



Impact of Corona-Virus on the Nigerian Public Sector; A Case Study of the Kwara State Civil Service

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Abstract

The study assessed critically the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on public sector, the broad objective of the study is to evaluate the effect of Coronavirus on the activities of Kwara State Civil Servants. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the effect of Coronavirus on Kwara State Civil Service, questionnaires also seek to capture the concerns and expectations of public sector workers in dealing with the pandemic, and to glean suggestions on how best to manage the situation. the researcher used a purposive sampling to choose the sample for the study. Its implications for the future of work was also assessed and recommendation such as restructuring of the civil service, overhauling the social investment program, and development of realistic fiscal plan were suggested as solution towards tackling any future expected threat such like the pandemic.

Keywords: Covid 19; Civil service, Public Sector

1. Introduction

Since the advent of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in the global village, the realm of world labour has been profoundly impacted. In addition to the severe implications for public health, the economic and social interaction posed a long-term threat to the well-being of millions of people worldwide; Its impact on the world labour, as well as in every other spheres of life, has been devastating. This however has prompted the vital role of social partners in combatting this pandemic to ensure peoples' health are safe and to also maintain continued sustainability of businesses. Although, the twenty-first century has witnessed at least five other pandemics including, H1N1 in 2009, Polio in 2014, Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, Zika virus in 2016 and Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo in 2019 (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020), COVID-19 remains the greatest threat to human civilisation in the century (WHO, 2020). According to Shereen et al. (2020) 'COVID-19 is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The virus emerged from Wuhan in China and spread throughout the world within few months' (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020; Kumar et al., 2020; Shereen et al., 2020). As at 28th March 2021, Worldometer (2020) reported 127,796,656 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 2,796,801 deaths globally with 162,593 and 2,048 reported or confirmed cases and death respectively in Nigeria.



The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges societies recently faced. As the public sector takes the lead in responding to, mitigating, and helping resolve the crisis, we are reminded of the fundamental importance of an effective state. States are not only expected to craft and deliver high-quality public health systems during this pandemic but must also address the strains on ordinarily routine processes of governance. In economically developed states, welfare administrators are processing unprecedented numbers of requests for social support, and officials were crafting policies to minimize economic damage (United Nation 2020). In the developing world, government agencies are coordinating the delivery of essential items to the poor, such as food and medicine, as social safety net systems collapse (Kazmin et al. 2020). An effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic thus requires effective administration. Effective administration, in turn, crucially depends on the effort and capacity of the millions of public sector workers from the front line to central administration. However, for many public sector workers, COVID-19 has fundamentally changed where and how they work, the demands their job places on them, and the demands they face outside their jobs. Various studies explored have showed how health sector corruption, weak healthcare system, large-scale immune compromised population, misinformation and the prevalence of highly congested and unsanitary slums contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria, they have glossed over the impact of political distrust at the public sector on the rapid spread of COVID -19 in Nigeria. Meanwhile, political distrust is a widespread phenomenon (Hartley & Jarvis, 2020). World Economic Forum (2018) ranked Nigeria among the top seven countries with the highest level of citizen distrust of government officials. Although scholars have shown that political distrust undermines public cooperation and promoted rapid spread of viral diseases such as Ebola in West Africa (Richardson et al., 2019; United Nations, 2020), scholars have glossed over the impact of political distrust on rapid spread of COVID-19. However, it has been argued that understanding the dynamic relationship between political corruption and political mistrust is relevant for mitigating the spread of COVID- 19 in Nigeria. The objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of Coronavirus on the activities Kwara State Civil Servants.

2. Literature Review

Global Economic Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19's impact on the global economic arena has remained highly fluid. Developing and developed states have all been taken aback by the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on the global economy (Ozili 2020; Chinazzi et al, 2020). The once celebrated globalization and technological advancement has done little to redeem or recalibrate global economies to circumvent COVID-19. Uncertainties concerning the depth and length of the health induced crisis have increased the degree of alertness of risk and instability, volatility, unpredictability in financial markets as well as corporate decision-making.

