it can be said that the statement, ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε which is translated as “heal the sick”, refers to a command to restore the health of those who were sick with various types of illnesses during the time of Jesus and his apostles. It included all kinds of diseases and sicknesses that were seen during that time exception of none. Therefore, the context suggests that “heal the sick” used in Matthew 10:8a can also refer to every disease that we see today including COVID-19.

Matthew 10:8a in the African Context

Just as diseases were common in Palestine during the time of Jesus, so it is in many African countries. Sicknesses such as malarial, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, respiratory infections and the complications of pregnancy and child birth are prevalent in Africa today. These account for 72% of all death,³⁰ and Nigeria is not an exception to this with high burden of infectious diseases and a material mortality ratio of 545 per 100,000 live births.³¹ As at 2008, Nigeria’s population consists of approximately 198 million people and remains the most populous in Africa and the seventh globally.³² Previous study showed that the occurrence of health problems in Nigeria is high and are commonly caused by infectious and parasitic agents.³³ Past studies have shown that 23% of most Nigerians’ expenditures is on the treatment of one sickness or the other.³⁴ They also revealed that payment for healthcare is mainly out of pocket in Nigeria, with a few individuals benefiting from the national health insurance scheme.³⁵ Today, the COVID-19 has been identified as horrific and unprecedented in the history of the world. In deed Africa and the whole world are facing an unprecedented health crisis. The pandemic is a human crisis, because it has affected lives with business shut down, schools closed, religious centres locked down, economic stalked and hospital over stretched. This poses fundamental threats to the very fabric of human life particularly in Africa and yet no vaccine has been discovered. If this is not effectively controlled and managed, the consequential effect may be devastating beyond description. Therefore, the mandate, “heal the sick” is more relevant in Africa and particularly in Nigeria today. The society is now saturated with pandemic that there is need for healing and deliverance while still seeking necessary medical help in order to stay healthy. The true gospel must be preached in order to liberate people from their dungeon and heal them from their various diseases. This becomes necessary because false preachers, prophets and miracle workers are now on the streets in the name of Christianity preaching false gospels and performing fake miracles in order to make name, money and deceive people. There is a culture that is fast evolving in Nigeria and across many African countries and taking its toll in the Christian church. It is the phenomenon of miracles and healings that are carried out of deceit and falsehood. Though, not a new trend, it is fast promoting a seemingly dangerous mentality that is based on maneuvering. This poses danger to many poor Africans who cannot afford simple health care bills and therefore pushed to seeking a false miracle not minding the means by which they get healed. The gospel has become commercialized in the society. Therefore, churches in Africa must preach the true gospel devoid of commercialization and fake healing. This is the kind of message Jesus handed

over to his disciples to promote in the world and Africa in particular. Quite often, these false miracle workers take the advantage of most Africans who are gullible and desperate to get out of their sicknesses and diseases. The truth of the matter is that most of the time, they do not get the desired deliverance. Social gathering that was once considered a beautiful value in our society has now become a possible means of contracting coronavirus. Social distancing is now the order of the day so as to curb the spread of the pandemic. There is an urgent need therefore for the African church leaders like the apostles who must take it upon themselves to preach the true gospel of the Kingdom and heal the sick in the society.

Conclusion

The church and the society at large are faced with great unprecedented challenge of coronavirus also known as COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence and the spread of this virus are leading to death and economic woes. The indexes rates continue to increase on daily basis and yet, no solution has been devised despite all the efforts to curtail its spread using the modern technologies available. As the search for the solution continues, there is the need for the church to rise up to the challenge before it gets out of hand. The society looks up to the church for true healing as desired by Jesus, but instead find fake miracles, false healings, immorality, corruption, dishonesty and gambling. Whereas, Jesus desire true healing for everyone. Thus, he sent his disciples out to preach the gospel and heal the sick. Health facilities in Nigeria and most African countries are very poor. Aggravated by lack of good governance, many sick people died for lack of proper care. The pressure to get quick healing from fake prophets continue to increase day by day as the index cases of COVID-19 and other related diseases are on the increase. Therefore, this paper examined the Jesus' teaching on "heal the sick" in Matthew 10:8a and its relevance to the healing of COVID-19 in Africa.

The text of Matthew 10:8a occurs within the larger context of the five great blocks of teaching of Jesus and the immediate context at the sending out of the Twelve. Historically, the author of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew had the Jews as his immediate audience, though the Gentiles were also not neglected. The book was probably written between 75 AD - 85 AD to give historical narrative of the life, ministry, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. An exegetical analysis of the passage and the key words of the text led to the discovery that "heal the sick" is relevant to the healing of the COVID-19 pandemic that is presently ravaging the society. Jesus sent his disciples to preach and to heal those that were ailing with different kinds of diseases and sicknesses. "Heal the sick" in this context refers to all those that were not physically well irrespective of their faith. Therefore, it will be appropriate to say that *ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε* (heal the sick) was exclusive of no sickness or disease.

Recommendations

The instruction of Jesus to the apostles in Matthew 10:8a therefore becomes relevant to the contemporary churches in Africa. It is imperative for the church to minister to both the souls and bodies of every human being and particularly those that are sick of COVID-19. In its fight against COVID-19 in Africa and the world at large, the efforts of the churches must therefore be rooted in the teachings of Jesus as encapsulated in Matthew 10:8a. Since every person is made in the image of God, the church must care for those infected with COVID-19 and the sick generally by:

1. Providing affordable health care services. In the past few decades, the church had shifted its attention into establishing educational institutions with the aim of getting financial gain from it. Today, leaders must see the need to build dispensaries, clinics and hospitals where patients can be cared for. Churches that already own medical centres or mission hospitals must quickly equip them for Covid-19 intervention activities.
2. Engaging the service of qualified and dedicated health workers to work in the mission clinics.
3. Settling medical bills for those who cannot afford to pay.
4. In partnership with government and/or medical institutions, churches can build or convert some of their giant properties to isolation centres
5. Good condition of service for the health workers. This will help them to be more dedicated and commitment.

6. Giving palliatives to those in need. Churches must beef up their food banks for the poor and those that were badly affected – (with proper guideline put in place).
7. Preaching messages of salvation. The church in Africa must rise to the challenge of preaching the true gospel and healing those that are sick including COVID-19 patients.
8. Providing counselling services to those that are sick both physically and spiritually. Those who are sick of COVID-19 need to be encouraged about the ability of Jesus and his love to heal them. (Matthew 14:14; Mark 1:34).
9. In heeding the charge to heal the sick, churches can also donate medical facilities and equipment such as test kits, masks, ventilators, respirators, hospital beds, useful drugs, *etc* to government or private hospitals that attend to Covid-19 patients.
10. Church leaders can encourage members that are wealthy amongst them to give generous gifts to affected families.
11. Churches can also organize online health awareness sessions on regular basis for families that may be affected.

It is believed that if the teaching of Jesus to heal the sick is followed by the church, the effects of COVID-19 and sickness in general will be curtailed to the barest minimal.

End Notes

- 1 Johannes John-Langba and Vivian Nasaka John-Langba, “Covid-19 Responses in Africa: Implications for Peace, Security, and Public Health”, Social Science Research Council, 2020. <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2020/04/30/covid-19-responses-in-africa-implications-for-peace-security-and-public-health/>, accessed August 21, 2020
- 2 Harry R. Boer, *The Four Gospels and Acts*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), 12.
- 3 Dorcas Olu Akintunde, *The Four Gospels and Acts*, (np: Lerak Ventures, 2005), 14.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. (New Testament). (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 43.
- 6 Harry Boerr, *The Four Gospels and Acts*, p. 13.
- 7 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* (New Testament). (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 13.
- 8 Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Abridged edition, New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 2.
- 9 Dorcas Olu Akintunde, *The Four Gospels and Acts*, p. 140.
- 10 Louis A. Barbieri, “Matthew” in “Matthew” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (New Testament). (Canada: Victor Books, 1984), 15.
- 11 Harry R. Boer, *The Four Gospels and Acts*, p. 13.
- 12 Louis A. Barbieri, “Matthew” in “Matthew” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (New Testament). (Canada: Victor Books, 1984), 15.
- 13 Sherman E. Johnson, “The Gospel According to Saint Matthew” in George A. Buttrick, (ed), *The interpreter’s Bible* vol. 7 vol. (NY: Abingdon Press, 1951), 231.
- 14 Harry Boerr, *The Four Gospels and Acts*, p. 14.
- 15 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 43.
- 16 Joe Kapolyo, in “Matthew” in Tokunboh Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*. (Nairobi, WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1131.
- 17 Kingsley Larbi “Healing: 2 Kings” in Tokunboh Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*. (Nairobi, WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 447.
- 18 Samuel M. Ngewa, “John” in Tokunboh Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*. (Nairobi, WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1297.
- 19 Joe Kapolyo, in “Matthew” in Tokunboh Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*. (Nairobi, WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1157.

- 20 W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: (Thomas Nelson Publishers,1996), 295.
- 21 W. E. Vine, et al. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 141.
- 22 R. T. France, "Matthew" in *New Bible Commentary* (21st century edition) edited by D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer and G. J. Wenham, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 917.
- 23 W. E. Vine, et al. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 295.
- 24 Ibid
- 25 James H. Strong, "θεραπεύω" in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, Compact Edition, (Grand Rapids: Barker Book House, 1987), p. 36.
- 26 William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek NT*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 244.
- 27 W. E. Vine, et al. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 573.
- 28 James H. Strong, "θεραπεύω" in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament,,p. 16.
- 29 William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 102.
- 30 World Health Organization (WHO) Facts about Health in African Region of WHO, Fact Sheet no. 314. Geneva: WHO; 2011.
- 31 Ifeoluwa Adeyemo, Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2008. Abuja: National Population Commission: 2009, Premium Times in [http: www. Premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news](http://www.Premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news) April 12, 2018 (accessed August 22, 2020).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 A. Auta, S. B. Banwat, D. W. Dayon, D. Shalkur, M. D. Avu, "Occurrence and Treatment of common health problems in a Nigerian community" in *Journal of young Pharmacists* 4(1): 49-53 in [https:// www.researchgate.net/publication/22481190_0](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/22481190_0) accessed August 22, 2020).
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 A. I. Olugbenga-Bello, W. O. Adebimpe, "Knowledge and Attitude of Civil Servants in Osun State, South West Nigeria towards the National Health Insurance. *Niger J. Clin Pract*, (2010)13:421-6).

Bibliography

1. Adeyemo, Ifeoluwa. Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2008. Abuja: National Population Commission: 2009, Premium Times in [http: www. Premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news](http://www.Premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news) April 12, 2018 (accessed August 22, 2020).
2. Adeyemo, Tokunboh (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*. Nairobi, WordAlive Publishers, 2006.
3. Akintunde, Dorcas Olu. *The Four Gospels and Acts*, np: Lerak Ventures, 2005.
4. Auta, A, Banwat, S. B, Dayon, D. W, Shalkur, D, and Avu, M. D. "Occurrence and Treatment of common health problems in a Nigerian community" in *Journal of young Pharmacists* 4(1): 49-53 in [https:// www.researchgate.net/publication/22481190_0](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/22481190_0) accessed August 22, 2020).
5. Barker, Kenneth L. and Kohlenberger, John R. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Abridged edition, New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
6. Boer, Harry R. *The Four Gospels and Acts*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982.
7. Buttrick, George A. (ed), *The interpreter's Bible* vol. 7 vol. NY: Abingdon Press, 1951.
8. France, R. T. *New Bible Commentary* (21st century edition). Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
9. John-Langba, Johannes and John-Langba, Vivian Nasaka. "Covid-19 Responses in Africa: Implications for Peace, Security, and Public Health", Social Science Research Council, 2020. <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2020/04/30/covid-19-responses-in-africa-implications-for-peace-security-and-public-health/>, accessed August 21, 2020
10. Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. (New Testament). Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1993.
11. Mounce, Williams D. *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

12. Olugbenga-Bello, A. I and Adebimpe, W. O. "Knowledge and Attitude of Civil Servants in Osun State, South West Nigeria towards the National Health Insurance. Niger J. Clin Pract, (2010)13:421-6).
13. Strong, James H. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Grand Rapids: Barker Book House, 1987.
14. Walvoord John F. and Zuck, Roy B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (New Testament). Canada: Victor Books, 1984.
15. World Health Organization (WHO) Facts about Health in African Region of WHO, Fact Sheet no. 314. Geneva: WHO; 2011.
16. Vine, W. E, Unger, F.Merrill, and White, William. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers,1996.

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

By

Agba A. O. ; John Thompson Okpa ; EmmanuelEshiotse; Akomaye Sylvester &Thelma Aya Abang

Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Abstract

In a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19 which primarily spread from person to person, the Federal Government of Nigeria placed a ban on public gatherings, including religious gatherings. This paper adopts two sociological theories to explain how the suspension of religious activities across the country adversely affects all sphere of religious practices including the church economy and the society. The methodology adopted is the context analysis, a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, concepts within some given qualitative data. Since science and religion cannot be separated at this crucial time in human history, religious leaders should be actively involved in educating and supporting responsible scientific outputs to save humanity from this devastating global pandemic.

Keywords: Sociological Analysis, Covid-19,Religious Practices

Introduction

Currently, the world is facing unprecedented health emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic. This particular virus has continued its relentless spread across the globe; thereby altering the traditional settings of the various structures and institutions of the world. Religious congregations prescribe by most world religions bodies as part of their faith is a casualty of this pandemic. The novel coronavirus, also known as 2019-nCoV or COVID-19, is a pneumonia-like condition of unknown cause, that has caused the present global pandemic that has weakened the global economy and hindered productive social lives. Although, the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is known, the actual cause or origin of COVID-19 is still not known for sure, as there are conflicting reports, allegations, theories, information, and misinformation about the whereabouts of the virus reported in every continent of the world. Claims at the beginning hold that it was from bats sold at the Wuhan market in China; however, the claim which was linked to Botao Xiao, as reported by Geraghty (2020) claimed from a research finding was extremely unlikely. This rebuttal, was due to the fact that the bats in question were not sold at the market and were unlikely to be deliberately eaten. There exists another claim that the virus was accidentally leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which claim the characteristics of the novel coronavirus shows that it was artificially engineered (a controversy theory published by *The Week* of March 9, 2020 (Egunjobi, 2020). This theory was strongly backed by President Donald Trump of the U.S., that China could have unleashed the coronavirus due to some kind of horrible "bio-mistake." While, his chief of staff, Mike Pompeo also reiterated, "Remember, China has a history of infecting the world, and they have a history of running substandard laboratories" (Weissert, 2020). Whereas, Eberstadt and Blumenthal (2020) in a report on the *New York Post*, stated that China's Communist authorities have concealed, misled, and lied about the origins of the epidemic and the death toll of the virus in China, and the World Health Organization has allegedly acted as China's handmaid. Albeit, Pope Francis on his part, sees the coronavirus pandemic as one of "nature's responses" to humans ignoring the current ecological crisis (Gallagher, 2020).

One might be moved to ask after gleaning through the topic, what does a virus have to do with religion? Surprisingly, more than you might think, and we are not referring to the transmission of religious ideas, which some have described using epidemiological models (Quadri, 2020). Rather, reference is being made to the effect, the impact and the implication of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, on religious practices in Nigeria. Nigeria is known globally for being the religious capital of the world, presumed to have the largest number of mega-churches and other religious centres like

mosques, temples and shrines, scattered across the country. It is no more news, that in recent times the world is facing a rare and unprecedented global medical emergency in recent history, the COVID-19 pandemic (so declared by the World Health Organisation earlier on in the year). In Nigeria, this health emergency has exceedingly shift religious services from in-person to online worship involving live streams, thus changing the dynamics and disruption of religious habits and practices known to man. This era brought about the need of social distancing in religious gathering thereby casting a dark cloud on the togetherness that comes with religious practices in Nigeria. Senior citizens, children, and pregnant women who are more vulnerable to the virus are said to stay at home. The religious assemblies are experiencing a shortfall in their finances, which are mainly sourced from members through the offerings, tithes and other gifts and contributions. The COVID-19 is spread through droplets; the basic reproduction rate, a measure of transmissibility of the virus, ranges from 2.24 to 3.58 (Zhao, Lin, Ran, Musa, Yang & Wang, 2020). This makes transmission to be easy and seamless, especially, through large gatherings including religious assemblies. This paper seeks to analyse the effect of this approach on religious practices in Nigeria, and that from a sociological standpoint with the intent to see the effect on the economy of the religious assemblies, which is sourced mainly from the financial contributions and gifts from their members.

Theoretical underpinning (structural functionalism & rational choice theory)

The paper is theoretically hinged on two theoretical perspectives, the structural functionalism and the rational choice theories. The structural functionalism as a theoretical perspective holds a view that society as a social system is made up of different parts which are interdependent and interrelated. That is to say that, these various parts of society namely the economy, health, educational, agricultural, including the religious sectors, etc., all perform different roles and functions towards the maintenance, stability and survival of the society. Uche and Uche (2014), explained that the chief proponents of the theory are Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown and that it features prominently in the works of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). In relation to the subject-matter, the theory is apt in its highlight of the role and function of religion in the lives of the people in the country. Religion plays a major role and function, as interacts with other sector of the society or social system for overall functioning the existence, stability, maintenance and survival of society (Otite & Ogionwo, 2008). This is because, before the biting effect of the pandemic on the society, the people found solace in their religious practices and during the heat of the pandemic (despite the ban on religious gatherings) adherents of different religious leanings were still encouraged to practice their religious beliefs on an individual and/or family basis. This is observed to have helped in the regulation of the people from becoming unduly fatigued, depressed and stressed out from boredom and inactivity, as most preachers, especially, from the Christian bloc, resorted to online transmission of the messages to their members. While, for those who are not adherents of any religious leaning, they might give in to despair from the effect of the lockdown on their finances and social lives, the religious adherents will take it to be the will of God at such a time as this.

Another angle to this, is from the perspective that with the biting of effect of the pandemic on the economy of the religious assemblies. The religious assemblies are experiencing a shortfall in their finances, due to the effect of the pandemic, which are mainly sourced from the financial gifts of their members (through the offerings, tithes and other gifts to the church. Although, these might continue from their committed members, who see it as their duty to God-as long as they have any income, they must give therefrom). Albeit, the overall income the religious assemblies have been observed to have dropped sharply (Egunjobi, 2020; Yezli & Khan, 2020). The religious assemblies, also, tried to reach out to some of their indigent members despite the observed reduction in their income as organisations. Medical outreaches were carried out to address the health challenges of the adherents by medical practitioners affiliated to these organisations in certain areas (Egunjobi, 2020).

Besides the structural functionalism theory, the rational choice theory which was first presented by Cornish and Clarke (1986) in their perspective on offending is also apt. The theory adopts a utilitarian belief that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice in the course of his actions. That is to say that, man chooses the course of his actions to satisfy his basic needs (for money, sex, status, excitement), and this course of action might be averse to the prescribed

norms as laid down by the society (Gul, 2009). Furthering the view, Gul (2009) states that individuals are self-interested and think more on how to advance their personal goals, and that against all odds. The rational choice theory is quite manifest during the nationwide lockdown in the country, as many persons were observed to be showing different responses to the directives of the government. For instance, many persons are in denial of the existence of the virus (that it is a ploy of the authorities to siphon funds), some persons will not comply with the directive on the use of facemasks, others flout the directive on social gathering (and in some States like Lagos and Rivers, drastic measures were taken send a strong message ranging from community services by offenders to sack of government officials). Also, in some States like Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa, it was observed that some Christian clergies that flouted the directives on congregational gathering were arrested by the government taskforce in those States. The drive to flout the government directives obviously might be personal for the offenders to want to maintain the status quo of their income, status and satisfaction in the light of the effect of the lockdown on their activities.

Covid-19 situational analysis in Nigeria

Since the index case was confirmed officially on the 27th February, 2020 (after a virology laboratory result came out from the Lagos University Teaching Hospital on the suspected Italian man who arrived Nigeria from Milan on February 24, 2020, on a Turkish Airline), the cases in the country has been on the rise. Fortunately, unlike other countries of the world that register their cases in thousands, the numbers per day are officially limited to the under-hundred benchmark. Also, over time the laboratory capacity across the country has increased from 15 to 26 and has resulted in a gradual increase in testing. A report by the UNICEF Nigeria on 22 May, shows that over 43,000 people have been tested, out of which 7,261 tested positive with 34 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) having reported at least one confirmed case. Also, within the reporting week, States that reported the highest number of cases were Lagos (676), Kano (86), Oyo (86), Federal Capital Territory (49), Rivers (46), Katsina (42), Plateau (36), Ogun (33), Borno (31), Edo (26) and Jigawa (20). It states that of the total admitted cases, 2,007 cases have been discharged and there have been 221 deaths recorded. Over the preceding months, all the 36 States and the FCT have all been confirmed to have registered cases, as predicted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) at the inception. On the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force (PTF), the Nigerian government periodically extends the reduced restrictions on a bi-weekly basis as it intensifies efforts to test, trace, and treat cases (UNICEF, 2020; Abere, 2020). Although, the various State governments have started reducing the various measures in their fight against the virus, by opening up the closure of their borders, opening places of worship and other places of assembly. Why then, was the closure of worship centres in the first instance?

Covid-19 and the suspension of religious gathering in Nigeria: why?

The government and the medical community across the world are of the view that there is the possibility of public gatherings increasing transmission, social distancing was proffered as the foremost preventive strategy adopted by the global community. For their fellowship meetings to take place, majority of the world religions propose congregational assemblies of its adherents at local, national, and international levels in the practice of their faith. With regards to the pandemic, these large congregational gatherings could serve as a potential focal point for dispersal of novel pathogens, especially, those transmitted through the respiratory route. This has been confirmed in recent events in relation to the COVID-19 spread among religious assemblies, at least in Daegu, South Korea (Wildman, Bulbulia, Sosis & Schjoedt, 2020). Naturally, in a bid to inhibit the spread of the virus, the government of Nigeria has also adopted the global stance of banning all public gatherings, including religious assemblies. In Nigeria, the government made a pronouncement on the 27th of April, to the effect to place a ban on any form of gathering including religious assemblies, in a nationwide lockdown that commenced on 3rd May, 2020. The term lockdown was initially used in prison settings, connoting a security measure where those inside a prison building are to remain confined until the situation that necessitated the lockdown is taken care of. However, the terminology, in context, is not the same in the bid to curtail the ravaging COVID-19

pandemic, where citizens are required to remain in their homes, with restrictions on going to work, to school, and social or religious gatherings until the pandemic is under control (Egunjobi, 2020).

Realistic approaches adopted by religious leaders to combat the spread of the novel COVID-19 pandemic.

The religious leaders of the various religious blocs have been making efforts to adapt to the reality of the effect of the pandemic on their activities. Observations have shown that religious communities have made efforts to adhere to government regulations which include washing of hands or using sanitizers, limiting gatherings to not more than 50 in some states, and social distancing amidst the lockdown rules, and this is in tandem with practices in other parts of the world (Egunjobi, 2020). But, the lockdown brought about the adoption of various innovative means of communication with their congregants, with the internet being the major beneficiary of patronage by the religious communities. Different religious leaders now stream live their services and messages to their congregants, especially, the Christians that have been used to tele-evangelistic outreaches. All aspects of the services are conducted online, even the offerings are called for, to be transferred directly to the account of the church. Most of the mega-churches, also, as part of their corporate social responsibility beyond their members, doled out some millions of naira to the government through the PTF on COVID-19, as their support for the fight against the pandemic. Also, some mega-churches gave medical equipment to the government's task force, mostly, in Lagos State. While announcements in the assemblies carry series of sensitization messages about the ravaging virus and ways to avoid contracting it.

The dual effect of Covid-19 on religious practices in Nigeria (positive and negative effect)

The effect(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic can be said to dual, that is, it has both positive and negative effects. Some positive effects of the period of the pandemic as pointed out by Egunjobi (2020) includes an observed commitment of adherents to their religious duties like the observance of prayers, scriptural readings, charitable works, renewed family bonding for families that have been kept apart by school and work, among others. He, also, pointed out that it created another avenue of connectedness, support, and celebration of religious meetings via the internet, though various online platforms. Observably, in any situation counted as positive, there must be a down side to it. Hence, on the other hand, the findings show that the lockdown, due to COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted the religious circles negatively as well. The negative effects include a 'slight' drop in the income revenue or financial standings (which comes from the gifts, such as tithes, offerings and vows, and the investments in educational institutions run by the religious organisations), with a marked redundancy of their workers, especially, for those that operate educational institutions as well as other staff members of the organisations. Also, for the smaller assemblies without sufficient resources to access and utilize the available technological platforms, their members are cut-off from fellowship and the ministrations from the clergy and are taking solace in their personal faith. This scenario affects those in the rural areas of the country without access to power supply and Internet connectivity. The situation poses a great challenge, spiritually and psychologically, to the personal lives of the congregants and the clergy, in the show of compassion, love, and care of the people of God at such a time as this where the service and pastoral care are most needed by their 'flock' (Jacelić, 2016; Henderson, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic obviously has affected religious practices in Nigeria, as it did in other parts of the world. A pointer to the nature of the global pandemic where everyone is concerned and affected irrespective of race, colour, nationality, religion, and social economic status Sułkowski, (2020). The religious men and women in the country demonstrated a more positive attitude and respect towards government policies and regulations by adhering to all that it takes to stop the spread of COVID-19. However, there were observed pockets of divergent views among the religious community, possibly, influenced by the views of the larger society or the 'mixed multitude' in their midst.

Myth and facts about the effect of Covid-19 on religious practices

With the spread and effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global life generally, there are certain views and myths that have arisen as a result. This has resulted from the actions and inactions of the leaders in the political circles across the world, with contributions from the scientific community without any clear stand on the issues of the pandemic. Hence, the hue and cry, and the recalcitrance of certain persons from the religious community across the world, including Nigeria. The instance of the Rev. Tony Spell, a pastor of the Life Tabernacle Church, a Oneness Pentecostal congregation in Baton Rouge, USA., comes to mind. In explaining his defiant stance of the Louisiana Governor's order banning meetings of more than fifty people, he was quoted as saying, "It's not a concern. ... The virus, we believe, is politically motivated. We hold our religious rights dear and we are going to assemble no matter what someone says"(Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020). About three hundred people gathered on the Tuesday after the ban and over a thousand on the following Sunday. Rev. Spell was seen handing out anointed handkerchiefs, preaching against fear, and telling his people that this is an extreme test of faithfulness brought on by the spirit of the antichrist. However, a petition calling for Rev. Spell's arrest and prosecution for reckless endangerment has been signed by over 7,000 people. This attitude of the blame game had spread at inception of the pandemic, but as a myth, over time it has given way to better judgement from the reality of its existence and effect on the socio-economic and religious life of the Nigerian nation. A congregational gathering for worship has been observed as an effective mechanism and avenue for accelerating the spread of the virus (Wildman, Bulbulia, Sosis&Schjoedt, 2020; Egunjobi, 2020).

Although, certain recalcitrant religious congregations (as led by their leaders) are accelerating viral transmission, it is notable that most religious groups are innovating in response to opposing demands of collective worship and social distancing. For instance, religious communities all over the world are conducting online services, stretching the world's data bandwidth at certain times of the week to stream live videos of suitably modified rituals, sermons, and prayers (Egunjobi, 2020). Many religious assemblies are, also, disseminating practical health information and offering urgent financial help in the wake of the rapidly degrading economic conditions of their immediate communities and nations. The behaviors of problematic churches are attracting the media's attention, but in many regions of the world religious communities are more beneficial than harmful (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020). While, it might be impossible, at present, to sum over the global diversity of religious communities, the fact remains that many religious communities in Nigeria and around the world are active in the fight against COVID-19, and this is a clear reminder that the concept of "religion" does not carve human social behaviors neatly at any joint. Although, all religious groups do not line up behind one another in their individual responses to the pandemic, they have all taken different approaches in their roles to their strengthening resolve and motivating action to support their immediate congregants, their community of domicile and the nation at large.

Conclusion and Policy implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a noticeable impact with regards to the religious practices in Nigeria. An evident association between early suspension of communal gatherings and lower occurrence of COVID-19 infections in countries that took such measures promptly, can be easily discerned, especially, in the Scandinavian countries. There are few lessons to be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic for the religious community, the governments at various levels, as well as, national and international health organizations. The religious community should form closer ties, in forming alliances across inter-religious and denominational boundaries, in a bid to having a unified stance in dealing with such crisis. On their part, the government should be prompt and proactive in their responses to such situations without being political about its handling. Policies such as the suspension of communal gatherings must be promulgated in a uniform manner across the federating units, to ensure social distancing to curb the spread of such pandemic viruses. Measures should be put in place to bridge the gap between the government and the religious community in the bid to cater for the people. Health facilities, as a matter of urgency, should be provided and adequately equipped at least in all the local government headquarters, to cater for the health needs of the citizens.

More practical and innovative preventive measures have to be introduced during times of health calamities, like a standby medical corps in liaison with the community health workers in the rural areas. The community health workers should be well funded to do their jobs, in the sensitization of the people on proper hygiene practices, even in normal and beyond crisis times. All level of leaders, from the religious, to the social, political and leaders in the medical profession, should exhibit a high sense of sagacity and adopt pragmatic approaches in their dealing with situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The government, at such times of emergencies, should be conscious in co-opting the clergy in the suspension of congregational gatherings. Nigeria as a country should have an exigency plan such as a standard operation procedure for health practices nationwide, with regards to congregational assemblies during times of infectious disease pandemics. On their part, scientific community should make informative and insightful generalizations where possible, in the fight against the pandemic.

