



ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria is one of the countries affected by the "COVID-19" outbreak. The severe economic obstacles caused by the pandemic are likely to exacerbate an already perceived brittle political fragility. A country of more than 206 million, with a fragile democracy, a weak health care system, and an inundated economy, vulnerable to the outrageous impact of COVID-19, politically and economically. Hence, the present study aims to scrutinize the pandemic's politico-economic implications on the Nigerian state. This study is qualitative research which employed secondary sources of data in scrutinizing Covid-19 potential impacts on Nigeria's politico-economic wellbeing, such as library information, documents from journal articles, books, newspapers, and reports, among others, to provide a comprehensive outlook of the phenomenon. The study posits that the Coronavirus continuously shapes and cripples the Nigerian economy, causing a substantial decline in GDP, political lurch, the outrageous effect on the health sector with a less coordinated response from the government, which makes the first and second wave more challenging for the people and government to bear. The study proposes an integrated approach between public and private stakeholders in the area of health and economy to deal with the deadly phenomenon, thereby curtailing its anticipated effects in the future.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Political, Economic Impacts, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic's novelty has disrupted the world economy with far-reaching and unprecedented consequences on developed, developing, and emerging economies. While globalization might benefit modern man,

its challenges cannot be overemphasized with this phenomenon. The word 'pandemic' is described as a contagious disease that spread on a global scale, which its outbreak could affect a significant proportion of the population. However, despite the sophisticated technology level in the modern era, it failed to revamp these economies as they rush in for a vaccine. Such plague or pandemic is approximately perpetual, albeit not every epidemic reaches up to a global pandemic level. History is the spectator of numerous such pandemics, which resulted in an enormous loss of human lives. The Spanish Flu (broke-out in 1918-19 resulting in 40-50 million fatalities), the Hong Kong Flu (broke-out in 1968-70, causing 1.1 million deaths), the Asian Flu (broke-out in 1957-58 and resulting in 1.1 million death toll). They resulted in an exponential loss of human lives and outrageously distraught the affected nations' economies (Wua & Chan, 2020; Bedford et al., 2020).

However, the available literature discovers that the plausibleness of the plagues relatively has been intensified over the past century as a result of the widespread globetrotting, urbanization, and globalization, among other substantial misuses of the natural environment (Samal, 2014). The world on December 31, 2019, grieved another horrifying outbreak of such a pandemic when China informed the World Health Organization (WHO) nation-state office concerning the eruption of mysterious pneumonia categorized by high fever, sore throat, dry cough, tiresome and periodic gastrointestinal symptoms which emerged in a seafood market, the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, Hubei, China. Even though the highly affected market was immediately shut down; however, in the following month of January, an enormous number of people became the target and victims of this mysterious disease (Sareen, 2020).

Moreover, in a short instance on February 6, 2020, according to WHO (2020), which comprises the record of about 25 countries globally renowned for a substantial number of 28,276 confirmed cases and 565 death tolls. In the ensuing months, it prevails in every nooks and cranny of the world, with confirmed cases of 8,060,496 contagious cases and 437,054 deaths (Worldometer, 2020). Contemporarily, it has been termed COVID-19, a condensed form of "coronavirus disease of 2019." It was publicized as a pandemic in March 2020 by WHO implying that no human being is safe and invulnerable. It has been explored as a contagious disease capable of spreading from one individual to another. The government adopted several preventive measures to curtail its prevalence speed, such as an awareness campaign to frequently wash hands for at least twenty seconds, limited mobility and social distancing, partial lockdown or closure of public places such as restaurants, shopping centres, parks, schools, colleges, universities and event centres, etc. However, when the virus wave became apparent and difficult to control, world leaders imposed partially or complete closure of public gatherings. As such, it raised some speculations by the leaders of the nation on the stance of either partial Lockdown or complete Lockdown would serve on the epicentre or hotspots of the pandemic. Besides, the lockdown decision may negatively impact the economy and particularly the social wellbeing of the society. So how to balance this complicated social, economic, and health puzzle became an issue of international concern (Shaheen et al. 2020).

As stated above, the world has been affected by the novel coronavirus pandemic. In the case of Nigeria, it could neither remain immune to the global catastrophe. The first confirmed Covid-19 case was publicized on February 27, 2020. The index case was an Italian 44-years old citizen who came into the country through the Lagos, Murtala Muhammad International Airport, at 10 pm on February 24, 2020, aboard a Turkish airline from Milan, Italy. This development resulted in the swift activation of the nation's National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC). As of April 5, 2020, 232 confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported in Nigeria, of which 33 recovered and discharged, while only 5 reported deaths. Even though, prior to the pandemic's arrival into Nigeria, the government had developed some strategic interventions to assist in fighting the disease through its primary public health

institute, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Such measures include distributing information on personal hygiene and cough etiquette of the masses, synergizing a network of state and public health quick response network centres within the country, awareness, and training of skilled staffing on contact treatment and tracing, amongst others. Also, the establishment of five laboratory centres with full testing capacities helps with immediate response to the disease's detection (Oyeniran & Chia, 2020).

