

# Sociological Assessment of the Perception of Nigerians on the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) Pandemic

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**Abstract:** - This paper assesses the perception of Nigerians in regard to the Coronavirus disease pandemic. It focuses on the level of awareness and attitude of the people towards the Covid-19, and how it impacts on their livelihoods, including the measures taken, and associated challenges to contain the disease and halt its wild-fire-like contagion. The paper adopts a desk review methodology to argue that Coronavirus disease is a reality that has an overarching social, psychological, and economic implications for people world over, Nigeria, not exempted. Findings reveal that regardless of this stark reality, most Nigerians tend to jettison the presence of Covid-19 and its epidemiological and socio-economic havoc. Measures adopted by the Government such as social/physical distancing, hand washing and or sanitization, lockdowns, among others, are most often disregarded by people. Also, to reduce the all-round effect of the disease, Government and other concerned Nigerians regularly give out palliatives to ameliorate the challenges occasioned by Covid-19, however, these efforts are been jeopardised because of the selfish and vested interests of a few Nigerians, including some Government officials, who are charged with the responsibility of distributing palliatives intended for the most vulnerable members of the public. These unscrupulous individuals, rather than act as directed, convert the palliatives to personal use, and, in some cases, give out to friends and relations; a situation that heightens the skepticism and sarcasm among majority of Nigerians, concerning Covid-19. The paper concludes that while it is relevant to align with the international community in finding solutions to the pandemic, it is fitting to look in-wards because of Nigeria's peculiar cultural orientations and belief systems. In this way, indigenous remedy would be applied in solving global problem such as the novel Coronavirus disease that threatens humanity today.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown, Nigeria, palliatives, perception

## I. INTRODUCTION

Across the world, people of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs and ideological inclinations, continue to battle the dreaded Coronavirus disease and its concomitant impacts. However, in Nigeria, it seems people are yet to come to terms with the fact that Covid-19 is a reality and not a myth, as most of them still disregard the regular advisory given by the government and private organisations. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can be transmitted between animals and people, causing

illnesses that may range from the common cold to more severe respiratory syndromes. The acronym Covid-19 emerged in February 2020, when the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses and the World Health Organisation announced official names for both the virus and the disease it causes: SARS-CoV-2 and Covid-19, respectively. The name of the disease is derived from the words *corona*, *virus*, and *disease*, while the number 19 represents the year that it emerged (Elflein, 2020).

Man is a social animal, who, in the course of his evolution, had faced numerous social-biological, economic and political challenges arising from natural or man-made phenomena at different historical epochs. Historically, humanity has experienced many deadly forms of diseases, some of which still exist because of lack of permanent cure. Some have been eradicated through vaccination (e.g. small pox, polio) while others are still being managed using drugs (e.g. tuberculosis, Malaria, Common cold, HIV/AIDS). Whatever might have been used to mitigate the effects of these diseases, available data shows that mankind suffers grievously from their effects, including deaths that deplete world population in the process. In some instances, social, economic and political lives of people were significantly affected. Families lost loved ones, friendships and relationships shattered or improved, businesses and sources of livelihoods lost, and old ways of governance gave way for new, effective and efficient governance structure. Making reference to the “gaol fever” also called *jail distemper (typhus)* outbreak in Winchester prison in England in 1780, Lines, Burke-Shyne and Girelli, noted that about 250 years after, the “prisons of the world are struggling to address a new ‘gaol fever’ that threatens to dwarf the impacts of previous historic contagions – Covid-19” (Lines, Burke-Shyne & Girelli, 2020),

Coronavirus disease first reared its ugly head in the busy business community of Wuhan, in the province of Hubei in China, in December 2019. Although the virus is not the first of its kind as there had been previously similar viruses such as SARS, Ebola, among others, it is however new in that experts are still at a loss regarding the manner of its spread and how it infects hundreds of thousands of people in a single day, which is faster than hitherto existing virus species. Covid-19 is a novel coronavirus that had not previously been identified in

humans. It shares similar and common modes of transmission with SARS coronavirus, which is cough and sneeze droplets expelled into the air by infected persons.