Congressional Research Services Report on "Global Economic Effects of Covid-19" (2020, p. 1) noted that:



“the pandemic is undesirably affecting universal economic growth beyond anything witnessed in almost a century. Projections point out that the virus could dwindle economic growth by 4.5% to 6.0% in 2020, with a partial recovery of 2.5% to 5.2% in 2021, supposing there is not a second wave of infections. The economic fallout from the virus increases the threats of a worldwide economic recession with levels of unemployment not experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s.”

Similarly, the Africa Union reinforces the above narrative by articulating that:

The European Union, the United States and Japan account for half of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These economies are based on trade, services and industries. However, measures to halt the pandemic have forced them to close their borders and drastically reduce economic activities; which will lead to recession in some of these developed economies. The Chinese economy accounts for about 16% of the global GDP and it is the largest trading partner of most African countries and the rest of the world. The OECD forecasts a decline in economic growth rates for these major economies as follows: China 4.9% instead of 5.7%, Europe 0.8% instead of 1.1%, the rest of the world 2.4% instead 2.9%, with world GDP falling by 0.412 from the first quarter of 2020. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) forecasts downward pressure on foreign direct investment from -5% to -15%. The International Monetary Fund has announced on the 23 March 2020 that investors have withdrawn 83 billion US Dollars (\$USD) from emerging markets since the start of the crisis.

This implies that the pandemic has negatively affected economic growth in different countries across the globe. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Mutizwa 2020, argued that the pandemic has robbed the globe of the much needed human capital. Congressional Research Services Report, SADC 2020 and Pineda & Musacchio 2020 reinforce the above view by noting that, the lost human capital impacts negatively on global economic growth coupled with the disruption of careers, social unrest and a rise in poverty and destitution. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) postulates that the pandemic has also affected trade growth in Latin America and the Caribbean region, economies are going down with little hope of them recovering in 2020. According to the Congressional Research Services Report, Pineda & Musacchio depending on the length, extent and depth of the pandemic, global trade might “fall by 13% to 32%”, with developing states for example those in the Latin America and the Caribbean likely to be affected the most.

National imposed lockdowns, the closure of boarders, airspaces, industries and schools as ways of curbing COVID-19 also had devastating effects on trade, tourism and oil related industries (Mutizwa 2020). Equally, Ozili 2020, noted that the lockdown measures by



various nations lead to the reduction of oil, coal and aviation fuel demand on the global market. The implemented measures to curtail the virus come with economic ramifications as evidenced by the loss of incomes due to reduction in labour task forces, absenteeism increase at workplace culminating in low productivity globally.

The Effects of COVID-19 in Developed Nations

Italy- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have left the globe facing one of its darkest hours in contemporary history. The Italian Public Sector and work force has suffered massively despite Italy being known to have a viable public sector with a functional health system. According to Mutizwa (2020), the Italian public sector was “overwhelmed” by the pandemic which caused panic across Europe and in the developing nations. The military had to step in to help the police, doctors, nurses and transportation services as the entire public sector was down (Pederson Meneghini 2020). Local authorities were unable to render their services as they could not handle the demand caused by the increase in contamination rate that lead to loss of many lives. The Italian Prime Minister had to declare government incapacitation to handle the disaster and called upon the European Union to intervene. This was because organizational capacity was undermined by the huge number of deaths which robbed the nation of the much needed human capital to respond swiftly. Moreover, statistics indicated that industrial production almost halved in April 2020, and due to the several fiscal support packages by governments to cushion individuals and firms, the Italian public debt is expected to rise over from 134.8% to 160% of the GDP in 2020.

Despite Italy's reputation for having a strong public sector and working healthcare system, the country's workforce and public sector have both suffered greatly. The epidemic that sparked alarm throughout Europe and in developing countries "overwhelmed" the Italian public sector. Since the whole public sector was shut down, the military had to step in to assist the police, doctors, nurses, and transportation agencies. Due to their inability to handle the demand brought on by the rise in pollution rates, local authorities were unable to provide their services, which resulted in the loss of many lives. When examining the Italian experience critically, it becomes clear that the Pandemic has had a disastrous impact on the Italian workforce. However, given the surrounding circumstances, it is clear that the Nigerian civil service is not the only one who can relate to the Pandemic's effects; as a result, the Italy experience is somewhat comparable to the Nigeria experience. Looking critically in the Italian experience it will be noted that the Pandemic causes a very disastrous experience for the Italian workforce, looking at the backdrop, the Nigerian civil service is not alone on the relatability of the experiences of the Pandemic, hence the Italy experience is kind of relatable to the Nigeria experience.