References

- Abere, O. J. (2020). Survival analysis of Novel Corona Virus (2019-Ncov) using Nelson Aalen Survival Estimate. *International Journal Of Business Education and Management Studies*, 3(1), 30-40.
- Egunjobi, J. P. (2020). The Perception of Covid-19 as a Fear Factor in the Preparation for the Pandemic Aftermath. In *ResearchGate*. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.14933.17125.
- Gul, S. (2009). An evaluation of rational choice theory in criminology. *Sociology and applied science*, 4(8), 36-44.
- Henderson, T. (2020). Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Available online: <https://lcaenews.createsend.com/t/ViewEmail/t/8F4EDFC090399D272540EF23F30FEDED/C67FD2F38AC4859C/?tx=0&previewAll=1&print=1&source=PrintPreview&context=BE1559E32AC7F640D744A813E2B67A32> (accessed on 8 April 2020).
- Jacelić, S. (2016). *Collectivistic Religions. Religions, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Otite, O. & Ogionwo, W. (2008). *An introduction to sociological studies*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.
- Quadri, S. A. (2020). COVID-19 and religious congregations: Implications for spread of novel pathogens. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 96, 219-221.
- Sułkowski, L. (2020). Covid-19 Pandemic; Recession, Virtual Revolution Leading to De-globalization? *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 12: 1-11.
- Sulkowski, L. & Ignatowski, G. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on organization of religious behaviour in different Christian denominations in Poland. *Religions*, 11(254), 1-15.
- Uche, A. O. & Uche, B. I. (2014). Some social work theories and their applications in social research. In Ikeanyibe, O. M. & Mbah, P. O. (ed.). *An anthology of theories for social research* (pp. 83-101). Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.
- UNICEF(2020). *NIGERIA: COVID-19 Situation Report – #09. Reporting Period: May 16th-May 22nd, 2020*. Retrieved on 06/08/2020 from <https://rapidmsnigeria.org/br/2020/5>
- Wildman, W. J., Bulbulia, J., Sosis, R. & Schjoedt, U. (2020). Religion and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 10(2), 115-117.
- Yezli, S. & Khan, A. (2020). COVID-19 social distancing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: bold measures in the face of political, economic, social and religious challenges. *Travel Med. Infect. Dis.* Retrieved on 06/08/2020 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101692>.
- Zhao, S., Lin, Q., Ran, J., Musa, S. S., Yang, G. & Wang, W. (2020). Preliminary estimation of the basic reproduction number of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China, from 2019 to 2020: a data-driven analysis in the early phase of the outbreak. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 92:214-217.

THE COVID – 19 PANDEMIC AND SOCIAL DISTANCING: IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNAL LIVING AND SOCIAL COHESION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

By

Casmir ObinnaOdo; Perpetua LumTanyi & Bukie Fidelis Bukie

Department of Social Work UNN; Department of Social work UNN, & Department of Social Work Calabar,

Abstract

Nigeria, like most African countries operate in a close knitted setting in which people are their brothers' keeper. This communal lifestyle has been instrumental in harnessing ideas geared towards exploring community resources, peace building processes and community development. This long aged tradition has been threatened since the outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and the resultant social distancing measures to curtail it. After conducting an extensive literature review, we recommend that policy-makers in Nigeria should look into ways that will enable them to meet the many challenges caused by social distancing as a result of COVID-19. The right set of policies can equip individuals, families, and societies to address these challenges without undermining the essence of communal living. One way to address this would be to see how the current human relationships in Nigeria can be harnessed in advancing community development.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, social distancing, communal living, social cohesion, social workers.

Introduction

Over the years, many philosophers in the African tradition are to a great extent, fundamentally relational in their understanding of morality, maintaining that it involves community in some non-instrumental way. For these great thinkers, community is not a mere means to something else, but is instead roughly a moral end to be pursued for its own sake (Metz, 2020). As noted by one of the influential Ghanaian moral-political philosophers, an ideal community lifestyle connotes a life lived in harmony and cooperation with others and a life in which one shares in the fate of the others (Masolo, 2010). Also, a Kenyan historian of African philosophy asserted that a life of cohesion, or positive integration with others, should always be considered as an ideal goal geared at achieving a peaceful African communal living (Masitera, 2020). With the recent introduction of the social-distancing and self-isolation occasioned by the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the above highlighted attributes of an ideal African communal living and wellbeing have come under serious threat (Mukhtar, 2020).

Nigeria recorded its index COVID-19 case on the 27th of February, 2020. Since then, the virus has spread rapidly, resulting to over 57,000 confirmed cases as at September 23rd, 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). In order to contain the spread of the deadly virus, there have been lockdown in many parts of the world including Nigeria. Many businesses and community networks have suddenly crumbled with many losses including millions of people been rendered jobless, Public and private institutions closed with gross disruptions of peoples' plans, targets and budgets (Nkporbu et al. 2020). The continued community disconnections and lack of togetherness have left the masses with so much fear, apprehension and uncertainty (Ren et al. 2020; World Health Organization 2020). Instead of the usual communal gathering to share ideas, exchange goods and services and pursue other progressive ventures, the virus has forced community members especially the elderly and those in precarious situations to stay at home (Jude MaryCéna et al. 2020; Ravi et al. 2020). Recently, the World Bank reported that the economy of the world has leaped into recession. This appears to be worse with the daily earners which constitute the majority of the population in the informal sector and communities in Nigeria (Metz, 2020).

The outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic no doubt has generated a number of psychosocial and emotional stresses especially as it concerns peaceful coexistence and togetherness inherent in traditional African system (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020; Banerjee, 2020). The anxiety and fear of contracting the

disease viz-a-viz the high mortality recorded globally has caused enormous emotional tension leading to a drastic reduction of economic activities and an unprecedented number of lose jobs and social connectedness (Asmundson & Taylor, 2019). Generally, hunger and sufferings has increased among various population with eminent fear of possible faming because of obvious scaling down of Agro activities and a drastic reduction in community exchange of resources. This has further worsened by insurgency and activities of herdsmen in Nigeria. The tendency for crimes has equally increased as some people are prone to engaging in any acts that can guarantee them the next meal (NCDC, 2020).

The concept of African communal living and Covid-19 pandemic

There are certain phrases that best describe an ideal traditional African communal living and ideologies. Such phrase includes; “close social relations”; “a life that shares the others’ fate”; “cohesion”; “integration with others”; “coming together”; “living together”. These terms are plainly read as ascribing the moral values associated with Africa’s oneness and the sense of togetherness (Metz, 2020). The aforementioned phrases plausibly explains practices common among indigenous African peoples such as: resolving conflicts by everyone sitting under the proverbial tree and seeking consensus; working collectively, e.g., with all those who had harvesting to do moving together from plot to plot, instead of leaving the work to be done on a given plot to those who lived there; and according moral importance to rituals and customs such as singing, drumming, and dancing (Metz, 2017). Also, the issue of isolation from others has always been discouraged among community members. In the traditional sub-Saharan African societies, precisely among the Kom people in Cameroon, isolating oneself from others is best described with one proverb which states that “aloofness is good only for a witch (Tosam, 2014).

Nigeria like most African societies operates in a close knitted settings in which people are their neighbours’ keeper and there is a close social relationship with one another. This close relationship is a common feature in most African cultures which can be compared with a living network of relations almost like that between the various parts of an organism (Etta, Esowe & Asukwo, 2016). The emergence of Coronavirus pandemic altered this long aged tradition such that staying close to one another is now considered a threat to life as it increases the chances of contracting the virus (NCDC, 2020). In a bid to contain the spread of the virus, measures such as suspension of handshakes, banning of social and religious gatherings like churches, movies and other event centers, recreational centers, clubs houses were put in place by the Federal and State governments (Rapid Risk Assessment, 2020). These measures were aimed at ensuring social distancing as it has been identified for now as the most effective measure to prevent human to human spread. Despite the progress recorded so far in containing the virus through these the introduction of social and physical distancing, this situation has also resulted into some unnecessary stigmatization, disconnection of social interaction and socialization at relaxation centres which are natural potent antidotes for anxiety and depression in Nigeria (Rapid Risk Assessment, 2020). There has been an unprecedented loss as millions of People have lost their businesses and jobs. In addition, several other people have lost their loved ones to COVID-19 infection.

More so, Nigeria as the most populous Black Country in the world is barely left out in most global event. As noted by WHO (2020) any disease outbreak in Africa’s most populous country is never taken lightly and with the gravity of the global situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nigerian Government had to move fast and mobilize all resources for the outbreak response. It was therefore very necessary and imperative for the federal government to lockdown all public places and stop all social gatherings at a record time (NCDC, 2020). A study by Ebiri, *et al.* (2020) observed that some people are of the opinion that the lockdown was necessary to contain the virus while many in the informal sector especially in rural communities are opposed to the lockdown as they deemed it a set back to their businesses and peaceful communal living.

The panic and uncertainty occasioned by the Coronavirus pandemic brought about a total collapse of social interaction and socialization in communities across Nigeria. This situation no doubt have resulted in a situation whereby people now live in fear of falling ill and dying and losing loved ones, feeling helpless, not able to protect loved ones, stress and anxiety especially due to separation (from loved ones and caregivers) because of being quarantined, fear of being placed under home surveillance because of the

disease, avoiding health facilities due to fear of becoming infected while in care, fear of not being able to work during isolation, and of being dismissed from workplace (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020). This paper through an extensive literature review aims to examine the implications the COVID – 19 pandemic and social distancing on communal living and social cohesion in South-east Nigeria.

Examining some social problems associated with the outbreak of Coronavirus pandemic, threatening community security, cohesion and development in Nigeria.

The outbreak of Coronavirus and the resultant protracted lockdown brought an unprecedented rise in social vices and a seemingly collapse in moral values in Nigeria. Cases abound across Nigeria about incidence of sexual and gender based violence, extra-judicial killings and hostilities and an increase in poverty level especially among the vulnerable populations. The attention of the government has equally shifted to Coronavirus leading to a neglect of other sicknesses. Some People, especially rural community dwellers are still afraid of visiting hospitals for medical checkups in order to avoid contracting the virus. Discussed below are of the social problems that have increased tremendously since the outbreak of Coronavirus in Nigeria.

Increased incidence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Nigeria and the world have been facing a GBV crisis, deeply rooted in harmful patriarchal social, cultural, traditional and religious norms. However, this crisis has been elevated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread evidence that GBV has sharply increased since the beginning of the pandemic (UN Women, 2020). Although domestic violence had existed long before 2020, it reportedly escalated within this period of lockdown (Wikipedia, 2020; UN, 2020; Lennard, 2020; Townsend, 2020). This growing trend could partly be attributed to frequent demand for sex by some idle men in Nigeria and the high level of incompatibility among spouses forced the domestic violence curve to rise within the lockdown period. A survey by the UNODC (2020) reported that incidents of GBV cases in Nigeria based on preliminary information from 24 states shows that in March, the total number of GBV incidents reported were 346, while in the first part of April, incident reports spiked to 794, depicting a 56 per cent increase in just two weeks of lockdown. Some of these incidents of violence have tragically resulted in the death of victims, the rape of children, young girls and aged women, tenant– landlord assault, economic uncertainty and increased substance abuse.

According to Premium Times (2020), In Kaduna, in April 2020, an 18-year-old young girl known as Jennifer was attacked and raped by five men. The victim's family released a video of her ordeal. A few days later, in Edo State, a 22-year old university student Vera Uwaila Omozuwa, simply known as Uwa was beaten to death in a church after she had been allegedly raped. Her assailants smashed her head with a fire extinguisher. In Dutse, Jigawa, there was the report of a 12-year old girl, named Farishina who was raped repeatedly on different occasions by 11 men. In Ibadan, on June 2 2020, a 19-year old student Barakat Bello was also raped inside her father's house and murdered. There have been more horrific reports: of men sleeping with a two-year-old, of men sleeping with their daughters, and the only excuse such offenders could offer was that if their wives denied them sex, they would seek sexual pleasures from their own daughters. In Lagos, four masked men raped a 12-year-old girl. In Niger State a 25-year-old man raped an 85-year old grandma. A university undergraduate in Lagos was also accused of kissing a child passionately. He has since been arrested. In Benue, a 38-year-old man raped his seven-month-old daughter. The above mentioned cases represent an insignificant figure of the number of rape cases across Nigeria since the outbreak of Coronavirus.

Furthermore, the spike in GBV in Nigeria as noted by the Albino Foundation (2020) has affected women and girls with disabilities in a more distressing and pitiable manner. According to the study, many women living with disabilities in Nigeria live in communities, already worse affected by the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, amid increased tensions that provide opportunities for perpetrators to engage in such abusive behaviour. More so, women and girls living with disabilities often cannot access information on where to seek help and other life-saving services and information, a problem which has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic with the lack of accessible social networks (Women

with Disabilities 2014; WHO, 2020). To this end, the giant stride by some state governments to curtail this ugly trend is highly commendable. Such government includes the Ekiti State Government which recently signed into law, a piece of legislation from the State House of Assembly, titled "Compulsory Treatment and Care of Child Victims of Sexual Abuse Law 2020 with no provision for bail of sexual offenders. Also, the Kaduna State government criminalized sexual violence and stipulated castration of offenders.

TABLE 1: Number of reported cases of gender-based violence in Nigeria during March and April 2020 by geopolitical zone

Geopolitical Zone	Number of cases per Geopolitical zone	
	March	April
North East	50	115
North West	52	87
North Central	67	156
South East	36	92
South West	91	296
South South	18	35

Source: Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs, 2020

Extra-judicial killings, hostilities and armed banditry

One of the most challenging and worrisome social concerns aggravated by the outbreak of Coronavirus and the attendant total collapse of social networks in Nigeria is the rising insecurity. Just when the attention of governments at all levels is focused on the COVID-19 pandemic; most states have largely remained a killing field with lives of thousands of citizens cut short by insecurity (Tope, 2020). Even with states and borders on lockdown, bandits, criminals and terrorists have been running riot across the country where villages are ransacked on daily basis, Southern Kaduna where villages have been razed and murder has been committed on a large scale, and elsewhere in the country where members of the middle class are now afraid of their own shadows (BBC, 2020). Since January 2020, Boko Haram insurgency, murderous activities of bandits, kidnappers, herdsmen and sectarian violence have claimed no fewer than 2,771 lives in Nigeria, according to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a US-based think-tank under the Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) programme. A breakdown of the deaths showed that 320 people were killed in January; in February, 597 Nigerians were killed. In March, the figure was 754; April had 625 and as at May 15, 2020, no fewer than 475 people had been massacred (Guardian, 2020).

Travelling along some notable highways across Nigeria has become a life threatening adventure as the surrounding bushes along such roads are dreaded zones of armed banditry. The law enforcement agents in some cases tend to have worsened the situation by the constant killing of innocent citizens all in the name of enforcing COVID-19 protocols. Evidence of the killings comes from members of the public, who rang their hotline or sent in videos as reported by the National Human Rights Commission June, 2020. According to the report, law enforcers have killed 18 people in Nigeria since lockdowns began on 30 March. In total, the group said it received more than 100 complaints across 24 of Nigeria's 36 states - including Lagos, Enugu, Edo, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Ogun and Abuja (BBC, 2020). The protracted lockdown coupled with social distancing created no doubt brought about disconnections on community relationships and solidarity which helps in communal joint cooperation in securing the neighborhood.

Increased poverty level especially among vulnerable populations

In Nigeria, the absence of a national social welfare program that offers assistance to all individuals and families in need such as health care assistance, food stamps, unemployment compensation, disaster relief and educational assistance account for acute complexities. As noted by Yemisi (2020), the consequence of not having a national social welfare program became evident during the Coronavirus outbreak of 2020. The study further reported that out of 200 million Nigerians, only about 11,045,537 were captured in the National Social Register from 2,644,493 households, far fewer than the over 90 million Nigerians estimated to live in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.90 a day.

Due to the high cost of health care, greater economic fragility, and higher mortality rates, many Nigerians fall below the poverty line. This condition has been worsened since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions in economic activities and survival challenges. As noted by Ugo et al. (2020), the Nigerian government on her own part could do little to surmount these problems owing to certain systemic and administrative challenges. These challenges include the absence of poor and vulnerable Data (in terms of coverage and records), the challenge of Implementation and the problem of redefining vulnerability as a result of the pandemic. . In a very simplistic manner, the context of social protection policies or a list of poor household prior to the outbreak of the pandemic cannot fit into the scenario of COVID-19.

There is therefore an urgent need for a more comprehensive government social protection policies and programmes. The social protection measures can be in form of cash transfer schemes, public work programmes, school stipends, unemployment or disability benefits, social pensions, food vouchers and food transfers, user fee exemptions for health care or education and subsidized services (International Labour Organization, 2010). The recent establishment of the Ministry of Humanitarian, Disasters and Social Welfare which was inaugurated by the administration of President Muhammad Buhari is step in the right direction and should be sustained. The Ministry was saddled with social protection programmes in the pandemic period such as disbursement of Conditional Cash Transfer, In-Kind palliative measures and assistance in medical measures.

Neglect of other health challenges

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria created a situation whereby all the attention was shifted to its containment and neglecting other challenging health problems. Most people were so skeptical and reluctant in accessing healthcare facilities because of the fear of contracting the virus. The attitude of healthcare providers further compounded the situation as many sick persons who were at the verge of dying were either denied entrance into the hospital premises or medical attention. According to WHO (2020), undermining other health challenges as a result Coronavirus pandemic will have a devastating consequences in the already fragile public health. It is therefore very imperative for the government to put adequate measures in place avert these preventable deaths in the event of future pandemic outbreak.

A report by The Nations (2020), narrated the following experiences of patients; I was told by the health workers, “We can’t attend to all of you...If your case is not an emergency... a very serious case, go back...For now, we’re only attending to those showing COVID-19 symptoms or emergency cases. Following these instructions, I took my father who had urinary tract infection back home. Mr. Ekere also added in affirmation, “When I was rushed to General Hospital in the middle of the night and did not meet a single doctor or nurse on duty, I thought I was going to die! Let me even shock you! We were the ones that opened the hospital’s gate ourselves. After shouting for help at the entrance of the emergency unit, it was the security (guard) there that responded and told us there was no one on duty”. Another patient also stated “When I got to the hospital with wife, they kept telling us no bed space, no bed space until we lobbied with nothing less than N30,000 at the Accident and Emergency department...I saw two people die right in front of the A and E department...When we eventually got in, different doctors kept coming and going without any particular treatment. My wife eventually asked me to take her back home because there was no improvement in health. She passed away at home”.

Post COVID-19 lessons learnt

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has completely changed how humans interact with the environment and has positively influenced how basic amenities are delivered to citizens including healthcare (Okerefor, Adebola&Djechaiche, 2020). In health emergency situations such as the current COVID-19 outbreak, urgent measures are most inevitable including the innovative application of eHealth which is the use of ICT to deliver and manage healthcare more efficiently other than the traditional way of accessing healthcare facilities which requires a face to face interface thereby increasing COVID-19 community spread as well as defeating the purpose of social distancing and COVID-19 lockdowns. While it is important to exhibit caution in technological choices and behaviours (Okerefor&Adebola, 2020), it is even more demanding to put digital initiatives to help in slowing the spread of the virus. Since social distancing has been globally identified as an effective approach to slowing down and possibly halting the spread of COVID-19, technological interventions that limit direct human interaction have come to the centre stage. Telemedicine, Mobile Health and other Digital Health interventions have all become extremely relevant to manage the current global health emergency occasioned by the spreading coronavirus outbreak.

The word “Tele” is derived from the Greek word meaning “at a distance” or “remotely”. Telemedicine is the use of Telecommunications and computer technologies to provide medical care and exchange healthcare information where distance is a critical factor, (Mandellos, Koutelakis, Panagiotakopoulos, Koukias&Lymberopoulos, 2009; NCDC, 2020; WHO, 2010). Although Telemedicine is sometimes used interchangeably with Telehealth (Burgstahler, 2019), Telemonitoring and Telecare, each of them refers to different ways of using ICT to deliver health services. The major distinction is in how ICT is used to support health care, social care, public health and health education. National Health Service (2020) describes Telemedicine as the use of ICT to support the exchange of health information between health care professionals for diagnosis or referral, and tends to focus on specific clinical applications such as Teledermatology or Teleradiology. Telemedicine uses real-time interactive textual audio, visual, and data communications to deliver healthcare, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data and education (Craig &Pettersson, 2005; Diamantidis, 2017).

In specific terms, Telecare is the use of ICT to bring health and social care services directly to a health service user. It is a collection of means or methods for enhancing healthcare, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunications technologies Telemedicine and Telehealth are used to manage long term conditions remotely, including the provision of health services at a distance using a range of technologies such as telephone, Internet Relay Chat and video consultations to support diagnosis and management, in addition to clinical networks and health professional education and to minimize the exposure of caregivers and health professionals to infections from the patients they are managing (Scottish Center for Telehealth, 2010; Centre for Connected Health Policy, 2014; Ohannessian, 2015).

Due to perceived usefulness and ease of use (Yee, Seong& Chin, 2019), mobile phones and handheld devices with appropriate software applications and access to health database/records are suitable for remote communications and exchange of relevant information for the effective management of COVID-19 cases (Mobile health). Video conferencing affords the health worker the capacity to perform remote visual inspections of patient’s condition without necessarily having to make direct contact that can expose him to the disease being treated (teleconferencing). Technological advances in Telemedicine, Telecare, Telehealth and Telemonitoring have proven to possess huge potentials in meeting the social distancing requirements of controlling the spread COVID-19, in addition to providing remote management of patients which ultimately protects caregivers, medical personnel and the general public from contracting the virus (Bexci &Subramani, 2013; Rygg , Brataas&Nordtug, 2018; Okerefor, Adebola&Djechaiche, 2020).

Before the pandemic, majority of the Nigerian population and different groups of people had a reasonably traditional online lifestyle, the conventional methods of carrying on with their meetings and all other activities are the usual face-to-face pattern. However, as the lockdown began, it becomes paramount to adapt to a fully digital lifestyle almost overnight. When the lockdown order began in late March, most

activities (that used to be online and physical) were not moved online which contributed immensely to community spread. Household-related and leisure activities were not moved to online channels. Understandably, moving online was a massive challenge for Nigerians, as most did not know how to do shop online, receive food deliveries, operate video chat, and other activities online. Most other persons have no access to some technological gadgets neither do they have the resources to purchase them. Although young and middle-aged individuals had few problems using smartphones and various apps, they met other challenges. One challenge in particular was having to move their work online and working from home. While working adults are familiar with using technologies in their work, having to set up and manage their work entirely online was a struggle felt by many. First, online communication was less effective and efficient, especially in the Nigerian business culture, where face-to-face meetings are preferred. Online discussion requires more time and effort. For citizens, responding to travel bans, school closures, and lockdowns as part of the social distancing strategy deployed by almost all infected countries required adapting their lives to emerging online technologies to maintain some semblance of normality (Okerefor, Adebola&Djechariche, 2020; Pan, Cui &Qian, 2020).

Implications for social work practice in Nigeria.

The roles of social workers and the Nigerian national association of social workers are more crucial in the face of the prevailing global pandemic. It is apparent that fake news and misinformation have created confusion and subsequently, posed greater challenge to every effort to curtail the spread of the virus. In this regard, social workers in Nigeria can provide and share information quickly, efficiently and in real-time as strategies in response to COVID- 19 pandemic through their social networking pages like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. They can provide a platform for gathering and disseminating information to promote awareness of the current situation (Ladan, Haruna&Madu, 2020).

Other types of support such as online support for victims of domestic violence, online therapy for persons with disabilities, online media awareness and community education, emotional support for lonely seniors, and financial support for families that could not afford homeschooling costs were part of the responsibilities of social workers in a period of the COVID-19 pandemic. These types of services were mainly provided by non-governmental agencies (Dauti, Dhembo, Bejiko&Allmuca, 2020). In Albania, Social workers involved in non-governmental agencies have offered online support to persons with disabilities, counseling services to victims of domestic violence, and online classes to children in disadvantaged communities, among others. Social workers have also engaged in online platforms established to support individuals and families during the pandemic, in the same vein social workers in Nigeria toe the same lane. Let's examine some of the specific roles assumed by social workers in mitigating and reducing the COVID-19 spread in Nigeria

Community education and awareness

Social workers have a vital role to play in the provision and dissemination of genuine information to cure and fight coronavirus to Nigerians through the social media. Social workers especially those at health centers and research centers can work extensively with medical professional to enlighten their communities via social media about coronavirus and self-protection measures (Dhëmbö, Akesson&Cheyne-Hazineh, 2019). They can also work with public health agencies and research centers, and in the broader health sector, are very active, helping to manage information and support efforts to strengthen understanding of the developments (Liu et al. 2020). The information guide should include information on what coronavirus is all about, how the virus spreads, steps to for self and family protection, steps to protect other in the community. They should also provide information on travel information, government announcements, accurate and up-to-date information that can change or evolve the virus rapidly (Ladan, Haruna&Madu, 2020). Social workers should also mount strong awareness on fake news as a strong measure to defeat the virus.

With regards to involvement in COVID-19 prevention activities, social workers are trained to provide health education to the population. They will be useful in providing health education to the community on the clinical features, route of transmission, access to care and the very important act of

switching to online meetings as an alternative means of mitigating community spread of the Coronavirus. They are therefore better positioned to explain and help implement and monitor preventive measures such as social distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette compliance. Rapid outbreak containment has been associated with mobilization activities that generated trust between health workers social workers and members of the community where they work (Beaubien, 2015).

Social workers engage in policy debates, proposing new policy alternatives to address the short- and long-term impact of the pandemic. Even though citizens' protests have made it clear that some of the most disadvantaged groups were excluded from the in-home assistance program, social workers also promote policy advocacy calling for greater responsiveness from the government (Dyrmishi, 2020). A concern of social workers serving in government agencies is that of advocacy for improved welfare services for the entire populace especially the poor and most vulnerable members of the Nigerian society.

Vulnerable groups who are confronted with their complex personal and social needs may need additional support found in social work approaches. It is against this background that social workers must be at the vanguard of promoting policy change in the context of the challenges faced by vulnerable Nigerians through the instrumentality of the mass media (Amadasun and Omorogiuwa, 2020). Social workers advocate for alternative means of care (e.g. community-based approach to care, not as a replacement but as a complement to existing institutional care) in order to decongest the limited and overstretched public healthcare facilities, while canvassing for investments in socioeconomic and public health infrastructures.

Social workers have played an important role, first, in identifying potential beneficiaries, and second, in delivering assistance. Social workers in municipalities were already – before the pandemic – involved with disadvantaged groups as they typically serve in municipal departments where they deliver services to beneficiaries of social welfare programs, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and children at risk of abuse, neglect, or trafficking. Social workers drew on their community experience to compile the list of potential beneficiaries, which was sent to the Central Commission for Assistance Provision. Furthermore, they delivered food and non-food items, as well as medicines, to individuals and families in need (Dauti, Dhembo, Bejiko & Allmuca, 2020).

Policy implications

There is an urgent need for policy makers in Nigeria to draw lessons from other contexts and rapidly design homegrown responses. To this end, the cardinal objective is not just how to reduce the spread of the disease, but also how to implement these mitigation and suppression measures in a manner that is culturally and economically palatable. Incentives should be geared towards enhancing community solidarity and not stigmatization; while enhancing trust, social accountability, and promoting peer to peer support after the crisis (UNDP, 2020). Policy options should therefore comprehensively address an existing weak healthcare system, disconnected social networks and connectedness, a large section of the population with pre-existing conditions and governance deficits that have strained public trust. Discussed below are some of the key policy areas that according to the UNDP Nigeria (2020):

Comprehensive Fiscal Stimulus

There should be a coordinated and well programmed reduction in taxes (VAT) on essential commodities including medicine and food, temporary salary advances and salary top ups, enhanced social security payments could be considered if the situation warrants such action. Incentives could also be provided to private firms for business continuity, including the financial system, shipping, local businesses and agricultural farming which are essential for keeping the economy running.

Risk communication to the public

Fake news and misinformation contributed to a great extent the panic and uncertainty witnessed during the peak of Coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. There is need to scale up public awareness and sensitization to properly educate citizens on the gravity of the disease, implications on different age groups and people with compromising health conditions. Proactive communications measures may be required to

take these messages to the rural communities whose response may not be as effective as one would expect in this critical time. Due to the cultural values that under guard social connectedness as a currency for building resilience, there might be a need to ensure context-specific approaches in communicating the mitigation measures. In this regard, collective engagement and messaging through community influencers, custodians of faith and traditions is critical.

Planning for post-COVID-19 pandemic

There is no doubt that the question in the minds of national and global leaders in the midst of the evolving pandemic is how affected communities will bounce back and in a sustainable manner recover from the crisis. The economic distress associated with the pandemic, health implications to those affected especially most vulnerable in the community, strain on service delivery infrastructure and the societal cost in terms of well-being could be enormous. Exploring the opportunities different online community platforms should be embraced and given adequate policy considerations. Any post-COVID-19 recovery strategy will need to re-establish the conditions for a quick return to a path of economic growth, improved social contract, and overall human development that can foster more inclusive societies in the future. The survivors and others directly affected by the disease must be assisted to regain their dignity and the affected communities supported to recover their livelihoods. This will require investment in innovative and digital approaches for restoration of health systems; co-creation of culturally sensitive protection and community, peace and cohesion building.