Coronavirus disease is a highly contagious disease recording worrying level of mortality. New cases are being detected and reported around the world daily. Statistics show that as of April 29, 2020, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) had been confirmed in around 210 countries including Nigeria, and infected 3,154,085 people worldwide, while killing a total of 218,764. Countries recording the highest number of deaths are the U. S. A., Italy, and Spain. The number of infected persons in Nigeria was 1,532 (Statista, 2020). The novelty of this coronavirus outbreak is indicative of how a biological and epidemiological issue could become a social, economic and political subject (Sadati, Lankarani & Lankarani, 2020).

Coronavirus Disease first arrived the shores of Nigeria on February 27, 2020, in Lagos State. It was carried by an Italian citizen, who later tested negative after some time in a hospital in Lagos, thus, becoming the index case for Covid-19 in Nigeria. Since then it has spread to almost all the states of the federation infecting thousands of people and claiming more than a hundred lives (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control [NCDC], 2020). This was after the shutdown of both public and private businesses, restriction of movement and all forms of social interactions initially in two states - Lagos and Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory, and later in other states. Against this backdrop, the paper addresses the following questions: What is the perception, level of awareness and attitude towards the coronavirus disease among Nigerians? How does Covid-19 impact on the livelihoods of Nigerians? What measures are being adopted by the government to cushion the effect of the pandemic on the citizenry and how effective have they been?

## II. METHOD

This study employed a desk review methodology to source for data from online journals, the electronic and print media, and agency publications to sociologically examine the perception and level of awareness of Nigerians on Covid-19, how the disease impacts on the livelihoods of the people, and the mitigation measures.

## III. THEORETICAL TRACTIONS

This paper is anchored on the Structural-Functional theory. Structural functionalism is a perspective in sociology that views society as comprising structures and functions, including family, education, economy, religion (faith), politics, culture (ritual) working in sync to perpetuate human existence and life (Moffitt & Chapel, n.d). Structural-functionalism is an early form of explaining the interrelationship between the different components of the social system that started in the 1800s with the works of French and British philosophers Comte, Spencer and

Durkheim who applied biological metaphor to understand society (Potts, Vella, Dale & Sipe, 2014).

Some basic assumptions of Structural-functionalism include:

- i. Society consists of both structures and functions that are interconnected and interdependent, and ultimately focused on maintaining or mediating societal equilibrium and or necessary transformation;
- ii. Social systems consist of both structures and functions that are necessary for the ongoing health or survival of that system;
- iii. Structures exist to meet the functional needs of a system
- iv. Systemic functionality (i.e. how parts of the system work) across and within structures serves to reinforce and maintain the stability of the system's structures in the context of an ever-changing, complex and unpredictable system.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons jointly with his students in the 1950s cum 60s, built on the works of the early aforementioned structural-functionalists, arguing that structural-functionalism was a grand theory of sociology that could be applied to understand any system. Standing on the shoulder of Marx Weber, Parsons developed a structural-functional framework based on his Weberian belief, that shared norms and values within systems are the keystone to systemic survival and a deviation from them would compromise the same system. However, Parsons' framework is a four-legged prerequisites that social systems generally seek to achieve to maintain systems stability: Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration and Latent pattern maintenance, otherwise referred to as AGIL (Potts, Vella, Dale & Sipe, 2014).

Just like his colleagues, Parsons viewed society as a system of interacting social unit, institutions and organisations hence, he was interested in the force of social norms, and how humans come to feel that force and act accordingly. In their evolutionary process or development, humans face numerous problems that require a solution(s). Therefore, Parsons reckoned that social systems arose to solve four particular problems (functional imperatives) for modern developed nation-state systems:

*Adaptation:* Social system must cope with their external boundary conditions, such as their resource base, physical environment, territory and so on. Economy activity serves to solve problems of adaptation.

*Goal Attainment:* The goals of societies and social institutions have to be defined, resolving goal conflicts, prioritising some over others, some over others, determining resource allocations and directing social energies. Political activity organises and directs the goal attainment of modern social systems.

*Integration:* All of the adaptive efforts of social institutions within a society need to be integrated into a cohesive system.