However, the Nigerian health system prior to the pandemic was nearly obsolete. In most of the country's cities, public health systems are almost dilapidated due to the government's negligence to provide modern facilities, while politicians subscribe to medical tourism abroad. On March 30, 2020, Nigeria's Federal government imposed an initial 2-week lockdown for three of the 36 states (Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun), which was on April 13, extended to another 2 weeks. Moments after the order was publicized by President Muhammadu Buhari; there was some sort of panic among the citizens due to numerous concerns for their social and economic welfare. According to the World Poverty Clock report 2018, Nigeria was categorized as the world's poverty capital, with almost 40% of its citizens dwelling in abject poverty. Therefore, an enormous proportion of the population, mainly in the Lagos commercial centre, survives daily income without savings to use as a financial bumper during the lockdown. Hence, the notion of staying at home could result in another problem, such as economic meltdown and hunger, among other challenges. Some low-class people, such as a young plumber Osas who lives and earn his daily bread in the city, have stated on social media about their condition; despite being fully learned about COVID-19, they can apprehend it due to incisive hunger that bedevilled the entire country (Oyeniran & Chia, 2020).

The Nigerian government promised its citizens sort of palliative measures such as food and funds materials to those most affected. But the reality on the ground goes contrary as promised; only some proportion of the masses attest to be given any support. A massive number of citizens defied the lockdown order in the hope of striving to survive and earn a living, but the police force apprehended some. The military and the police's synergic efforts to imposed the lockdown may have resulted in more fatalities than the diseases itself, as well as the ensuing adverse outcomes ascribed to the lockdown. Lagos has experienced a massive spike in armed robberies among other megacities. One cannot help to question whether these abovementioned negative impacts outweigh the initial reasons for the lockdown; to curtail the spread of the infections. Based on the news from other African nations, the situation in Lagos, as the largest city in Africa, is almost a perfect reflection of the situation across the entire continent (Rwanda and other few countries exception), where their economy is capable enough to sustain the citizens with immediate solutions and palliatives to the pandemic (Oyeniran & Chia, 2020).

On the other hand, there is some significant positive development to be considered. Some international government organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies (Islam/Christianity), and private sectors have enormously contributed to funds and food to sustain the pandemic's hunger and hardship in Nigeria. They have expedited various distributions of food items to some deprived and vulnerable states of the country. Also, there is a sense of optimism that the government will finally revamp the health sector in response to the consequences implied by the pandemic. Despite the socio-political and economic differences seen amongst Nigerian communities, there has been a sense of closeness during this time. Irrespective of these positive features of COVID-19 and Lockdown, panic and worries remain as the number of death due to the lockdown orders will be ascent than those resulting from the infection. By this, Nigeria's federal government has witnessed a new dawn in recent years over its stagnant economic growth as the need to prioritize its citizens' protection by providing adequate funds, facilities, and materials to alleviate the pandemic consequences.

The adverse effects of lockdown implicated the Nigerian economy in multiple ways. The slow economic performance paralyzed the already stultify economy and endangered the livelihood of those living below the poverty line. It is a dilemma that came as a challenge to the government to curtail the virus while also threatening the economy in the process and support the lower class from hunger and starvation. Thenceforward, it is necessary to address the negative impact of Covid-19 on the weak economy of Nigeria. The present study takes an overview of the pandemic's effects on a global scale with a critical examination of its impact on Nigeria's political economy. Its prevalence in the whole world has showcased the fragility and vulnerability of the health system globally. In such instances, the economic and political implications emanated catastrophically. The catastrophe has emerged disastrous in both developed and developing countries like Nigeria, where poor and inadequate health facilities, insufficient Health infrastructure, and government incompetence to counter such plague raised many questions. At the economic level, the impact of movement restriction order, international flight suspension, hindrance of business and agricultural activities heavily affected the nation's financial wellbeing due to the lack of taxes generated from such activities. In the same vein, the political impact of the pandemic hits hard on Nigerian fragile and corrupt political system, resulting in disharmony, inconsistency, and absence of synergy between the state and the federal government of the country, making it complicated for the citizenry to cope and conform with the restrict measures posed on their daily activities