References

- Amadasun, S. & Omorogiwa, T.B.E.(2020). 2019 Coronavirus and social work: Blueprint to holistic intervention. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Asmundson G.J.G. & Taylor, S. (2020). Coronaphobia: Fear and the 2019-nCoV outbreak. *Journal of Anxiety Disorder*, 70
- Asmundson G.J.G. & Taylor, S. (2020). How health anxiety influences responses to viral outbreaks like COVID-19: What all decision-makers, health authorities, and health care professionals need to know. *Journal of Anxiety Disorder*, 71: 102211.
- Banerjee, D. (2020). The COVID-19 Outbreak: Crucial role the psychiatrists can play. *Asian journal of Psychiatry*. 51
- Beaubien, J. (2015). *Block by block, health workers lead Liberia to victory over Ebola*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/05/08/405200905/block-by-block-health-workers-lead-liberia-to-victory-over-ebola>.
- Bexci, M. S. & Subramani, R. Video conferencing for medical knowledge dissemination: A sufficient information and communication technology for healthcare delivery. *International Journal for Management Science and Technology (IJMST)*, 1(9), 1-9.
- Burgstahler, L. D. (2019). *Telehealth: A Path to virtual integrated care*, American Hospital Association. Centre for Health Innovation; Chicago
- Center for Connected Health Policy (2014). What is Telehealth? *National Telehealth Resource Center USA*. Retrieved from <http://cchpca.org/what-is-telehealth>.
- Craig, J. & Petterson, V. (2005). Introduction to the practice of telemedicine. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, 11(1), 3-9.
- Dauti, M., Dhembo, E., Bejiko, E. & Allmuca, M. (2020). Rethinking the transformative role of the social work in Albania: Some lessons learned from the response to COVID-19. *International Social Work*, 00(0). Doi:10.1177/00208720940356
- Diamantidis, C. J. (2017). A fundamental theorem of telehealth. *Advances in Chronic Kidney Disease*, 24(1), 4-5.
- Dhëmbo, E., Akesson, B & Cheyne-Hazineh, L. (2019). Social work education in Albania: A developing landscape of challenges and opportunities. *European Journal of Social Work*. DOI: 10.1080/13691457.2019.1681365.

- Dyrmishi, A. (2020). 'Albania', in Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (ed.) *Democracy and the state of emergency: Responses to the corona crisis in the western Balkans, Croatia and Slovenia*, 4-7. Retrieved from <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/belgrad/16119.pdf>
- Etta, E., Esove, D. & Asukwo, O. (2016).African Communalism and Globalization. *African research Review Journal*, 10 (3), 302-316.
- Ladan, A., Haruna, B. & Madu, A.U. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic and social media news in Nigeria: The role of libraries and library associations in information dissemination. *International Journal of Innovation and Research in Educational Science*, 7(2), 125-133.
- Lennard, N. (2020). *Domestic violence is on the rise with Coronavirus lockdown*. The Responses missing Points.
- Liu, Y., Ning, Z., Chen, Y., Guo, M., Liu, Y., Gali, N.K., Sun, L., Duan, Y., Cai, J., Westerdahl, D., Liu, X., Xu, K., Ho, K., Kan, H., Fu, Q. & Lan, K. (2020). Aerodynamic analysis of SARS-CoV-2 in two Wuhan hospitals. *Nature*, 1-6.
- Mandellos, G. J., Koutelakis, G. V., Panagiotakopoulos, T., Koukias, M. & Lymberopoulos, D. K. (2009). Requirements and solutions for advanced telemedicine applications, in biomedical engineering. *Shanghai In Tech*, 645-658.
- MaryCéna, J. (2020). A systematic review of mental health programs among populations affected by the Ebola virus disease. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 131, April 2020, 109966.
- Masitera, E. (2020). Indigenous African Ethics and Land Distribution. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 39, 38.
- Masolo, D.A. (2010). *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 240
- Metz, T. (2017). Toward an African moral theory (Revised Edition). In Ukpokolo, I. (Ed.), *themes, Issues and Problems in African Philosophy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 97-119.
- Metz, T. (2020). What does an African ethic of social cohesion entail for social distancing? *Developing World Bioeth.* Special issue, 1–10. DOI: 10.1111/dewb.12266
- Mukhtar, S. (2020). Pakistanis' Mental Health during the COVID-19. *Asian Journal of psychiatry*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102127>
- National Health Service (2020). Implementing telecare strategic analysis and guidelines for policy makers, commissioners and providers. Retrieved from www.auditcommission.gov.uk/olderpeople.
- Nigerian Center for Disease Control (2020). *National Strategy to scale up Access to Coronavirus disease testing in Nigeria*, 20th April, 2020. CDC
- Nigeria Centre for Disease Control [NCDC] (2020). COVID-19 guidance for safe mass gatherings in Nigeria.
- Ohannessian, R. (2015). Telemedicine: Potential applications in epidemic situations. *European Research in Telemedicine*, 4 (3), 95-98.
- Okerefor, K. U. & Adebola, O. (2020). Tackling the cyber security impacts of the coronavirus outbreak as a challenge to internet safety. *International Journal in IT and Engineering (IJITE)*, (8) 2, 1-14
- Okerefor, K., Adebola, O. & Djechaiche, R. (2020). Exploring the potentials of telemedicine and other non- contact electronic health technologies in controlling the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). *International Journal of IT and Engineering*, 1-13.
- Omole, C. (2020). 25 prospective post-Covid-19 business trends and opportunities for Nigerians 08 May 2020. *Financial Development and finance*. Retrieved from <http://www.financialnigeria.com/25-prospective-post-covid-19-business-trends-and-opportunities-for-nigerians-blog-539.html>
- Ozili, P.R. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis: The Nigerian experience and structural causes. SSRN Electronic Journal. Doi: [10.2139/ssrn.3567419](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3567419)
- Pan, S.L., Cui, M. & Qian, J. (2020). Information resource orchestration during the pandemic: A study of community lockdowns in China. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102143>
- Premium Times (9th June, 2020). *Nigeria: Rape pandemic*. All African Newsletter.

- Ravi, P. R (2020). COVID-19 and mental health: A review of the existing literature. *Asian journal of Psychiatry*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30109-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30109-7)
- Ren, L.L., Wang, Y.M., Wu, Z.Q., Xiang,Z.C., Guo, L.&Xu, T. (2020). Identification of a novel Coronavirus causing severe pneumonia: Human descriptive study. *Chinese Medical journal*.
- Rygg,L. O.,Brataas, H. V.&Nordtug,B. (2018). Introducing videoconferencing on tablet computers in nurse-patient communication: Technical and training challenges. *International Journal of Telemedicine and Applications*,1-6.
- Scottish Center for Telehealth (2010). Telehealth-definitions. Retrieved from <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/his/new-to-health-informatics/telehealth.aspx>
- The Albino Foundation (2020). *COVID-19 Disability inclusion emergency response: Disability inclusion in Nigeria*. Retrieved from [https://albinofoundation.org/covid-19-disability-inclusionemergency-response-by-the-albino-foundation-disabilityinclusion-nigeria/.](https://albinofoundation.org/covid-19-disability-inclusionemergency-response-by-the-albino-foundation-disabilityinclusion-nigeria/)
- The Nations (July 8, 2020). *COVID-19: Nigerians dying of other illnesses due to neglect*.vintage press Limited.
- Tope, T. O. (2020). Killings, kidnappings, banditry hold sway amid COVID-19 pandemic. *The Guardian*
- Tosam, M.J. (2014). The Philosophical Foundations of Kom Proverbs. *Journal on African*
- Townsend, M. (2020). *Domestic abuse cases soar as lockdown takes its toll some charities can no longer effectively support women because of lockdown and staff sickness*.
- Ugo, G. Mohamed, A. &Pamela, D. (2020). *Social protection and jobs responses to COVID-19: a real-time review of country measures*. Living Paper Version
- United Nations (2020). *UN chief decries horrifying rise in domestic violence amid virus lockdown*. United Nations Nigeria.
- United Nations Development Programme Nigeria (2020). The impact of the covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria a socio-economic analysis. March 24th Brief.
- United Nations Office on Drugs Crime (2020). *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response: thematic Brief on gender-based violence against women and girls*. UN Portal.
- United Nations Women (2020). Violence against women and girls: The shadow pandemic. retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>.
- Wikipedia (2020). The impact of the (Covid 19) Coronavirus pandemic on domesticViolence. wikipedia Covid-19 Updates
- Women with Disability (2014). *What works to prevent violence against women with disabilities*. retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089ade5274a27b20001e9/What_Works_inception_Report_June_2014_AnnexW_Interventions_for_abuse_against_WWD.pdf.)
- World Health Organization (2010). Telemedicine: Opportunities and developments in member states,Geneva.
- World Health Organzization (2020). *Rolling updates on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)*, 20TH April, 2020.
- Yee, T. S.,Seong, L. C. & Chin, W. S. (2019). Patient's intention to use mobile health app, *Journal of Management Research*,11(3),18-35.
- Yemisi, O. I. (2020).*COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Protection Conundrum in Nigeria*. retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341121129>

THE NEXUS BETWEEN HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF IMO STATE OF NIGERIA.

By

Anoruo Adolphus Chukwuemeka
Department of Public Administration
Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo; Nigeria

&

Ihenacho Charless Uzoma
Department of Public Administration Imo State polytechnic

&

Adiukwu Chima Benjamin
Department of Cooperative Economics Imo State Polytechnic

&

Afokwalam Augustine Chinedu
Department of Public Administration Imo State Polytechnic

Abstract

The essence of this study is to examine, articulate and analyze critically the nexus between human capital formation and national development considering the need for education and Health service in democratic system of governance in Nigeria. This is due to high level of consciousness in achieving effective developmental strives in human resource management and economic resuscitation geared towards ensuring capacity building in Nigeria. It is upon these developments that enable the researchers adopted both primary and secondary data collection. In the primary data collection; interviews, questionnaires distributions and Empirical study were made, while the secondary data collections include; internet research, materials from journals, Articles, textbooks, magazines and radio. The content analyses were simple percentage, statistical tables and Chi-square. The theories used were human capital and human relation theories. The empirical and statistical study shows that human capital formation has been positively achieving tremendous development in the nation's health and education systems to facilitate effective capacity building. These levels of achievement have been indispensable one in the nation's socio-economic and political development to foster sustainable development in Nigeria. The findings show that there is an increase in economic performance for every increase in human capital development. The recommendations are that government should endeavor to ensure more development of human capacity through enhancing quality education, healthcare services, Training and development, creativity and innovations as well as enhancing entrepreneurial education and practices through funding education and health sectors, provide employment and empowerment to human resources graduates, and security of lives and properties which enable the transformation of economy and development as these will lead to economic growth and more development in Imo state of Nigeria.

Keywords: Human capital, Economic growth, Education, Health, Entrepreneurship Development.

Introduction

Human capital formation is an ideology which centralized itself to the basic training formation and developmental needs that should be given to individuals in the development of the society, in order to be capable in production and service delivery. It ensures an effective management and administration of socio-economic and political activities in the society. An effective human capital formation is a catalyst

that propels efficient economic resuscitation and national development. The (Schultz propositions in 1961 and 1981) gave birth to human capital development theory. According to Wikipedia “the human capital theory was popularized by Gary Becker; an Economist from the University of Chicago and Jacob Mincer who refers to it as the stock of knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes which include creativity embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value”. It is a collection of traits which encompass knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment and wisdom possessed individually and collectively by individuals in a population. These resources are the total capacity of the people that represents in form of wealth which can be directed to accomplish the goals of the nation or state or a portion thereof. Therefore, health system, Education, Agriculture, Entrepreneurship development, Training and development as well as employment and security services are imperatives in the national growth and development in Nigeria.

However, the importance of health cannot be overemphasized, following its role as centre for wellbeing of people. An adage said that “a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. A good health facilitates socio-economic growth and development due to its impacts to foster hardworking, sound thinking minds and physical implementations. Education plays an important role in shaping and re-shaping personnel to ensure effective capacity building in the society.

Agriculture is a practice aiming at ensuring an improved production in food and industrialization of the society, while security remains an essential commodity that ensures the protection of lives and properties towards engendering effective human capital formation and national development in Imo state of Nigeria. The Entrepreneurship practice, education and development is one of the strongest components of human capital formation which its improvement facilitates effective economy and national development. These five factors above are the basics which brood the expanded human capabilities that is sine qua non to the concept of development.

However, it is hard and impossible for any organization or country to achieve substantive increase in the socio-economic sector without reasonable investment in human capital development. This is because human capital investment has been defined as a force that propels economic growth and development in the society. It is an asset that propels economic transformation. According to (Bontis et al, 1999) cited in Fred .O. Eze 2013: p. 195) human capital represents the human factor in the organization. It is the combined intelligence, skills and enterprise that give the organization its distinctive character. The human elements of the organization are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and improving the creative thrust which if properly activated can ensure the long term survival of the organization. Human capital according to (Okojie, 1995) is the abilities and aggregates skills, knowledge and the ability of the citizens to propel the productive forces of the nation. It is not about the quantity of humans but their quality achievement through education, training and development. (Adedeji & Banidele, 2003) opined that the factors responsible for the impressive performance of the economy of the most of the developed and newly industrializing countries are an impressive commitment to human capital formation. He asserted that this has been largely achieved through education and training by all the people of these countries. Therefore, the essence of human capital development is to ensure the achievement of capable individuals that can create, innovate and perform maximum towards enhancing socio-economic development in the society. The importance of this rests on value creation through knowledge, skills and abilities of people employed. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to examine the nexus between human capital formation and national development which is imperative in the national transformation. Other objectives of this paper can be stated as follows:

1. To examine the impact of human capital formation and national development in the socio-economic and political development in Imo state of Nigeria.
2. To investigate and analyze government investment on Education, Health, Agriculture, entrepreneurship development and Security as well as its contributions to national development in Nigeria.

This is to ensure critical analysis of the possible agenda towards development of human capital formation in Nigeria. Like European countries, human capital formation started through training and education of its citizenry within primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to enable an

improve knowledge, skills and capabilities of its inhabitants to ensure the transformation of the society. These human capital formation was adopted in Nigeria in line with the European nations to ensure remarkable results by the way of improve the numbers of graduates from tertiary institutions across the country and even outside the country who study and return to work for country's development, but the question here is what are the degree of the utilization of this human capital formation which have been attributed as a panacea for national development? This question occurs due to the resultant effects of unemployment and poverty nature of the country inspite of high rate of graduates with high level of training from various institutions within and outside the country. The poor leadership, corruption, insecurity and high level of maternal mortality rate, the effects of food insufficiency, food poisons and other health challenges witnessing in the country; have been affecting the need for proper utilization of human resources in Nigeria. This is because, the purpose of human capital formation is to foster effective capacity building on education, health care, security and Agricultural development but inability to utilize human resources available have been affecting the need to ensure the realization of the developmental strive in Nigeria. The need to achieve socio-economic and political development have not been given good attention consequence to unemployment, poverty, insecurity, low productivity, hunger and corruption as a result of bad leadership, maladministration, greediness and sectionalism. It is in the context of the above assertion that the researcher put on the following research questions, such as:

1. To what extent does human capital formation determine socio-economic and political development of Nigeria?
2. To what extent does government investment contribute to the nation's economic development?

The **hypotheses** are as follows:

- Human capital formation does not determine socio-economic and political development in Imo state of Nigeria.
- There are no impacts of government investments on nation's economic development.

This is because, human capital focuses on the development of human capabilities to enhance knowledge and skills, how to acquire knowledge and its utilization in the production process. This is in the light of the fact that human potentials is capable of being wasted when the efforts of human development fails to balance the formation with the use of the human capabilities. The essence of human development strategy is to enhance the fruits of economic growth and developments which will facilities the lives of people thereby increase both the capabilities and opportunities according to (UNDP, 2001).

However, notice has been made that the differences in the levels of socio-economic development across the country (Nigeria) can be attributed to natural resources and endowments, the species of the physical capital, the quality and quantity of human resources and the effective utilization of these human resources to achieve national development in Nigeria. According to (Oladeji and Adebayo, 1996) states that "human capital is the means and the ends of achieving economic growth and development". This is to say that, human resources constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of the Nations. Human beings are an active agent that accumulate capitals, exploit natural resources and build socio-economic and political organizations where such will facilitates lives and promote enablement in the society.

Therefore, the significance of this study to the national development will exposed the levels of human capital development in the country and its impact to socio-economic and political development. The government investment on education, health, Agriculture and security and its resultant effect which can be attested through numbers of school enrolments, level of children and mothers mortality rates, the rate of employment and unemployment, improve productivity and services as well as the level of security and the threat of insecurity in Imo State of Nigeria.

Other Significance of the study includes:

1. This paper gives account of the extent to which Imo state and Nigeria's human resources development have made mark in the country's socio-economic and political transformation

- thereby serve as a reference materials for researchers on human capital investment and socio-economic transformation in Nigeria and the World.
2. The outcome of this research will be of immense benefits to the policy makers, economists, and experts in health science, education, students and stakeholders to borrow in developing more reliable ways of improving and utilizing human capital for national transformation.
 3. This research will enables the utilization of high number of graduates who are graduating out of schools by the way of provision of employment, appointments, provision for subsidies for successful business operation and investment for the purpose of ensuring effective and efficient utilization of human resources management in Nigeria.

The Scope of the Study

These studies emphasize on human capital formation and national development in Imo state of Nigeria. These concentrate on government expenditure and investment on education, health, Agriculture and security. Others are the school enrolment and the provision of hospitals and free education schemes in Imo State and Nigeria.

The Review of the Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

The concept of human capital formation was coined by Schultz in 1961 and 1981. In his description, he categorized the sources of all human capabilities into the abilities that originate from innate sources and those acquired from the environment Fred .O. Eze (2013: p 195). Human capital is an essential quality of a person or persons used in propelling socio-economic and political activities of an organization towards achieving the needed development in the society. It is the requiresite training, knowledge, skills and experiences of persons which is needed in advancement of production and effective service delivery geared towards ensuring nation's development. According to (Armstrong, 2003) human capital is the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in an organization to work for the success of the organization.

The nexus between human capital formation and national development can be attested with World Bank Report 1996 that "Nigeria is experiencing poverty in the midst of plenty", as Nigeria presents a paradox that the nation is rich but its people are poor people is due to an increasing deterioration in human capital condition leading to an increase in poverty nature of the growing population which surpassed the food production. It maintains that the existing social services, education, health services and quality of nutrition have being deteriorated. The national economic strategy and needs 2004 to 2007 stated that the needs are Nigeria people; their welfare and wellbeing, health, employment and empowerment, education, security and political power remain an important milestone in the realization of the millennium development goals of 2015 (Nigeria, 2004, P.11). The millennium development goals are geared towards reducing poverty and ill-health thereby improved education and healthcare service in the public organizations. Health is the fundamental to economic growth and development. It is a condition that determines economic performance both in micro and macro levels. It is a direct component of human wellbeing and form of human capital that increase an individual's capabilities (Bloom and Canning, 2003). However, Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people's level of productivity and creative thinking thereby promote entrepreneurship and technological advancement (World Bank, 1999). The adult health depends on child health and itself directly influences labor productivity (World Health Organization, 1999).

Moreover, the relationship between human capital formation and national development entail that the performance of human resources determines the level of development of every country. Therefore, the achievement of Imo state in this regard can be attested through the following sub-headings.

How Does Human Capital Affect the Economy?

There are strong mutual and symbiotic relationship between human capital and economic growth. Human capital affects economic growth through the knowledge and skills of the people. This is because; any country that wants to improve in its economy must have developed some degree of competitive advantages over other economies. This will enable them to stand out among others. The indications are as follows:

- (a) A periodic and acceptable increase in gross domestic products
- (b) An increase in housing and other infrastructural development
- (c) An increase in unemployment/employment as a result of increase in the number of graduates and staff training periodically.
- (d) An increase in the economic growth comparing to the past administrations, by improving production of goods and services in both public and private sectors.

Therefore, below can be justifying with respect to above stated:

Education

Education according to Oxford Dictionary 6th Edition is a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools and colleges to improve knowledge and development skills. Education is a biggest industry in Nigeria. It enables human mental, social, emotional and psychological development (Anoruo A.C. 2015. P. 314). It has contributed towards fostering manpower development and socio-economic and political resuscitation. Education has been the priority of Imo state and Nigeria. This can be attested through the free education given by the government of the state since 2011 till 2019 as long as this present government last. Governor Rochas Okorocha declared free education from primary, secondary and higher institutions of learning on (November, 13, 2012, statesman Newspaper, 08/02/2017). He constructed and rehabilitated class rooms to boost learning. He provides relieve to parents on the burden of heavy school fees for their children by providing free education that give room to nonpayment of school fee to various academic institutions in the state. This free education policy has provided an increase of about one million children enrolment. There are tremendous achievements recorded by the students of Imo state Institution of learning since the introduction of free education. The rate of capacity building in the context of education of the citizens, improve health care services better than the previous administration. Despite the state of insecurity in Nigeria, Imo state can boast with adequate security of lives and properties, improve productivity and effective service delivery. For instance; the rate at which Imo State of Nigeria has been able to work towards establishing, facilitating and securing the relevant areas like education by the government effort towards providing free education for the citizens from primary to higher institutions of learning is a case study. This singular objective has been able to increase the number of both JAMB and WAEC candidates above other states since five years now. It is a wakeup call that facilitates the willingness of the citizens to attending/engaging in further education and also promotes education of the citizens both internal and external. The Impact of Free Education in Imo State of Nigeriathrough distribution of free books, uniforms, Payment of JAMBS fee for Imo candidates, Building infrastructure to fosters academic environment; Imo state students emerged first position in inter-debate in Nigeria to represent the country in Czech Republic in 2017.

However, the federal government establishment of the National Empowerment program to enhance learning and education of the citizens. The Empowerment scheme has provided close to four hundred Thousand Graduates job opportunities (400,000) which facilitates youth performance through practical, theoretical learning and teaching skills. The Scholarship provision speaks loud for the government. There are the construction and establishment of new schools from primary, secondary and Tertiary Institutions such as the establishment of Imo state polytechnic multi campus and multi campus of State University, Owerri City School and Young Scientists College to mention but few. The development of human capital requires creating and cultivating environment in which human beings can rapidly learn and apply new ideas, competencies, skills, behaviours and attitudes for the development of the society. Therefore, human capital formation is a process of transforming the people in a country into capable labour that will produce goods and services.

Infrastructural Development

Human capital development can be realized with positive venture on infrastructural development. To facilitate an effective infrastructural development in the state of Nigeria, Imo state government of Nigeria built one storey of modern class room Block in each of the 305 political wards in the state. The construction of two thousand Kilometers Roads of Urban and Rural with dualization and expansion of Cities across Owerri Municipalities, Orlu and Okigwe to Aka City, Mgbidi City etc are ongoing. The expansion of Markets to Ultra modern markets is commendable in Imo state of Nigeria through building shopping Malls, Relieve markets; Electronics and Auto spare parts markets. There are the constructions of Hero's square, Ikemba Ojukwu Centre, Imo International Convention Centre, The construction and establishment of Imo state college of advanced professional studies (ICAPS), Newspaper publication and alleviation of poverty through providing houses for Indigent Widows in the state and beyond. At least, three hundred and one houses provided for the less privileged families. These giant strive has impacted more positive to the socio-economic live of the society. The concentration of government towards building more infrastructural facilities such as building of schools and reconstruction of new schools, building more hospitals and health centre, facilitating security service through provision of security Helicopter from inspector general of police to Imo State government and commissioner for police (Thisday Newspaper June 5th, 2017) and Imo State government to facilitate security service as well as some relevant security gadgets, health equipments and quality education to foster national development.

Health

Health has been defined as the state of wellbeing which enshrine sound thinking minded and ensure an articulate actions and reactions to and from in relation to issues of body and mind. This is in line with an adage that says "a Healthy nation is a wealthy nation." The state of health of an organization determines the levels of developmental strive of such society. "All things being equal". In Imo state of Nigeria, there are some remarkable improvements in the health service by the provision of Hospitals, equipments of medicals facilities, improve medical attention and service. The ongoing construction of more 27 modern Hospitals one in each local government Area of the state coupled with Ochie Dike Renal and Kidney Dialysis Centre. The upgrading of general Hospitals to specialist Hospitals in Umuguma Owerri, the re-equipment of Imo state University Teaching Hospital and the provision of free medical care by the wife of the Governor to the state facilitates health care service to the citizens in the state. However, Berthet, E. (1979, P: 23) cited in Dr. Olewe, B. N. and Dr. Olewe C. E. (1996: p186) "asserted that Health is defined not only in sickness, rather in relation to the harmonious development of every individual personality and it represents a balanced measure of a person's total potential- whether biological, psychological and social; and to the notion of individual health we should add the concept of family and community health". According to World Health Organization (WHO) Health are a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. The Government of Imo state strives to give medical attention to the citizens by ensuring constant provision for medical attention to children through constant immunization and the victims of meningitis, malaria and other related health challenges. The number of private management Hospitals is increasing on daily basis and their services have commendable. There are healthy competitions between the public and the private owned Hospitals. The provision for scholarship training and development of both young medical students and nursing students to both foreign and local Institutions of higher learning is to improve capacity building of the Nation's healthcare services in Nigeria.

Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Development

According to Prof. B. C. Isisioma (2015, p.1) " a system that incorporates entrepreneurship into technical and vocational education, offers irresistible cocktail which will transform our schools into centre for skills acquisition, preparing graduates for employment in the workplace, and imbuing them with job specific and employability skills that connect them with the business community. Entrepreneurship training and development has been incorporated in Imo state of Nigeria. The administration of Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria and Rochas Okorochoa of Imo state accepted improvement in Agriculture as a panacea for food

insufficiency and ensures poverty reduction. To support Entrepreneurship development; the wife of the governor has been providing empowerment reliefs in terms of wrappers, sewing machines, Blenders, Hair Dryers and food stuff to indigent women of the state to encourage them in building their families and society. The state government through the governor Rochas Okorocha has provided 305 youth with 1,000,000 each to enable them establish an independent business outfit to improve their millions with multi millions naira venture. In the federal government of Nigeria, loans have been given to the farmers under farm credits scheme to foster economic production. This singular act has provided an improvement in Rice and other crop production in Nigeria. The government has partnered with some countries towards improving Entrepreneurship and Agricultural productivity and services. Such countries include: China, Israel and Turkey.

Employment

According to vanguard Newspaper 6th June, 2017; the Unemployment inches up to 14.2% in fourth quarter of 2017 (National Bureau of statistics); entails that the success of Human capital lies in the ability of government and private sector to engage the citizens into useful areas that will facilitate socio-economic and political development of the organization. Self employment and Entrepreneurship development has been part and parcel of employment and empowerment opportunities. Therefore, in the articulation of the need to ensure capacity building, federal government of Nigeria has been embarking on several employments and empowerments strive through the provision of regular recruitment in Nigeria police and military. The recent 10,000 jobs recruitment to Nigeria police force is the repetition of the policy guideline on job recruitment. The recent military overhauled training and development as well as the provision for regular recruitment of young youth into military force; the establishment of National empowerment program (N-power) that has provided hundreds of thousand unemployed graduates teaching job in both primary and secondary school nationwide has been commendable. The states including Imo state have been embarking on provision of employment opportunities for its young graduates. For instance, Imo state has been providing jobs opportunities to its graduates within its capacity. The recent recruitment activity earlier 2017 made it clear that about four thousand graduates (4000) were recruited into civil service system including hundreds of jobs to the various Parastatals and Agencies. Not only that the government of state has empowered 305 youth through provision of 1,000,000 each person from each INEC ward of the 27 local government Area of Imo state. As at 2014, there was empowerment of 25,000 youth from 27 local governments Area under the auspices of youth must work program in which ministry of youth and sports took responsibility of the service. Each of the youth earned about 400,000 each between June 2014 and December 2015 the empowerment lasted.

Security

According to Prof.B.C.Isisioma (2015 p.3) 'sustainable human development is essentially the protection of the life opportunities of future generations and the natural systems on which all life depends. Therefore, security is important at this point. The provision of military training and development has been taken regular dimension. There have been efforts to ensure the provision of regional security to boast military operation and ensure global support in providing reliable services. Nigeria has worked assiduously in the provision of joint military collaboration in order to tackle insecurity occasioned by the activity of Boko Haram insurgency. This can be articulated through military collaboration with Niger, Chad and Cameroon in order to combat insecurity and extremists activities which Boko Haram brought in the country. The regular military training and development, promotions are to ensure the motivation of the various "forces" towards realization of the goals of ensuring an effective security system. The government has been providing sophisticated equipments to fight insecurity and working towards improving the technical capacity of the police force through the provision of forensic lab and GSM tracking device to enable the force departments have more IT integrated police force. Other security service done by the government to cushion the effects of insecurity is the restructuring of Nigeria Immigration in order to stop cross border crimes and making NSCDC to become more proactive in the prevention of pipeline vandalism by arresting the pipeline vandals, ensure joint operation of security forces towards curbing the menace of the Herdsmen

in the country. The needs to ensure surveillance and mapping of strategies to prevent threats among ethnic groups in Nigeria have been stressed. Following the report from (punch newspaper) on 6th June, 2017 that Africa losing \$80bn annually to illicit financial flows, all corrupt activities that affect security system in the country have been giving attention through the provision of Treasury Single account policy to cushion the effects of financial misappropriation, extortion, embezzlement, mismanagement and laundry by the public servants and government officials. The need for e-governance to foster transparency, accountability and resourcefulness in the public service and its administration cannot be overemphasized. The government made provision for the prosecuting the war against corruption and institutionalization of probity, setup advisory committee on war against corruption. The Anti- corruption battles have been effectively be achieved while security service is yielding good result.

In the same vein, the policies and programs to facilitate education of citizens through trainings for skills acquisition, knowledge and experiences are put in place. The knowledge acquisition will promote socio-economic and political development of the nation, which lead to economic advancement and national development in Nigeria. The knowledge of education facilitates an effective health services and security of lives and properties. The rate of quality education determines the level of productivity, services and development in the contexts of health, Agriculture, infrastructure and security in the society. Therefore, the performance of education, health and security determine the level of development in Nigeria. This is because, an improve education, health and security apparatus determine improvement in nation's socio-economic and political advancement of the people. That is to say that, the nexus between human capital formation and national development can be attested in such that an increase in quality education, health care, security services, productivity and effective service delivery determine the rate of national development in the country.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework use in this research work is Human capital theory, Human relation and achievement motivation theory. These theories are relevant to the study of this kind. Human capital theory is conceptualize by its view that individuals possess skills, knowledge and abilities conferred on them which determine the human capital needs of the society and can facilitate an effective service delivery through working performance. These skills and knowledge can be rented out to the employer in exchange of desired reward which can be informed of wages and salaries (Ehrenberg and Smith, 1994). Human capital enables an organization attain sustainable competitive advantage over its rivals. At this point, there is a correlation and relationship between employee training and his superior performance in the workplace. In another development, achievement motivation theory is a product of H.A. Murray who developed the system for classifying individuals according to the various needs that have the potential for motivating behavior. Murray in his assertion made 20 psychogenic or social needs that were later used by Allen E. Edwards to develop a personality inventory called Edwards personal preference schedule (EPPS). The Edwards personality preference schedule is made up of 225 items which is use to determine the level of achievement in the society

While the Human Relation theory according to Eton Mayor stated the need for unity, mutual relation and formal and informal co-operation in the work place as a force that drive knowledge sharing, building friendly and accelerates performance thereby spear development.