The institutions need to be regulated so that a harmonious society can emerge from their integration. Legal system solve this problems, seeking overarching principles for aligning social activities.

*Latency*: The encultured patterns of behaviour required by the social system must be maintained. Peoples' motivation must be established and renewed, and the tensions they experience as they negotiate the social order must be managed. Furthermore, the cultural patterns that accomplish this renewal must themselves be maintained and renewed. Fiduciary systems such as families, schools and churches solve these problems of pattern/tension management. In Parsons' perception, these four functional imperatives – Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, Latency: AGIL – provide complex and systematic account of social phenomena (Four particular Prolems, May 13, 2020).

Spencer's conception of structural-functionalism focuses on understanding social life as involving social individuals confronting challenging and complex terrains (Offer, 2019). Spencer likened society to a living organism and held that as a social organism with "transcendent differences" society was an "aggregate of individuals distributed over a wide area". In this light, the "units" (individuals) in society become subject to "actions and reactions between the community and each member of it, such that either affects the other in nature". Enunciating Spencer conception of the interdependency inherent in society, Offer pointed out that over time, individuals adapt to each other and to the society including external conditions, leading to changes that in turn lead to further adaptations in future generations who would inherit the characteristics acquired by their predecessors- an evolutionary process of life and societal succession (Offer, 20219).

Durkheim (1895) agreed with Spencer on the interconnectivity between the social and the individuals, but stressed that the social transcends the will and consciousness of the individuals who are outside the reach of the social (as cited in Meloni, 2016). In Durkheim's view, society is greater than the sum of its parts, which includes its individual members whose behaviour is not the same as collective behaviour; which makes studying collective behaviour different from studying an individual's actions. He added that society acts as external restraint on individual behaviour; meaning the individual cannot be said to be greater or bigger than the society of which he/she is part of. Interestingly, Durkheim interpreted this position in a paradoxical manner stating "If I do not submit to the conventions of society, if in my dress I do not conform to the customs observed in my country and in my class, the ridicule I provoke, the social isolation in which I am kept, produce, although in an attenuated form, the same effects as punishment" (as cited in Little, 2014). In sum, for Durkheim, the communal beliefs, morals, and attitudes of a society is the *collective conscience*.

Structural-functionalism, as particularly expounded by Parsons, has been criticised by several scholars among whom was Alexander and Colomy, 1960; Giddens, 1979, 1984, among others. The major criticism against the theory include: a simplistic and static model of society/system that focused on order and equilibrium, making it unable to adequately account for transformation and change that occasionally occur in the society. Giddens pointed out that the theory places too much emphasis on the importance of integration within the system, while downplaying the role of the individual and agency in the system. Alexander and Colomy, et al., argued that structural-functionalism does not adequately address issues of self-reference, complexity or conflict that does and could surface from time to time within the society (Potts, Vella, Dale & Sipe, 2014).

However, the theory has provided some level of knowledge and given insight into the workings of systemic society. For example, the Coronavirus pandemic has led to the closure of public and private business (economy), religious centres of worship (religion), schools (education), stoppage of cultural activities such as marriages, burials, and other social gatherings; also there is increase in domestic violence and associated issues. It could be argued that the entire global society or community is in a state of disequilibrium evident in the world order that is currently under threat because of the coronavirus disease which started in late December 2020, as a health issue from a seemingly harmless community in China. As expected though, the world would certainly not be the same again after Covid-19 because there would be massive transformation in the social structure of the global human society resulting in, hopefully, new ways and manners of social interactions cutting across all spheres of the society that would be passed on to next generations in an evolutionary process as elucidated by the Functionalists.

Spencer's focus, on understanding social life as involving social individuals confronting challenging and complex terrains, shapes his work on the actions of professionals and professional institutions in particular.

#### IV. PERCEPTION, LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORONAVIRUS DISEASE AMONG NIGERIANS

Perception is a subjective position held by an individual or group of individuals based on knowledge and environment. In other words, the amount of information available to an individual and their ability to process such information determines their perception or view on any existing phenomenon. Likewise, the background in terms of environment or location of an individual, influences his/her ability to process the received or acquired information. For example, a rural dweller is more likely to view a particular issue or situation differently from someone who resides in the urban centre, and has some appreciable level of education. Although the reverse might actually apply.

