

COVID-19 EPIDEMICS AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

The rising information of studies on the impact of COVID-19 is often discussed in the framework of developed countries, prominence a slit in the perceptive of how the pandemic is impacting developing countries. This theoretical explanation focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on good governance in Lagos State, Nigeria. The spread of the corona-virus worldwide created uncertainty and anxiety as the public and government agencies attempt to contain and combat the viral diseases. Despite the rises of the pandemic in Africa, some Nigerians believed that the pandemic is not real. False news and mistrust in the government makes the Nigerian thinks the pandemic is a hoax. The COVID-19 fraternities espoused the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of governance in Nigeria. The inability of Lagos State to mitigate the spread of the corona-virus within its own boarders has broader implication for the entire States in Nigeria; meanwhile, the virus threatens to exacerbate the country's existing good governance challenges, which in turn makes pandemic response more difficult to curb.

Keywords: Covid-19, Good Governance, Pandemic and Palliative

Introduction

The universal brunt of the COVID-19 has been well acknowledged. This outburst was deemed an endemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March, 2020 till date, there have been cases established in almost all the State nations across the world, in-terms of area or territories according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused extraordinary actions to be taken by many countries, such as pro-active governance, restriction on social gathering, hand washing and compulsory use of nose mask. The Global cases of COVID-19 are 33,473,089 while 100,4658 were death and 24,779,529 had been recovered. COVID-19, the sensational virus, has led to unprecedented disruptions, affecting all sectors globally. Nigeria faces a greater challenge than most from the covid-19 pandemic as a result of being the largest economy in Africa, with a population and a key regional actor in the African Continent with over 200 million (approximately). In Nigeria the Covid-19 cases total were 58,324, while 1,108 deaths were recorded and 47,794 recovered with active cases of 7,422, Lagos State been the commercial capital and the epicenter of the virus in Nigeria recorded total cases of 19,239, and actives cases is 3,788, and discharge 15,246 with 295 deaths recorded as at 24th September, 2020 (The Nation 2020.2).

The pandemic is an exogenous shock of uncommon magnitude imposed on all sectors globally. Most of the government of the developing countries has called for rethinking for effective governance. In Nigeria, federal and state governments are enchanting proactive steps to curb the spread of corona virus all over the country. As the country experiences a steady increase in the number of confirmed cases, movement restrictions and lockdowns are instituted to adequately respond to the pandemic. These situational responses impinge on businesses including interactions with relevant regulators. A few of the Nigerian Federal Government's responses such as the Nigerian National Assembly's Emergency Stimulus Bill, the Central Bank of Nigeria's policy measures in response to COVID-19, and its dedicated credit facility to develop the healthcare sector. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) earmarked N100 billion to enable the country prepare for the worst. Before then, The Lagos state government had requested for financial support to combat and control the increase of the virus in the state, as well as the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). President Buhari approved the sum of #10 billion which was released within two days of the request to the Lagos State Government, been the hypocenter of the virus and #5 billion to NCDC respectively (The Punch, 2020 cited in Araba, 2020).

Literature Review

Governance is the use of political authority and exercise of control over society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. Governance can also be described as the use of authority and the exercise of control over society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. It is the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the distribution of a country's social and economic resources. The

nature and manner of distribution is what makes governance good or bad one. Thus, according to Ogundiya (2010:238) when resources must be distributed to promote inequality or to achieve personal or group ambitions, the essence of governance which coincides with the essence of politics and essence of the state is defeated. Therefore, resources must be distributed responsibly, equitably and fairly for the realization of the essence of the state. Good governance, therefore, refers to government that fulfils the terms of the social contract with the people. Good governance is a fundamental right in a democracy and it implies transparency and accountability. Good governance entails an administration that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people and is effective in coping with emerging challenges in society by framing and implementing appropriate laws and measures. It includes strict rules of accountability.