Malaysia- COVID-19's effects on the Malaysian public sector were unfavourable and malevolent just like in Italy. Malaysia's tourism and trade sector which were the nerve-centre for fiscal generation were seriously affected thus robbing the nation of the much needed revenue to support government projects. Shakeel et al (2020) noted that the Visit Malaysia 2020 (VM2020) campaign which had targeted approximately \$30 million in



revenue inflows was cancelled leaving the nation with unbearable expenses that had been accumulated in preparation for the VM2020. This was a major drawback not only in revenue collection but in development and growth as various sectors would have benefited from tourism. Sectors that would have benefited include hotel industries, transport industry, fuel industry as well as the health industries. Shakeel et al 2020, argued further that, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was of concern as the tourism industry of Malaysia is a major source of foreign exchange in national economy. Tourism contributes to more than 50% of export trade-in service, with approximately 27 million tourist visits in Malaysia annually. The VM2020 campaign aimed at generating up to RM 100 billion. Nonetheless, with COVID-19 and the fact that 60% of the tourists in the last past five years were from China – saw the campaign being suspended (Shakeel et al 2020). Malaysia anticipates a 50% decrease in visits thus signifying a great loss in revenue generation (Malaysian Rating Corporation Berhad, 2020). The central bank of Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia postulated that the financial development and growth has been hibernated by the pandemic resulting in trade and production declining by 3.0%. Local authorities' fiscal space and service delivery has been undermined, with local hospitals and clinics failing to cope up with the demands imposed by the pandemic.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) was also hit hard as the spread of the virus intensified which led to the Director General of the MoH to invite the intervention of private hospitals, university hospitals as well as Ministry of Defence hospitals (Bernama 2020). The police and military also worked overtime trying to enforce the Movement Control Order (MCO) which was implemented to curtail the spread and the mortality rates. To curb the pandemic and its socio-economic effects, a stimulus package of RM 20 billion was released in February. This was further supported by the 250 billion stimulus package which was meant to rejuvenate the public sector and other private entities that were incurring loss due to the pandemic (News24 2020). The stimulus package was also used to revitalise local authority fiscal space and service delivery. A provisional hospital with 604 beds was constructed and this helped in job creation thereby addressing some of the socio-economic quandaries.

United Kingdom- The impact of the pandemic has been severe on many global economies, the impact differs according to the nations' preparedness, capacity and development. The United Kingdom (UK), France and Germany are some of the countries whose public sector remained vigorously functional. This was necessitated by the adaptive, robust management and operational services, leadership and resource capacity of their public sectors. All disaster management protocols were activated, social safety nets were availed and businesses were giving loans to their employees to circumvent the depression caused by the virus. Congressional Research Service on Covid-19: Potential Economic Effects (2021) noted that the IMF highlighted that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UK, France and Germany might have slowed growth but was not a fatal blow to institutional and organisational capacity, hence they responded swiftly to the virus. The African Union stated that all this was necessitated by the fact that France announced 334 billion Euro as



response to COVID-19, Germany 13.38 while England reduced interest from 0.75% to 0.25% and 37 billion as a cushion to the COVID-19 pandemic.

China- The story of China deserves attention, the same way it attracted condemnation for the outbreak of the virus. The way China handled the virus leaves many questions unanswered from virologists, organisational specialists, intelligence officers, engineers and doctors. It makes one to question whether the virus that caught the world by surprise caught them aware and prepared? Nonetheless, that is not the centre of the argument, the purpose of this narrative is to bring to light how swift China was in curtailing the virus without incurring many economic losses. The way China handled, managed and contained the epidemic projected exceptional preparedness and adaptive capacity despite being the hotspot and epicentre of the virus. Holland & Lin 2020, further articulated that the adaptive capacity of China's public sector and swift coordination deserves praise; as vigorous measures were implemented with Wuhan being locked down for 77 days. The Africa Union notes that China had to lower reserves and free up more than \$ 70.6 billion to boost the economy and announced aid of 154 billion dollars. Similarly, Holland & Lin 2020, noted that a hospital designated for COVID-19 was constructed within two weeks and employees were recruited to reinforce human capital. An examination of China's responses to the virus and how economic activities in other region were not interrupted shows exceptional leadership, management and operations, services and resources capacity.