Empirical Framework

The Empirical study of this paper states that human capital formation determines the strength of a nation. This is because, an effective human capital formation in the context of skills acquisition, knowledge building and experience determine the rate to which nation achieves its socio-economic and political aspirations in the country development. This can be attested that the education, health service and security provided determine the level of performance and development in society. For instance, quality education is determine by both practical and theoretical knowledge, skills and experience and it enables an improve performance and enhance socio-economic and political development of the nation.

It is the combination of human factor, intelligence, skills and enterprise that gives the organization certain distinctive character and facilitates societal development. These can be possible with the help of quality education, good healthcare and security services with good infrastructural facilities which facilitates environmental stability. While the researcher was carrying out the research work, he observed that development of every nation is predicated by the level of quality education, healthcare facilities, security, production, improve Agricultural productivity and its management and services in the society. Therefore, the level of human capital formation is determined by the education, health and security which determine the level of development of the nation.

Methodology

The data of this research is gotten from both primary and secondary sources. In the primary sources of data collection; questionnaires were distributed and later collected, interview conducted and Empirical methods were used; while the secondary sources include: internet research, journals, Articles, textbooks, radio and Newspapers. The content analysis is simple percentage, tables and chi- square.

Population

The population of the study is 4,000,000. This is the population data of Imo State. Imo State comprise of 27 local government area with three senatorial zones of the state.

Location of the Study

The area of the study is Imo State in South East Nigeria and Nigeria. These areas are chose as a result of its strategic position as Eastern heartland in the Eastern Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample and sampling technique of the study have been achieved through the adoption of Taro Yamane formula which includes the following:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Nx (e)^2} n = \frac{400,000}{1 + 400,000 (0.04)^2} n = \frac{400,000}{1 + 400,000x 0.0016} n = \frac{400,000}{1 + 400,000x 0.0016} n = \frac{400,000}{1 + 6400} n$$

$$= \frac{400,000}{6401}$$

$$n = 624.9$$

$$n = 625$$

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with the presentation of data collected in the course of the study. In analyzing the data collected, frequency tables were used. The content analyses of the information include simple statistics; percentage and chi-square were used. The research questions were also analyzed. However, the total numbers of six hundred and twenty five questionnaires were distributed within the state environs.

However, the essence of this paper is to examine the nexus between human capital formation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria. This study will help to analysis the relationship between government and the citizens to know the possibility of ensuring even development. So, this chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation which was done with statistical methods enumerated above. The questionnaires of this paper were prepared and give out to the respondents made up of six hundred and twenty five (625). Then Four hundred and thirty two questionnaires returned while one hundred and ninety three not returned which was either declared missing or otherwise.

Response	Number Distributed	%	Number Returned	%	Number not Returned	%
Non academic staff	305	48.8	303	48.48	2	0.32
Academic staff	320	51.6	129	20.64	191	30.56
Total	625	100	432	69.12	193	30.88

Source: field study, 2017.

$$\text{No. distributed} = \text{Non academic staff} = \frac{305}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{30500}{625} = 48.8\%$$

$$\text{Academic staff} = \frac{320}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{32000}{625} = 51.6\%$$

No. Returned =

$$\text{Non academic staff} = \frac{303}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{30300}{625} = 48.48\%$$

$$\text{Academic staff} = \frac{129}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{12900}{625} = 20.64\%$$

No. not returned or declared missing is:

$$\text{Non academic staff} = \frac{2}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{200}{625} = 0.32\%$$

$$\text{Academic staff} = \frac{191}{625} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{19100}{625} = 30.56\%$$

Research Question One

3. To what extent does human capital formation determine socio-economic and political development of Imo state of Nigeria?

Table 1:1 the questionnaires distributed table

S/ N	Description of items	Agree	%	Strongly agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%	Total
1	It has improved quality education	210	48.6	132	30.56	83	19.21	7	1.62	432
2	It has improved Healthcare services	200	46.3	130	30.10	90	20.83	12	2.78	432
3	It has encouraged Entrepreneurship development	210	48.6	132	30.6	83	19.21	7	1.62	432
4	It has improved infrastructural development	180	41.7	135	31.25	107	24.769	10	2.315	432
	Total	800		529		363		36		

Source: field research work, 2017.

It has improved quality Education: From the table 2:1 above, it is worthy to note that out of 432 respondents who responded on the questionnaires returned; 210 respondents representing 48.6% agree that education has contributed much to economic resuscitation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria. In the same vein, 132 respondents representing 30.56% strongly agree with the notion. Meanwhile 83 respondents representing 19.213% and 7 respondents representing 1.62% disagree and strongly disagree with the notion respectively

It has improved Health care services: From the table 1:2 above, out of 432 respondents; 200 respondents representing 46.83% agree that improve healthcare services has contributed to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. At this point, 130 respondents representing 30.10% strongly agree with the notion above while 90 respondents representing 20.83% and 12 respondents representing 2.78% disagree and strongly disagree with the above notion respectively.

It has encouraged Entrepreneurship development: From the table 2:1 above, it is worthy to note that out of 432 respondents of the questionnaires returned; 210 respondents representing 48.6% agree that

Entrepreneurial development has contributed much towards economic resuscitation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria. However, 132 respondents representing 30.56% strongly agree with the notion, while 83 respondents representing 19.213% and 7 respondents representing 1.62% disagree and strongly disagree with the notion respectively

It has improved infrastructural development: Judging from the table 2:1 above, we came to know that out of 432 respondents of the questionnaires returned; 180 respondents representing 41.7% agree that the nexus between human capital formation and national development has boosted the level of infrastructural development Entrepreneurial development in Imo State of Nigeria. This implies that there are positive improve in the human capital formation which lead to an acceptable level of economic resuscitation in the state. However, 135 respondents representing 31.25% strongly agree with the notion, while 107 respondents representing 24.769% and 10 respondents representing 2.315% disagree and strongly disagree with the notion respectively

Table 1:2 Hypotheses: Human capital formation does not determine socio-economic and political development in Imo state of Nigeria.

Table 1:2Ho: Education has not improved the quality of human capital formation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria.

Table 1:1:2Frequency Distribution for Hypothesis

Responses	Non academic staff	Academic staff	Total
Agree	147	63	210
Strongly Agree	85	47	132
Disagree	69	14	83
Strongly Disagree	2	5	7
Total	303	129	432

Source: field study. 2017.

$$\text{Formula} = \frac{rt \times ct}{n} = \frac{\text{rowtotal} \times \text{columntotal}}{GT = \text{Grandtotal}}$$

Education has not improved the quality of human capital formation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria.

$$\text{Therefore, Agree A} = \frac{210 \times 303}{432} = \frac{63630}{432} = 147.292$$

$$\text{Agree B} = \frac{210 \times 129}{432} = \frac{27090}{432} = 62.710$$

$$\text{Strongly Agree A} = \frac{132 \times 303}{432} = \frac{39996}{432} = 92.583$$

$$\text{Strongly Agree B} = \frac{132 \times 129}{432} = \frac{17029}{432} = 37.42$$

$$\text{Disagree A} = \frac{83 \times 303}{432} = \frac{25149}{432} = 58.216$$

$$\text{Disagree B} = \frac{83 \times 129}{432} = \frac{10707}{432} = 24.785$$

$$\text{Strongly Disagree A} = \frac{7 \times 303}{432} = \frac{2121}{432} = 4.9097$$

$$\text{Strongly Disagree B} = \frac{7 \times 129}{432} = \frac{903}{432} = 2.0903$$

Table 1:1:3 Frequency Distributions for Hypothesis

Responses	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
Agree	47	147.29	-0.29	0.0841	0.0006	63	62.71	0.29	0.0841	0.0013
Strongly Agree	85	92.58	-7.58	57.4564	0.6206	47	39.42	7.58	57.4564	1.4575
Disagree	69	58.22	10.78	16.2084	1.9960	14	24.79	-10.79	116.42111	4.6964
Strongly Disagree	2	4.91	-2.91	8.4681	1.7247	5	2.10	2.9	8.41	4.0048
Total	303				4.3420	129				10.16

Source: field work, 2017

$$\text{The calculated value} = 4.3420 + 10.16 = 14.502$$

$$\text{The degree of freedom} = (c - 1)(r - 1) = ?$$

Where c = column = 2 and r = row = 4

Therefore, Degree = (2 – 1)(4 – 1) = 3x1 = 3

Critical value = $X_2 = 0.05 = 7.81473$

Comparison = 14.502 > 7.81473

Decision: judging from the table above, it is worthy to note that the calculated value is greater than the critical value. Therefore, alternative hypothesis is accepted and null rejected which implies that education has improved the quality of human capital formation and national development in Imo State of Nigeria.

Table 1:2:1Ho: **An improved healthcare system has not contributed to socio-economic and political development of Imo State of Nigeria.**

Table 1:2:1 Frequency distribution for hypothesis

Responses	Non academic staff	Academic staff	Total
Agree	140	60	200
Strongly Agree	90	40	130
Disagree	68	22	90
Strongly Disagree	5	7	12
Total	303	129	432

Source: field study. 2017.

$$\text{Formula} = \frac{rt \times ct}{n} = \frac{\text{rowtotal} \times \text{columntotal}}{n = \text{totalquestionnaire returned}}$$

Ho: **An improved healthcare system has not contributed to socio-economic and political development of Imo State of Nigeria.**

$$\text{Agree A} = \frac{200 \times 303}{432} = \frac{60600}{432} = 140.278$$

$$\text{Agree B} = \frac{200 \times 129}{432} = \frac{25800}{432} = 59.72$$

$$\text{Strongly Agree A} = \frac{130 \times 303}{432} = \frac{39390}{432} = 91.181$$

$$\text{Strongly Agree B} = \frac{130 \times 129}{432} = \frac{16770}{432} = 38.82$$

$$\text{Disagree A} = \frac{90 \times 303}{432} = \frac{27270}{432} = 63.13$$

$$\text{Disagree B} = \frac{90 \times 129}{432} = \frac{11610}{432} = 26.88$$

$$\text{Strongly Disagree A} = \frac{12 \times 303}{432} = \frac{3636}{432} = 8.42$$

$$\text{Strongly Disagree B} = \frac{12 \times 129}{432} = \frac{1548}{432} = 3.58$$

Table 1:2:2 Frequency Distribution for hypothesis

Responses	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
Agree	140	140.28	-0.28	0.0784	0.0005	60	59.72	0.28	0.0784	0.0013
Strongly Agree	90	91.181	-1.181	1.3948	0.0153	40	38.82	1.18	1.3924	0.0359
Disagree	68	63.13	4.87	23.7170	0.3757	22	26.88	-4.88	23.81	0.8860
Strongly Disagree	5	8.42	-3.42	11.6964	1.3891	7	3.58	3.42	11.6964	3.2672
Total	303				1.7807	129				4.1904

Source: field work, 2017

The calculated value (CV) = 1.7807 + 4.1904 = 5.9711

The degree of freedom = (c – 1)(r – 1) Where c = column = 2 r = row = 4

∴ Degree = (2 – 1)(4 – 1) = 3x1 = 3 Critical value = $X_2 = 0.05 = 7.81473$

Comparison = 5.971 < 7.81473

Decision: judging from above table, it is worthy to note that the calculated value is less than the critical value. Therefore, we reject the alternative hypothesis and still accept null which implies that an improved healthcare system has not contributed much to socio-economic and political development of Imo State of Nigeria.

Table 2. To what extent does government investments contributed to the nation’s economic development?

S/ N	Description of items	Agree	%	Strongly agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%	Total
1.	It has improved Agricultural productivity	150	34.72	140	32.41	70	16.20	72	16.67	432
2.	It has improved quality training and development of personnel	177	41	95	22	100	23	60	14	432
3.	It has encouraged security of lives and properties.	150	34.72	50	11.57	208	48.15	24	5.56	432
	Total	477		285		378		156		

Source: field research work, 2017.

Table 2:1:1

$$\text{Percentage agree} = \frac{150}{432} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{15000}{432} = 34.729\%$$

$$\text{Percentage strongly agree} = \frac{140}{432} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{14000}{432} = 32.41\%$$

$$\text{Percentage disagree} = \frac{70}{432} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{7000}{432} = 16.204\%$$

$$\text{Percentage Strongly Disagree} = \frac{72}{432} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{7200}{432} = 16.67\%$$

Judging from the table 1:1 above, one can observe that out of 432 four hundred and thirty two respondents responded on the question, 150 respondents representing 34.72% agree that an improved Agricultural productivity is as a result of an improved human capital formation and national development in Nigeria. However, 140 respondents representing 32.41% strongly agree on with the notion above. In the same vein, 70 respondents representing 16.20% disagree with the notion above while 72 respondents representing 16.67% strongly disagree with the assertion above. Therefore, the computation of hypothesis below will explain better for upward understanding and interpretation.

Hypothesis one Table two

There are no impacts of government investments on nation’s economic development

Ho: An improved Agricultural productivity has not accelerated national development in Imo State of Nigeria.

Table 1:1:1 frequency distribution expected for hypothesis

Responses	Non academic staff	Academic staff	Total
Agree	90	60	150
Strongly Agree	95	45	140
Disagree	55	15	70
Strongly Disagree	63	9	72
Total	303	129	432

Source: field study, 2017

$$\text{Formula} = \frac{rtxct}{gt} = \frac{\text{rowtotal} \times \text{columntotal}}{GT = \text{Grandtotal}}$$

Therefore, an improved Agricultural productivity has not accelerated nation’s socio-economic and political development in Imo State of Nigeria.

$$\text{Agree A} = \frac{150}{432} \times \frac{303}{1} = \frac{45450}{432} = 105.208$$

$$\text{Agree B} = \frac{150 \times 129}{432} = \frac{19350}{432} = 44.802$$

$$\text{Disagree A} = \frac{140 \times 303}{432} = \frac{42420}{432} = 98.19$$

$$\text{Disagree B} = \frac{140 \times 129}{432} = \frac{18060}{432} = 41.81$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Strongly Agree A} &= \frac{70 \times 303}{432} = \frac{21210}{432} = 49.10 \\ \text{Strongly Agree B} &= \frac{70 \times 129}{432} = \frac{9030}{432} = 20.903 \\ \text{Strongly Disagree A} &= \frac{72 \times 303}{432} = \frac{21816}{432} = 50.5 \\ \text{Strongly Disagree B} &= \frac{72 \times 129}{432} = \frac{9288}{432} = 21.5 \end{aligned}$$

Formula for chi-square = $\frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$

Where “O” is observe frequency and “e” is expected frequency

Table 1:1:2 Computation for hypothesis

Responses	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe	Fo	Fe	(fo-fe)	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
Agree	90	105.21	-15.21	231.3441	2.1989	60	44.802	15.20	231.04	5.17
Strongly Agree	95	98.19	-3.19	10.18	-0.10364	45	41.81	3.19	10.180	0.2434
Disagree	55	49.10	5.9	34.81	0.7090	15	20.903	-5.903	34.8454	-1.6670
Strongly Disagree	63	50.5	12.5	156.25	3.0941	9	21.5	-12.5	156.25	-7.2674
Total	303				6.1056	129				14.3478

Source: field work, 2017

The calculated value = 6.1056 + 14.3478 = 20.4534

Degree of freedom = $(c - 1)(r - 1) = c = \text{column} = 2 \text{ and } r = \text{row} = 4 =$

$(2 - 1)(4 - 1) = 3 \times 1 = 3$

Therefore, critical value = $\chi = 0.05 = 7.81473$

Comparison = 20.4534 > 7.81473

Decision: From the table above, we observed that the value of calculated hypothesis is greater than the critical value; therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null which implies that an improved Agricultural productivity has accelerated nation’s socio-economic and political development in Imo State of Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

The summary of findings of this paper pinpoint clearly that human capital formation determines the nation’s socio-economic and political developments in Imo state of Nigeria. This is through the impact of education, health service, Entrepreneurial development and Infrastructure put in place. The rate of quality education given to citizens, healthcare service, Empowerment and self employment development and Infrastructure put in placedetermine all-round development. Quality education of both practical and theory will enable the citizens develop good skills, knowledge, experience and enthusiastic that improve performance. This education will facilitate an effective health services, improve Entrepreneurship and Infrastructural development, productivity and development of the environment. Therefore, the nexus between human capital formation and national development entails that an effective human capital development can be determined through quality education, provision of quality healthcare services, Entrepreneurship formation and Infrastructural development. Others are an improved productive services through improve human capital skills, knowledge, experience and curiosity lead to national development. However, Government Investments has impacted greatly in the development of Agriculture, Training and Development of citizens as well as gradually improve security of lives and property in Imo State of Nigeria. These can be attested through the provision for palm seedlings and its cultivation, improve the cultivation of Rice, Cassava, Yams and other relevant Agricultural species. Training and developmental skills and knowledge has been given to the people in order to improve their mental capabilities towards ensuring an effective productivity and service delivery in the society. Finally, Infrastructural development facilitates socio-economic and political advancement of a country.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this paper entail, that human capital formation is the used of human factor, intelligence, skills, experience and knowledge to achieve organizational goals and objectives for the development of the nation. These can be through education which has been described as a catalyst that propel economic resuscitation and nation development, Healthcare services, Entrepreneurship development, Infrastructural facilities, security service, improve Agricultural productivity, training and development of personnel, an effective Trade relation, effective transportation and communication service, conflict resolution, peace building and national integration geared towards enhancing socio-economic and political goals and objectives which is sine quo non to capacity building.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this paper acknowledged that human capital formation can be achieved through skills acquisition, knowledge building, experience and intellectual utilization to achieve designed objectives of an organization. The nexus between human capital formation and national development entail that for nation (country) to grow and develop; its citizens must be equipped with quality education, good provision for healthcare services, Entrepreneurship development, Infrastructural development, security of lives and properties, improve Agricultural productivity and an effective service delivery. Upon all these; empowerment and employment, food sufficiency, provision for welfare services and motivation must be an utmost priority on daily bases. Therefore, the recommendations of this paper are as follows:

1. Government must endeavor to articulate the need for continue improving its education system, healthcare service, Entrepreneurship development and infrastructural facilities in order to enhance skills, knowledge and experience periodically, employment and empowerment of its graduate's citizens to ensure the utilization of their knowledge, skills and intellectual acquisition in the development of Imo state of Nigeria. These will reduce the effect of Brain drain observed in our society and engender effective utilization of human resources management. Endeavoring to provide quality health care services through ensuring health reform policies to meet with the contemporary needs of health service which provides quality health care service thereby reduce the maternal mortality rate in the society. This can be actualized through ensuring regular acquisition of new medical equipments that are sophisticated enough to meet contemporary health issues and tackle tremendous healthcare challenges in the society.
2. There is a need for government to endeavour to continue improving more in Agricultural productivity through ensuring good policies that will address Agricultural Issues, engender Agricultural programs and service to ensure food sufficiency, economic growth and development as well as self reliance and self actualization. Both government and private organization should endeavor to continue to ensure the provision of adequate training and development to their employed staff to inculcate in them with good skills, knowledge, intellectual capacity building and orientation on the negative effects of corruption in the society. Both public and private organization and non-governmental organization should endeavor to advocate for peace building and reconciliation of conflict to facilitate co-operation between one another in order to ensure nations-building. Security challenges must be given an adequate attention to reduce or eradicate every security issues which affect development of the state in particular and nation in general; such as kidnapping, militancy, Boko Haram, Herdsmen, corruption, poor and bad leadership and administration to give room for capacity building in Nigeria.

References

- Anoruo, A.C.* (2015) Education for women: A catalyst for Gender Redressing and Capacity Building in Nigeria. A paper presented to 4th International Academic conference of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies; Federal University Owerri, (FUTO) Imo State; Nigeria. Proceedings P: 314.
- Armstrong, M.* (2003) A Handbook of Human Resources Management Practice London. Cogan Page.
- Berthed, E.* (1979: P23) "Secretary- General, International Union for Health Education, Paris.
- Bloom, D.E, and Canning, D.* (2003): The Health and Poverty of Nations: from theory to practice; Journal of Human Development, Vol. 4 No.1, pp. 47-71
- Bontis N.* (1998). "Intellectual Capital: an exploratory study that develops measures and models Management Decision, Vol. 36, No.2, pp. 63-76.
- Bontis, N., Dragonets', N.C., Jacobsen, K. and Roost, G.* (1999) "The Knowledge Toolbox: A review of the tools available to measure and manage intangible resources", European Management. Journal Vol. 17, No.4 pp. 391-402
- Denis, E.F.* (1962): Sources of Economic Growth in Unites States and the Alternatives Before US, New York: Committee of Economic Development.
- Dr. Olewe, B. N. and Dr. Olewe C. E* (1996, P.186) Health Care Administration: Scope, Challenges and Expectations." The Administration and Management Classics"
- Fred .O. Eze* PhD,2010 Reprinted 2013 (Human Resource & Management Strategy, Theory and Applications. Revised and Enlarged.
- Okojie, C.E.* (1995) "Human Capital Formation for Productivity and Growth in Nigeria". The Nigeria Economic and Financial Review Vol. 1, No.1, June, p.44
- Prof. B. C. Osisioma* (2015, p:1) " Entrepreneurship, Technical Education and sustainable Development: An overview (Lead Paper).National Academic conference of Imo state polytechnic Umuagwo; Nigeria.
- Statesman Newspaper* 02/08/2017, Local Imo State newspaper.
- Schultz T.W.* (1981) Investing in People: The Economics of Population quality. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schultz, T.P.* (1992): The Role of Education and Human Capital in Economic Development. An empirical assessment; Yale economic growth centre. Discussion papers series 670.
- World Health organization* 1998 "Health, Health Policy and Economic Outcomes', prepared by the Health and Development satellite, WHO Transition Team.

OIL PRICE VOLATILITY AND MACROECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN NON-OIL EXPORTING COUNTRIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By

David-Wayas, Onyinye Maria Ph.D & Kumeka Terver T.

Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka¹

University of Ibadan²

Abstract

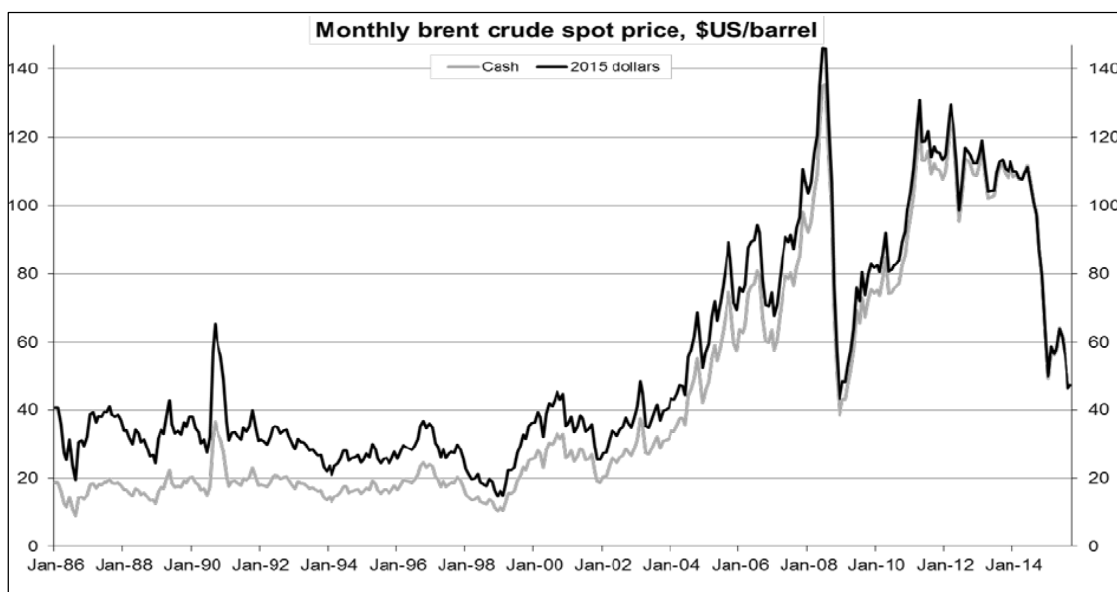
This paper analyses the impact of oil price volatility on macroeconomic performance in fourteen non-oil exporting Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) economies using panel ARDL model. It also examines the channels through which oil price volatility transmits to the three major sectors of these economies. The panel ARDL estimates indicate how persistent oil price volatility prevailed on the economy by measuring the short run and long run effects. The main result suggests that economic activity and sectors respond very differently to oil price volatility depending on the time period – whether short term or long term. In particular, oil price volatility has a negative effect on the macroeconomy in the short run but the effect becomes positive in the long run. Our findings also indicate that oil price volatility dampens the agricultural sector but improves the activities in the manufacturing and services sector. The results further show that oil price volatility affects the exchange rate and interest rate channels negatively but positively through the inflation channel. These results shed some light on how the policy makers of these economies can use controlling mechanisms to stabilise the macroeconomy, key sectors and the transmission channels.

Keywords: oil price volatility, macroeconomic performance, sectors, transmission channels, non-oil exporting, SSA, panel ARDL.

1. Introduction

The world oil price declining trend into the new millennium did not last long. This price began climbing steadily in 2002, reaching US\$54.4 per barrel in 2005, up from US\$25 per barrel in 2001. The pace at which the oil price was growing slowed somewhat in 2006, but the price per barrel remained at an average of US\$65.4. It subsequently jumped up by about 11% between 2006 and 2007, but it is during 2008 that it pushed to new records, averaging US\$113 per barrel during the first seven months of the year, and reaching US\$147.27 per barrel during the trading day of July 11, 2008. Between 2007 and 2008 the oil price climbed by 34%. During this period of booming oil prices, world prices also increased remarkably for other commodities. The slowdown of the world economy in the second half of 2008 has notably pushed the world prices of oil and other commodities down. Both supply and demand factors have contributed to this softening in commodity prices. In spite of the sharp global downturn that unfolded in late 2008, supply constraints will likely keep prices high in the medium term, as many of the fundamental forces behind the price surge are still in effect (IMF 2008, pp. 2, 4). In fact, having decreased to US\$41.6 in December 2008 from its record high, the world price of oil has generally recovered and reached US\$77.8 in September 2010 which is above its average for 2007. The excess oil supply which started in 2014 caused the monthly average price of crude oil to plummet from \$112/bbl in June 2014 to about \$32/bbl in February 2016 (Alban, et al. 2016) (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Variations of Oil Price 1986 – 2015



Source: IEA World Energy Outlook, 2015

This crude oil glut was driven largely by growing US and Canada unconventional oil production and weak demand. Data from EIA indicates that US production increased 58% from 2010 to 2015.¹ OPEC maintained output discipline until 2014 when Saudi Arabia advocated higher OPEC production to regain market share. This increase in supply combined with growing turmoil in the Chinese stock market push oil prices down dramatically.

No doubt, while net oil-exporting developing countries have enjoyed a remarkable oil price boom, net oil-importing developing countries must have been harmed by it. The key questions are to what extent and in what ways. For the second group of countries, in particular, soaring oil prices impose a negative external shock that affects domestic relative prices, possibly sparking inflation, raising production costs, and weakening the balance of payments, all of which have undesirable economy-wide repercussions.

This paper considers the effects of oil price volatility on the macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting economies in the Sub-Saharan region. Further, it considers the real GDP and current account balance as the measures of macroeconomic performance in selected economies of SSA. However, as a departure from previous studies, we further investigate the effect of oil price volatility on primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, and the transmission channels of oil price volatility to macroeconomic performance of the selected non-oil exporting economies in SSA. It brings to the fore the neglected aspect of previous studies in the region, and to grace the understanding of sectors that are more vulnerable to shocks and enrich the available policy options for policy makers. The sampled economies are classified as net oil importers since their imports of crude oil and oil products by far exceed their corresponding exports.²

2. Literature Review

The effects of oil price shocks on macroeconomic performance of oil and non-oil exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the likes has over the time attracted valuable input from scholars from diverse background across the globe. This is connected to the significant role it plays in the global economic performance. In recognition of this fact, efforts are directed by various governments and associations towards realizing stable oil price in developing, emerging and developed economies. However, even in the presence of the efforts, the performance of the global economy has been muted owing to the vagrancies in macroeconomic indicators which have been traced empirically to be affected by volatility in both international and domestic oil prices. This has greatly affected every other sector of the global economy, especially countries where oil is the main source of their revenue. There has been so much controversy on oil price volatility and its influence on macroeconomic performance, while some

scholars argued that oil price volatility promote macroeconomic performance (Aeron and Sherzod, 2009; Gounder and Bartleet, 2007; Akinlo and Apanisile, 2015 and Lim et al. 2011).

Others are of the view that it has an inverse relationship with macroeconomic performance (Omisakin, 2008; Englama et. al, 2010; Jerome et al. 2009; Manasseh et. al, 2016; Dogah, 2015; Hunt et. al, 2001; Chang and Wong, 2003 and, Rebecca and Marcelo, 2004). However, this study reviewed empirical literature thematically, looking at studies in sub-Saharan Africa, developed countries and other parts of the world as stated earlier.