Good governance seeks to improve the capacity of the state, encompassing a variety of strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness of government performance (Omona, 2010). This implies that accountability, transparency and responsiveness on the part of government and its officials are the hallmark of good governance in any society. Good governance according to Downer (2000:27) is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. The true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. 'Good governance' was traditionally related to resource management (Rai, 2010:13).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of Covid-19 on governance in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the levels of compliance to the factors of COVID-19 processes in Lagos State.
2. Examine the indicators of good governance on COVID-19 in Lagos State
3. Examine the relationship between COVID-19 measure on governance in Lagos State

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the people comply with factor of COVID-19 process in Lagos State?
2. To what extent does the good governance indicators impact on COVID-19 in Lagos State?
3. What is the relationship between Covid-19 measure and good governance indicators in Lagos State?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between factors of COVID-19 and indicators of good governance in Lagos State.

Methodology

To measure the impact of COVID-19 on governance in Lagos, the study relied on mixed surveys which comprises of interview and distribution of questionnaire via Google form through WhatsApp, social media and professional networks and administered to the inhabitants of Lagos State. 280 samples of which 225 were completed, this showed 85% response rate. In order to ensure that the respondents were resident of Lagos and at the time of response. A section of the questionnaire inquired about their residence and locations at the time of response. The questionnaire addressed the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the core objective of the study, which is the impact of COVID-19 on governance in Lagos State. The study obtained the quantitative responses using the Likert Scale. The study relied on convenience sample techniques to choose the participatory respondents and obtain the information to draw inference. The nature of the pandemic, as well as the limited social contact and government lockdown restrictions has made the convenience sample procedure the preferred method of getting the data for this study. The convenience sampling procedure involves non-randomized experimentation and relies mainly on individuals' respondents. Pearson Correlation analysis of variance was used to estimate the influence of COVID-19 on governance in Lagos State. The Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to conduct the analysis. The Study reported the descriptive frequency statistical results, and the correlation results.

Results

Table 1: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on COVID-19 Measure in Lagos State

S/N	Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	The quarantine procedure in Lagos State is very effective	20 (8.9)	170 (75.6)	25 (11.1)	10 (4.4)	225	3.89	.605
2	Palliative measure is adequately implemented in Lagos State	-	95 (42.2)	95 (42.2)	35 (15.6)	225	3.27	.713
3	The Testing centre is fully equipped in Lagos State.	20 (8.9)	130 (57.8)	65 (28.9)	10 (4.4)	225	3.71	.069
4	Covid-19 preventive measure are adhere to by the Lagos state citizens	15 (6.7)	75 (33.3)	125 (55.6)	10 (4.4)	225	3.42	.684
5	The Citizen adheres to social distance instruction in Lagos State.	5 (2.2)	75 (33.3)	100 (44.4)	45 (20.0)	225	3.18	.770
6	The Lagos State Citizen comply to the use of nose mask	20 (8.9)	95 (42.2)	85 (37.8)	25 (11.1)	225	3.49	.808

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 reveals the response of samples on Covid-19 factors in Lagos state. This shows that majority 190 (84.5%) of the respondents agree that The Quarantine procedure in Lagos state is very effective. However; 130 (57.8%) of the respondents believe that Palliative measure is not adequately implemented, furthermore, 150 (66.7%) of the respondent agreed that the testing centre is fully equipped. In addition, 60% (135) of the respondent indicates that Covid-19 preventive measure are not adhering to by the Lagosian, while 64.4% (145) believes that The citizen are not adhere to social distance instruction, however, 51.1% which translates to 115 of the respondents in Lagos state agree that The citizens comply with the use of Nose Mask and hand sanitizer and 48.9. % depicting (110) in Lagos state disagrees.

Table 2: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Governance Measure in Lagos State

S/N	Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Palliative measure distribution procedure is transparency in Lagos State.	10 (4.4)	70 (31.1)	125 (55.6)	20 (8.9)	225	3.31	.695
2	The health facilities are adequately equipped during covid-19 in Lagos State.	5 (2.2)	135 (60.0)	75 (33.3)	10 (4.4)	225	3.60	.6124

3	Security Checking point is very effective during covid-19 in Lagos State	35 (15.6)	100 (44.4)	65 (28.8)	25 (11.1)	255	3.64	.875
4	Covid-19 donations are adequately accountable for by the Lagos State government.	5 (2.2)	105 (46.7)	100 (44.4)	15 (6.7)	225	3.44	.653
5	The Regulatory policies used by Lagos State government during Covid 19 are adequate and effective.	25 (11.1)	135 (60.0)	60 (26.7)	5 (2.2)	225	3.80	.655