The Effects of COVID-19 in Developing Nations

Kenya- The pandemic had devastating effects on the Kenyan public sector. A decline in revenue collection was witnessed while it's GDP which was {at 5.7% prior to the COVID-19 pandemic decreased to 1%. The inflation rate which was at 5.9% increased to 6.5% (Deloitte 2020). The Kenyan flower sector which contributed immensely to growth and development in Kenya was said to be losing 250 million Kenyan Shilling per day with a 60 billion estimated loss by the end of the year. This culminated in employee lay off as organisations struggle to survive in the volatility business environment induced by COVID-19. Approximately 40 000 permanent employees were put on an unpaid leave while about 30 000 temporary employees lost their jobs. The tourism sector which accounts for the 8.5% employment in the country and approximately 1.6 million revenue generation has been affected by the global lockdown drive (Deloitte 2020 & Economic Intelligent Unit 2020). Government hospitals were completely overwhelmed due to dilapidated equipment as well as under stuffed. Local authorities were failing to offer viable service delivery as their fiscal space continued to shrink (United Nation, 2020). The Kenya Revenue Authority also registered a revenue decline thereby failing to reach the expected target and negatively affect public finance management and the country's ability to service its debt.

Ethiopia- The Ethiopian case is not different from that of other African nations. The Ethiopian economy is at the mercy of the loathsome impact of the pandemic. Economic development and growth has been interrupted, resources that were meant to further developmental projects have been redirected to curtail the "invisible enemy" (Mutizwa



2020). Since then, a decline has been recorded in the Ethiopian economy. Prior to the pandemic, the IMF had projected a 6.2% growth; during the pandemic the IMF had to reevaluate and a decline to 3.2 % was registered (Deloitte 2020). Inflation rate rose to 15.4% due to the imposed international lock down. The re-directing of resources to save lives has also seen the inflation rate soaring to 20.6% (Deloitte 2020). As a result, the public sector has been affected the most, with the tourism sector registering a decline in economic activities. The tourism sector employees lost about 8.3% which is around 2.2 million jobs. This gravely affected the Ethiopian Tourism Organisation as it has reported struggling to raise its workers' salaries. The once celebrate African Air giant Ethiopian Airlines also lost about USD 550 million between January and mid-April (Deloitte 2020). Ethiopian airways wholly owned by the government plays a major role in the country's development and fiscus. To make matters worse the IMF has projected a decline of 18.8% on government tax revenue and 7.7% decrease of non-tax revenue. The number of those who are living below the poverty datum line is also expected to rise from 26 million people to 31 million people by 2021 (Deloitte 2020). The entire public sector is in dismay; incapacitation has become the order of the day with government expenditure becoming unbearable (Deloitte 2020). To this end, the Ethiopian Job Creation Commission has projected that approximately 90 000 jobs are likely to be lost in both the public and private sector.

Tanzania- Like in other developing nations, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Tanzanian economy and the public sector hampered growth and development. Prior to the pandemic Tanzanian's GDP was estimated to rise by 5.3%; nonetheless, with the pandemic Tanzania's GDP is expected to decrease to 2% (Congressional Research Service, 2020). The agricultural sector is at the centre of growth and development in Tanzania as it employs about 67% of the total workforce, and contributes about 27% to the GDP (Deloitte 2020). However, this is likely to change, as the major export destinations of Tanzania's tobacco, coffee and fish are in recession hence a decline in the demand scale leading to revenue loss (United Nation 2020). The World Health Organisation's social distancing regulations have also interrupted the mining sector which is very crucial to the Tanzanian economy; this has led to the closure of mines and the laying off of temporary employees and unpaid leave for permanent employees. A majority of key public institutions in low and medium income countries are thus are operating below optimum efficiency. Unlike in developed nations, these developing nations do not have sufficient revenue to implement robust social nets that supports growth and development during such global catastrophes.