2.1. Review of Studies in Sub-Sahara African Countries

Olomola (2006) studied the impact of oil price shock on aggregate economic activity in Nigeria. VAR model with quarterly data from 1970 to 2003 was employed. The variables used were real gross domestic product, proxied by industrial production index, money supply, real effective exchange rate, inflation rate and real oil price. The result shows that oil prices have significant effect on exchange rate and insignificant effect on output and inflation in Nigeria. Similarly, Akide (2007) investigated the impact of oil price volatility on economic growth in Nigeria for the period of 1970 to 2000, quarterly data was employed. The results show that oil price shocks significantly influenced real exchange rate but did not affect output and inflation in Nigeria. The findings are in line with that of Olomola (2006). In addition, Omisakin (2008) studied the impact of oil price shocks on the macroeconomic performance in Nigeria using Vector Autoregressive (VAR) approach. The findings revealed that oil price shocks significantly contribute to the variability of oil revenue and output, but do not have substantial effects on the money supply, the price level and government expenditure in Nigeria.

In a study by Omojolaibi and Egwaikhide (2014) on oil price volatility and economic performance of five selected oil-exporting countries such as Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Libya and Nigeria in Africa, using quarterly data that span the period 1990q1 to 2010q4 and a panel vector autoregressive technique, in which the impulse response result shows that out of all the macroeconomic variables considered, gross investment respond more effectively to oil price volatility. Wakeford (2006) and Bouzid (2012) found a negative relationship between oil price and economic growth in South Africa and Tunisia respectively. In a similar study in Ghana, Jumah and Pastuszyn (2007) examined the relationship between oil price shocks and monetary policy for the period 1965 to 2004. The findings show an inverse relationship between the international crude oil price and the price level. Tweneboah and Adam (2008) extended Jumah and Pastuszyn (2007) study looking at the long run and short run relationship between world oil price and monetary policy for the period 1970 to 2006. Vector error correction model was adopted. The result shows that there is a long run relationship between oil price, domestic price level, GDP, exchange rate and interest rate in Ghana, but was unable to establish if the relationship is negative or positive. But William (2015) employed a similar method - ARDL cointegration approach, to exploit more on the relationship between crude oil price and economic growth in Ghana using annual data set that ranges from 1967 to 2011 that seem to be larger in scope compared to works of Omojolaibi and Egwaikhide (2014), Jumah and Pastuszyn (2007), and Tweneboah and Adam (2008). The results indicate the existence of a long run relationship between crude oil price and economic growth in Ghana which is consistent with the findings of Tweneboah and Adam (2008).

Englama et.al, (2010) examined the relationship between oil price and exchange rate for the period 1999:1 to 2009:12, using Vector Error Correction Model. The findings revealed that both oil price volatility and the demand for foreign exchange impact on exchange rate volatility in both the short-run and the long-run. Similarly, Kazue (2012) investigated the effects of changes in the international oil price and price volatility on the macro-economy of Nigeria; five-variable Structural Vector Auto Regression model was applied to monthly data series from January 1970 to May 2011. It was found that Nigeria's exchange rate is affected not only by the changes in the international oil price but also by its price volatility. In the quest to examine volatility and commodity oil price dynamics in Nigeria, Manasseh et al. (2016) using generalized autoregressive conditional heteroschedasticity (GARCH), exponential GARCH and granger causality test for the estimation pointed that 30% of volatility in the spot international market can be explained by

volatility in domestic and international export prices, while international oil spot prices explains 7% volatility in prices of goods consumed locally.

Madueme and Nwosu (2010) studied the impact of oil price shocks on macroeconomic variables in Nigeria from 1970-2008, using the Generalized autoregressive conditional heteroschedasticity (GARCH) model. The result showed that capital expenditure, exchange rate and crude oil prices contributed positively to the growth of the Nigerian economy while crude oil sales and inflation have a negative impact on Gross Domestic Product. This indicates that oil price shocks have a negative impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Similarly, **Emmanuel** (2015) investigated the impact of oil price volatility on economic growth in Nigeria for the period of 1970 – 2014. Engel-Granger co-integration test and Granger Representation theorem in testing the long run and short run relationships between crude oil volatility and economic growth respectively were adopted. The study found that, oil price volatility has negative impact on the economic growth of the Nigerian economy. **Hodo et al.** (2013) examined the asymmetric effect of oil price shocks on exchange rate volatility and domestic investment in Nigeria for the period of 1970-2010 and VAR model was employed for the analysis. The result shows that government expenditure exhibited an immediate positive response to oil price shocks, but public investment, private investment and industrial production exhibited a negative response to oil price shocks, further confirming the evidence of a “Dutch disease” in Nigeria. The variance decomposition analysis showed that exchange rate, government expenditure and domestic investment are mainly affected by the oil price shock, particularly in the short-run.

Apere and Ijomah (2013) investigated the relationship between oil price volatility and macroeconomic activity in Nigeria, employing exponential generalized autoregressive conditional heteroschedasticity (EGARCH), impulse response function and lag-augmented VAR models. The findings revealed that a unidirectional relationship exists between the interest rate, exchange rate and oil prices, with the direction from oil prices to both exchange rate and the interest rate. However, a significant relationship between oil prices and real GDP was not found. In the same vein, **Oriakhi and Osaze** (2013) investigated the consequences of oil price volatility on the growth of the Nigerian economy for the period 1970 to 2010. The result showed that oil price volatility impacted directly on real government expenditure, real exchange rate and real import, while impacting on real GDP, real money supply and inflation through other variables, notably real government expenditure. Likewise, **Broni-Bediako, Onyije and Unwene** (2018) investigated the effects of oil price volatility on Nigeria’s economy using some macroeconomic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), exchange rate (EXR), interest rate (INR), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and balance of payment (BOP). Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation was employed for the period of 1990-2015. The result shows that the macroeconomic variables respond to oil price volatility.

Jerome et. al. (2009) examined the impact of oil price volatility on the economic growth of seven Sub-Saharan African oil exporting countries. A balanced data structure was adopted for the period of 1985-2005. The result shows that the investment rate and terms of trade had a positive significant impact on the growth process while oil price volatility had a negative effect on growth in the selected countries. Similarly, **Lim et.al.** (2011) examined the long run relationship between the oil prices and real GDP in ten sub-Saharan African countries for the period of 1980-2008 using Panel data. The findings showed that oil price movement has a positive impact on the economic growth in the selected oil exporting countries. Also, **Taiwo and Olumuyiwa** (2014) examined the impact of the volatility of oil price on economic growth of 20 sub-Saharan African countries for the period of 1986-2012 using panel data. Panel A model estimation consisting of selected oil exporting countries shows that the volatility of oil prices has a positive significant effect on the economic growth of the selected oil exporting countries. The panel B result consisting of non-oil producing countries show that the volatility of oil price also has a positive insignificant impact on economic growth of selected non-oil producing countries. **Dogah** (2015) examined the impact of oil price shocks on the Macroeconomy of Ghana using a restricted VAR model and Johansen Cointegration. The result shows that oil price shocks have negative significant impact on output and economic activities in Ghana. Furthermore, **Mathew and Harold** (2017) studied the oil price shocks transmission processes and its impact on economic performance of Africa’s net oil exporting economies.

Panel Structural Vector Autoregressive (P-SVAR) model was employed for the period of 1980-2015. The result shows a large impact of oil price shocks on the economic performance of Africa's oil exporting countries. Similarly, Obadi and Chimelova (2018) investigated the impact of oil price volatility on economic growth of oil exporting countries for the period of 2000-2017. A random effect model in panel data analysis for eight OECs was adopted. They found that 5 out of 8 selected countries have a negative sign effect. This shows that oil price volatility has a negative impact for majority of the countries selected. Based on available literature, no study has looked at the degree of the influence of oil price shocks on both current account balance and real GDP as a measure of macroeconomic performance of oil and non-oil exporting countries in SSA. Therefore, the addition to already existing knowledge would be essential and appropriate to enhance our understanding on the subject. Thus, we explored the weaknesses of previous studies by investigating the degree of oil price shocks on oil and non-oil exporting countries in SSA looking at real GDP and current account balance as measures of macroeconomic performance of the selected countries. Meanwhile previous studies in SSA (Jerome et al. 2009; Lim et al. 2011; Omotolaibi and Egwaikhede, 2014; **Taiwo and Olumuyiwa, 2014**, Mathew and Harold, 2017, Obadi and Chimelova 2018) only focused on SSA countries and their GDP Growths, without examining the effects of oil price volatility on current accounts; and primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Our present study intends to fill this gap in empirical literature. This will enhance the understanding of the sector that is more vulnerable to shocks in non-oil exporting countries in SSA. The study also investigated the key channels through which oil price volatility transmit to macroeconomic performance of the selected countries. Thus, this knowledge could enrich the available policy options for policy makers.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Data Sources and Transformation

Aggregate data at the quarterly frequency were obtained from the International Monetary Finance (IMF, 2017), International Financial Statistics (IFS, 2017) while the quarterly data for crude oil prices were obtained from Energy Information Administration (EIA, 2017). Data spanning the period 1980Q1 to 2015Q4 were collected from these sources.

The components of the macroeconomic performances namely: real GDP for economic growth and current account balance, while the control includes oil price proxied by Brent, exchange rate, investments, rate of inflation, foreign reserves, employment and consumption. To capture the effects of oil price volatility on the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, these were proxied by agriculture value added, industry value added and services value added respectively. To examine the key channels through which oil price volatility is transmitted to macroeconomic performance, we used exchange rate channel, interest rate channel and inflation rate.

Except for variables with some negative values and rates, other variables in the equations were included in logarithmic functional form such that the coefficients are interpreted as elasticities. In predicting conditional variances as proxy for volatility, the study uses the GARCH model. The GARCH (1, 1) model accounts for volatility clustering, the property suggesting that volatility appears in clusters. The data are from 14 non-oil exporting SSA economies.

3.2. Models for the Study

In this study, we employed linear ARDL (p, q, r) in estimating the research questions. Therefore, this subsection presents the models and their specifications, as well as the transformation of the volatility variable. It is important to state here that in order to achieve the objectives of this study; three sets of models were stated. The first set of models investigate the impact of oil price volatility on macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa; the second group of models ascertain the degree of oil price shocks on the performance of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in non-oil exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa while the third group of models investigate the key channels through which oil price volatility transmits to macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in SSA.

3.2.1. The Economic Growth Model

$$\Delta MACPer_{i,t} = \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \gamma_j^i \Delta MACPer_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \delta_j^i \Delta VOP_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{r-1} \phi_j^i \Delta X_{i,t-j} + \psi^i \left[MACPer_{i,t-j} - \left\{ \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t-j} \right\} \right] + \xi_{it} \quad 1$$

where *MACPer* is macroeconomic performance, which are the two proxies employed in this study, that is, the real gross domestic product and current accounts balance, *VOP* is the crude oil price (proxied by Brent) volatility while *X* is a set of independent control variables, γ , δ and ϕ represent the short-run coefficients of lagged dependent and independent variables respectively, σ are the long-run coefficients, and ψ is the coefficient of speed of adjustment to the long-run equilibrium. The subscripts *i* and *t* represent country and time indexes, respectively. The term in the square bracket of Equation (1) contains the long-run growth regression, which is derived from the following equation.

$$MACPer_{i,t} = \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \square I(0) \quad 1.1$$

As it is seen in equations 1 and 1.1, real GDP and current accounts balance have been used to capture macroeconomic performance in these group of countries.

3.2.2. The Sectoral Model

Further, to ascertain the degree of oil price shocks on the performance of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of non-oil exporting SSA countries. The following models are specified.

$$\Delta PRI_{i,t} = \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \gamma_j^i \Delta PRI_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \delta_j^i \Delta VOP_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{r-1} \phi_j^i \Delta X_{i,t-j} + \psi^i \left[PRI_{i,t-j} - \left\{ \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t-j} \right\} \right] + \xi_{it} \quad 2$$

where *PRI* is the primary sector proxied by agriculture value added, *VOP* is the crude oil price (proxied by Brent) volatility while *X* is a set of independent control variables, γ , δ and ϕ represent the short-run coefficients of lagged dependent and independent variables respectively, σ are the long-run coefficients, and ψ is the coefficient of speed of adjustment to the long-run equilibrium. The subscripts *i* and *t* represent country and time indexes, respectively. The term in the square brackets of Equation (2) contains the long-run growth regression, which is derived from the following equation.

$$PRI_{i,t} = \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \square I(0) \quad 2.1$$

For the secondary sector;

$$\Delta SEC_{i,t} = \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \gamma_j^i \Delta SEC_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \delta_j^i \Delta VOP_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{r-1} \phi_j^i \Delta X_{i,t-j} + \psi^i \left[SEC_{i,t-j} - \left\{ \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t-j} \right\} \right] + \xi_{it} \quad 3$$

where *SEC* is the secondary sector proxied by manufacturing value added, the other variables and coefficients are as explained above. The term in the square brackets of Equation (3) contains the long-run growth regression, which is derived from the following equation.

$$SEC_{i,t} = \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \square I(0) \quad 3.1$$

For the tertiary sector;

$$\Delta TER_{i,t} = \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \gamma_j^i \Delta TER_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \delta_j^i \Delta VOP_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{r-1} \phi_j^i \Delta X_{i,t-j} + \psi^i \left[TER_{i,t-j} - \left\{ \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t-j} \right\} \right] + \xi_{it} \quad 4$$

where TER is the tertiary sector proxied by services value added, VOP, X, γ, δ and ϕ, σ , and ψ are as explained above. The term in the square brackets of Equation (4) contains the long-run growth regression, which is derived from the following equation.

$$TER_{i,t} = \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP_{i,t} + \sigma_1^i X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \square I(0) \quad 4.1$$

3.2.3. The Transmission Channels Model

In addition, to investigate the key channels through which oil price volatility transmit to macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in SSA, we employed interaction terms between crude oil price volatility, and exchange rate, interest rate and inflation rate respectively. To achieve these objectives, the following models have been stated:

$$\Delta MACPer_{it} = \sum_{j=1}^{l-1} \lambda_j^i \Delta MACPer_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{p-1} \gamma_j^i \Delta VOP * EXR_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \delta_j^i \Delta EXR_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{r-1} \phi_j^i \Delta VOP * INFL_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{s-1} \alpha_j^i \Delta INFL_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{u-1} \beta_j^i \Delta VOP * INT_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{w-1} \rho_j^i \Delta INT_{i,t-j} + \psi^i \left[MACPer_{i,t-j} - \left\{ \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP * EXR_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i EXR_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i VOP * INFL_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i INFL_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i VOP * INT_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i INT_{i,t-j} \right\} \right] + \xi_{it} \quad 5$$

where $VOP * EXR, VOP * INT$ and $VOP * INFL$ represent interaction terms between oil price volatility and exchange rate, interest rate and inflation rate respectively. These interaction terms measure the exchange rate channel, interest rate channel and inflation channel. All other variables are as described above. Also, the terms in the square brackets of Equations (5) contain the long-run growth regression, which is derived from the following equation.

$$MACPer_{i,t} = \sigma_0^i + \sigma_1^i VOP * EXR_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i EXR_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i VOP * INFL_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i INFL_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i VOP * INT_{i,t-j} + \sigma_1^i INT_{i,t-j} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad \text{where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \square I(0) \quad 5.1$$

Three different estimators can estimate equations (1), (2), (3), (4) & (5): the mean group (MG) model of Pesaran and Smith (1995), the pooled mean group (PMG) estimator and the dynamic fixed effects (DFE) estimator developed by Pesaran et al. (1999).

Pesaran and Smith (1995), Pesaran (1997) and Pesaran and Shin (1999, ch. 4) introduce the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model as a new cointegration test in the form of error correction. They stressed, however, that in a long-run relationship, the need is to have consistent and efficient estimates of the parameters. In line with Johansen (1995) and Philipps & Bruce (1990), only variables with the same order of integration can have a long-run relationship. According to Pesaran and Shin (1999, chap. 4), the ARDL panel can be used even with variables with different orders of integration and regardless of whether they are $I(0)$ or $I(1)$ or a combination of the two but not higher. This is a major advantage of the ARDL model because it makes unit roots testing unnecessary. Moreover, it is possible to estimate both the short-run and long-run impacts simultaneously from a data set with large cross-section and time dimensions. Finally, despite the possible existence of endogeneity, the ARDL model, in particular PMG and MG, offers consistent coefficients as it contains lags of dependent and independent variables (Pesaran et al., 1999). For further understanding of the main characteristics of the three distinct estimators in the dynamic panel framework, we present the assumptions relating to each estimator.

3.2.4. Model selection

The estimations of the Equations above are carried out with PMG, MG, and DFE. As we consider 14 non-oil exporting SSA, we expect the sample to be homogenous with respect to macroeconomic performance (economic growth and current account balance), primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. However, in the short run, there is bound to be country-specific heterogeneity due to the effect of local laws and

regulations. The PMG estimator offers more efficient estimates compared to the MG estimators under the assumption of long-run homogeneity. Moreover, the time span for this study is 36 years, and all the estimators are well suited with enough degrees of freedom. However, to choose among the MG, PMG, and DFE methods, the Hausman test is used to test whether there is a significant difference between these estimators. The null of this test is that the difference between PMG and MG or PMG and DFE estimation is not significant. If the null is not rejected, the PMG estimator is recommended since it is efficient. The alternative is that there is, indeed, a significant difference and the null is rejected. If there are outliers the average estimator may have a large variance and in that case the Hausman test would have little power. The PMG will be used if the p-value is insignificant at the 5% level. On the other hand, if it happens to have a significant p-value, then the use of MG or DFE estimator is appropriate.

Another important issue is that ARDL lag structure should be determined by some consistent information criterion. Based on the Schwartz Bayesian criterion we impose the following lag structure (1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1) for the real GDP, current account balance, exchange rate, employment, foreign reserves, investment, oil price volatility, consumption, primary sector, secondary sector and tertiary sector respectively.

4. Preliminary Analysis and Empirical Results

4.1. Preliminary Analysis

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study are presented in Table 1 for non-oil exporting SSA countries. The Table shows the basic characteristics of the variables in terms of their average value (Mean), standard deviation (SD), minimum (Min) and maximum (Max) values. In terms of definition, the mean value is the average outcome of a reference variable over a specific period of time. SD is the measure of dispersion of variables from the reference mean, and it measures the variability of spread data. Min and Max are the minimum and maximum values of the variables in question, respectively. For clarity and simplicity of analysis, the mean value is used for discussion, while other statistics, defined and explained above are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Lnrgdp	2016	9.3132	1.1805	6.8792	11.8652
Lnexr	2016	4.6708	2.3736	-0.5201	8.8557
Lninvt	2016	2.8923	0.5872	0.2327	4.3183
infl	2016	13.7033	21.9183	-14.936	215.4
Lncuta	2016	-5.6059	7.7629	-65.257	29.162
Lnop	2016	3.5307	0.6833	2.5463	4.7152
Lnfres	2016	24.3781	2.7433	14.0588	29.9632
Lnemp	2016	1.0359	1.2630	-1.7081	3.8129
Lncop	2016	9.1927	1.0888	7.0390	11.7094
lnpri_ag	2016	25.2314	3.1478	17.9603	30.9006
lnsec_ma	2016	23.7785	2.7878	16.8128	29.5271
lnter_ser	2016	25.7054	2.8191	18.8425	31.2338
Itr	2016	8.2520	6.3555	0.0402	62.2000

Source: author's compilation using STATA 15. Note: lnrgdp, lnexr, lninvt, infl, lncuta, lnop, lnfres, lnemp, lncop, lnpri_ag, lnsec_ma, lnter_ser and itr represent natural logarithm of RGDP, exchange rate, investment; inflation, current account balance, oil price, foreign reserves, employment, consumption, primary sector (agriculture value added), secondary sector (manufacturing value added) tertiary sector (services value added) and interest rate.

An analysis of Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) reveals a value of 9.3 on average; with 6.9 and 11.9 minimum and maximum values, while the standard deviation is 1.18. This indicates that there is little

deviation of the RGDP value from its mean value. In terms of current account balance, the result showed a negative mean value of -5.6, minimum and maximum values of -65.5 and 29.2 respectively and high standard deviation of 7.8. Meaning that on average, non-oil exporting countries in Africa have poor performance in terms of international trade. That is a deficit current account with high level of deviation. Considering the level of exchange rate to the US Dollars among the SSA countries, it is found that on average the exchange rate is 4.7, with standard deviation of 2.4 whereas the minimum and maximum values are -0.5 and 8.9 respectively. Consistently, in terms of investment, the result showed a mean 2.9 and standard deviation of 0.6; the minimum value is 0.2 while the maximum value is 4.3.

The mean statistic for inflation, however, shows that average inflation is relatively higher for non-oil exporting SSA as indicated in Table 1; with a standard deviation of 21.9. The level of employment, rate of consumption and interest rate, on average, are 1.0, 9.1 and 8.3 respectively, with standard deviations of 1.2, 1.0 and 6.4 respectively. Foreign reserves is high on average at 24.4 with a standard deviation of 2.7. The log of oil price (Brent) indicates a value of 3.5 on average and a low standard deviation of 0.9 within the period of investigation. Finally, considering the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, the average values are consistent with the foreign reserves with mean values of 25.2, 23.8 and 25.7 for the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors respectively. The statistics for primary, secondary and tertiary sectors can be seen to be consistent with *a priori* expectations since economies that depend less on proceeds from oil export, try to have a better agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors.

4.1.2. Panel Unit Root Test Results

As a rule for macro panels with large T, we performed panel unit root tests on the relevant variables. In fact, our preferred model in this study, which is the dynamic heterogeneous panel data model, is usually considered where non-stationarity is a concern. It is conventional rather than exception in time series analysis to investigate the stationarity of macroeconomic variables before they are used in regressions. This is due to the fact that estimations with non-stationary variables result in bias and inconsistency of the estimates of coefficient standard errors thus increasing the likelihood of drawing incorrect inferences. For the purpose of this study, we consider four different types of panel unit root tests.

As presented in Table 2, the first type involves panel unit root tests with the null hypothesis of unit root with common process (Harris and Tzavalis, 1999; Breitung, 2000; Levin et al., 2002 tests). The second type assumes unit root with individual unit root process (Im et al., 2003; Maddala and Wu, 1999 tests) while the third also assumes unit root in the null hypothesis but in the presence of cross-section dependence (Pesaran, 2007). The fourth category, however tests the null hypothesis of no unit root with common unit root process (Hadri, 2000 Lagrange Multiplier test). Since the various unit root test has different individual hypotheses and test regressions, these tests have been categorized into stationary (the fourth type - Hadri) and nonstationary (first, second and third – HT, Breitung and LLC; IPS and Pesaran respectively) tests in the literature. In addition, the Pesaran (2007) unit root test is particularly important in this study as it can also be used to test whether the various cross-sections in each group are homogenous or heterogeneous. The null hypothesis for the test assumes homogeneous non-stationary as against the alternative hypothesis of possible heterogeneous alternatives.

All the variables used for this study were subjected to unit root test to ascertain their stationarity status. For robustness, the variables were subjected to four types of unit root tests. These unit root tests are as follows: unit root test that assumes unit root with individual unit root process i.e., Im, Pesaran and Shin (2003), Maddala and Wu (1999) tests; unit root test that assumes no unit root with common unit root process i.e., Hadri, 2000; unit root test that assumes unit root with common process i.e., Harris and Tsavalis (1999); Breitung (2000) and Levin, Lin and Chu (2002) and unit root test that assumes unit root in the presence of cross-sectional dependence, i.e., Pesaran (2007).

Irrespective of the type of unit root test, the unit root test of the non-oil exporting SSA countries confirm that the variables used for the study are either stationary at level, i.e., $I(0)$ or at first difference, i.e., $I(1)$. These results justify the use of panel Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) as the most appropriate estimation technique.

Table 2: Panel Unit Root Test Results of Non-Oil Exporting Countries of SSA

Variable	RGDP	EXR	INVT	INFL	CUTA	OP	FRES	EMP	COP	PRI_AG	SEC_MA	TER_SER	ITR
Test Method													
Null hypothesis: unit root with common process													
Levin, Lin & Chu t*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6.1092***a	4.3781***a	4.1886***a	7.6466**a	3.8278***a	14.3799**b	8.7175***b	2.0520**a	7.6423**a	7.6964**a	9.7997**a	14.5433***a	2.7999**a
Breitung t-stat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.183	-
	8.8102***b	4.2652***b	6.7421***b	6.6531**b	8.4277***b	16.5783**b	12.5534**b	8.0236**b	8.7703**b	1.6375**b	0.1934*b	4* ^b	10.3712**b
Harris-Tzavalis rho	0.8217***b	0.9655***a	0.7787***b	0.9706*a	0.7246***b	0.7074***b	0.6334***b	0.8228**b	0.8456**b	0.9586**a	0.9670*a	0.9715*b	0.9634**a
Null hypothesis: unit root with individual unit root process													
Im, Pesaran & Shin W Stat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6.8378***a	6.5087***a	10.9646***b	5.5331**a	12.6651***b	13.7253**b	11.0336**b	8.1095**b	11.7140**a	20.0166**a	25.8595**a	33.5855***a	26.5262**b
ADF Fisher Chi-square	98.3481***b	111.2803***a	62.4987***a	100.9547***a	50.9386***a	203.3464**b	129.7662**b	109.9111***b	60.8508**b	84.9899**a	78.3226**a	82.5496***a	49.8837**a
Pesaran CD test ²	-2.527***a	-	-2.246**a	-	-3.491***b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		3.257**a		3.267**a		3.123**b	2.233**a		2.422**a	2.243**a	3.839**b	3.702***b	3.657**a
Null hypothesis: no unit root with common unit root process													
Hadri Z-stat.	46.0452 ^b	35.0226 ^b	6.4252 ^b	6.7487 ^b	9.9705 ^b	25.4970 ^b	10.1161 ^b	20.7984 ^b	61.5811 ^b	71.4434 ^b	84.2945 ^b	132.1866 ^b	-1.4919 ^b
No. of Cross-sections	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
No. of Periods	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144	144
Total Obsns	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016

Source: author's compilation. Note: exr, invt, infl, cuta, op, fres, emp, cop, pri_ag, sec_ma, ter_ser and itr represent oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment, inflation, current account balance, oil price, foreign reserves, employment, consumption, primary sector (agriculture value added), secondary sector (manufacturing value added) tertiary sector (services value added) and interest rate. Note: a & b denote stationarity at level and at first difference respectively, while ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. All the variables here are expressed in natural logs. ² Note that the Pesaran CD test is not conducted for the oil price series since it is considered to be homogenous as it is cross-section invariant. Standard errors in parentheses.

4.2. Empirical Results

4.2.1. Oil price volatility and Macroeconomic Performance

Table 3 reports the short and long run estimates of macroeconomic performance (proxied with real GDP and current account balance) of non-oil exporting countries of SSA. As the Table 3 reports, in the short run, oil price volatility is negatively related to real GDP and current account of non-oil exporting SSA countries. *Ceteris Paribus*, a 1% increase in oil price volatility will reduce real GDP and current account by 0.0009% (statistically significant at 10%) and 0.0265% respectively. This implies that oil price volatility is an important factor that reduces real GDP and the current account of this group of countries; though the magnitude of the impact of oil price volatility is more on current account than on real GDP. Investment, exchange rate, employment and consumption are positively and significantly related to real GDP of non-oil exporting countries in the short run. All other things constant, a 1% rise in investment, exchange rate, employment and consumption will rise real GDP by 0.0270%, 0.0329%, 0.109% and 0.538% respectively and are all statistically significant at 1%; suggesting that these variables are essential in strengthening real GDP in these countries. On the other hand, inflation and interest rate are negatively related to real GDP.

A percentage increase in inflation and interest rate will reduce real GDP by 0.0001%; with the impact of inflation on real GDP being significant at 10%, suggesting that inflation is important in dwindling the GDP of these countries.

Exchange rate and interest rate have positive relationship with current account in non-oil exporting countries in the short run. As confirmed in Table3, if there is a percentage increase in exchange and interest rates, the current account of these countries will rise by 2.791% (statistical significant at 1%) and 0.0177% respectively in the short run. Investment, employment, inflation and consumption are negatively related to current account of these countries in the short run. This suggests that these variables reduce current account in these countries in the short run. *Ceteris paribus*, if Investment, employment, inflation and consumption increase by 1%, current account will diminish by 5.660%, 0.917%, 0.0111% and 10.95% in the short run; with the impact of consumption and investment being significant at 1%. This means that consumption and investment are important in reducing current account in these countries.

Estimates of the long run confirm that oil price volatility, exchange rate and consumption significantly raise real GDP in non-oil exporting countries; suggesting that these variables are important determinants of real GDP in the long run. In these countries, exchange rate insignificantly increases real GDP – it plays little role in augmenting real GDP. On the other hand, employment significantly reduces economic growth, while inflation insignificantly reduces economic growth in the long run. The results suggest that employment is an important factor that contracts real GDP in these countries. Moreover, the estimates confirm that a 1% rise in oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment, and consumption in the long run will increase economic growth by 0.0161%, 0.0390%, 0.242%, and 0.9805 respectively, while a 1% increase in employment and inflation will contract real GDP by 0.726% and 0.0047% respectively.

Oil price volatility, investment and consumption have positive and significant impact on current account in non-oil exporting SSA countries in the long-run. However, exchange rate, employment, inflation and interest rate have negative impact on the current account of these countries in the long-run. *Ceteris Paribus*, a percentage rise in exchange rate, employment, inflation and interest rate will diminish current account in these countries by 0.0654%, 0.983%, 0.0065% (all being statistically significant) and 0.0063% respectively; connoting that exchange rate depreciation/devaluation, employment and inflation are major factors that contract current account balance of these countries in the long run.