Therefore, the current study substantially contributes to the available literature on this scholarship because it underlined the Health sector weaknesses and scrutinized the novel Corona Virus' political-economic implications in Nigeria. This study presents an in-depth examination of Nigeria's current decayed Health sector. It underlined the inefficiency in medical infrastructure in the country and assessed the Nigerian government's performance in mitigating the plague. The study adopted the data available from health facilities and the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to determine its adequacy with a population of 200 million citizens. Secondly, it analyses the economic implications of Covid-19 in a circumstance where the government had to channel the resources from other sectors to meet up to the deadly plague. Moreover, the sudden economic cessation internationally has severely endangered the Nigerian struggling exporting business. Also, the political leadership response is critical in such a catastrophe. Nigerian weak democracy, divided political leadership, absence of political will for a rigorous response from government authorities, and opposition have complicated its situation. This study aims to scrutinize the economic, social, and political implications Nigeria is facing as a result of the deadly pandemic.

Human distress of all kinds is the critical consequence of contagious diseases. They do bring not only economic hardships but also the political sphere is not invulnerable. The fatalities ratio of Covid-19 has exceeded the number of deaths in armed clashes in recent years (Patrick, 2011). The study of contagious diseases and their implications on states has been an indispensable topic of study. A substantial number of researchers have assessed the impacts of epidemics on nations' security, economic development, and even the fall of territories. Contemporary studies illustrated this phenomenon in the context of Ebola, SARS, Swine Flu, Avion Flu, and other diseases. However, the epidemic of Covid-19 is more impactful in all of its dimensions where it is revealed that the pandemic will have unforeseen effects on the global political economy, more precisely for the developing nations (Shaheen et al., 2020).

Armelagos et al. (2005) conducted a broad study in evaluating diverse phases of the history of plagues and how their death ratio and consequences are decreased as a result of improving health conditions. They assessed almost 10,000 years of epidemic history, categorizing it into three phases. According to George and Peter, the third category is more disastrous when such viruses become resistant and novel to multi antibiotics. They are more

pervasive and pose a severe threat to weak and fragile states' capability in fighting them. Evaluating their economic effects is an enormous task critically for developing states like Nigeria. Malani and Laxminarayan (2011) have provided a comprehensive account of contagious disease's economic effects on developing nations. They emphasized investment behavior and labor productivity in case of plagues and illustrated the ability of risk-taking while inducing crucial decisions that might affect the economy. Organizational studies also shed some light on various economic spheres of the pandemics. A study in 2018 carried out by the IMF titled "Epidemics and Economic" offered a complete account of social distancing, causing economic and social losses with instances of various epidemics outbreaks in Africa and Europe. It suggested that such situations might deteriorate the economic growth of states for a long time. Their ability to ensure trade relations, international interactions gets immensely influenced. It strongly dilapidated the health sector's strength of developing countries with inadequate budgetary provision to the health sector (Bloom & Cadarette, 2019).

Furthermore, studies of viruses like Covid-19 were once within only the grasp of the medical domain. However, Pirages first established the nexus viruses, politics, foreign policy, and state security in the mid-1990s (Pirages, 1995). Various historians have endeavored to determine the political effects of plagues, precisely its consequences for the government's fall and regime stability. Watts has done a broad study to scrutinize the aftermath of the Bubonic plague on Venice's political and economic power (Watts & Kennedy, 1999). On the other hand, the ineptitude and inefficiency of the state resource to fight such contagious viruses escalate polarisation in already weak and fragile as well as politically divided societies.

While it also posed a threat to the legitimacy of the government authorities and trustworthiness between masses and government. Therefore, the Nigerian government is increasingly facing challenges in ensuring peace and stability as well as tackling anti-government protests in the country. Such consequences projected the endemic corruption and a lethal nuisance of a politically weak and fragile society (Price-Smith, 2002). Even though there is substantial data available on contagious diseases and their prospective impacts, such studies are, however, few, which precisely confined the case of any developing country in a manner of assessing the implications of the epidemic on its economy. Very limited studies were found to evaluate the politico-economic impact of Covid-19 for Nigeria. Hence, the current study is an effort to bridge this gap by assessing Nigeria's political economy in the era of global pandemics and its implications.

METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative research with a descriptive and explanatory approach aimed at scrutinizing the covid-19 potential implications on Nigeria's economy and political wellbeing. The causes of the pandemic and consequences have been explained by adopting secondary qualitative data such as library information and document sources like journal articles, books, newspapers, and reports, among others.