Difference between Developed and Developing Nations

The pandemic had different impacts in developed and developing nations owing it to a myriad of reasons namely national preparedness capacity, adaptive capacity, resource and management capacity. Developed nations have resilient disaster management frameworks that are viable and effective in addressing national disasters. On the contrary the majority of developing nations are in debt distress as such, they do not have resources to set up



robust disaster management structures, which has led to dramatic effects on the wellbeing of communities and economies. Most public institutions in these nations responsible for service delivery have been crippled, translating to an increase in severe poverty, reduced access to basic services such as clean water, food, healthcare and education (Chikohomero 2020). In most cases the revenue they generate is directed towards debt service or is similarly embezzled in corrupt deals, while in developed nations revenue is usually directed towards social services, disaster management and national development.

The Nigerian Experience

The spread of COVID-19- The coronavirus entered Nigeria through an infected Italian citizen who came in contact with a Nigerian citizen who was subsequently infected with the coronavirus. The first Nigeria case of the covid-19 was in Lagos in March 2020 and then spread to other parts of the country.

COVID-19 spillover to the Nigerian economy

Direct effect- There are five main ways through which the COVID-19 pandemic spilled over into Nigeria. One, the COVID-19 pandemic affected borrowers' capacity to service their loans, which gave rise to non-performing loans (NPLs) that depressed banks' earnings and eventually impaired banks' soundness and stability. Subsequently, banks were reluctant to give additional loans to borrowers as more and more borrowers struggled to repay the loans granted to them during the COVID-19 outbreak. Two, there were oil demand shocks which was reflected in the sharp decline in oil price. The most visible and immediate spillover was the drop in the price of crude oil, which dropped from nearly US\$60 per barrel to as low as US\$30 per barrel in March. During the pandemic, people were no longer travelling and this led to a sustained fall in the demand for aviation fuel and automobile fuel which affected Nigeria's net oil revenue, and eventually affected Nigeria's foreign reserve. Three, there were supply shocks in the global supply chain as many importers shut down their factories and closed their borders particularly China. Nigeria was severely affected because Nigeria is an import-dependent country, and as a result, Nigeria witnessed shortage of crucial supplies like pharmaceutical supplies, spare parts, and finished goods from China. Four, the national budget was also affected. The budget was initially planned with an oil price of US\$57 per barrel. The fall in oil price to US\$30 per barrel during the pandemic meant that the budget became obsolete and a new budget had to be formed which had to be repriced with at low oil price.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Nigerian stock market. Major market indices in the stock market plunged when investors pulled out their investments into so-called safe havens like US Treasury bonds. Stock market investors lost over NGN2.3 trillion (US\$5.9bn) barely three weeks after the first case of coronavirus was confirmed and announced in Nigeria on January 28, 2020. The market capitalisation of listed equities, which was valued at NGN13.657 trillion (US\$35.2bn) on Friday, February 28, 2020 depreciated by NGN2.349 trillion to NGN11.308 trillion (US\$29.1bn) on Monday 23



March 2020. The All-share index closed at 21,700.98 from 26,216.46 representing 4,515.48 points or 20.8 per cent drop.⁴

Mitigating the Spread of the Pandemic

Movement restriction- Both the State and Federal governments imposed movement restrictions in some areas across the country to control the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Using monetary and fiscal policy measures- In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the monetary authority, the Central bank, said it would provide support to affected households, businesses, regulated financial institutions and other stakeholders to reduce the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The central bank provided support in six ways. One, it granted extension of loan moratorium on principal repayments from March 1, 2020. This meant that any intervention loan currently under moratorium would be extended by one year. Two, it offered interest rate reduction on all intervention loan facilities from 9% to 5% beginning from March 1, 2020. Three, it offered a NGN50bn (US\$131.6m) targeted credit facility to hotels, airline service providers, health care merchants, among others. Four, it provided credit support to the healthcare industry to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services during the outbreak. The loan was available only to pharmaceutical companies and hospitals. Five, it provided regulatory forbearance to banks which allowed banks to temporarily restructure the tenor of existing loan within a specific time period particularly loans to the oil and gas, agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Six, it strengthened the loan to deposit ratio (LDR) policy which allowed banks to extend more credit to the economy. On the other hand, the fiscal authorities had to review and revise the 2020 national budget of N10.59 trillion (US\$28 billion). The government announced that the budget was reduced by NGN1.5 trillion (\$4.90 billion) as part of the measures to respond to the impact of coronavirus on the economy and in response to the oil price crash. The new budget was benchmarked at US\$30 per barrel from US\$57 per barrel in the previous budget.