Table 3: Panel regression results for oil price volatility–macroeconomic nexus

VARIABLE	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Long run	RGDP	CUTA	PRI_AG	SEC_MA	TER_SER
Lnopvol	0.0161* (0.0086)	0.0051 (0.0133)			
Lnexr	0.0390 (0.0254)	-0.0654* (0.0368)			
Lninvt	0.242*** (0.0563)	0.0245 (0.0717)			
Lnemp	-0.726*** (0.216)	-0.983** (0.403)			
Infl	-0.0016 (0.0012)	-0.0065** (0.0027)			
Fres	-0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)			
Lncop	0.980*** (0.0913)	1.195*** (0.178)			
Itr	-0.0047 (0.0040)	-0.0063 (0.0068)			
Constant	0.0008 (0.0142)	-0.7080 (1.4650)	-2.5910* (1.4240)	9.0700** (4.2460)	3.2490 (2.2550)
Short run					
D.Lnopvol	-0.0009* (0.0005)	-0.0265 (0.0490)	-3.3010 (2.0550)	3.5020 (1.5790)	8.4940 (8.3850)
D.Lnexr	0.0329*** (0.0086)	2.791*** (0.885)	-7.7150 (1.1110)	-9.6130 (6.2130)	-4.7530 (3.3000)
D.Lninvt	0.0270*** (0.0042)	-5.660*** (0.430)	0.0301 (0.183)	-1.4180 (1.0060)	-1.0940** (5.3430)
D.Lnemp	0.109*** (0.0274)	-0.917 (2.818)	-1.5740* (8.1970)	5.5620*** (1.3560)	1.4400** (7.2040)
D.infl	-0.0001* (0.0001)	-0.0111 (0.0079)	-7.7150 (1.1110)	2.0900 (2.6790)	4.9800 (1.4230)
D.fres	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0301 (0.183)	-0.157*** (0.0133)	-1.159*** (0.0706)
D.Lncop	0.538*** (0.0164)	-10.95*** (1.683)	2.0770 (2.2810)	-2.7660 (3.6390)	- (1.9330)
D.itr	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0177 (0.0232)	5.2570 (1.6940)	-1.8770 (1.8700)	-1.5080 (9.9300)
ECT	-0.0189*** (0.0036)	-1.170*** (0.369)	4.1250 (3.0120)	2.2420*** (6.3700)	5.4610 (3.3830)
Hausman test - χ_k^2	0.0000 (1.0000)	0.0000 (1.0000)	0.0000 (1.0000)	0.0000 (1.0000)	0.0000 (1.0000)
No. of cross section	14	14	14	14	14
No. of Obs	1989	1989	1989	1989	1989

Source: author's compilation. Note: opvol, exr, invt, infl, cuta, op, fres, emp, cop, pri_ag, sec_ma, ter_ser and itr represent oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment, inflation, current account balance, oil price, foreign reserves, employment, consumption, primary sector (agriculture value added), secondary sector (manufacturing value added) tertiary sector (services value added) and interest rate. Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 All the variables except infl cuta itr & fres are expressed in logs.

4.2.2. Oil Price Shocks and Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sectors

To establish long run relationship, we relied on the error correction model, ECM. Therefore, it is required that the error correction term, ECT, be between zero and one, negative and statistically significant and only the short run results if otherwise. As indicated in Table 3, none of the sectors – primary, secondary and tertiary satisfies the ECT condition; hence we report only the short run results here.

In the short run, oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment and employment have negative insignificant impact on primary sector in non-oil exporting countries of SSA. It means that these variables play small role in hampering the performance of primary sector in these countries in the long run. *Ceteris Paribus*, a 1% rise in oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment and employment will reduce the performance of primary sector in these countries by 0.0166%, 0.0226%, 0.465% and 1.593% respectively.

In this group of countries, inflation, consumption and interest rate are positively related to primary sector. Results in Table 3 shows that consumption is an important variable that boosts primary sector performance of non-oil exporting countries in the long run. Similarly, employment, inflation and consumption are positively related to secondary sector in the non-oil exporting countries in the long run. A percentage rise in employment, inflation and consumption will increase the performance of secondary sector by 0.288%, 0.0001% and 1.464% respectively. On the other hand, oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment and interest rate are negatively related to secondary sector in non-oil exporting countries; indicating that these variables diminish the performance of secondary sector in these countries. All else constant, a percentage rise in oil price volatility, exchange rate, investment and interest rate will dwindle the performance of secondary sector by 0.0069%, 0.0672% (significant at 1%), 0.103% and 0.0083%. Similarly, exchange rate, investment and interest rate diminish the performance of tertiary sector insignificantly in the long run. In contrast, oil price volatility, employment, inflation and consumption increase the performance of tertiary sector of non-oil exporting countries in the long run. A 1% rise in oil price volatility, employment, inflation and consumption will promote the performance of tertiary sector in these countries by 0.0498%, 0.940%, 0.0001% and 1.641% (statistically significant at 1%).

Further, Table 3 confirms that in the short run exchange rate, investment, foreign reserves, consumption and interest rate have negative impact on the secondary sector of non-oil exporting countries of SSA, with the impact of foreign reserve being statistically significant at 1%. This implies that foreign reserve is a major factor that hampers the performance of secondary sector of these countries. In contrast, oil price volatility, employment and inflation exert positive impact on the secondary sector of these countries, with the impact of employment being statistically significant at 1%; implying that employment is a major factor that promotes the performance of this group. Similarly, the long run impact of oil price volatility, employment and inflation on the tertiary sector of non-oil exporting countries is positive. Also, Table 3 corroborates that employment is essential in enhancing the performance of tertiary sector of these countries. Exchange rate, investment, foreign reserve, consumption and interest rate diminish the performance of tertiary sector of non-oil exporting countries in the short run. As reported in Table 3, investment, foreign reserves and consumption are important in undermining the performance of tertiary sector of these countries.

Table 3 confirms that in the short run, exchange rate, investment, foreign reserve, consumption and interest rate have negative impact on the secondary sector of non-oil exporting countries, with the impact of foreign reserve being statistically significant at 1%. This implies that foreign reserve is a major factor that hampers the performance of secondary sector of these countries. In contrast, oil price volatility, employment and inflation exert positive impact on the secondary sector of these countries, with the impact of employment being statistically significant at 1%; implying that employment is a major factor that promotes the performance of this group. Similarly, the long run impact of oil price volatility, employment and inflation on the tertiary sector of non-oil exporting countries is positive. Table 3 further indicated that employment is essential in enhancing the performance of tertiary sector of these countries. Exchange rate, investment, foreign reserve, consumption and interest rate dwindle the performance of tertiary sector of non-oil exporting countries in the short run. As seen inTable 3, investment, foreign reserves and consumption are important in undermining the performance of the tertiary sector of these countries.

4.2.3. Transmission of Oil Price Volatility to Non-Oil Exporting SSA

In order to look at the transmission mechanism of oil price volatility, interest rate, inflation and exchange rate models are estimated. Oil price volatility affects exchange rate, interest rate and inflation for both oil-exporting and oil-importing countries (Volkov and Yuhn, 2016). Oil price volatility encourages the outflow or inflow of Dollars which directly affects the exchange rate of oil exporting or oil importing countries that use US Dollars (Kaufmann and Ullman, 2009). This will affect economic activities and by extension the macroeconomic performance of a country.

Table 4 show the results for channels through which oil price volatility enters the macroeconomies of the Non-Oil Exporting SSA countries. Beginning with the short run, the results showed that oil price volatility has positive and insignificant impact on RGDP through the exchange rate channel. When we considered the current account balance model, we discovered that the effect is negative but still not statistically significant. This means that a percentage point increase in oil price volatility will enhance economic growth by 0.0002 percentage points but worsen the current account balance by about 0.173 percentage points.

Conversely to the exchange rate channel, oil price volatility through the inflation channel is completely negatively associated with economic growth and current account balance for the non-oil exporting SSA. In terms of the magnitudes, a percentage point rise in oil price volatility results to a decline in economic growth and CUTA by 0.000009 and 0.015 percentage points respectively through the inflation channel. The impact of oil price volatility through the interest rate channel is negative and insignificant on RGDP but positive and significant on CUTA at 1% conventional level. One percentage change in oil price volatility interacting through the interest rate channel generate a deteriorating effect of 0.0002 percentage points in RGDP and an ameliorating effect of 0.134 percentage points in CUTA in the short term. By implication, for the non-oil exporting economies, oil price volatility through exchange rate channel improves economic growth but decreases CUTA; through the inflation channel, however, it shrinks the macroeconomy (both RGDP and CUTA); contrarily, oil price volatility reduces RGDP but boosts CUTA through the interest rate channel.

The underlying idea is to link the price of oil to the price level which affects the real exchange rate (Bénassy-Quéré et al., 2007). If the non-tradable sector of country A is more energy intensive than the tradable one, the output price of this sector will increase relative to the output price of country B. This implies that the currency of country A experiences a real appreciation due to higher inflation (Chen and Chen, 2007; Buetzer et al., 2016).

Effects on the nominal exchange rate arise if the price of tradable goods is no longer assumed to be fixed. In this case, inflation and nominal exchange rate dynamics are related via purchasing power parity (PPP). If the price of oil increases, we expect currencies of countries with large oil dependence in the tradable sector to depreciate due to higher inflation. The response of the real exchange rate then depends on how the nominal exchange rate changes, but relative to the impact of any changes in the price of tradable (and non-tradable) goods described above. Overall, causality embedded in the terms of trade channel potentially holds over different horizons depending on the adjustment of prices.

The basic idea is that oil-exporting countries experience a wealth transfer if the oil price rises (Bénassy-Quéré et al., 2007). The wealth channel reflects the resulting short-run effect, while the portfolio channel assesses medium- and long-run impacts. When oil prices rise, wealth is transferred to oil-exporting countries (in US Dollar terms) and is reflected as an improvement in exports and the current account balance in domestic currency terms. For this reason, we expect currencies of oil-exporting countries to appreciate and currencies of oil-importers to depreciate in effective terms after a rise in oil prices (Beckmann and Czudaj, 2013b). There is also the possibility that the currency of the foreign country (e.g. US dollar) appreciates in the short-run because of the wealth effect—if oil-exporting countries reinvest their revenues in that country currency (US dollar) assets.

Table 4: Panel regression results for Channels through which oil price volatility pass-through to macroeconomies

VARIABLE	Non-Oil Exporting SSA	
	(3) PMG RGDP	(4) PMG CUTA
Constant	0.1110* (0.0663)	1.1660 (1.1310)
D.opvol*extr	0.0002 (0.0009)	-0.1700 (0.4810)
D.lnextr	0.0600* (0.0347)	1.5310 (5.1920)
D.opvol*infl	-0.0001	-0.0148

	(0.0001)	(0.0184)
D.infl	-0.0001	-0.0146
	(0.0012)	(0.0734)
D.opvol*itr	-0.0002	0.1340***
	(0.0003)	(0.0477)
D.itr	-0.0002	-0.2830
	(0.0011)	(0.3360)
ECT	-0.0107	-0.0087
	(0.0066)	(0.0074)
Hausman test - χ_k^2	9.38	9.90
	(0.1535)	(0.1290)
Log Likelihood	6270.768	-2562.128
No. of cross section	14	14
No. of Obs	2,002	2,002

Source: Author's compilation. Note: opvol, exr, infl, cuta, op, and itr represent oil price volatility, exchange rate, inflation, current account balance, oil price, and interest rate. While opvol*exr, opvol*infl and opvol*itr are the interaction terms between oil price volatility and exchange rate, inflation and interest rate respectively. These interaction terms are used to measure/capture the three channels via which oil price volatility pass-through to the macroeconomies. Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

5. Summary and Conclusion

This study investigates the effect of oil price volatility/shocks on macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Firstly, the study seeks to investigate the effect of oil price shocks on real GDP and current account balances of non-oil exporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, we examine the degree of oil price shocks on the performance of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of non-oil exporting economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, we examine the key channels through which oil price volatility transmit to macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in SSA.

The scope of the study covers the period 1980Q1 to 2015Q4. The dependent variables for all the models estimated are for macroeconomic performance, we employed real GDP as proxy for economic growth and current account balance; agriculture value added, manufacturing value added and services value added as proxies for primary, secondary and tertiary sectors respectively; interest rate, exchange rate and inflation as transmission channels through which oil price volatility transmits to the economies. We employed panel ARDL to decompose the effects oil price volatility on macroeconomic activities into short run and long run.

The following insights emanate from the study. We find that oil price volatility deteriorates economic growth in the short run. As oil price shocks intensify in the short run, economic activities depreciates for the non-oil exporting group of SSA economies. Contrary to the results in the short run, long run result showed a positive relationship between oil price shock and economic growth for non-oil exporting SSA economies. Also, exchange rate, investment and consumption have positive influence on economic growth while inflation and foreign reserves have negative relationship with economic growth. Interest rate has negative impact on economic growth in non-oil exporting economies, while employment has positive relationship with economic growth in non-oil exporting economies. In the long run however, exchange rate, investment and consumption all have positive relationship with economic growth for non-oil exporting economies while inflation, foreign reserves and interest rate are negatively associated with economic growth for these groups of countries; whereas the result for employment is negative and significant for the non-oil exporting economies.

In terms of magnitudes, the coefficients suggested that a percentage point increase in oil price volatility in the short run reduced economic growth by 0.0009 percentage points in non-oil exporting economies. The relationship in the long run between oil price volatility and economic growth is positively significant at 10% conventional level for non-oil exporting countries. These results are consistent with *a priori* expectations.

Further, the results showed that oil price volatility and CUTA are negatively related for non-oil exporting countries in the short run. This showed that the better the level of oil price fluctuations, the worst for economic growth in the non-oil exporting countries. In terms of significance, oil price volatility was insignificant for these groups of SSA at any conventional level. In the long run, oil price volatility becomes positive but still insignificant for the non-oil exporting countries. For the other variables, investment and consumption have positive effects on CUTA while employment and inflation are negatively related to CUTA for non-oil exporting economies. In terms of magnitudes, the results showed that one percentage point improvement in oil price volatility decrease CUTA by 0.027 percentage points for non-oil exporting countries in the short run. In the long run, oil price volatility improved CUTA by about 0.005 percentage points for non-oil exporting countries.

The study further considered the effect of oil price volatility on the agriculture value added (used as a proxy for primary sector), manufacturing value added (used as a proxy for secondary sector) and services value added (used as a proxy for tertiary sector). Beginning with the primary sector, oil price volatility exerted negative and insignificant impact on the sector in the short run for non-oil exporting economies. The results showed that a percentage point increase in oil price volatility will cause deteriorating effects on primary sector in non-oil exporting SSA countries. This condition showed the extent to which oil price volatility reduced the level of primary sector in SSA economies between 1980Q1 and 2015Q4.

Subsequently we considered the effect of oil price volatility on the secondary sectors of non-oil exporting SSA. Interestingly, in the short run, oil price volatility has positive impact on the manufacturing sector for non-oil exporting SSA economies. In terms of significance, the relationship is insignificant at any conventional levels in these groups of countries. The results showed that an improvement in oil price volatility also improve the manufacturing sectors in non-oil exporting SSA economies.

Considering the tertiary sector, oil price volatility has a positive relationship for the non-oil exporting countries. This indicated that the improvement in oil price volatility serves as an improvement of tertiary sector in non-oil exporting SSA economies. In terms of significance, none of them is significant at any conventional levels.

Finally, we investigated the key channels through which oil price volatility transmit to macroeconomic performance of non-oil exporting countries in SSA. This was examined using three channels, which included interest rate, exchange rate and inflation. To investigate these channels, some interaction terms were introduced into the ARDL models – the real GDP model and current account balance model. The interaction terms are between oil price volatility and exchange rate, oil price volatility and inflation rate, and oil price volatility and interest rate. The results showed that in the short run oil price volatility has positive and insignificant impact on RGDP through the exchange rate channel. When we considered the current account balance model, we discovered that the effect is negative but still not significant statistically. This implies that a percentage point increase in oil price volatility will enhance economic growth by 0.0002 percentage points but worsen the current account balance by about 0.173 percentage points. Conversely to the exchange rate channel, oil price volatility through the inflation channel is completely negatively associated with economic growth and current account balance for the non-oil exporting SSA. In terms of the magnitudes, a percentage point rise in oil price volatility results a decline in economic growth and CUTA by 0.000009 and 0.015 percentage points respectively through the inflation channel. The impact of oil price volatility through the interest rate channel is negative and insignificant on RGDP but positive and significant on CUTA at 1% conventional level. One percentage change in oil price volatility interacting through the interest rate channel generate a deteriorating effect of 0.0002 percentage points in RGDP and an ameliorating effect of 0.134 percentage points in CUTA in the short term. By implication, for the non-oil exporting economies, oil price volatility through exchange rate channel improves economic growth but decreases CUTA; through the inflation channel, however, it shrinks the macroeconomy (both RGDP and CUTA); contrarily, oil price volatility reduces RGDP but boosts CUTA through the interest rate channel.

Considering the long run, we observed that all the results are statistically significant. Again starting with the exchange rate channel, the results indicate that oil price volatility has a positive effect on both RGDP

and CUTA with 1% significance on RGDP and 5% significance on CUTA. This means that a percentage point rise in oil price volatility will lead to 0.061 and 0.65 percentage points increase in RGDP and CUTA respectively through the exchange rate channel. These outcomes point to the fact that the interaction between oil price volatility and exchange rate serve as an improvement in the macroeconomies of these non-oil exporting countries. Akin to the exchange rate channel, oil price volatility through the inflation channel also enhances economic growth (RGDP) and current account balance (CUTA) of these economies. There is a positive and significant impact of oil price volatility on RGDP and CUTA through inflation channel in the long run. A percentage point increase in the interaction term between oil price volatility and inflation results to about 0.0032 percentage points increase in RGDP and 0.324 percentage points rise in CUTA. On the other hand, contrary to the exchange rate and inflation channels, the interaction term between oil price volatility and interest rate show significantly negative effect on the economic growth and current account balance in the long term. The impact is at 1% significance level for both RGDP and CUTA. In term of the sizes of the coefficients, one percentage increase in oil price volatility will lead to about 0.0144 percentage points reduction in RGDP and about 1.484 percentage points decrease in CUTA. What these results foreshadow is that in the medium term or longer term, oil price volatility augments the macroeconomies (RGDP and CUTA) through the exchange rate and inflation channels but diminishes economic growth and current account balance through the interest rate channel. Furthermore, to determine cointegration in these models (RGDP and CUTA), we used the EC terms, which show the speed of adjustment of -0.0107 and -0.0087 but not significant at any conventional levels for RGDP and CUTA respectively.

Conclusively, it is oil price volatility deteriorates macroeconomic activities of non-oil exporting economies in the SSA in the short or medium term but the negative effects tend to fizzle out as countries adjust their policies. Considering the three sectors, oil price volatility unexpectedly dampens agricultural activities in these countries. A plausible reason for this outcome could be that a positive change in oil price increases costs of importation of agricultural inputs and machineries. Interestingly, manufacturing and services sectors seem to flourish in the face of unstable oil prices. As oil prices become volatile, the secondary and tertiary sectors perform better in these economies; a good reason could be as a result of governments' policy efforts in improving sectors other than mining and extractive sectors. The transmission channels through which oil price volatility enters these economies are exchange rate, interest rate and inflation. Our results indicate that oil price volatility enters negatively through exchange rate and interest rate, but enters positively through the inflation channel. However, the effects appear to be stronger through the exchange rate channel, followed by the interest rate channel and lastly the inflation channel. The exchange rate is one of the intermediate policy variables through which monetary policy is transmitted to the larger economy through its impact on the value of domestic currency, domestic inflation (the pass-through effect), the external sector, macroeconomic credibility, capital flows, and financial stability. Therefore, changes (appreciation or depreciation) in the exchange rate have implications for individual spending and firms' investment behaviour, all of which can affect the macro economy.

References

- Aaron, G. and Sherzod, N. (2009). Oil price fluctuations and its effect on GDP growth: A case study of USA and Sweden. An unpublished thesis within economics submitted to the Jonkoping International Business School.
- Akide, A. (2007). Growth implications of oil price variations. A case study of Nigeria, 8(2): 20- 27.
- Akinlo, T. and Apanisile, O. T. (2015). The Impact of Volatility of Oil Price on the Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. *British Journal of Economics, Management & Trade*. 5(3). 338 – 249.

- Beckmann J, Czudaj R. (2012). Oil prices and effective dollar exchange rates. *International Review of Economic & Finance* 27, 621 – 636.
- Bouزيد A. (2012). “The Relationship of Oil Prices and Economic Growth in Tunisia: A Vector Error Correction Model Analysis”, *Romanian Economic Journal*. 15(43):3-22. http://econpapers.repec.org/article/rejjournal/v_3a15_3ay_3a2012_3ai_3a43_3ap_3a3-2.htm.
- Breitung, J. (2000). The local power of some unit root tests for panel data. In B. H. Baltagi (Ed.). *Advances in econometrics, Volume 15: Nonstationary panels, panel cointegration, and dynamic panels* (pp. 161–178). Amsterdam: JAY Press.
- Broni-Bediako E, Onyije I.J. and Unwene, K.K. (2018). Economic Effects of Oil Price Volatility on Developing Countries: A Case Study of an Oil Exporting Country. *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*, Vol 7, 2.
- Chang, Y. and Wong, J.F. (2003). Oil price fluctuations and Singapore economy, *Energy Policy* 31, 1151–1165.
- Chen S-S, Chen H-C. (2007). Oil prices and real exchange rates. *Energy Economics*, 29:390 – 404.
- Dogah K. E. (2015). The Impact of Oil Price Shocks on The Macroeconomy Of Ghana. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, vol. 9
- Englana A, Duke O, Ogunleye T, Ismail U (2010). Oil Prices and Exchange Rate Volatility in Nigeria: An Empirical Investigation. *Central Bank of Nigeria Economic and Financial Review* 48(3):31-48.
- Gounder R. and Bartleet, M. (2007): “Oil Price Shocks and Economic Growth: Evidence of New Zealand, 1989-2006”. Papers presented at the New Zealand Association of Economists Annual Conference, Christ Church, 27th-29th June: <http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:GO9VthrBB0J:editorialexpress.com/cgibin/conference>.
- Hunt. B., Izard. P. and Laxton. D (2001). The Macroeconomic Effect of Higher Oil Price. IMF Working Paper 01/14. Research Department.
- Im, K. S., Pesaran, M. H., & Shin, Y. (2003). Testing for unit roots in heterogeneous panels. *Journal of Econometrics*, 115, 53–74.
- Jerome A, Busari D, Adjibolosoo S. (2009). Oil and growth in Africa: A comparative analysis. [Online] Available: <http://www.africametrics.org>.
- Jumah, A and Pastuszyn, G (2007), “Oil Price Shocks, Monetary Policy and Aggregate Demand in Ghana” *Economics Series*.
- Kaufmann RK, Ullman B (2009), Oil prices, speculation and fundamentals: interpreting causal relationship among spot and futures prices. *Energy Economics*. 31: 550-558
- Kazue D. (2012). The effect of crude oil price change and volatility on Nigerian economy. MPRA Munich Personal RePEc Archive. Online at Available: <http://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/41413/MPRA Paper No.41413>.
- Levin, A., Lin, C.-F., & Chu, C.-S. J. (2002). Unit root tests in panel data: Asymptotic and finite- sample properties. *Journal of Econometrics*, 108, 1–24.
- Lim CY, Ngow, CF, Phang, Y.P. (2011). Oil Price and Economic Growth: Evidence from 10 sub-Saharan Africa Countries. An unpublished MSC thesis submitted to Department of Economics Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Faculty of Business and Finance; 2011.
- Manasseh, C. O. Ogbuabor, J. E and Obinna, O. K. (2016). “Volatility and Commodity Price Dynamics in Nigeria” *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 6(4), 1599-1607
- Mathew E. R. and Harold N. (2017), Oil Price Shocks and Economic Performance in Africa’s Oil Exporting Countries. *Acta Universitatis Danubius*, 13, 5.
- Obadi S. M., Chinelova M. (2018), Oil Price Volatility and Consequences for Selected Oil-exporting Economies. *Journal of Economic and Social Development (JESD)* 5, 1.
- Olomola, P. and Adejumo, (2006). Oil price shocks and aggregate economic activity in Nigeria. *African Economic and Business Review*, 4(2): 40-45.

- Omisakin A.O. (2008). Oil Price Shocks and the Nigerian Economy: A Forecast Error Variance Decomposition Analysis. *Journal of Economics Theory* 2(4): 124-130
- Omololaibi, J. A. and Egwaikhide, F. (2014). “Crude oil price dynamics and transmission mechanism of the macroeconomic indicators in Nigeria” *OPEC Energy Review*; Vol. 38, (3), 341–355.
- Oriakhi, D. and Osaze, D. (2013). “Oil Price Volatility and Its Consequences on the Growth of the Nigerian Economy: An Examination (1970-2010)”, *Asian Economic & Finance Review*.3(5):683-702.
- Pesaran, H., & Shin, Y. (1999). An autoregressive distributed lag modelling approach to cointegration in econometrics and economic theory in the 20th Century. In The Ragnar Frisch Centennial Symposium (pp. 371–413). Cambridge University Press.
- Pesaran, M. H., Shin, Y., & Smith, R. P. (1999). Pooled mean group estimation of dynamic heterogeneous panels. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 94(446), 621–634.
- Rebeca, D. and Marcelo, E. (2004). Oil price shocks and real GDP Growth: Empirical Evidence for Some OECD Countries. European Central Bank, Working Paper Series N0. 362.
- Sari R, Hammoudeh S, Soytas U. (2010). Dynamics of oil price, precious metal prices, and exchange rate. *Energy Economics*, 32 (2), 351 – 362.
- Tweneboah, G. and Adam, A. M. (2008). “Implications of Oil Price Shocks for Monetary Policy in Ghana: A Vector Error Correction Model” Munich: University Library of Munich.
- Volkov, N. I. and Yuhn, K.H. (2016). Oil price shocks and exchange rate movements. *Global Finance Journal*, 31, issue C, 18-30.
- Wakeford, J. (2006), “The Impact of Oil Price Shocks on the South African Macroeconomy: History and Prospects” Accelerated and Shared Growth in South Africa: Determinants, Constraints and Opportunities, (pp. 1-26). Johannesburg
- William, C. (2015). “Crude Oil Price and Economic Growth: The Case of Ghana” *International Journal of Business and Economics*, 1(2), 147-155.

PAUL’S PHILOSOPHY OF TAKING A LITTLE WINE IN 1TIMOTHY 5:23 AND THE CURB OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG NIGERIA YOUTHS

By

Ijeudo Nnamdi Ugochukwu

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies University of Nigeria Nsukka

&

Ogbuclement Samson Chijioke MA: (In View)

Department of Social Work University of Nigeria Nsukka

Abstract

Studies have shown that misconceptions of taking alcoholic wine, harmful substances and drug abuse among Nigeria youths have reached an alarming crescendo. Most of the young people take these substances as food instead of medicine to treat their ailments. Drugs are good though with minimal side effects when recommended by a medical practitioner to patients. It was discovered that drug abuse has plugged the youths of Nigeria into various criminal acts and tendencies. It is against this backdrop that the researcher implored the hermeneutical interpretation of Paul’s philosophy taking a little wine in Timothy 5:23 and proffer strategies that could curb drug abuse among Nigeria youths. The study discovered among other things that the family, Government, Religious organizations, various none governmental organizations, peer group, and youth organizations have major roles to play in ameliorating the effects of drug abuse among Nigeria youths. The study recommended and concluded that Nigerian youths should be made to understand that drugs are meant to be taking as medicines and not as food especially with medical prescriptions. Just as Paul adumbrated in 1Timothy 5:23 take a little wine for your ailment.

Keywords: 1Timothy 5:23, Paul’s Philosophy, Taking a little wine, Drug Abuse, Nigeria Youths.

Introduction

Research shows that the rate at which Nigeria youths abuse substance is very alarming. Recent studies show that this substance youths abuse is more readily available than water. Olaniyi (2020) opines that Without doubt, substance use has been of tremendous benefit to mankind. Nevertheless, it has also been acknowledged that its inappropriate use can cause incalculable harm not only to the users but to the larger society. The implication of this is that it set both the abuser and its environs in great danger hence need to keep addressing this topic periodically. Olaniyi (2020) in the same vein stresses that in contemporary Nigeria society, if we look around in our immediate environment there seems to be high spread of drug use and abuse among many, mostly the young ones. Some of these substances may come in form of tablets, capsules, syrups or soluble. Examples of such are codeine, tramadol, frenor, Alabuku e.t.c. Some people sniff, swallow, inject or ingest them to get euphoria. In addition, substances such as eskey, crake, marijuana and many others mostly initiate in the users the ability to commit crimes. In support of this, Adegboro (2014) asserts that use of illicit drugs has been linked with anti-social behaviours and criminality for many decades. Alcohol and marijuana were the top two on the list of substances abused. Adegboro(2014) further reports that violent behaviour like sexual assault and violent crimes were common among substance abusers.

It is against this backdrop that this study implored exegetical descriptive method of research of using Paul’s philosophy of timothy taking a little wine in 1 Timothy 5:23 to proffer strategies that can curb drug abuse among Nigeria youths. Exegesis in biblical studies is the method of doing a critical

biblical interpretations of the text of study (1 Timothy 5:23) (Goman, 2009) and engaging the exegetical lessons to describe to larger extent the danger of drug abuse in Nigeria and using the exegetical findings and lessons to properly do a hermeneutical applications of the above text to Nigeria situations. The more youths abuse substance the more social vices grows and keep lingering in the society thereby becoming a major reoccurring social problem. The study discovers in the cause of hermeneutical evaluations of the text 1 Timothy 5:23 that parents, family, community, government, media and law makers among others have a major role to play in addressing and curbing social-psychological implications and menace of drug abuse among Nigeria youths.

According to United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime Vienna publication on Drug use in Nigeria 2018, that in Nigeria, one in seven persons aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year. The past years prevalence of drug use is estimated at 14.4 percent (range 14.0 percent - 14.8 percent), corresponding to 14.3 million people aged 15-64 years who had used a psychoactive substance in the past year for non-medical purposes. The highest levels of any past-year drug use were among those aged 25-39 years. Cannabis is the most commonly used drug. An estimated 10.8 percent of the population or 10.6 million people had used cannabis in the past year.