However, the method was insufficient to provide a qualitative measure sufficient to grasp the problem investigated. It explored the criteria set in place to address the invisible enemy that has created havoc in the country's economy. Despite the country's poor and decayed health infrastructure, the study scrutinized the quality of the health infrastructure, provision of modern equipment, and other aspects in response to the country's novel Coronavirus and the government's attentiveness to meet the challenges of covid-19.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The novel coronavirus has taken the world economy to the brink of a global recession. Since the measures aimed at combating the spread of the virus, the lockdown has essentially restricted movement to maintain social distancing, but due to such actions, a shortage of supplies has been encountered locally (Mahar, 2020). Besides, restrictions on imports slowed down economic activities. Likewise, the Nigerian economy experienced a significant downturn due to the imposition of a smart and complete lockdown.

The implications of Covid-19 on Nigeria's political and economic wellbeing can be divided into two parts; The first section attempts to analyze the economic impacts under two aspects. The first section deals with the external factors, and the second describes the internal forces. The second section deals with political influences and seeks to integrate economic influences with politics.

Covid-19 Spillover to the Nigerian Economy

Direct Effect

There are five main ways the Covid-19 pandemic has a widespread impact on Nigeria. First, the Covid-19 pandemic affected borrowers' ability to service loans, which led to the emergence of non-performing loans (NPL), leading to lower bank profits and ultimately weakened banks' safety and stability. Apart from that, banks were reluctant to lend as more ~~and more~~ borrowers are struggling to repay the loans they had made before the Covid-19 outbreak. Second, there was a shortage of oil demand that led to a sharp decline in oil prices (Ozili, 2020). The most evident and immediate repercussion was the drop in crude oil price, which fell from around \$60 per barrel to as low as \$30 per barrel in March. Amidst the pandemic, people were unable to travel, resulting in a continuous decline in jet fuel and auto fuel demand, which affected Nigeria's net oil revenue, and ultimately, Nigeria's foreign reserves (Oyeniran, & Chia 2020). Third, there were supply shocks in the supply chain globally, as many importers closed their factories and shut down their borders, especially China.

Nigeria is significantly impacted because Nigeria is an import-dependent country, and as a result, Nigeria has experienced shortages of vital supplies such as pharmaceutical supplies, spare parts, and finished goods from China. Fourth, the national budget has also been affected. The budget was initially scheduled at an oil price of US\$57 per barrel (Mahar, 2020). The drop in the oil price to US\$30 a barrel meant that the budget became obsolete, and a new budget had to be repriced as oil prices fell (Jelilov et al., 2020). Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the Nigerian stock market. Major market indices fell in the stock market when investors withdrew their investments to so-called safe havens such as US Treasury bonds. Stock market investors have lost more than US\$2.3 trillion (US\$5.9 billion) just three weeks after the first coronavirus case was confirmed and publicized in Nigeria on January 28, 2020. The market value of listed shares, estimated at NGN13.657 trillion (US\$35.2 billion) on Friday, February 28, 2020, decreased by 2.349 trillion to NGN11.308 trillion (US\$ 29.1 billion) on Monday, March 23, 2020. The All Shares Index closed at 21,700.98 from 26,216.46, which represents 4,515.48 points, a decrease of 20.8 percent (Anna Hoban, 2020).

Furthermore, according to the worldometer, Nigeria has seen over 72,757 cases of the Coronavirus and over 1,194 deaths. In a country of around 206 million, the death tolls are about 2% or 418,000 Nigerians. The pandemic's impact on the country's economy is overwhelming; despite a recession from 2014 to 2016, the World Bank affirms that the Nigerian economy may be heading towards its worst financial condition in four decades

(Andam et al., 2020). Nigeria is highly dependent on oil, accounting for more than 80% of the nation's exports. Due to the blockage of international travel resulting from Covid-19, the country recorded its lowest level in 18 years in fuel prices, at \$ 22 a barrel (Mahar, 2020).

According to economists, the Nigerian revenue stream dropped to N1.1 trillion naira (about \$ 3 billion). This represents a decrease of about N4.4 trillion naira since the beginning of 2020. The National Bureau of Statistics proclaims that 42% of nearly 2,000 citizens interviewed were unemployed due to the pandemic. Among all the households interviewed, the most impoverished families experienced the highest unemployment at 45% (Anna Hoban, 2020). Moreover, 79% of reporting households experienced a decline in their income as of March 2020. Oil exports are not the only issue lurching the Nigerian economy. Prices for common commodities, such as water and bread, ascended soon after the lockdown was imposed on March 30. One loaf of bread went from N350 to N450 (~ 90 yen to \$ 1.16) (Otahe, 2020). Usually, pure household water in Nigeria costs around 100 Naira, but the price has doubled since the pandemic. With a lower consumption of goods, investments, and net exports, the Nigerian economy is facing a tremendous decline (Anna Hoban, 2020).