Structural factors that worsen the impact of the Corona-Virus on the Nigerian Public Sector

This section of the paper, present a description of key structural factors that trigger or worsen the impact of the Corona-Virus on the Nigerian Public sector.

Poor public health infrastructure- According to a 2015 BMI report, Nigeria had an estimated 3,534 hospitals in 2014, of which 950 were in the public sector. There were around 9,000 private health facilities, and an estimated 134,000 hospital beds in 2014, equal to 0.8 per thousand populations which is below the rate for the African region. The public health sector in Nigeria has poor infrastructure such as poor emergency services, few ambulance services, ineffective national health insurance systems, insufficient primary health care facilities, and these problems in the public health sector have often been linked to the high maternal and infant mortality rates in the country (Muhammad et al, 2017).



Currently, Nigeria operates a two-tiered healthcare system with a large public healthcare sector and a smaller private healthcare sector. Compared to developed countries, the private healthcare sector in Nigeria is very small and fragmented because of the limited funding for private health insurance. Also, the majority of Nigeria's healthcare spending is still dominated by out-of-pocket expenditure which account for 70% of total health expenditure (Aregbeshola, 2016) which suggest that most Nigerians either do not rely or trust the health insurance system in the country or they are unaware of the availability of health insurance. Despite the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 2004, the population covered by health insurance in 2019 was only 5 percent of the total population. The Nigerian pharmaceutical industry also has its own problems. The Nigerian pharmaceutical industry is one of the largest in West Africa, and accounts for about 60% of the market share in West Africa. But most of the active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) used in Nigeria are imported from China, and only 10% of the drugs used in Nigeria are manufactured locally in the country. The industry is facing many problems such as poor infrastructural and unreliable utilities, scarcity of skilled workers, poor access to finance, lack of appropriate government incentives, policy incoherence by the government, poor demand due to robust competition from Asian companies particularly China, high cost of doing business as a result of imported and expensive production inputs, regulatory problems, among others.

Nigeria has a drug market that is almost unregulated because the health agencies have difficulty in preventing the importation of illegal drugs and difficulty in tracking informal drug sellers that operate without a registered license (Fatokun, 2016). It is estimated that informal drug sellers in the country account for more than 70% of the pharmaceutical market, and these informal agents import substandard and falsified drugs through informal channels. Research shows that 78% of low-quality medications came from private facilities compared to public facilities (Onwujekwe et al 2009), and most of these private facilities are unregulated. The unregulated drug market in Nigeria is the major factor responsible for the circulation of low-quality medicines in the country (Klantschnig & Huang, 2019). The failings in Nigeria's public health sector made it difficult for Nigeria to cope with the fast spreading COVID-19 disease during the outbreak. Local drug manufacturers could not manufacture drugs that could temporarily suppress coronavirus in infected patients because the APIs used to manufacture suppressant drugs could no longer be imported because China had shut down its factories and closed its borders to control the coronavirus pandemic that was ravaging China at the time. Also, there were insufficient isolation centers in many states including in Abuja and Lagos. The number of infected patients in Lagos grew worse to the extent that a stadium had to be converted to an isolation center (Jacob et al 2020). In the end, the COVID-19 outbreak overwhelmed the poor public health infrastructure in Nigeria.

A Weak and Underdeveloped Digital Economy- Before the COVID-19 outbreak, Nigeria already had a weak and underdeveloped digital economy. Currently, Nigeria has eight (8)



operational telecom service providers, namely, MTN Nigeria, Globacom, Airtel, 9Mobile, M-Tel, Telkom, Econet Wireless and Vodacom. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the number of mobile phone subscribers in Nigeria decreased by 49,060 in April to 173.38 million from 173.43 million in March. Also, MTN, the largest telecom provider, had 64.73 million users in April which is a drop of 302,448 from 65.03 million in March 2020 (Olapegba 2020) Also, Statista reports that there are 96 million internet users in Nigeria.

