

Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Livelihood Activities of Iwo Inhabitants in Osun State

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Recently, the world has been confronted with unprecedented global pandemic which has resulted in many deaths, fears, shocks and effects on people's livelihood. In Nigeria, the measures taken to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 during the lockdown affected means of livelihoods undertaken by people. This study measured the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the livelihood of farmers and business owners of Iwo inhabitants in Osun State. The study also examined the challenges posed by the pandemic and assessed the effects of government's strategies implemented for the disease control on the livelihoods of the farmers and business owners. A total number of 200 well-structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the study area using snowball sampling technique. The questionnaires were all returned amounting to 100% response rate. Data was analysed using descriptive method with the aid of SPSS. Findings revealed that Covid-19 negatively affected the lives of people, ranging from suspension of businesses and other daily activities that requires physical contacts, travel ban effects on business, inflation in price of goods and services, suspension of farming activities, increased cost of labour and agrochemicals amongst others. It was observed that diversification into other business interest is among the reasons why some of the respondents survived during the Pandemic. The study recommends that measures taken to curtail the effects of Covid19 through vaccination be adhered to for prevention of cases that may warrant further shutdown of activities which may hamper livelihoods engagement.

Key words: Business Owners, Covid-19, Farmers, Pandemic, Livelihoods, Lockdown

INTRODUCTION

The world has been grappling with unprecedented pandemic which spread to various countries over the first half of 2020. The pandemic was identified as a new corona virus (severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2, or SARS-CoV-2), and later named as Corona virus Disease-19 or COVID-19 (Qiu *et al.*, 2020). The pandemic evidently originated from the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province of China in 2019 and it has spread rapidly across the world, resulting in millions of deaths and tremendous economic damage. To curtail the spread and flatten the curve, countries across the world adopted different public health measures such as the wearing of face mask, hands sanitizing, social distancing amongst other measures intended to prevent its spread (Fong *et al.*, 2020). To prevent the rapid spread of the disease, the decision to adopt the lockdown and other containment measures resulted in multifaceted impacts ranging from disruption of the food supply chain and other vital economic activities across the globe (Alvi *et al.*, 2021; Pu & Zhong, 2020; Swinnen & McDermott, 2020). The covid-19 pandemic posed challenges on food security and sustainable livelihoods particularly in developing countries (Rasul, 2021). More effects emanate from the disease control measures which has weakened the livelihoods of vulnerable people (Gerard *et al.*, 2020 Kassegn & Endris, 2021; Ouko *et al.*, 2020).

It is noteworthy that due to high rate of unemployment at the level of public sector, a significant proportion of African workers are employed in the informal sector in different cities. The survival of informal sector workers depends mainly on daily earnings from outside the home, with these being factors that inevitably necessitate constant and regular movement and interactions (Duerksen, 2020). The challenges posed by the pandemic includes of losses of jobs and businesses require the people to learn new skills and diversify their income and resources into multiple streams of investments. Urban area by nature is believed to be highly monetized and people particularly survive through various livelihood strategies. The spread of Covid-19 across the globe including Nigeria has threatened the survival of livelihood as people took a break from their livelihood activities for safety of life. Studies about impact of covid-19 such as (Adam *et al* 2020, Akinyoade *et al.*, 2020.,) mainly focused on food insecurity, poverty, mobility restriction amongst others with no emphasis on the pandemic's impact on livelihoods of business owners and farmers whose services were considered essential when the pandemic was at its peak. To fill this gap, the study sought to establish empirical evidence of Covid-19 pandemic on livelihoods of farmers and business owners in Iwo town, Osun State. This study intended to assist policymakers,

planners and other stakeholders in decision making relating to pandemic and livelihoods security.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopted the concept of livelihoods to show the link between the COVID-19 and people's income generating activities. Livelihood concept emanated from the work of Robert-Chambers in the mid-80s as a framework created for understanding of poverty in rural area. It is defined as a set of capabilities, assets, and activities required for a way of living (Chambers & Conway, 1992). The livelihoods framework explains five fundamental pillars which includes vulnerability context, livelihood assets, policies structures and processes, livelihood strategies, and livelihood outcomes. The vulnerability context refers to shocks, seasonality and trends. Natural and/or man-made shocks and stresses severely affect different actors involved in the food supply chain (Bene, 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 is a shock that has a direct effect on livelihoods and this effects by extension has an impact on the functionality of households. Livelihoods in this context is vulnerable to Covid19 owing to the fact that various forms of restrictions imposed by the government in response to COVID-19 are an example of shocks/stresses that affect the ability of small business owners to engage successfully in their livelihoods (Bene, 2020). The shocks and stresses associated with COVID-19 pandemic worldwide is reported to have resulted in devastating socio-economic disruptions of people placing livelihoods at high risk as thousands of people reportedly lost their income and falling into the trap of impending poverty, as a direct consequence of the economic crisis (Paul *et al.*, 2020)