A closer look at the manner and ways in which most Nigerians react to the Covid-19 pandemic is emblematic of their perception and awareness level. Electronic and print media are awash with reports of how most people across the nation have dismissed the claim that a new disease called Coronavirus has invaded humans and the human space, thereby causing not only global epidemiological disasters but also social, economic and political pandemonium that currently threatens the very soul of humanity. Many Nigerians' attitude towards Covid-19 is either skepticism, sarcasm, ignorance, or out-right rejection. A survey conducted by the BBC at the end of March, 2020, to determine the perception of Lagosians, revealed that survival seemed to matter more to the people than the danger posed by the Coronavirus disease. The survey also showed that risking infection was preferable to hunger and starvation. Thus, it became a question of "fearing hunger, not the virus". In concrete terms, one of the respondents erroneously stated: "It is hunger I am worried about, not a virus. I even heard it doesn't kill young people" (Orjinmo, 2020). This response arguably represents the view held by majority of the people, and points to the assertion that the socio-economic conditions of people determine their social consciousness (see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 1848, *The Communist Manifesto*); in this instance, Nigerian's consciousness of Covid-19 presence and its catastrophic consequences.

The level of awareness of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) among the population as at the time of writing was no longer in question. This could be gleaned from the information provided by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), during the daily briefing by the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on Covid-19. The PTF was constituted to sensitize and update Nigerians on Coronavirus devastating effects regarding the number of people infected, deaths, and recovery cases as well as other efforts of the Federal government in tackling the pandemic. Aside this efforts, various print and electronic media are constantly pushing out information on the nature of the disease, mode of infection and spread. The traditional leaders as well as leaders of all religious based organisations, have also joined in the sensitisation campaign. On this score, people have been advised not to in any manner trivialize the disease and its virulent characteristic. The disease, contrary to popular opinion among Africans generally and Nigerians in particular, is not a disease only of the elite or the whites; it is not amenable to hot or cold temperatures, neither does drinking of hot liquid (water) reduce or eliminate the biological and epidemiological effect of the disease (VOA, aired on ITV, May 10, 2020). Oriniowo observed that majority of Nigerians were still skeptical about the virus and its impact on human lives (Oriniowo, 2020).

#### V. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NIGERIANS

The socio-economic impact of the coronavirus disease is apparently more than the health consequences judging by reports in local and international media including international organisations such as the United Nations. It has been revealed

that in addition to the health hazards occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic panic and social disruptions that it throws up have significant cost to the global economy. Thus, a United Nations Trade and Development Agency (UNCTAD) estimated the cost of the outbreak to be around US\$2 trillion in 2020 (cited in Akanni & Gabriel, 2020). Coronavirus outbreak continues to have severe consequences on social values globally, leading to panic among some sections of the population and a genuine sense of disappointments especially among the younger generation, indicative of societies' vulnerability in confronting hazards (Sadati, Lankarani & Lankarani, 2020). Several media outlets reported that Nigerians, especially those at the lower rung of the socio-economic ladder were adversely being affected as a result of the nation-wide lockdown. This is expected as Africans generally, and Nigerians in particular, are used to communal life of shared values. One human right television and radio station in the country, continues to receive reports of poor households in need of food palliatives mostly because many of them are petty or small scale business men and women who could not step out to their business locations where they get their daily bread because of the social distancing regulations (Human Rights Radio and Television, 2020).

According to Africa Business Radio, though social distancing is a valid containment solution for coronavirus, it is a novel situation that most Africans struggle to come to terms with. Generally and culturally, Africans tend to survive difficulty by teeming together as communities of care, not in isolation to an individualistic mindset as their Western counterparts. The World Health Organisation and Centre for Disease Control are promoting social distancing as an essential response to this pandemic, ignoring the fact that there are many parts of the world where this approach is contextually unacceptable or even near impossible (African Business Radio [ABR], 2020). To the average Nigerian, any concept that poses a threat to the communal wellbeing is seen as foreign and unwelcome. In the midst of poverty, insecurity, unemployment and a plethora of other challenges, the mindset of "togetherness" is what has always been the bedrock of Nigeria's survival not self-isolation or physical distancing. This has contributed to attitude of Nigerians towards the existence of Covid-19.