Yet, with the COVID-19 pandemic, there were hardly any university or school that offered a full educational curriculum online from start to finish. Many businesses operated using the traditional 'come-to-the office-to-work' model as opposed to the 'working-from-home' model. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus brought challenges to the business environment in Nigeria. It impacted industries and markets in the short term. The operations of these markets and industries would have been minimally affected if they had a large digital infrastructure. The only services that were offered through the existing digital infrastructure during the COVID-19 outbreak were telecommunication services, digital bank transfers and internet services.

The digital economy would have played a major role in driving recovery from the economic crisis if Nigeria's digital economy was robust and well-developed. For instance, in Nigerian schools, universities and educators can put coursework online so that students quarantined at home don't have to miss out on key aspects of their education while school is closed or when students can't get to school. E-commerce apps that enable online buying and selling can allow buyers and sellers to make purchases and sales while staying in their homes. Also, tele-health apps for health and wellness checks can allow individuals in all affected areas to take extra precautions to monitor their vital signs and learn how to reduce their risk of infection. Also, family members can visually check on their parents, grandparents and siblings without physically visiting them which provides a level of comfort that would be impossible over the phone. Online delivery businesses can use virtual assistants to help ensure that goods purchased from online grocery stores are delivered when customers need them. Businesses that don't want their workers to travel or whose employees are uncomfortable taking trips can stay connected with team members, clients and prospective clients around the world using online video conferencing technologies. All these are possible when there is a robust and well-functioning digital economy.

Outside Nigeria, digital technology helped many businesses in developed countries survive the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak, and it created an opportunity to enhance the country's digital economy. In the future, a well-developed digital economy in Nigeria, achieved through intense digital technology penetration, will play a greater role in reducing the effect of recessions in the country, and will also help in supporting economic activities, social activities and the development of good health care systems.



3. Methodology

The study deals on the coronavirus and its effect on public sector. It was carried out to determine the effect of coronavirus on public sector in Kwara State, the study was a survey research, designed to expose the effect of covid-19 on work ethics of public servants in Kwara state, the researcher used a purposive sampling to choose the sample for the study.

The study sample consists of twenty-five (25) civil servants selected from each of the three Local Government Area Council that form the population. That is, 25 workers from Ilorin West Local Government Secretariat, 25 workers from Ilorin South Local Government Secretariat and 25 workers from Ilorin East Local Government Secretariat, to enable the study collect the appropriate information needed, questionnaires were administered to the above number of civil servants from the selected Local Government Areas that form the population.

4. Results

Table 1: Objectives and analysis of information related to the effect of Corona virus on the Nigeria Public sectors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly Agree	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	37	73.0	73.0	83.0
Undecided	4	8.0	8.0	91.0
Disagreed	3	7.0	7.0	98.0
Strongly disagreed	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table1 show the reaction of respondents on effect of coronavirus pandemic on the public sectors in Nigeria. 83% (5 strongly agreed and 37 agreed) of the respondents, while 2% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed, 7% (3 respondents) disagreed to the above stated. 8% of the respondent where undecided. This implies that employee also recognize that the novelty virus has a significant effect on Nigeria public sectors.

Table 2: There is a proper awareness on how to contain the virus in public sectors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly Agree	12	20.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	22	41.0	41.0	61.0
Undecided	15	27.0	27.0	88.0
Disagreed	5	10.0	10.0	98.0
Strongly disagreed	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022



Table 2 shows the reaction of respondent to the idea of containment of the virus within public sectors. 66% (12 strongly agreed and 22 agreed) of the respondents, while 10% (5 respondent) disagreed, 2% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed to the above stated statement, 32% of the respondent where undecided. The implication therefore reveals how of an awareness was out on the containment of the virus within public sectors.

Table 3: There was a low outcome of productivity while working remotely compare to the physical working

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly Agree	16	32.0	32.0	32.0
Agree	9	18.0	18.0	50.0
Undecided	12	22.0	22.0	72.0
Disagreed	2	8.0	8.0	80.0
Strongly disagreed	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 shows the reaction of respondents on how 50% (16 strongly agreed and 9 agreed) of the respondents, while 8%(2 respondents) disagreed, 20% (10 respondents) strongly disagreed to the above stated statement, 22% of the respondents were undecided. The results clearly show that it was difficult for some staff in Kwara Civil Servants to work efficiently from home.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The interpretation of the data gives great insight into the thought process of public sector workers. It also provides an understanding of the effort required to formulate a national response that will get us on the road to recovery in the most efficient way. The data reveal that some public sector workers are in support of deeper engagement so they can have a better understanding of the effect of COVID-19 on employment relationship and the wider implications for the world of work. The response must be people centered, underpinned by social partnership commitment as we focus on the future of work in a post-Covid reality. The reform of the legislative framework to meet the challenges will have to place considerable emphasis on social, employment and income protection, and design deliberate policy responses that ensure the sustainability of businesses