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 reveals the response of samples on good governance measure in Lagos state. This shows that majority 145 (64.5%) of the respondents disagrees that Palliative measure distribution procedure is transparency. However; 140 (62.2%) of the respondents believe and agree that the health facility is adequately equipped during the Covid-19 in Lagos State. Furthermore, 135 (60.0%) of the respondent agreed that Security check point is very effective during Covid-19 in Lagos State. In addition, 51.1% (115) of the respondent indicates and disagree that the Covid-19 Donation is adequately accountable for by the Lagos State Government while 71.1% (160) believes that regulatory policies are adequately put in place by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Lagos State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Covid-19 Measure and Good Governance Measure in Lagos State

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	R-cal	P-value	Remark
Covid-19 Measures	20.96	3.03	225	223	.756	.000	Significant
Governance Measure	17.80	2.64	225				

$P < 0.05$

The table 3 showed that there was significant relationship between covid-19 and good governance in Lagos state ($r = .756$; $P < 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that Lagos State government adheres with good governance measures in combating Covid-19 epidemic. The State Government, Governor Sanwo-Olu in the course of enforcing the use of nose mask, the government threatened penalties and sanction for whoever violates the requirement of wearing face mask (Africanews, 2020). Corroborating this statement on the interview question on to what level does Lagos State Citizen comply with the use of nose mask? The respondents a Civil Servant stated that: I do not have choice than to wear it as the Virus does not respect any person and my life does not have duplicate. The residents of Lagos complied with the wearing of mask in the public as a part of measures to curtail the spread of the disease in the State. The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria announced mandatory wearing of face masks by anyone going out in public (The Nation, 2020). A similar policy was implemented by almost all the states government of the country. A respondent Teacher interview on the same above question affirmed that with the number of confirmed cases which keep increasing on a daily basis, people need to be cautious. Wearing of mask is now part of my dressing; I do not want to take any chances because health is wealth. Similarly, in an interview question on to what extent does Lagos State Government Palliative measure distribution procedure is transparency in Lagos State. A Respondent Civil Servant stated that:

A fight broke out a few days earlier, when the supply of bag of rice was divided and kept for party members, but the genesis of this is traceable when three bags were left for the entire street, after a larger quantity had been earmarked for party member and official in the area. A greater portion of the relief materials was reserved for party members when the goods arrived to the local government.

The distribution of the palliative is chaotic and uncoordinated; this is not unexpected because there is no verifiable digital data base in Nigeria which captures poor and vulnerable persons. Lack of good and systematic data base measure affected effective distribution of COVID-19 lockdown. This has led to allegation that the process is being politicized, till date the government have not been able to utilize clear strategy of reaching the vulnerable and the poor in the distribution of palliatives (Premium Times, 2020). The Lagos state government introduced a food relief package to cushion the effects of lockdown. But the distribution of the relief package has been hampered by governance challenges. The situation, to a large extent, reflects the opposite of good governance. Good

governance is about relationships and interactions between citizens and government based on the principles of equity, efficient service delivery and sustainability (The Conversation, 2020).

On the same respond to the same question, a respond stated that the government's failure to disclose the details of the cash transfer programme has cast doubt on how many lagosian benefitted for the palliative and this is a sign of lack of transparency on the part of Lagos State government. Corroborating the respond Human Rights Watch (2020) and The Social and Economic Rights Watch (2020) a non- governmental Organization seeking details on the government's relief funds. "We are seriously concerned that millions of the country's poorest and most vulnerable people not benefitted from the announced palliatives, donation, reported cash payment, cash transfers and other benefits. Transparency is a product of openness in governments' activities, processes and programmes. It is a measure of clarity of basis for government decisions and policies. It is also built on the accuracy, completeness, free flow of information and extent to which the government allows, its activities to be scrutinized by other government institutions, civil society and external institutions. An interview question on what extent does regulatory policies used by Lagos State government during Covid 19 is adequate and effective. A respondent affirmed that the Lagos State government took restrictive containment regulatory measures; these include lockdown of various Markets and a cessation of social and economy activity, except those activities relating to essential services. Most of the states have restricted movement in airport and inter-state travel in order to curtail the spread of COVID-19. Open Market in States are closed or allowed to open at specific hours in order for State agencies to disinfect those spaces for COVID-19. For instance, Lagos State undertake more stringent measure such as instituting curfew and also issued the Lagos State Infectious Diseases (Emergency Prevention) Regulations 2020 via its powers under the State's Public Health Law and the Federal Quarantine Act, Q2 LFN 2004 (Brooks & Knights, 2020). The crippling effects of the pandemic and swiftly responded with a COVID-19 regulation lockdown cessation of movements in Lagos state.