Statistics show that oil accounts for about 15% of Nigeria's GDP and 80% of government revenue, yet majority of the citizens live below poverty level. The current global novel coronavirus disease pandemic makes the situation worse as it leaves many households cutting across different socio-economic strata in dire circumstances. In Nigeria, the situation is worse especially for the small and medium scale businesses that practically live on the money or profit they make in a day. For example, a survey carried out by the Independent Television (ITV) located atop the Mpape Hills, in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, among some traders, revealed that they could barely make any sales in a day because of the lockdown initiated by the Federal Government in the Territory since March, 2020. The traders reported that they and their

dependents had exhausted their savings and wished for an end to the coronavirus so that business could pick up again quickly and life returns to normalcy (ITV, May 9, 2020).

The Coronavirus disease has undoubtedly caused serious concern for all religious adherents. According to the foremost sociologist, Emile Durkheim, religion is a system of prohibited beliefs and practices about what is sacred in a society different from other phenomena. Thus, religion has an overarching influence on members of society, especially in times of disasters (as cited in Kasapoglu and Akbal, 2020). Religion binds the people into a community of believers and determines their ability to cope during difficult times. Religion being an important sub-system of the society, is sacred to its adherents. For example, among the many measures taken by the Turkish government since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, congregational religious worship is allowed to continue perhaps because of its importance to the people. As Kasapoglu and Akbal noted “It is noteworthy that the government, which has taken measures in many areas and institutions of the society since the Corona virus epidemic started to appear, has not taken any measures regarding the visit to Umrah. Because it is thought that changing the rules (meaning) of worship, which is considered sacred by the whole society, will cause reactions and fluctuations in the society” (Kasapoglu and Akbal, 2020). This in the view of many was an initial mistake made by Minister in charge of Religious Affairs which was later corrected by directing the closure of mosques as an addition to the banning practices that came on the heels of increase in the number of infections and deaths within a week.

In times of troubles and tribulations or any unexplainable challenge such as the Covid-19 phenomenon, Nigerians, especially the poor, find succor and consolation in religion and try to make sense of their situation. However, the situation has changed since the outbreak of the pandemic. The restriction on communal or congregational worship as part of measures to curb the spread of the Coronavirus disease has added to the dissatisfaction felt by adherents of different faiths in the country, and consequently affected their religious solidarity exemplified in such rituals as handshake, music, dance, singing, and prayer, all of which give meaning to their everyday lives.

Education is yet another aspect of the social system or structure that has been impacted. Reports indicate that the closure of schools in countries around the world has affected about 70% of the global students’ population, particularly among the most vulnerable members of society (UNESCO, 2020). Education is a prerequisite in many respects for upward mobility in society. It serves the function of socialization, learning, and as a status symbol, it determines social or class placement in most societies including Nigeria. Schools are closed, leaving all categories of learners at home, suggesting that the school is temporarily relieved of its role of socialisation. Some of the students might turn to one form of delinquent or criminal acts because of loneliness and

restlessness and boredom. Consequently, school, one of the fiduciary systems of society, designed to solve the problems of tension management, loses its efficacy in the face of the current global happenings caused by Coronavirus disease.

Additionally, the danger posed by Covid-19 could be seen in the socio-psychological cost of staying at home that needs consideration by all concerned individuals. For example, studies so far conducted into the impact of the Covid-19, revealed that women now bear the brunt of the staying at home directives. Women are beginning to experience domestic violence and have become victims of the closure or stay-at-home directives of the government (Kasapoglu and Akbal, 2020).