The average age of initiation of cannabis use among the general population was 19 years. 1 in 5 people who had used drugs in the past year is suffering from drug user disorders. Nearly 40 percent of high-risk drug users indicated a need for treatment of drug use disorders. Nearly one quarter of high-risk drug users had been arrested for a drug-related offence during the course of their drug use, while the majority (73 percent) had been arrested for possession of drugs, many high-risk drug users had also been arrested for theft (12 percent), sex work (5 percent), burglary (4 percent) and shop lifting (2 percent). Two-thirds of people who used drugs reported having serious problems, as result of their drug use, such as missing school or work, doing a poor job at work/school or neglecting their family or children among others (UNO, 2018).

Consequence upon, this paper is poised towards providing lasting solutions to Drug abuse considering key factors which if addressed would help minimize the rate. The paper is also geared towards re-enlighten the public on the strategies to implore in combating this menace. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals affirm that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. This draws together the strands of peace, rule of law, human rights, development and equality to form a comprehensive and forward-looking framework. Addressing the drug abuse problems among Nigeria Youths and the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are thus complementary and mutually reinforcing. The findings from the drug use survey 2018 provide the evidence to inform the national debate among policy makers and other stakeholders for reviewing and updating the current National Drug Control Master Plan. This study is poised to draw a recommendable template that drugs are not food and should not be used as medicine without a prescription from a certified medical practitioner. Taking drug as the paper further examines when sick without a medical prescription constitutes drug abuse.

Conceptualization

According to World Health Organization (WHO) Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome - a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state (Barerah 2018).

Drug abuse, also known as Drug addiction is defined as chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite its harmful consequences. The initial decision of drug taking is voluntary but repeated uses leads to its addiction and addiction of any form is dangerous (Agberotime, 2020). From the foregoing as Agberotime (2020) further discloses that What is even worse

is that mostly young children and youth are hit by this storm and illicit use of drugs starts at the age of 16-17 years of age. It starts with merely smoking of cigarettes and gradually drowns the person into the trap of drug abuse. Drug Abuse is one of the banes of modern society. It has hit all regions and all sections of our society. It is found in rural and urban areas, among poor and the rich, among the men and women, among young and old (Osiwa,2020).That is to say it is most overwhelmingly practiced by young boys and girls especially in hostels and in almost all educational and technical institutions. Thus drug abuse is there in almost all the countries of the world. Day by day alcohol is becoming increasingly available and is used widely and addiction has become really a curse upon human beings which affects not only the drug addicts but also others directly or indirectly (Fareo, 2020). Fareo (2020) widely attests that For common people, it is a weakness of character and moral theologian may see it as a matter of vice while as sociologists see it as a social problem. It is considered sin by religious people and as a crime by law enforcement groups. The psychiatrist can describe it as a personality disorder problem. The alcoholic's anonymous groups and the treatment centers call them patients and alcoholism (Uzochukwu,2018).

Exegetical Studies of the Text 1 Timothy 5:13.

(A) Researchers Translation of the Text

Greek	Transliteration	Translation
^{BGT} 1 Timothy 5:23 Mhke,ti u`dropo,tei(avlla. oi;nw ovli,gw crw/ dia. to.n sto,macon kai. ta.j pukna,j sou avsqenei,aj	Meketi hudropotei, alla oino oligo chro dia ton stomachon kai tas puknas sou astheneias.	Take no longer wine but put a little wine for your stomach and your constant ailments.

(B) Structural Analysis of the Text 1 Timothy 5:23

Paul admonition to his missionary son to take wine for his frequent infirmities has raised series of concern in Christendom. As to whether Paul is contradicting himself having spoken of an overseer in 1Timothy 3:8 to be temperate and blameless. Does his instruction leads the young growing minister to sin and thereby constituting defilement and intoxication of highest order (Macdonald 1995). Even in old testament times (Liviticus 10:9 and Ezekeil 44:21) the Priests and Levites and their sons are forbidden from taking wine, strong drinks while performing their priestly ordinances and rites.

Paul also collaborated the above assertion when he declares that Timothy should not participate in the sins of others and should keep himself pure (1Timothy 5:22). The Greek phrase used in the verse captures it correctly “koinw,nei a`marti,aij” (koinónei amartiais) koinónei is a verb imperative present active of second person singular from koinóneo (koinw,new) meaning having share or partaking in something. So Paul was advising Timothy not to partake or have share in the sins (amartiais) of others (amarti,aij avllotri,aij) and should keep himself pure (seauto.n a`gno.n th,rei Seauton agnon terei). This instruction is in line with the one given to Old Testament priesthood to keep. terei (th,rei) is used here as a verb imperative present active second person singular from th,rew (têreo).

Paul was actually considering Timothy's ecclesiastical office at Ephesus having admonished him in 1Timothy 4:12 that he should not allow anybody despise his youth. He is supposed to live by example before his congregation both in creed and conduct (Bruce, 2008).

Critically on this note, one will wonder why Paul will instruct Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach and infirmities. It appears Paul suddenly remembered Timothy's ill- health and difficulties and as young minister under authority who was waiting for his boss, father and mentor's endorsement before taking a little wine. This is for his healing and also to protect the faith of the believers so that they will

not be offended by what their leading elder - Timothy is drinking or eating. Gill (1980) supports the fact and maintains that Paul's advice of "taking a little wine was not for pleasure, intoxication and hilarious living but for edification of a weak body and improving a health that has been attacked by ailments.

Close Reading of the Text

1 Timothy 5:23 is divided into three parts.

(A) "Take a Little Wine"

The wine to be taking from the above phrase suggests that if taking in larger quantity, it can cause intoxication and misbehaviours that is unbecoming of the minister of the gospel. Gills (1980) was of the opinion that Paul's philosophy is based on taking little proportion of wine. The main purpose of mixing little wine with water is to dilute the intoxicants. The Greek word little is rendered *asovli,gw|* ((*aligw*)_ adjective normal dative masculine Singular no degree from (*aligos*) (*aligos*). It means few or small.

The intent is that such quality small wine mixed with water is more of curative tendencies than enjoyment and hilariousness. The statement also implies that water alone was no longer affective in curing Timothy's health trauma. Probably the people with less severe cases in Timothy's community has been using only water to resolve their stomach disorder and frequent infirmities. However Timothy's sickness has gone severe as Nute(1988) points that he is waiting for a superior and authoritative permission from Paul to use a little wine mixed with water to cure himself. From every indication less superior counselors from Timothy's community might have been encouraging him "to take little wine for his sickness but Timothy was at a cross road because of his leadership position, degree of consecration and not to diminish the faith of new converts in the Ephesian church. Paul's admonition definitely cleared the air and save Timothy the higgledy-piggledy of his health and leadership stand (Macdonald, 1995).

(B) Faith and medication that resolves Stomach disorder.

Timothy's firm believed in taking only water can no longer carry him because of his stomach disorder. A close reading of the text suggests that Timothy prefer only water in curing his ailment and news of his stand got to Paul and Paul being conscious of his pastoral assignment at Ephesus and the danger of his stomach ill health, instructed him to begin to mix a little wine for his own good (Barn's,1998) Irekamba (2015) complements the above claim that Christian faithful won't because of religious postures reject the intake of drugs more especially when such ailment is about to take their lives.

It is pertinent to note therefore based on the above commentary that as Christian pilgrims, most especially leaders, one is not supposed to die in active service while sick because of ignorance or terse rejection of drug intakes. Paul was fully aware of how Timothy was dear to him and was not ready to lose him because of Stomach disorder and constant infirmities which mixing a little wine with water can resolve. Huston (2014) in the same vain resolves that adding a little wine to water has made the mixture a medicine as against strong alcohol beverages like beer and other intoxicating substances. Paul's recommendation was to cure an acute stomach problem for Timothy's effective pastoral service. Gills(1980) espouses that the stomach problems may be indigestions. Hence these indigestions medically can cause an acute ulcer or swollen stomach which is not far from Liver inflammation and other associated disease which might affect the brain arousing from stomach disorder.

(C) Resolving a frequent infirmity for a healthy Christian Service.

Frequent infirmities and constant body trauma affects a healthy Christian service. Paul was of the opinion that Timothy's commitment to service is not supposed to be interrupted by constant infirmities. The Greek word *pukna,j*(*puknas*) means adjective accusative feminine plural no degree from *pukno,j* (*puknos*) meaning frequent, often and numerous. The stomach sickness by the implication of being frequent might become cancerous or something else and could have transferred to other parts of the body if not for Paul's pastoral intervention (Macdolad,1995). The stomach houses the internal organs and closely associated with the Liver, intestine, pancreas, kidney etc. So Paul's admonition is that Timothy should take a little wine to stop the stomach ailment from becoming chronic. It occurs often and Timothy can no longer manage it privately hence Paul's public admonition in his letter for him to take a little wine for his constant infirmities. Henry (2001) administers that this may be as a result of body weakness

occasioned by hard studies, frequent ministration and indefatigable pains and labours, Timothy endured in the cause of spreading the gospel. The drug intake of a little wine mixed with water is not a drug abuse but as an experienced fatherly prescription to an obedient son and partner in ministry to resolve a frequent stomach ailment for an effective pastoral work in Ephesus and elsewhere.

Summary of the Exegesis

Paul's admonition of taking a little wine is clearly an authoritative and superior drug prescription to young active Christian Leader. It is not drug abuse because it has to be diluted with water and the quantity is to be small. The wine is not taking for pleasure or hilarity, but for resolving and curing a constant health challenging infirmities.

The wine must be diluted with water before taking it to avoid Timothy being intoxicated. As a Christian Leading overseer, intoxication can affect his moral soundness, preaching estate and leadership adroitness. Paul's concern and recommendation is for Timothy as a Christian Leader to take something that will not bring disgrace to himself and God's flock under his care. Once one is intoxicated with any strong drink and other related drugs and substance the essence of self control and discipline over once attitude, temperament – expressions and actions are no longer attainable and abuse is inevitable.

Strong drinks and drug abuse are irrespectful of one's social, religious, political, and academic status and can bring disgrace and shame to already achieved dignity and integrity. Timothy's pastoral dignity, integrity and long term effectiveness in ministry was Paul's uttermost concern when he instructs him to take little wine for his stomach and numerous infirmities. This was not for pleasure. Therefore Paul's prescription and regulations in this context represents the role of parents, family, religious bodies, Government etc in resolving and curbing drug abuse among Nigerian Youths.

Cases of Drug Abuse among Nigeria Youths

Nowadays Drugs are no longer used as medications which were the initial Essence rather as food and once it's used inform of food it's seen as Drug abuse. Research has proven that this practice revolve around the young ones mostly in Nigeria. The personal and societal negative impact of drug abuse can never be over stated. Agwogie, (2020) opined that recent cases of rape in Nigeria are no longer cases of sexual abuse of the girl child but sexual abuse of the female gender irrespective of age. Often, the victims are blamed either for their inappropriate dressing or for not being sensitive enough. Rarely are the personalities and mental health of the culprits thoroughly examined. While it may not be totally out of place to consider indecent dressing and other issues as risk factors, it is vital that we take a close look at issues within the culprits that constitute threat of rape and other social vices in our society. One of these is drug Abuse.

According to Olaniyi (2020) noted that Crimes and deviant behaviour bring about insecurity in any society and remain part of the major impediments to development in any nation. A society thrives when criminalities and social menace that could threaten its security are controlled. Nwanegbo et al., stress that security is evidently the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained. Iwerimie Jaja et al., posits further that without law and order, there would be no stability and sustainable development in any society. Victims of crimes and social vices suffer the loss of lives and property which can retard socio-economic development in the country. Considering these fundings, there is need to examine recent real life cases of rape in Nigeria to help validate this fact.

Agwogie, (2020) noted that recently there were cases of rape ,one was that of a 25 year old young man who raped an 85 year old grandmother in Niger State. His excuse was that he was drunk. Same with the case of a 25 year old who raped another 70 year old grandmother in Ogun State purported to be under the influence of alcohol. Agwogie, (2020). Another case was reported of a man who slept with his two daughters for years, especially when under the influence of alcohol. These are just few examples, with these, the fact remains that there is nexus between Drug abuse, criminality and other social vices such as rape, cultism, thuggery, racketeering, larceny ,armed robbery, brutality/aggressive behaviours, disordered social relationship, unwanted pregnancies, unguided early marriages and prostitution etc, all of which

have been on the increase in recent time in Nigeria. Same publication observed that not only do Drug abuse above-mentioned problems linger but they also threaten fundamentals of the social fabrics of society such as values, beliefs and cultural systems.

Therefore, beyond the issue of rape and other social vices, everyone and the society is now more at risk of the negative impact of drug abuse in Nigeria more than ever before. For instance it is difficult to estimate the number of rape cases in Nigeria in a year. This is because most cases are usually not reported due to stigma, shame, fear, self-blame, and arduous legal requirements to prove the cases. However, a report credited to Women at Risk Foundation stated that over 10 thousand girls are being raped in Nigeria daily. In another report credited to the Minister of Women Affairs, about two million girls and women are raped annually in Nigeria. These figures appear to be on the high side, but when compared with some risk factors that contribute to sexual violence, they may not be out of place. For example, according to the National Drug Use Survey and Health in Nigeria (2018), 14.3 million (14.4 percent) of Nigeria's population between the ages of 15 and 64 years use at least one psychoactive substance, excluding alcohol and tobacco. This figure is higher than the global average by about 10 percent. Out of this population, 20 percent have drug use disorders. This is also higher than the global average by 11 percent. According to the report, many of those who use drugs have been arrested for drug-related offences, including burglary, sex work, shoplifting and theft, among others. Regrettably, most of these individuals with drug use disorders who, ordinarily should be provided with appropriate drug treatment, are on the streets either abandoned by their families or, could not access treatment due to the very limited drug treatment facilities in Nigeria or the high cost of treatment which in most cases is beyond the reach of an average Nigerian.

Agwogie, (2020) posits that even though alcohol was excluded in the national drug use survey, recent studies have raised concerns about the increasing rate of the use and abuse of alcohol with the attendant economic, social and medical adverse effects upon the individual, family and community. Alcohol is now more readily available, in small sachets but with extremely high concentration, the most commonly used psychoactive substance across the six geo-political zones, cheaper and appearing more attractive to the young ones, hawked on the streets and with more outdoor open space drinking, to the extent that some persons have sarcastically said that it is now easier and cheaper to get alcohol in some communities than to get water. That is the sorry situation. With this, the case of social vices in Nigeria especially drug abuse being the architecture, the situation is not only alarming but needs immediate intervention by different institutions that have the society and its environs at heart. Same scholar noted that Persons under the influence of psychoactive substances have perceptual distortions, emotional imbalance, issues with self-discipline, in a state of confusion, paranoid and suffer irritability to mention but a few that could stir them to social vices. Similarly, some victims of rape develop depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders, PTSDs, and may resort to substance abuse to cope with the pains and shame of abuse. What these tell us is that we need urgent steps to address the issue of substance abuse and mental health in Nigeria as one leads to the other. Considering these, it's very imperative, we address factors that put individuals at risk of substance abuse as it will go a long way to curbing the menace.

According to Sumaina (2016), about 40% of young adults in the country are involved in substance abuse in several locations in Nigeria. Substances such as cocaine, heroin, alcohol, marijuana, tobacco have however been revealed as the most common drugs abused by this category of people. (Amosu, Ige & Ajala, 2010) opined that more worrisome is the continued increase in the use of alcohol and other substances such as Indian hemp, nicotine, ecstasy and other amphetamines among students in tertiary institutions in the country which seem to be gaining momentum every day.

Hermenties of 1Timothy 5:23 and the Curb of Drug Abuse Among Nigeria Youths. An Authoritative Prescription from a Godly Father

Paul's admonition was authoritative and was not misleading. Both Timothy and the congregation under him have respect, reverence, and honour for Paul. They have no option than to accept his instruction on

Timothy taking a little wine mixed with water for his ailment. Also he was given such instructions to save life. So Timothy who is sick will be healed and have more opportunities and live long to serve God better in Ephesus and beyond.

The family, church and the government have a big role to play in saving Nigerian youths who are dying by giving themselves to drug abuse. Instead of the drugs to cure their ailment like in the case of Timothy who was sick; the drugs itself has made them sick because they took them without having any ailment.

Uzochukwu(2020) agrees to the fact that so many drugs most especially Marijuana and strong drinks are being abused by Nigerian youths between the age of 18-35 which have left them with unbearable reparations. Fareo(2020) supports the fact that it has been a stigma of moral concerns and serious campaign should be expressed with firmnesses to curb the menace. The menace of drug abuse as earlier reiterated ranges from rape, kidnapping, school dropouts, cultism, armed robbery and other untold social vices. The family, Government, Faith based organizations and other agencies should be firm in taking some stringent measures that will ameliorates the prevalence of drug abuse in Nigeria. Parents are supposed to exert their God-given parental control on their children on the issue of drug abuse. Parental measures include but not limited to constant sound moral natures, living by example, monitoring the kind of peers the children keep and exposing their children to the activities of the faith based communities where clerics should preach constantly on the danger and consequences of drug abuse. Parents should keep drugs they take away from the children's reach and should endeavourer to visit hospitals not patent drug dealers for proper medical checks and treatments.

Ikon(2019) supports the above assertion when he insists that lack of parental control, easily access to drugs, cultism and engaging street life style of gangster's are part of the causes of drug abuse among Nigeria youths.

Prescription of a Little Wine for Healing and not for pleasure

It has been reiterated before now in this paper that little wine diluted or mixed with water has minimized the strong alcoholic content of the wine which was given to Timothy for his healing and not for pleasures (Huston,2014).

Government should therefore take some concerted efforts in reducing the rate of drug abuse among Nigeria youths. Seminars should be organized by Government agencies in schools and colleges on the dangers of taking drugs and other related substances as addictions and foods instead of medical prescriptions by authorized, government medical established personnel (medical Doctors, Pharmacist, etc) and establishments (Government approved hospitals, certified pharmaceutical shops). To the intent that it should be understood from the foregoing that Paul's advice to Timothy is not for pleasure and wanton living but for bodily edification and improvement on healthy living (Gills,1980).

Paul recommended such to save the Life of Timothy who was useful to him and God who called him for a long term valuable evangelical service. In the same vein, the idea of curbing drug abuse among youths and discouraging intakes of substances, strong drinks and hard drugs is to save the country's future glory and gains. The youths are the tomorrows' future of any country and they are supposed to contribute their own quota in leadership positions and other valuable political and economical sectors. On this note, Agberotime (2020) is to be commended when he insists that the danger of drug abuse and large intakes of some harmful substances are being done by the youths and emerging adults of Nigerian population which has far reaching effects on the social moral concern of the society and the nation's optimal economic growth. What it means is that such country is heading towards emotional and psychological trauma – a doom that will affect the nation's moral, political and economical architecture. The youths are genius every country needs for positive transformation and should do everything within reach to save their lives(Agberotime, 2020). when all hands (family, Parents, Government, religious faith) are on desk, it will help the youths to reject and stop the addictions and large intake of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, codeine, marijuana and other related substance and will no longer engage themselves in violence, rape, school dropouts, cultism and other drug associated criminal offenses (Abdu-Raheem,2013). That is to say that

Nigerian will become a safe haven where morally sound youths are raised for proper social integration and profitable economic engagements. Osiwa (2020) comprehends the objective of the study that Drug abuses in all ramifications have both a global and national increasing problematic challenging effects on the people's health, security, social-economical and cultural welfare. However, Ayotobi (2013) correctly puts it that the Nigerian youths with all the efforts of all the saving agencies as this paper have outlined the policy makers, Religious organizations, traditional rulers, communities, law enforcement agencies, parents, family, school institutions, government if properly channeled will not get involved in drug abuse related offences. These agencies as the research observes will serve like Paul in our study text who prescribed taking a little wine to Timothy as needing a medicine for resolving constant infirmities and not as food, strong drinks and hard substances that can lead one into addictions and constant involvement in crime and criminality.

Conclusion

It becomes clear that there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of drug addiction. Drug abusers have become a serious problem which has affected millions of people including the youths who are supposed to be the torch bearers of the next generation. Drug abuse has deterred lives of millions of drug addicts throughout the globe, as it has forced them to live a miserable life, where they cannot distinguish between life and death. Drug abuse has many inherent problems in it, as it causes immense human distress and also its illegal production and distribution of drugs increased to crime and violence worldwide. The world community has undertaken many tasks to sensitize, the people in general and youth in particular about the menace of drugs. The paper concludes that drugs are not food and any Nigeria youth that takes drugs as food constitute abuse and the role of parents, family, government and government agencies, religious bodies e.t.c in curbing the menace cannot be over-emphasized

Recommendations.

This study recommends that, parents should monitor their children closely and the company they keep and be wary of the values they pass to their children.

In addition, it is recommended that the development of preventive drug education curriculum be infused into relevant school subjects at various levels of learning i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary to ensure that students are well informed of dangers inherent in substance abuse.

It is strongly recommended that social work department should be introduced to schools in Nigeria at all levels to keep track on student's behaviors and attend to their welfare needs where necessary especially in the area of substance abuse and addiction.

No sick person should take drugs without prescriptions by certified medical personnel. So drug sellers are supposed to dispense with doctors prescriptions.

References

- Adegboro E. *Drug abuse among students of Adekunle Ajasin University, Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes*, ISBN: 978-92-1-1482850, 2016.
- Akungba Akoko, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Research*. 2014; 2(4):1–8. Ondo State.
- Amosu, P. A., Ige, O. A., & Ajala, O. A. (2010). *A study of some causative factors of substance abuse among selected secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria the African Symposium*, 10(2). Pp 4-10.
- Atoyebi, O. A., & Atoyebi, O. E (2012). *Pattern of substance abuse among senior secondary school students in a south western Nigerian City. International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(2), pp 54-65.
- <http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/drugs/ecstasy.html>
- <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/06/the-nexus-between-drug-abuse-and-rape/html>

- https://www.who.int/topics/substance_abuse/en/html
- Olaniyi Damola Tayosi: *Substance abuse and criminal behavior among commercial vehicle drivers in Lagos State*. Department of sociology, University of Lagos, Nigeria: January 30, 2020.
- Shan Barerah. *Forms of Drug abuse & their effects*. Department of education, University of Kashmir. feb 2018, weekly.1 (1).13-19
- Sumaina, K (20 May, 2016). *Nigeria: 40 Per cent of Nigerian youths engage in Substance Abuse*. Available online at: <http://allafrica.com/stories>.
- United Nations on Drug & Crime Vienna publication in Nigeria 2018. Available online at http://www.UNO.crime/vienna_publication_in_Nigeria/en/.html
- UNODC, *Technical Guidance: Increasing access and availability of controlled medicines, advanced draft*, March 2018.
- World Health Organization (2016). *Substance use*: Available online at: http://www.who.int/topics/substance_abuse/en/.
- Okafor Ifeoma P. (2020), *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth/de la Jeunesse* 12[11] 147-162, www.researchgate.net/publications.
- Lawal, N, and A. Aliyu, A.M (2020) *Assessment of causes and effects of Drugs and substances Abuse among Youths. A case study of Katsina metropolis (North West Nigeria)*. *international Neuropsychiatric Disease Journal*, 14[1] 1-9, <https://doi.org/10.9734/indy>.
- Uzochukwu Mike MP. (2018), *drug abuse among Nigerian Youths*, [www.razon.com\(9781792827099\)](http://www.razon.com(9781792827099)).
- FAREO D.O. (2020) *Drug abuse among Nigeria Adolescent*.
- Osiwa (2020) *Drug use and its effect on youths of West Africa*, www.Osiwa.org
- Ikoh M.U (2019) *Factors affecting Entry into Drug Abuse among Youths in Lafia*, www.journal.sagepub.com.
- Abdu-Raheem S.F. (2013), *Consequences of Drug Abuse*, www.files.ed.gov/fulltext
- Agberotime S.F. (2020) *Dangers of Drug Abuse*, www.core.ac.uk.
- Nute, A.G. (1988), *The pastoral letters* in *New International Bible commentary*, FF Bruce (ed) Michigan: Zondervan
- Gills .J. (1980). *Gills commentary on new Testament*. London: Bakers book.
- Gills, J. (1980). *Exposition of the entire Bible* retrieved from <https://www.blueletterbible.org>.
- Bruce, FF (2018) *Zondervan Bible Family: visits Zondervan Books*.
- Barna's (1998). *Today Pastors*, USA: Royals Books
- Ire Kamba (2015) *Does believing in God stop one from taking medicine or Blood transfusion*, www.gurdian-nigSunday Magazine.
- Macdonald, W. (1995). *Believers Bible Commentary*. London: Nelson Publishers.
- Huston C.R. (2014) *Bible Commentary*, www.lexitheo.edu.

Freedom and Determinism: Contextualizing Rousseau’s Social Contract Theory vis-à-vis IPOB’s Struggle for Referendum

Obi, Louis U. (PhD)¹
School of General Studies
Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo-Ohaji
E-mail: maclouyobi@gmail.com
Phone: 08036700971

Chukwu Peter Damian Ezechi, Ph.D.²
School of General Studies
Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo-Ohaji
E-mail: ezechichukwupd@gmail.com
Phone: 08132087496

Awurumibe, Douglas N.U.³
School of General Studies
Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo-Ohaji
E-mail: ogendu7@gmail.com
Phone: 08033371019

Abstract

The contentious issue of self-determination has always been a recurrent variable in human history dating back to antiquity. The quest or agitation for self-determination arises as a product of prolonged bad governance, marginalization, inequality and injustice often meted to a particular section or segment of a given democratic nation. The evergreen declaration by Jean Jacques Rousseau “man is born free and everywhere he is in chain”, though made several decades ago still resonates in the Nigeria democratic context. This paper aims at critical analysis of Rousseau’s social contract theory with particular reference to Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) struggle for referendum. This paper adopts critical content analysis method. The data is gotten mainly from secondary sources. It is the opinion of this paper that legitimate rights of individuals should not be suppressed in a supposedly democratic government.

Keywords: Freedom, Determinism, Social Contract, Referendum.

Introduction

Among the major fundamental human rights is the right to life and freedom to choose. To preserve life requires a society/environment devoid of rancor, bitterness, injustice, inequality, insecurity, intimidation and other negative tendencies. The world over, self-determination has always been the last resort when a section of the society feels that the right to life and freedom to choose can no longer be guaranteed. The Igbos, one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, feel before and after the civil war that their interests cannot be protected in Nigeria. The secession project in 1967 that led to civil unrest which lasted for more than 3 years was a copious effort to register their grievances after diplomacy failed. Though, the Igbos lost their sovereignty but their territory was not conquered.

Sequels to the cessation of the war the Igbos were promise adequate integration in affairs of the country. Despite the assurance and promises were not fulfilled rather the Igbos were further alienates, maltreated and subjected to more in human treatment by successive government. Consequent upon these, many groups and associations arose in defense of the rights of the Igbos. Among them is the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Is the modus operandi of the Ipob in tandem with international best practices? Is there correlation between Rousseau’s declaration & IPOB agitation? Are there other ways through which the sovereignty of Biafra can be restored?

These and other issues will form the crux of this work. In trying to address the aforementioned posers, the paper will employ content analysis method. The data will be generated extensively from secondary sources. While it is the unbiased opinion of this work that the restoration of sovereignty of Biafra cannot be achieved solely by Ipob; it cautions that legitimate rights of individuals should not be suppressed in a democratic government.

Conceptual Clarifications

Self-Determinism can be viewed as a process by which a group of, usually possessing certain degree of national consciousness, form their own state and choose their own government. Also, it is observed that the right of a people to self-determination is a cardinal principle in modern international law, binding, as such, on the United Nations as authoritative interpretation of the Charter's norms. It states that people based on respect for the principle of equal rights and fair equality of opportunity, have the right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status without interference.

Referendum is a direct and universal vote in which an entire electorate is invited to vote on a particular proposal and can have nationwide or local forms. This may result in the adoption of a new policy or specific law. Voting in a referendum is similar to casting a vote in an election. In a referendum, voters are required to write either "Yes" or "No" in the box opposite each question on the ballot paper. A referendum may be accepted or rejected by government in power.

Ipob is an acronym for Indigenous People of Biafra. According to one of its founders Emekesiri (2020), this was why I created the body known as INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA to represent all the remnants of the Biafrans not consumed in the war which Dr. Dozie Ikedife abbreviated to IPOB in 2013. Unfortunately, the person we put in our Media Department, who came from MASSOB and joined us, introduced the spirit of rebellion and insubordination in the movement. He accused our Elders of being traitors and saboteurs. The Elders ostracized him and he created his own faction of Indigenous People of Biafra and registered it in the Company House in London as Indigenous People of Biafra Ltd. However, according to Wikipedia, the leader of Indigenous People of Biafra is Nnamdi Kanu and was founded in 2012. The goal of IPOB is the creation of an independent Biafra through a referendum.

Freedom is having the ability to act or change without constraint. Something is "free" if it can change easily and is not constrained in its present state. In Philosophy and Religion, it is associated with having freewill and being without undue or unjust constraints, or enslavement, and is an idea closely related to the concept of liberty. It is the ability to make something happen without the influence of the heredity or environment. A person has freedom to do things that will not, in theory or in practice, be prevented by other forces.

Determinism is a philosophical position which holds that every event is determined by natural laws. In this view, nothing can happen without an unbroken chain of causes that can be traced all the way back to the beginning of time and space. It is usually understood to preclude freewill because it entails that humans cannot act otherwise than they do. Sometimes the opposite of determinism is called indeterminism. This means freedom or freewill is not necessarily the opposite of determinism.

Jean Jacques Rousseau's Theory of Freedom and Determinism

Rousseau addresses freedom more than any other problem of political philosophy. His major aim is to explain how man in the state of nature is blessed with an enviable total freedom. He believed that modern man's enslavement to his own needs was responsible for all sorts of societal ills from exploitation and domination of others to poor self-esteem and depression (Ome, EM 2014, www.ajol.info vol.14 No.2). The concern that dominates Rousseau's work is to find a way of preserving human freedom in a world where human beings are increasingly dependent on one another for the satisfaction of their needs.