Oil Sector Hit Hard

The oil sector shrank by 13.89 % in the third quarter compared to 6.49 percent growth in the same period during the previous year, according to data cited by Yemi Kale, while the non-oil sectors declined by 2.51 % in three months to September. After the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in Nigeria, in late February, lockdowns were enforced from late March through early May in major cities, the economic hub of Lagos, and the federal capital, Abuja. Lockdowns have also been imposed in some other states, and travel bans have been enforced between state-to-state travel in the country.

According to the Census Bureau report, "the performance of the economy in the third quarter of 2020 reflects the remaining effects of the restrictions on movement and economic activity that were implemented across the country in the early second quarter in response to the COVID-19 epidemic,". Yemi added, "with the lifting of these restrictions, the opening of businesses, and the resumption of international travel and trade activities, some economic activities have returned to positive growth." The government had previously said it expected the economy to contract by up to 8.9% this year in the worst-case scenario without stimulus, and the International Monetary Fund had forecast a 5.4% decline in Nigeria's GDP in the year 2020 (Kale, 2020).

Structural Factors that have Exacerbated the Economic Crisis

This section of the paper describes the main structural elements that have helped provoke and worsen the current political and economic crisis.

Poor Public Health Infrastructure

In Nigeria, the public health sector suffers from poor infrastructures such as poor emergency services, lack of ambulance services, ineffective national health insurance systems, and inadequate primary health care facilities. These problems have often been linked to the public health sector at high levels with maternal and child mortality rates in the country (Muhammad et al., 2017).

Currently, Nigeria operates a two-tier healthcare system with a large public healthcare sector and a smaller private healthcare sector. Compared to developed countries, Nigeria's private healthcare sector is very small due to limited private health insurance financing. Also, most health care spending in Nigeria continues to be dominated

by personal spending, which accounts for 70% of total health spending, indicating that most Nigerians either do not rely on or trust the country's health insurance systems or are unaware of the availability of health insurance. Despite introducing the National Health Insurance System (NHIS) in 2004, the population concealed by health insurance in 2019 was around 5 percent of the total population. The pharmaceutical industry of Nigeria suffers its own problems. The Nigerian pharmaceutical sector is one of the largest in West Africa, accounting for around 60% of the region's market share. But the majority of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) used in Nigeria are imported from China, and only 10% of the medicines used in Nigeria are locally manufactured in the country.

The industry faces many problems such as poor infrastructure and unreliable facilities, deficits of skilled workers, low access to finance, lack of appropriate government inducements, inconsistent government policies, weak demand due to intense competition from Asian companies, especially China, high cost of doing business. Commercialization as a result of imported and costly production inputs, and supervisory problems, among others. Nigeria has an almost unregulated drug market because health agencies have difficulty preventing the import of illicit drugs and difficulty in tracing unofficial drug vendors operating without a registered license (Fatocon, 2016). It is estimated that the country's unofficial pharmacists account for more than 70% of the pharmaceutical market and that these informal agents import substandard and counterfeit medicines through unofficial channels. Research revealed that 78% of the low-quality drugs came from private facilities compared to public facilities, and most of these private facilities are unregulated. Nigeria's unregulated pharmaceutical market is the main factor responsible for spreading low-quality medicines in the country (Klantschnig & Huang, 2019).

Deficiencies in Nigeria's public health sector have made it difficult for Nigeria to deal with the fast-spreading Covid-19 pandemic during the outbreak. Local drug producers have been unable to manufacture drugs that can temporarily overpower the Coronavirus in infected patients because the APIs used to manufacture inhibitory medicines can no longer be imported because China has closed its factories and closed its borders to control the coronavirus pandemic that was ravaging China at the time. Also, there were not enough isolation centres in several states, including Abuja and Lagos. The amount of infected patients in Lagos grew so worse that the stadium had to be converted into an isolation centre. In the end, the Covid-19 pandemic overwhelmed Nigeria's poor public health infrastructure (Peterson & Ozili, 2020).