This study recommends that there is need to overhaul Nigeria's civil service is critical to the overall re-engineering process. Truth is, this situation gives us an opportunity to reset the country, placing it on a trajectory that guarantees equality and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to all irrespective of your ethnicity, religion or social standing. The civil service by virtue of the important role it plays should be overhauled for improved service delivery and efficiency. It should be weeded of rent-seekers who have no contribution to make to the development of our nation, it should get rid of incompetence, nepotism, tribalism and every other phenomenon that has plagued it for the past couple of



decades. The Nigerian civil service should enjoy first pick of the best Nigerian tertiary institutions have to offer. In order to be able to do so, the civil service must be restructured in such a way that it harnesses the talent and creativity of civil servants, the remuneration must be competitive, selection must be devoid of ethnic and religious bias, and career progression must be devoid of tribalism, nepotism, or any form of favouritism. Again, as explained below, the development of a National Development Plan (NDP) will greatly help in shaping the civil service into a lean and mean machinery that will propel the nation to greater heights.

In overhauling the country's budgeting, what a nation seeks to achieve with their lives or within a given period, should be the key driver of the budget. A purpose-driven budget therefore allows the country to double down on what matters most, whilst cutting waste. So for Nigeria, such our budget should cause us to determine down to the minutest detail, how many Nigerians we need to provide for, how many work in our public service, the size of public service we need and how they should add value, the roads we need and what value they will add, the transportation links between our cities and at what cost, the hospitals that need to be built, how we would develop our education sector etc. It should itemize our "objectives to be achieved for the fiscal year", which in turn should be guided by our longterm goals as outlined in our national development plan.

By Implementing a National Development Plan, Strategic planning is the art of formulating strategies, implementing them, and evaluating their impact based on organisational objectives. The concept focuses on integrating various departments to achieve organisational goals (CFI, 2020). In this instance, the strategic plan is referred to as the National Development Plan, and the Ministries, Departments and Agencies will form the integrating departments. It is important to note that although the country developed a medium term expenditure framework called the Economic and Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP), the need for long-term strategic planning is of utmost importance. The National Development Plan (NDP) would provide strategic goals to each Ministry, Department and Agency of the Federal Government. In this wise, the NDP will determine the MDAs that will constitute the Federal Civil Service, which in turn will eliminate duplication of activities, ultimately reducing wastages. Furthermore, the NDP will outline the mandate of each MDA, which in turn will guide budgeting and implementation. These will all be geared towards achieving the strategic goals as set in the National Development Plan. Consequently, this will lead to the development of purpose-driven budgets where all MDAs are working in a concerted manner to bring about sustainable development to Nigeria.

Also, by overhaul the social investment programme. Since the outset of the Coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria, the Ministry had been engaged in providing palliatives to Nigerians. This palliative comprised of cash transfers, distribution of relief materials such as food, etc., although laudable, is not reaching those most in need of it as when due. It is therefore necessary for the Federal Government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the



distributive mechanisms to reach households that are worst-hit by the pandemic. This will ensure the lock-down is strictly adhered to, giving the NCDC ample time to identify the infected, isolate, and treat them.

By developing a realistic fiscal plan. As Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank posited, “in the face of this pandemic, we must put lives above resources and health above debt. Why? Because developing economies are the most vulnerable at this time...” At this moment in time, with the prevailing economic situation, the Federal Government should have developed a lean and mean fiscal plan aimed at targeting critical infrastructure such as health, education, rail transport, banking, agriculture, social investment and ICT amongst others. These should be focused on for the 2021 fiscal year whilst providing other MDAs with maintenance budgets, but no serious capital outlay for the year. This will enable the Government channel scarce resources to the most critical needs required to eliminate the pandemic.

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