The evergreen dictum of Rousseau on the Social Contract begins with "man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains", stated instead that people could only experience true freedom if they lived in a civil society that ensured the rights and wellbeing of its citizens. Rousseau believes that good government must have the freedom of all its citizens as its most fundamental objective. He maintains that modern states suppress the physical freedom that is our birthright and do nothing to secure the civil freedom for

the sake of which we enter into civil society. Legitimate political authority, he suggests, comes only from a social contract agreed upon by all citizens for their mutual preservation.

The Social Contract is an attempt to find a solution to inequality which destroys man's original state of happiness and freedom. For Rousseau, because of man's "perfectibility", the passage from a natural state to a social one is both accidental and necessity. Unlike animals, men are programmed to create and progress from one condition to the next. Rousseau discovers a way men can associate themselves with each other while maintaining their own individual freedom within a socio-political organigram. He calls that concept the "general will". While each individual has a particular will that aims for his own best interest, the sovereign expresses the general will that aims for the common good.

In Rousseau's thought, the contract essentially binds people into a community that exists for mutual preservation. Upon entering into civil society, people sacrifice the physical freedom of being able to do whatever they please, but they gain the civil freedom of being able to think and act rationally and morally. Thus Rousseau's institutional determinism denotes a social contract that holds that government is necessary to protect people from other people. Therefore applying Rousseau's social contract means justifying the power that law enforcement can exert over the population as a whole. The power imbalance, held by law enforcement, is part of the contract that society has agreed upon in exchange for security. For Rousseau the object of the laws is always general, we perceive at once how unnecessary it would be to enquire to whom the function of making laws belongs, because the laws are but the acts of the general will;...nor whether the law can be unjust, as no one is unjust towards himself; nor how we can be free while subjected to the laws, since they are but the registers of our own wills (Somerville and Santoni, 1963:231).

For Rousseau, freedom is obedience to the laws that one has prescribed to himself. Freedom is both a natural condition and a natural right. Hence, he talks about three types of freedom namely: natural, civil and moral. According to Bluhm (1984:359) although many scholars think of The Social Contract as an exposition of democratic freedom, it appears possible to argue that in Rousseau's own view freedom is compatible with social and political order. The purpose of the best polity is not to maximize individual freedom but to enable the individual to realize his or her perfectibility, a capacity that Rousseau regards as characteristically human. Going against the general will is what Rousseau termed as being "forced to be free".

Ipob's Agitation: The Missing Link

Presently there exist so many pro-Biafra groups with diverse approaches to the same goal; among them is the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Are there genuine reasons for the agitation? Is there the possibility that their approach will yield positive result? Is there an alternative to achieving the same goal? This paper will try to address critically and logically these posers.

According to Mazi Nnamdi Kanu the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, "ill treatment by successive governments, particularly the current President Muhammad Buhari-led All Progressive Congress, APC, administration, that aggravated the agitation for the Sovereign State of Biafra led by IPOB" (Vanguardngr.com September 11, 2019). Osaretin observes that "Biafra agitation stemmed from leadership failure on the part of the government, amounting to years of social neglect, economic and political isolation of the people of Nigeria and particularly people from the South East of the Nation in Nigeria". From the above, it is obvious that the agitation for Biafra did not start with the present government but has been there from the 1960s.

The most worrisome is the failure of the leadership of Nigeria to do the needful. According to Osaretin, "the politics of imbalance in the nation's political, social, economic, political and co-operate governance in the management, sharing, and allocation of the nation's common wealth, constitute to a very large rampant state of insecurity, rancor, fear, suspicion and feelings of agitation, exclusion and isolation within and among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigerian state" (www.omicsonline.org). Therefore what the IPOB is doing is in the right direction, since the group feels that the Igbos are being short-changed in the Nigerian project. Giving his support and justification for resuscitating the sovereign state of Biafra, Anele(2020), argues that now, it is clear to those who value justice, equity, and truth that the way Nigeria

is structured and governed at the moment is very unsatisfactory and cannot work because there are serious congenital abnormalities in her DNA which would require radical genetic engineering to correct. In summation therefore, he suggests that only confederation or peaceful dismemberment can resolve the perennial National Question on a long term basis by providing the foundation upon which geographically contiguous and historically cum culturally related ethnic nationalities can build viable countries for themselves without being asphyxiated in a highly centralized administration dominated by members of another ethnic group.

According to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”. What it means is that it is guaranteed in the international law for a group of people that strongly wishes to aspire for independence; provided they fulfill the necessary requirements. Also, by virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development, and every state has the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. Theoretically and by extant laws, the Ipob is at liberty to engage in the agitation.

People may be groups by different characteristics such as territorial affiliations, historical traditions, linguistic affinities, shared religious beliefs, common ethnic origins and economic unity (Gardiner, 2003:185). It is most expedient when the group shares similar historic, linguistic, religious, cultural and ethnic colourations. It is more profitable, let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right (Thoreau, 1963:283).

Granted as observed earlier, that groups and individuals have the right for self-determination; such a right should not be abused. The right to form a different government should not impinge on the rights of others who do not share similar ideology. The group should be made to know that until Biafra becomes independent, they are still part and parcel of the country called Nigeria. The modus operandi of Ipob especially unwarranted verbal attacks on non-members of the group, coupled with antagonizing the elders, governors, politicians, businessmen and captains of industries of Igbo extraction is highly condemnable. The struggle for Biafra requires collective efforts. The attitude of the indigenous people of Biafra portrays the group in a negative perspective before the generality of non- members. More so, their actions most times seem to make some people see them as great alarmists and rabble- rousers. It is not everything that should be posted on the social media. In the 21st century, wars are won and lost through diplomacy and not barrel of guns.

Akin to the above is infantile propaganda and reliance by Ipob on other countries to achieve their project. There is no free lunch in international relations. All member nations of the United Nations are sovereign and equal. According to Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations “the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all the members” (Morgenthau, 2010:331). No country is ready to waste her resources on another country except it has interests to protect. The guiding principle in international relation is that of quid pro quo. The question any country that wants to show commitment in the Biafran project would ask is, in the long run what benefit will accrue to my citizens.

Another issue is elements of national power. By this is meant the factors that make for the power of a nation vis-à-vis other nations. For Morgenthau(2010:137-169) they include but not limited to the following: Geography, Natural resources, Industrial capacity, Military preparedness, Population, National character, National morality, Quality of diplomacy and Quality of government. When these elements are placed side by side with the extent gone by the Ipob in terms of preparedness, it is obvious that a lot need to be done. The core Igbo states that make up Biafra seem to be land-locked and circumscribed by neighbouring states that do not share the Biafran ideology. The Ipob has not shown serious commitment aimed at enlisting the support of erstwhile Easterners in other non-Igbo speaking states. They need to be assured of what they stand to gain in order to attract their sympathy and support. Mere rhetoric that Biafra

will be declared an independent country on unrealizable dates is not the issue but ensuring proactive and wider consultations.

Going by the above, it is advisable and more convenient to advocate and push for restructuring of the country. This is where diplomacy, lobbying and handshake across the Niger should be applied. By embracing restructuring, the component parts that make up Nigeria can develop their respective regions at their own pace. This will change the narrative of the states going cap in hand to the center begging for patronages. This time the reverse will be the case. This singular act will offer the Igbos enormous opportunity for massive investments in Igbo land. With unprecedented investments and solid infrastructure, then the route to realization of independence of Biafra becomes simply fait accompli. The belief that members of Indigenous People of Biafra alone through their present methods can achieve Biafran independence is the missing link.

Conclusion

The agitation seeking for referendum for the declaration of the sovereign state of Biafra by the Indigenous People of Biafra is the group's legitimate right. It is both a natural right and a legal right to aspire for self-determination if the existing political arrangements are no longer favourable to them. According to B.F. Skinner, freedom is nothing but the effort to escape the unpleasant consequences of certain actions. However, there are laid down rules within the ambit of the law. The 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended does not make provisions for referendum –the leitmotif for achieving Biafran independence by the members of Ipob.

It is obvious from empirical data and the body language of the government in power that it is not in a hurry to amend the constitution in order to accommodate referendum. Being faced with such a dire strait, the possible alternative becomes restructuring of the country. Restructuring seems to be more acceptable to most ethnic nationalities in Nigeria now than outright break away. Conclusively, it is more politically sagacious and expedient for the Igbos to join forces with other ethnic groups to clamour for restructuring with its inherent benefits.

Recommendations

1. It is in the best interest of the Nigerian government to critically assess the remote and immediate causes of the agitation with a view to remedying them.
2. The various groups agitating for Biafran independence should rather champion the call for restructuring of the country.
3. The Igbos should look inward and start massive investments in the region.
4. There should be intensive lobbying of lawmakers for the purposes of amending the constitution of Nigeria.
5. The Biafran project should be a collective responsibility of all interest Igbo groups.

References

- Anele, D. (2020). Justification for Resuscitating the Sovereign State of Biafra in *The Leader Newspaper*, 16th August, 2020.
- Bluhm, W.T. (1984). Freedom in "The Social Contract"; Rousseau's "Legitimate Chairs", Vol.16 No.3 in <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3234555>. Retrieved: 11th October, 2020.
- Emekesiri, E. (2020). Message Delivered to the World Igbo Congress on the Occasion of the 3rd Quarter Board/HOD Meeting, 5th September, 2020.
- Gardiner, R.K. (2013). *International Law*, London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Morgantheau, H.J. (2010). *Politics Among Nations The Struggle for Power and Peace* (6th edition), New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers.
- Nwaiwu, C. (2019). Ill-treatment Responsible for Worsening Biafra Agitation, Retrieved : 11th September, 2020 from www.vanguardngr.com
- Osaretin, U.S. (2020). "Biafra Agitation and Politics of Imbalance in Nigeria" Retrieved: 16th August, 2020 from www.omicsonline.org

Rousseau, J.J. (1963). The Social Contract in Somerville, J. and Santoni, R. (Ed.). *Social and Political Philosophy Readings from Plato to Ghandhi*, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc.

Thoreau, H.D. (1963). On the Duty of Civil Disobedience in Somerville, J. and Santoni, R. (Ed.). *Social and Political Philosophy Readings from Plato to Ghandhi*, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/self-determinism> Visited 16th August, 2020.

www.theleaderassumpta.com Visited 16th August, 2020.

Sociological Analysis of the effect of Covid-19 on Religious Practices in Nigeria

Agba A. O.¹; John Thompson Okpa²; Emmanuel Eshiotse³; Akomaye Sylvester⁴ & Thelma Aya Abang⁵

Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Corresponding author:
John Thompson Okpa
okpajohntom@gmail.com
+2348037393275

Abstract

In a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19 which primarily spread from person to person, the Federal Government of Nigeria placed a ban on public gatherings, including religious gatherings. This paper adopts two sociological theories to explain how the suspension of religious activities across the country adversely affects all sphere of religious practices including the church economy and the society. The methodology adopted is the context analysis, a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, concepts within some given qualitative data. Since science and religion cannot be separated at this crucial time in human history, religious leaders should be actively involved in educating and supporting responsible scientific outputs to save humanity from this devastating global pandemic.

Keywords: Sociological Analysis, Covid-19, Religious Practices

Introduction

Currently, the world is facing unprecedented health emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic. This particular virus has continued its relentless spread across the globe; thereby altering the traditional settings of the various structures and institutions of the world. Religious congregations prescribe by most world religions bodies as part of their faith is a casualty of this pandemic. The novel coronavirus, also known as 2019-nCoV or COVID-19, is a pneumonia-like condition of unknown cause, that has caused the present global pandemic that has weakened the global economy and hindered productive social lives. Although, the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is known, the actual cause or origin of COVID-19 is still not known for sure, as there are conflicting reports, allegations, theories, information, and misinformation about the whereabouts of the virus reported in every continent of the world. Claims at the beginning hold that it was from bats sold at the Wuhan market in China; however, the claim which was linked to Botao Xiao, as reported by Geraghty (2020) claimed from a research finding was extremely unlikely. This rebuttal, was due to the fact that the bats in question were not sold at the market and were unlikely to be deliberately eaten. There exists another claim that the virus was accidentally leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which claim the characteristics of the novel coronavirus shows that it was artificially engineered (a controversy theory published by *The Week* of March 9, 2020 (Egunjobi, 2020). This theory was strongly backed by President Donald Trump of the U.S., that China could have unleashed the coronavirus due to some kind of horrible “bio-mistake.” While, his chief of staff, Mike Pompeo also reiterated, “Remember, China has a history of infecting the world, and they have a history of running substandard laboratories” (Weissert, 2020). Whereas, Eberstadt and Blumenthal (2020) in a report on the *New York Post*, stated that China’s Communist authorities have concealed, misled, and lied about the

origins of the epidemic and the death toll of the virus in China, and the World Health Organization has allegedly acted as China's handmaid. Albeit, Pope Francis on his part, sees the coronavirus pandemic as one of "nature's responses" to humans ignoring the current ecological crisis (Gallagher, 2020).

One might be moved to ask after gleaning through the topic, what does a virus have to do with religion? Surprisingly, more than you might think, and we are not referring to the transmission of religious ideas, which some have described using epidemiological models (Quadri, 2020). Rather, reference is being made to the effect, the impact and the implication of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, on religious practices in Nigeria. Nigeria is known globally for being the religious capital of the world, presumed to have the largest number of mega-churches and other religious centres like mosques, temples and shrines, scattered across the country. It is no more news, that in recent times the world is facing a rare and unprecedented global medical emergency in recent history, the COVID-19 pandemic (so declared by the World Health Organisation earlier on in the year). In Nigeria, this health emergency has exceedingly shift religious services from in-person to online worship involving live streams, thus changing the dynamics and disruption of religious habits and practices known to man. This era brought about the need of social distancing in religious gathering thereby casting a dark cloud on the togetherness that comes with religious practices in Nigeria. Senior citizens, children, and pregnant women who are more vulnerable to the virus are said to stay at home. The religious assemblies are experiencing a shortfall in their finances, which are mainly sourced from members through the offerings, tithes and other gifts and contributions. The COVID-19 is spread through droplets; the basic reproduction rate, a measure of transmissibility of the virus, ranges from 2.24 to 3.58 (Zhao, Lin, Ran, Musa, Yang & Wang, 2020). This makes transmission to be easy and seamless, especially, through large gatherings including religious assemblies. This paper seeks to analyse the effect of this approach on religious practices in Nigeria, and that from a sociological standpoint with the intent to see the effect on the economy of the religious assemblies, which is sourced mainly from the financial contributions and gifts from their members.

Theoretical underpinning (structural functionalism & rational choice theory)

The paper is theoretically hinged on two theoretical perspectives, the structural functionalism and the rational choice theories. The structural functionalism as a theoretical perspective holds a view that society as a social system is made up of different parts which are interdependent and interrelated. That is to say that, these various parts of society namely the economy, health, educational, agricultural, including the religious sectors, etc., all perform different roles and functions towards the maintenance, stability and survival of the society. Uche and Uche (2014), explained that the chief proponents of the theory are Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown and that it features prominently in the works of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). In relation to the subject-matter, the theory is apt in its highlight of the role and function of religion in the lives of the people in the country. Religion plays a major role and function, as interacts with other sector of the society or social system for overall functioning the existence, stability, maintenance and survival of society (Otite & Ogionwo, 2008). This is because, before the biting effect of the pandemic on the society, the people found solace in their religious practices and during the heat of the pandemic (despite the ban on religious gatherings) adherents of different religious leanings were still encouraged to practice their religious beliefs on an individual and/or family basis. This is observed to have helped in the regulation of the people from becoming unduly fatigued, depressed and stressed out from boredom and inactivity,

as most preachers, especially, from the Christian bloc, resorted to online transmission of the messages to their members. While, for those who are not adherents of any religious leaning, they might give in to despair from the effect of the lockdown on their finances and social lives, the religious adherents will take it to be the will of God at such a time as this.

Another angle to this, is from the perspective that with the biting of effect of the pandemic on the economy of the religious assemblies. The religious assemblies are experiencing a shortfall in their finances, due to the effect of the pandemic, which are mainly sourced from the financial gifts of their members (through the offerings, tithes and other gifts to the church. Although, these might continue from their committed members, who see it as their duty to God-as long as they have any income, they must give therefrom). Albeit, the overall income the religious assemblies have been observed to have dropped sharply (Egunjobi, 2020; Yezli & Khan, 2020). The religious assemblies, also, tried to reach out to some of their indigent members despite the observed reduction in their income as organisations. Medical outreaches were carried out to address the health challenges of the adherents by medical practitioners affiliated to these organisations in certain areas (Egunjobi, 2020).

Besides the structural functionalism theory, the rational choice theory which was first presented by Cornish and Clarke (1986) in their perspective on offending is also apt. The theory adopts a utilitarian belief that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice in the course of his actions. That is to say that, man chooses the course of his actions to satisfy his basic needs (for money, sex, status, excitement), and this course of action might be averse to the prescribed norms as laid down by the society (Gul, 2009). Furthering the view, Gul (2009) states that individuals are self-interested and think more on how to advance their personal goals, and that against all odds. The rational choice theory is quite manifest during the nationwide lockdown in the country, as many persons were observed to be showing different responses to the directives of the government. For instance, many persons are in denial of the existence of the virus (that it is a ploy of the authorities to siphon funds), some persons will not comply with the directive on the use of facemasks, others flout the directive on social gathering (and in some States like Lagos and Rivers, drastic measures were taken send a strong message ranging from community services by offenders to sack of government officials). Also, in some States like Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa, it was observed that some Christian clergies that flouted the directives on congregational gathering were arrested by the government taskforce in those States. The drive to flout the government directives obviously might be personal for the offenders to want to maintain the status quo of their income, status and satisfaction in the light of the effect of the lockdown on their activities.

Covid-19 situational analysis in Nigeria

Since the index case was confirmed officially on the 27th February, 2020 (after a virology laboratory result came out from the Lagos University Teaching Hospital on the suspected Italian man who arrived Nigeria from Milan on February 24, 2020, on a Turkish Airline), the cases in the country has been on the rise. Fortunately, unlike other countries of the world that register their cases in thousands, the numbers per day are officially limited to the under-hundred benchmark. Also, over time the laboratory capacity across the country has increased from 15 to 26 and has resulted in a gradual increase in testing. A report by the UNICEF Nigeria on 22 May, shows that over 43,000 people have been tested, out of which 7,261 tested positive with 34 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) having reported at

least one confirmed case. Also, within the reporting week, States that reported the highest number of cases were Lagos (676), Kano (86), Oyo (86), Federal Capital Territory (49), Rivers (46), Katsina (42), Plateau (36), Ogun (33), Borno (31), Edo (26) and Jigawa (20). It states that of the total admitted cases, 2,007 cases have been discharged and there have been 221 deaths recorded. Over the preceding months, all the 36 States and the FCT have all been confirmed to have registered cases, as predicted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) at the inception. On the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force (PTF), the Nigerian government periodically extends the reduced restrictions on a bi-weekly basis as it intensifies efforts to test, trace, and treat cases (UNICEF, 2020; Abere, 2020). Although, the various State governments have started reducing the various measures in their fight against the virus, by opening up the closure of their borders, opening places of worship and other places of assembly. Why then, was the closure of worship centres in the first instance?

Covid-19 and the suspension of religious gathering in Nigeria: why?

The government and the medical community across the world are of the view that there is the possibility of public gatherings increasing transmission, social distancing was proffered as the foremost preventive strategy adopted by the global community. For their fellowship meetings to take place, majority of the world religions propose congregational assemblies of its adherents at local, national, and international levels in the practice of their faith. With regards to the pandemic, these large congregational gatherings could serve as a potential focal point for dispersal of novel pathogens, especially, those transmitted through the respiratory route. This has been confirmed in recent events in relation to the COVID-19 spread among religious assemblies, at least in Daegu, South Korea (Wildman, Bulbulia, Sosis & Schjoedt, 2020). Naturally, in a bid to inhibit the spread of the virus, the government of Nigeria has also adopted the global stance of banning all public gatherings, including religious assemblies. In Nigeria, the government made a pronouncement on the 27th of April, to the effect to place a ban on any form of gathering including religious assemblies, in a nationwide lockdown that commenced on 3rd May, 2020. The term lockdown was initially used in prison settings, connoting a security measure where those inside a prison building are to remain confined until the situation that necessitated the lockdown is taken care of. However, the terminology, in context, is not the same in the bid to curtail the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic, where citizens are required to remain in their homes, with restrictions on going to work, to school, and social or religious gatherings until the pandemic is under control (Egunjobi, 2020).

Realistic approaches adopted by religious leaders to combat the spread of the novel COVID-19 pandemic.

The religious leaders of the various religious blocs have been making efforts to adapt to the reality of the effect of the pandemic on their activities. Observations have shown that religious communities have made efforts to adhere to government regulations which include washing of hands or using sanitizers, limiting gatherings to not more than 50 in some states, and social distancing amidst the lockdown rules, and this is in tandem with practices in other parts of the world (Egunjobi, 2020). But, the lockdown brought about the adoption of various innovative means of communication with their congregants, with the internet being the major beneficiary of patronage by the religious communities. Different religious leaders now stream live their services and messages to their congregants, especially, the Christians that have been used to tele-

evangelistic outreaches. All aspects of the services are conducted online, even the offerings are called for, to be transferred directly to the account of the church. Most of the mega-churches, also, as part of their corporate social responsibility beyond their members, doled out some millions of naira to the government through the PTF on COVID-19, as their support for the fight against the pandemic. Also, some mega-churches gave medical equipment to the government's task force, mostly, in Lagos State. While announcements in the assemblies carry series of sensitization messages about the ravaging virus and ways to avoid contracting it.

The dual effect of Covid-19 on religious practices in Nigeria (positive and negative effect)

The effect(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic can be said to dual, that is, it has both positive and negative effects. Some positive effects of the period of the pandemic as pointed out by Egunjobi (2020) includes an observed commitment of adherents to their religious duties like the observance of prayers, scriptural readings, charitable works, renewed family bonding for families that have been kept apart by school and work, among others. He, also, pointed out that it created another avenue of connectedness, support, and celebration of religious meetings via the internet, though various online platforms. Observably, in any situation counted as positive, there must be a down side to it. Hence, on the other hand, the findings show that the lockdown, due to COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted the religious circles negatively as well. The negative effects include a 'slight' drop in the income revenue or financial standings (which comes from the gifts, such as tithes, offerings and vows, and the investments in educational institutions run by the religious organisations), with a marked redundancy of their workers, especially, for those that operate educational institutions as well as other staff members of the organisations. Also, for the smaller assemblies without sufficient resources to access and utilize the available technological platforms, their members are cut-off from fellowship and the ministrations from the clergy and are taking solace in their personal faith. This scenario affects those in the rural areas of the country without access to power supply and Internet connectivity. The situation poses a great challenge, spiritually and psychologically, to the personal lives of the congregants and the clergy, in the show of compassion, love, and care of the people of God at such a time as this where the service and pastoral care are most needed by their 'flock' (Jacelić, 2016; Henderson, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic obviously has affected religious practices in Nigeria, as it did in other parts of the world. A pointer to the nature of the global pandemic where everyone is concerned and affected irrespective of race, colour, nationality, religion, and social economic status Sułkowski, (2020). The religious men and women in the country demonstrated a more positive attitude and respect towards government policies and regulations by adhering to all that it takes to stop the spread of COVID-19. However, there were observed pockets of divergent views among the religious community, possibly, influenced by the views of the larger society or the 'mixed multitude' in their midst.

Myth and facts about the effect of Covid-19 on religious practices

With the spread and effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global life generally, there are certain views and myths that have arisen as a result. This has resulted from the actions and inactions of the leaders in the political circles across the world, with contributions from the scientific community without any clear stand on the issues of the pandemic. Hence, the hue and cry, and the recalcitrance of certain persons from the religious community across the world, including Nigeria. The instance of the Rev. Tony Spell, a pastor of the Life Tabernacle Church, a Oneness Pentecostal congregation in Baton Rouge, USA., comes to mind. In explaining his defiant stance of the Louisiana Governor's order banning meetings of more than fifty people, he

was quoted as saying, “It’s not a concern. ... The virus, we believe, is politically motivated. We hold our religious rights dear and we are going to assemble no matter what someone says” (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020). About three hundred people gathered on the Tuesday after the ban and over a thousand on the following Sunday. Rev. Spell was seen handing out anointed handkerchiefs, preaching against fear, and telling his people that this is an extreme test of faithfulness brought on by the spirit of the antichrist. However, a petition calling for Rev. Spell’s arrest and prosecution for reckless endangerment has been signed by over 7,000 people. This attitude of the blame game had spread at inception of the pandemic, but as a myth, over time it has given way to better judgement from the reality of its existence and effect on the socio-economic and religious life of the Nigerian nation. A congregational gathering for worship has been observed as an effective mechanism and avenue for accelerating the spread of the virus (Wildman, Bulbulia, Sosis & Schjoedt, 2020; Egunjobi, 2020).

Although, certain recalcitrant religious congregations (as led by their leaders) are accelerating viral transmission, it is notable that most religious groups are innovating in response to opposing demands of collective worship and social distancing. For instance, religious communities all over the world are conducting online services, stretching the world’s data bandwidth at certain times of the week to stream live videos of suitably modified rituals, sermons, and prayers (Egunjobi, 2020). Many religious assemblies are, also, disseminating practical health information and offering urgent financial help in the wake of the rapidly degrading economic conditions of their immediate communities and nations. The behaviors of problematic churches are attracting the media’s attention, but in many regions of the world religious communities are more beneficial than harmful (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020). While, it might be impossible, at present, to sum over the global diversity of religious communities, the fact remains that many religious communities in Nigeria and around the world are active in the fight against COVID-19, and this is a clear reminder that the concept of “religion” does not carve human social behaviors neatly at any joint. Although, all religious groups do not line up behind one another in their individual responses to the pandemic, they have all taken different approaches in their roles to their strengthening resolve and motivating action to support their immediate congregants, their community of domicile and the nation at large.

Conclusion and Policy implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a noticeable impact with regards to the religious practices in Nigeria. An evident association between early suspension of communal gatherings and lower occurrence of COVID-19 infections in countries that took such measures promptly, can be easily discerned, especially, in the Scandinavian countries. There are few lessons to be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic for the religious community, the governments at various levels, as well as, national and international health organizations. The religious community should form closer ties, in forming alliances across inter-religious and denominational boundaries, in a bid to having a unified stance in dealing with such crisis. On their part, the government should be prompt and proactive in their responses to such situations without being political about its handling. Policies such as the suspension of communal gatherings must be promulgated in a uniform manner across the federating units, to ensure social distancing to curb the spread of such pandemic viruses. Measures should be put in place to bridge the gap between the government and the religious community in the bid to cater for the people. Health facilities, as a matter of urgency, should be provided and adequately equipped at least in all the local government headquarters, to cater for the health needs of the citizens.

More practical and innovative preventive measures have to be introduced during times of health calamities, like a standby medical corps in liaison with the community health workers in the rural areas. The community health workers should be well funded to do their jobs, in the sensitization of the people on proper hygiene practices, even in normal and beyond crisis times. All level of leaders, from the religious, to the social, political and leaders in the medical profession, should exhibit a high sense of sagacity and adopt pragmatic approaches in their dealing with situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The government, at such times of emergencies, should be conscious in co-opting the clergy in the suspension of congregational gatherings. Nigeria as a country should have an exigency plan such as a standard operation procedure for health practices nationwide, with regards to congregational assemblies during times of infectious disease pandemics. On their part, scientific community should make informative and insightful generalizations where possible, in the fight against the pandemic.

References

- Abere, O. J. (2020). Survival analysis of Novel Corona Virus (2019-Ncov) using Nelson Aalen Survival Estimate. *International Journal Of Business Education and Management Studies*. 3(1), 30-40.
- Egunjobi, J. P. (2020). The Perception of Covid-19 as a Fear Factor in the Preparation for the Pandemic Aftermath. In *Research Gate*. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.14933.17125.
- Gul, S. (2009). An evaluation of rational choice theory in criminology. *Sociology and applied science*, 4(8), 36-44.
- Henderson, T. (2020). Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Available online:<https://lcaenews.createandsend.com/t/ViewEmail/t/8F4EDFC090399D272540EF23F30FEDED/C67FD2F38AC4859C/?tx=0&previewAll=1&print=1&source=PrintPreview&context=BE1559E32AC7F640D744A813E2B67A32> (accessed on 8 April 2020).
- Jacelić, S. (2016). *Collectivistic Religions. Religions, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Otite, O. & Ogionwo, W. (2008). *An introduction to sociological studies*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.
- Quadri, S. A. (2020). COVID-19 and religious congregations: Implications for spread of novel pathogens. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 96, 219-221.
- Sułkowski, L. (2020). Covid-19 Pandemic; Recession, Virtual Revolution Leading to De-globalization? *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 12: 1-11.

- Sulkowski, L. & Ignatowski, G. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on organization of religious behaviour in different Christian denominations in Poland. *Religions*, 11(254), 1-15.
- Uche, A. O. & Uche, B. I. (2014). Some social work theories and their applications in social research. In Ikeanyibe, O. M. & Mbah, P. O. (ed.). *An anthology of theories for social research* (pp. 83-101). Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.
- UNICEF (2020). *NIGERIA: COVID-19 Situation Report – #09. Reporting Period: May16th-May 22nd, 2020*. Retrieved on 06/08/2020 from <https://rapidmsnigeria.org/br/2020/5>
- Wildman, W. J., Bulbulia, J., Sosis, R. & Schjoedt, U. (2020). Religion and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 10(2), 115-117.
- Yezli, S. & Khan, A. (2020). COVID-19 social distancing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: bold measures in the face of political, economic, social and religious challenges. *Travel Med. Infect. Dis.* Retrieved on 06/08/2020 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101692>.
- Zhao, S., Lin, Q., Ran, J., Musa, S. S., Yang, G. & Wang, W. (2020). Preliminary estimation of the basic reproduction number of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China, from 2019 to 2020: a data-driven analysis in the early phase of the outbreak. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 92:214-217.