A Poor and Underdeveloped Digital Economy

Before the Covid-19 outbreak, Nigeria already had a weak and underdeveloped digital economy. Only a few schools and universities offered online curriculum from start to finish. Most companies, including banks and technology companies, operate using the traditional "come to work" model instead of the "work from home" model. The novel coronavirus outbreak has brought challenges to the business environment in Nigeria. It affected industries and markets in the short term. These markets and industries' operations would have been slightly affected if they had an extensive digital infrastructure to operate. The only services provided through the existing digital infrastructure during the Covid-19 outbreak were telecom services, digital bank transfers, and internet services. A digital economy could have played a significant role in motivating recovery from the economic crisis if Nigeria's digital economy were strong and developed. For example, in Nigerian schools and universities, teachers can place courses online so that students who are isolated at home do not have to miss critical aspects of their education while the school is closed or when students cannot get to the school.

E-commerce apps that allow online buying and selling can enable buyers and sellers to make purchases and sales while residing at home. Also, telehealth apps can make health and wellness checks for individuals in all

affected areas to be more precarious in monitoring vital signs and learning how to reduce the risk of infection. Also, family members can visually check their parents, grandparents, and siblings without physically visiting them, providing a level of comfort that would be impossible over the phone. Online delivery companies can utilize virtual assistants to help ensure that goods purchased from online grocery stores are supplied when customers need them. Companies that do not want their workforces to travel or their employees do not feel comfortable taking on trips can stay in contact with team members, clients, and potential clients worldwide by using videoconferencing technologies by software platforms.

All this is possible when there is a well-functioning strong digital economy. Outside of Nigeria, digital technology has helped many companies in the developed economies to survive and overcome the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak considerably and has created an opportunity to boost the country's digital economy, such as China, Japan, New Zealand, and North Korea, among others. In the future, Nigeria's well-developed digital economy, achieved through an intense penetration of digital technology, will play a more significant role in limiting the impact of recessions as the country is currently experiencing and will also help support economic and social activities and the development of quality healthcare systems (Peterson & Ozili, 2020).

Absence of Social Welfare Program

Before the outbreak of Covid-19, there were significant social difficulties in Nigeria, such as child neglect, deprivation, armed robbery, mental health problems, unmarried, and divorce parenting problems. These social problems can only be curtailed through strict social welfare policies and programs. But at present, social welfare activities in Nigeria are still weak, poorly funded, and inaccessible to the majority of those who need them (Ahmed et al., 2017). Nigeria does not have a national wellbeing program that provides assistance to all individuals and families in need, such as health care assistance, disaster relief, unemployment compensation, educational assistance, and food stamps. The very concerns of not having a national social welfare program became apparent during the Coronavirus epidemic in 2020. During the pandemic, people did not have much to rely on, and vulnerable citizens did not have social benefits that could help them overcome the novel economic hardship. There was no support for housing, utility and energy support, and assistance for other essential services for the people most affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

There are debates about the utility of using social welfare programs to alleviate poverty and help citizens cope with disasters (Luenberger, 1996; Dolgoff et al., 1980; Abramovitz, 2001), and social welfare theories offer different perspectives on what social welfare can be. Designed to meet people's basic needs (Fleurbaey and Maniquet, 2011; Arrow et al., 2010; Andersen, 2012). To date, the provision of social care services to needy citizens is the most recognized way to protect them from economic hardship in challenging times and the lack of social care services for vulnerable people and families (Ewalt and Jennings Jr, 2014).

During the coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria, vulnerable individuals experienced severe pain and economic hardship to low-income families and individuals because policymakers have not politically prioritized Nigeria's social welfare (Peterson & Ozili, 2020). The United States of America, whose conducting her elections amidst the pandemic raging, COVID-19 has disrupted registration, campaigns, and other activities and almost makes the electoral commissions or incumbents seek extensions delay elections. Security forces, like civilians, are themselves un-immune to COVID-19. The close conditions in which security operatives live and work do not allow for social distancing.

Political Implications of COVID-19 in Nigeria

Covid-19 also has adverse effects on the global political landscape, particularly on security institutions and political processes around the world. Many senior government officials have been infected in several countries, and some have died from the virus. In Africa, like other regions, many of the top leaders fall into groups at risk of contracting the virus based on age. Many countries' governments turn to the military for help in the crisis, particularly to enforce curfews, quarantines and restrict movement order control or lockdowns. Imposing lockdowns, in turn, increases social hatred, unrest, and violence.

Clashes between the police and the masses have been reported in different parts of the world with varying casualties. The United Nations asked several European and Asian countries to postpone their forces' rotation due to the pandemic outbreak at home. No contributing country is unaffected by the epidemic. The spread of the virus is further constraining peacekeeping operations in insurgency-torn regions of the world. Even more disturbing are those displaced persons (highly vulnerable themselves) to which the peacekeepers were sent to protect (Peterson & Ozili, 2020).