The Lagos State Infectious Diseases (Emergency Prevention) Regulations 2020 is designate COVID-19 as a Dangerous Infectious Disease within the meaning of section 2 of the Quarantine Act, noting that it constitutes a serious and imminent threat to the public health of the people of Lagos State. It grants the Governor Powers to direct a potentially infectious person within Lagos State to go to a place specified for COVID-19 screening or into isolation. A potentially infectious person under the Regulations is a person who has been in an infected area within fourteen (14) days preceding arrival and entry into Lagos State. The Regulations grant the Governor the power to restrict movement within, into or out of the State, particularly the movement of persons, vehicles, aircraft and watercraft. This restriction may not apply to the transportation or movement of, as well as movement for the purposes of procuring essential supplies, such as food, water, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and medicines, and any other essential supplies the Governor may deem necessary. The Regulations grant the Governor the power to restrict or prohibit the gathering of persons without the Governor's consent, restrict the conduct of trade, business and commercial activities within the state, and to order the temporary closure of markets, except those selling or manufacturing essential services. The Governor is also empowered to prohibit the hoarding or inflating the prices of essential goods and services and direct such goods or service to be seized and utilized to address the supply needs of the State. A breach of the Regulations is an offence under Quarantine Act and Lagos Public Health Law and is liable to a fine or imprisonment or both in accordance with those laws (Brooks & Knights, 2020). Initially, there was apparent public acceptance of the restrictions of the COVID-19 Regulations, signified by a high degree of compliance. But the manner of enforcement of the restrictions in several areas around the country led to reports of human rights abuses. These included killings, incarceration without court orders in places where physical distancing was impossible, demolition of buildings, and deportation of young almajiris, all of which whittled away support and delegitimized the measures (Cheluchi, 2020).

The corona-virus pandemic brought healthcare problems to lime light, despite that Lagos State government announced seven private laboratories into its testing strategy to expand capacity in Nigeria's commercial capital. Lagos state has, through its accredited health facilities, conducted over 45,000 COVID-19 tests, with over 7000 confirmed cases from the number. The ministry had also recently announced the private health facilities accredited for the purpose of COVID-19 testing (Okwumbu, 2020) Prof. Emmanuel Akinola Abayomi, Honorable Commissioner of Health Lagos State, stated that the ministry is ready and prepared for tackling the COVID-19 issues based on experience and lessons learned from the Ebola crisis (Africanreports, 2020)

Conclusion

The consequences of the COVID-19 standpoint is that many States in Nigeria are under-equipped to carry out extensive testing and contact tracing as Nigeria continue to battle the pandemic. The efforts of Lagos State government administration in curbing the COVID-19 are quite commendable as it made giant strides at combating the COVID-19 virus. There is, however, a lot more to be done, hence the need to intensify on-going efforts by facing the virus challenges squarely until the target of making Lagos a COVID-19 virus free is accomplished. The rapid spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria calls for sincerity on the parts of the authorities, the health workers and citizens. It demands vigilance from civil society organisations and the mass media to foster accountability and transparency.

Recommendations

1. The federal and State government should see this pandemic as an opportunity to address the challenges in governance. By developing an inclusive action plans to reduce dependence of the citizen on government for palliative measures.
2. The government should be more accountable and transparency in its all dealings especially in the course of curbing the virus. All donor and donations need to be properly accounted for through bi-annually report which should be made publicly.

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