Further, the World Health Organisation cautioned that there would be a rise in the levels of loneliness, stress, anxiety, harmful abuse of drugs and alcohol, depression and even suicidal tendencies (as cited in Muanya, The Guardian, April 5, 2020). With coronavirus declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, social isolation and lock downs have been enforced in Nigeria leading to different mental reactions. People are dealing with the loss of jobs, social connections, loved ones and even of a future they once dreamt of. There is no way that the present struggle to live with such uncertainties will not lead to post traumatic stress. The WHO Regional Director for Europe, Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, echoes that “as Covid-19 pandemic sweeps across the world, it is causing widespread concern, fear and stress, all of which are natural and normal reactions to the changing and uncertain situation that everyone finds themselves in” (as cited in Muanya, The Guardian, April 5, 2020).

Similarly, the stay-at-home directives that led to the closure of schools, has taken its toll on parent-child relationship. Managing and monitoring the activities of the children has put parents in confusion regarding how to balance the time spent in productive and non-productive activities of their wards. It would not be surprising to find the children engaging in noxious social media activities and such other acts at this time that could lead to unintended consequences for both parent and child. For example, one parent had expressed fear that some girls would be impregnated by boys in their neighbourhood (Personal Conversation, 2020).

## VI. MEASURES ADOPTED TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The government has taken some very important steps by closing the international borders, inter-state boundaries, restricting free movement of persons within and across state boundaries, advocating social/physical distancing, washing of hands, testing as many people as possible, supporting households with food palliatives, amongst others.

Among the many measures adopted by countries aimed at tackling the Coronavirus pandemic is public health approach. This amounts to building the capacity of clinics and hospitals and strict quarantine of infected patients, campaigns for hand

washing and cough etiquettes, the use of face mask, and border and boundary closures as well as total lockdown and physical distancing. Even though these measures particularly the use of face masks has seen an increase in the making and use of these masks by the local population, it has not stopped further outbreaks, as findings revealed that the number of confirmed cases continued to spike daily; causing serious worry for the Presidential Task Force (PTF) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and other concerned Nigerians (Sadati, et al., 2020; NCDC, 2020).

As afore-stated, the different and, in some cases, overlapping strategies employed have yielded little or no results. The reason for this ineffectiveness could be attributed to the very perception of the general public *ab initio*, which suggest that majority of Nigerians are yet to be convinced of the actual existence of Covid-19 or even its ability to infect large numbers of people within minutes. The general lockdown imposed on the country was meant to curb wide-spread impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, human beings as expected would always want to disobey laid down rules and regulations (laws/norms) even when these laws are meant to protect their individual and collective interest. This scenario had made the Coordinator of the PTF on Covid-19, Dr. Sani Aliyu, to state that “it’s about behavioural change, it’s not easy to curtail people’s freedom and to get them to do what they are not used to” (Aliyu, 2020). Thus, a joint security task force (JSTF) was constituted by all the states of the Federation to ensure that people comply with the lockdown directives of the federal and states governments and those found wanting be penalised accordingly after being tried in designated mobile courts.

The JSTF has reported that the citizens continued to disregard the lockdown directives as many of them still move about, even those who are not essential workers or on essential duty (condition for free movement); and majority not wearing masks. Also, interstate travels continued unabated leading to further spread of the disease. The establishment of the courts meant to try and punish violators of the lockdown directives also continued to record more cases of offenders. (FCT JSTF, 2020). Although, according to the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Public Affairs, Ajuri Ngelale, in fairness to the urban dwellers, there was some level of compliance amongst them despite the high rate of infections (Ngelale, 2020).

Security agents, too, have been implicated in the non-conformity of some Nigerians to the travel ban and inter-state boundary closure. The Radio Nigeria news reported that public transporters and private persons had flouted the inter-state travel ban as they continued to carry passengers across state boundaries; a scenario common in all the states. Some passengers who interviewed disclosed that some of the security agents at the boundary post collected money from them and allowed them passage to continue their journey (Radio Nigeria, 4 o, clock News, May 11, 2020).