According to official data released, Nigeria slipped into recession after shrinking its gross domestic product (GDP) for the second consecutive quarter. Africa's largest economy is in recession for the first time since 2016. The recession four years ago was the first in a generation, and the country bounced off it the following year. However, growth was fragile, and the new Coronavirus severely damaged the economy amid falling oil prices. The continent's largest oil producer and exporter heavily rely on crude oil sales for 90% of foreign exchange earnings, and Nigeria's average production is usually two million barrels per day. But the effects of the epidemic and lower oil prices have reduced production to nearly 1.4 million barrels. "Real GDP contracted for the third consecutive quarter, by -3.62 percent," statistician Yemi Kale said on Twitter on Saturday. He added that the cumulative GDP for the first nine months of 2020 was -2.48 percent. The absence of accurate data across the country limits Nigeria's ability to respond to the Coronavirus. Linked to this are the politicization of the epidemic and the lack of cooperation between institutions and the public, which pose significant challenges.

According to Oyewale Tomori (2020), a Nigerian virologist and adviser to the World Health Organization stated that sometimes it is a feeling of competition or personal pride that prompts rulers and those in authority to reduce the number of cases of Covid-19 virus in their state. He uttered that the entire country would suffer without more unity and cohesion (Paul Adepoju, 2020). Nigeria has announced new travel procedures for air travelers coming to the country from the United Kingdom and South Africa, as a new type of Coronavirus was recently discovered. According to Sani Aliyu, Nigeria's National Coordinator of the Presidential Task Force on Coronavirus, "As of Monday, December 28, all passengers coming into the country from the United Kingdom and South Africa flights must use Nigerian International Air Travel Portal to register, fill in a health questionnaire and upload negative Covid-19 PCR result with a validity of more than five days, as some health officials were reported allegedly selling fake covid- results to incoming travelers from Covid-19 hot spotted countries, which makes it hard for Nigerian governmental to trace and track actually infected individuals among the travelers. He also asserts that all air travelers from the two countries should pay for a PCR coronavirus test, adding that travelers who do not adhere to such protocols "will be denied to board on flights." Nigerian Deputy Health Minister Uloronimbi Mamura said that the number of passengers on the plane who tested positive for the Coronavirus increased from 129 last week to 270 this week. He said that the number of arrivals from European countries had doubled recently, despite the high coronavirus infection cases in those countries (Alarewaju Kola 2020).

Nigerian Efforts in Mitigating the Spread of the Pandemic

Restriction of movement both the state and federal governments have imposed restrictions on movement in some areas across the country to control the new coronavirus' spread, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Movement Restriction in Nigeria during Covid-19 pandemic

Affected sector	Impact
1 Education sector	All students were sent back home, Public and Private schools and universities were all closed
2 Aviation sector	Enormous flight cancellation, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) suspends all domestic and International Airports
3 Civil service sector	Suspension from work for 14 days for remote quarantine
4 Banking sector	Senior staff operate remotely from home; only a few branches were open to attend to depositors
5 Religious sector	All religious centres were banned during the pandemic. A Christian pastor was arrested for holding house service during the movement control order
6 Markets	Major foods markets were partially closed
7 Sports	All sports gathering and events were canceled
8 All sectors	A 14-day nationwide stay-indoors lockdown was officially imposed started from March 30, 2020
9 Eleven (11) businesses excluded from the ban	(i)Medical establishments, (ii) Health care manufacturing and distribution company, (iii) Private security company, (iv) Broadcasters, (v) Petroleum distribution retail entities, (vi) Hospitals, (vii) Food processing and distribution companies, (viii) Power generation, transmission and distribution companies, (ix) Telecommunication, (x) Electronic media, (xi) Print media staff.

Source: (Peterson & Ozili, 2020).

Use of Monetary and Fiscal Policy Measures in Response to the Covid-19 Outbreak

The central bank publicized that it would provide support to affected families, businesses, regulated financial institutions, and other stakeholders to reduce the negative economic impact of the Covid-19 outbreak. The central bank provided support in six ways. First, granting a loan deferral extension on principal loan payments with effect from March 1, 2020. This means that any intervention loan that is currently subject to suspension will be extended for one year. Second, it offered a lower interest rate on all intervention loan facilities from 9% to 5% starting March 1, 2020.

Third, it also provided a target credit facility of 50 billion NGN (US\$131.6 million) for hotels, airline service providers, and healthcare retailers, among others. Fourth, it provided credit support to the healthcare industry to meet the growing demand for healthcare services during the outbreak. The loan was only offered to pharmaceutical companies and hospitals. Fifth, it provided the regulatory burden to banks, which allowed banks to temporarily restructure the current loan term within a specified period of time, especially loans to the oil and gas sectors, agriculture, and other industry. Sixth, it strengthened the loan-to-deposit ratio (LDR) policy that allowed

banks to offer more credit to the economy.

On the other hand, the fiscal authorities had to analyze and revise the 2020 national budget of 10.59 trillion naira (\$28 billion). The government announced that the budget had been cut by 1.5 trillion NGN (\$4.90 billion) as part of measures to mitigate the Coronavirus impact on the economy and the oil price collapse. The new budget was designated at \$30 a barrel from the \$ 57 a barrel in the earlier budget (Peterson & Ozili, 2020).

A Call for Partnership and Cooperation

Combating the pandemic requires a multinational approach tailored to indigenous realities, and the key to active containment is partnership and cooperation. It is also paramount to mention here that Nigeria is already enjoying the benefits of partnership and cooperation. Currently, it has received a donation of medical supplies from the Jack Ma Foundation in China. The donation includes 1,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), 20,000 test-kits and 100,000 face masks. Personal protective equipment and face masks have been dispersed to frontline health workers, while test kits were shared among nine Nigerian molecular laboratories. The Federal Government (FG) of Nigeria, through the Minister of Health, Dr. Osagi Ehanire, had also requested Chinese medical experts to help combat the pandemic.

This development has been publicized in Abuja, FCT, at the Fifth Joint National Presidential Task Force (PTF) briefing on Covid-19. A team of 18 Chinese medical experts will visit Nigeria to exchange experiences with the National Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and deliver some medical supplies, including ventilators and personal protective equipment. This is very important because China has technically brought the virus, and Nigeria needs to make use of its experiences.

The information available to the National Centre for Disease Control and Prevention will be filtered and applied to address local facts and characteristics in dealing with the Covid-19 disaster. According to the Director-General (DG) of the NOA National Guidance Agency, Dr. Garba Abari, they will add value to the war against Covid-19 because they also have been overwhelmed by the epidemic. But the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), on the other hand, rejected the FG plan. They considered it is degrading the morale of the frontline health force that had long suffered from the government moving forward with bringing in Chinese medical experts without their consent.

The Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN) has also conveyed deep concerns about the alleged exclusion of some of its members with expertise in molecular diagnostics in the ongoing Covid-19 testing across the country. The lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the insufficiency of diagnostic test kits and testing centres across the country, and the absolute lack of life assurance for health workers are key issues that warrant the government's attention at this time, and they expect the government to respond accordingly.

CONCLUSION

The coronavirus pandemic's impact in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as this study has attempted to evaluate from both economic, health, and political standpoint. From the study's perspective, it is understood that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has immensely contributed to the decline of Nigeria's economic performance. Based on our

observation, we realize that due to this financial shortfall, the national budget was affected, culminating in the decrease in the amount of public expenditure and ultimately contributing to the health sector's weak and ineffective performance in the virus outbreak quickly.

In addition to that, it is evident from the data provided by this study that the Nigeria political system is weak, as apparent in the relationship between the federal and state government, despite its federal structure. The study equally understand that due to the weakness in political readiness and willingness, the poor and inadequate policy failed to combat the pandemic, which resulted in its tremendous effect on the common man. Also, the lack of social welfare programs to aid the people's economic condition in times of epidemics, as well as other unforeseen health and economic challenges, presents the weakness in the government's performances.

By and large, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Nigerian economy shows the weakness in the political system due to its ineffective policy and program, which ultimately resulted in a decline in economic performance. These became evident when the policy set in place to tackle the pandemic was partially successful for its failure to meet the people's demand in terms of social and economic welfare. It is apparent that if the adequate measure is not adequately put in place, the pandemic's second wave might be a national disaster as other states in the globe are currently experiencing its up and down. Therefore, the study makes the following recommendations.

Covid-19 virus is rapidly reshaping people's lives, political orientation, economic wellbeing, and healthcare systems, and new questions are consistently raised with little or no answers. Nigeria is unique with its own challenges. Inaction was linked to the large number of deaths recorded elsewhere in the world. While the government is doing its best to combat and curtail the virus, the citizens are also expected to cooperate with the government and join the fight. It is time for a vigorous application by the relevant authorities. As the country is now entering into the second wave of the pandemic, its economy is currently in recession. Much has been said about what Nigeria lacks in fighting the pandemic. To this end, the Nigerian government must take care of its proper performance at various levels, which will discourage the citizens from going to the supervisor in search of greener pasture.

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