Distribution of palliatives among the population particularly the most vulnerable, apparently to alleviate the suffering of Nigerians during the lockdown period, was seen by many as lip service. Reason being that these palliatives hardly even get to the targeted audience, and if at all they did, the recipients or beneficiaries were short-changed. Reports and video clips on various Television stations (documentaries and news items) showed that some people got a sachet of salt, a tuber of yam, and similar such items in insignificant qualities. Some unscrupulous individuals had diverted food and other items meant for the people, to other locations, ostensibly to be later shared among themselves or even out-rightly sold. The implication of these unwholesome acts by a few selfish individuals and government officials, would be increase cynicism and skepticism relating to the entire palliative exercise and sincerity of government in cushioning the effect of the lockdown caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Inherent in all of this “disappearing acts” is a call to the coronavirus to continue its wanton destruction of lives and depletion of livelihoods of Nigerians of all socio-economic strata. When people lose their livelihoods, poverty ensues, and in a chain-like manner, crime follows. This is what the structural-functionalists mean by a defect in one aspect of the society impact on the entire social system or structure. For instance, hunger and general lack or want, leads people to engage in sharp practices including criminal acts that are detrimental to the functioning of the society today and in the future.

On the economic front, various financial institutions in the country had step up to the challenge by making donations (in cash or equipment deployment). Government on its part, too, had provided waivers to businesses. For example, it asked that there be no demurrage on goods imported via the sea ports. Although, implementation of this measure appeared to have been stalled by bureaucratic tactics as those who were supposed to benefit from the initiative had yet to see its implementation. Similarly, according to Lai Mohammed, Minister of Information and Culture, the creative industry, including artistes, authors, publishers, and sundry persons or groups, would be given some form of financial assistance as government commitment to their plight (Mohammed, 2020). This is a commendable step, however, actualising it might be problematic.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study of the perceptions, awareness level and attitudes of Nigerians towards Covid-19 pandemic is intended first and foremost as a useful contribution to the ongoing discourse on the novel Coronavirus disease, particularly on the need to involve all relevant stakeholders in the quest to combat and overcome it. The study found that while some people acknowledge that Coronavirus disease is a reality, many are unconcerned and continue to display varying degrees of negative behaviours towards the disease’s ravaging capacity. Perhaps this recalcitrant attitude displayed by some citizens, led one of Nigeria’s musicians, Cobhams Asuquo, to state in his song on Covid-19 that *Coronavirus na disease wey no get*

leg, but ideywaka from person to person.... (Broken English); translated as *Coronavirus does not have legs, but it walks from person to person* (Cobhams, 2020). It is imperative, therefore, to accept the fact of Covid-19's existence and presence among us. In this way, the world can frontally fight the battle and defeat the virus and its catastrophic consequences. The impact of the pandemic on Nigerians is far-reaching, including social, economic, psychological and political but, importantly, on their socio-psychological wellbeing. The current study found that despite Government's efforts to curtail the Coronavirus disease and its adverse effects on the population, by adopting international best practices and following World Health Organisation (WHO) protocol, such as social/physical distancing, washing of hands, restrictions of movement, among others, many people remained adamant and continued to flagrantly disobey these orders or advisories.

Disease pandemics are not new to mankind; history is replete with numerous kinds of diseases that have plagued humankind at different times in the past. We must draw on our inherent resilience as humans to overcome the current pandemic. In the words of Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, "the issue facing each and every one of us is how we manage and react to the stressful situation unfolding so rapidly in our lives and communities. Here we can draw on the remarkable powers of strength and cooperation that we also, fortunately, possess as humans. And that is what we must try to focus on to respond most effectively to this crisis as individuals, family and community members, friends and colleagues" (Kluge, 2020). However, the question that should occupy our minds as Nigerians is: are there any lessons to learn from the current Coronavirus Disease pandemic? It is hoped that the different nation's leaders including Nigeria's, in whatever position they find themselves, local, state or federal, would learn some lessons from the current Covid-19 pandemic and endeavour to provide good leadership and governance especially in the areas of human capacity building and human security generally, now and post- Covid-19. This assessment concludes that an effective public campaign and sensitisation that takes cognisance of Nigeria's socio-cultural milieu and its peculiar circumstances is required to convince the generality of Nigerians on the need to observe laid down protocols aimed at curtailing and containing the Coronavirus disease pandemic.

#### VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Expanded study to be conducted comprising the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The impact of Covid-19 on the economy; the impact of the pandemic on the nation's health sector. Coping mechanism of parents and children as well as the elderly under the lockdown. The political and security implications of Covid-19.

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