The unemployment increases observed in the US are partly driven by lockdown/social distancing policies (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Bartiket *al.* (2020), conducted a survey in a small number of firms in the US and document that several of them have temporarily closed shop and reduced their number of employees compared to January 2020. The global pandemic is recorded to have hit minorities and people at the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum extremely suffer more from pre-existing conditions due to more exposure to risks, economic difficulties, and limited access to services (Wade, 2020&Duggal,2020). Formal sector employees, particularly the lower middle class that has limited savings, have been significantly affected by the pandemic as thousands were laid off, some were sent home with unpaid leave as businesses strive to stay afloat (Demeke &Kariuki, 2020). Informal sector employees who basically often survive on daily hand-to-mouth wages are most affected by COVID 19 response measures such as stay home orders, closures of markets and shutdowns in many sectors (Demeke &Kariuki, 2020). It was also observed that COVID-19 pandemic is

likely to have confrontational effects on agrarian households and loss of job amongst rural wage labour (Wieser *et al.*, 2020; Kassegn & Endris, 2021).

The link between Covid-19 (Independent variable) and Livelihood activities (Dependent variable) could be explained from the livelihood framework modified by Rakodi, (2002) who opines that the sustainability of livelihood depends on its ability to cope and recover from sudden shocks and stress imposed by disease, disaster and government policies/intervention while maintaining and enhancing its capabilities and assets. The fear and shock created by Covid-19 means that the livelihood activities of people are susceptible. The outbreak of Covid-19 and government's intervention through various means to flatten the curve has a direct impact on livelihoods of people. Business activities and agricultural value chain are vulnerable to Covid-19 pandemic (Morton 2020)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted quantitative research leading to the administration of a total number of two hundred (200) well-structured closed ended questionnaires to respondents selected from Oke-Adan and Gidigbo wards of Iwo local government using snowball sampling technique. This technique also regarded as the "chain method," is considered highly efficient and help reduces cost to access people who would have been difficult to reach. The first procedure required is for the researcher to ask the first few samples usually selected through convenience sampling to indicate if they are acquainted with anyone with similar view or opinions that can participate in the research (Polit-O'Hara & Beck 2006). This method was helpful because there was no record of sample comprising the population of categories of the respondents investigated (Farmers and Business owners). Nevertheless, the identification of the larger respondents was made easier through the help of the first few participants that filled the questionnaires who further involved others. The questionnaires contained various questions applicable to each group based on their livelihood activities. The respondents identified constituted farmers and business owners who were carefully selected based on observable characteristics. In the end, the questionnaires were all returned amounting to 100% response rate. The data were analyzed with the use of statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for presentation of data in tables, bar charts, pie charts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information in the Table 1 below consists of data showing the gender representation and marital status of the respondents in the two wards (Oke-Adan &Gidigbo). Majority of the respondents (115) which represented 57.5% were male while the rest number of respondents (85) which represented 42% were female. Data about the

marital status shows that majority of the respondents consisting of 60% are married, 29% are single and 11% are divorced.

Table 1: Gender and marital status of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	115	57.5
Female	85	42.5
Total	200	100
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	120	60
Single	58	29
Divorced	22	11
Total	200	100

Table 2: Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	25	12.5
Secondary school	45	22.5
ND/NCE	36	18
HND/University degree	67	33.5
Postgraduate	27	13.5
Total	100	100

The Table 3 below showed that a total number of 100 business owners who represented 50% of the respondents also provided responses to questions regarding challenges encountered in their businesses during the peak of the pandemic. The data collected to investigate the effect of pandemic on business as analysed in Table 3 below shows that 14% of the respondents experienced loss of customer/clients, 10%

Table 3: Challenges encountered by business owners

Experience of business owners	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Loss of customer/clients	14	14
Expiration of some products un-purchased	10	10
Increase in price of goods and low patronage	56	56
Travel ban affects business	20	20
Total	100	100

Effects Of Covid-19 Pandemic on Farmers.

Farming is one of the means of generating income of the respondents, hence the farmers were asked questions about decline participation in farming activities due to pandemic. The data in Table 4 revealed reasons for declination in farming activities; 6% of the respondents agreed they did not feel safe to go to farm, 28% were scared of being infected, 25% revealed that hired

Table 4: Reasons for declined participation in farm during the lockdown.

Declined participation in farm activities	Frequency	Percent (%)
Uncertainty about safety on the farm	15	15
Fear of being arrested by security personnel	12	12
Fear of being infected	28	28
Unavailability of labourers to work on the farm	45	45
Total	100	100

Level of education of the respondents

The level of educational attained by the respondents was investigated to ascertain if they are knowledgeable enough to answer the questions useful for the study. The data in Table 2 below shows that 12.5% of the respondents acquired primary school education, 22.5% of the respondents have secondary school certificate, 18% are holders of ND/NCE certificate, 33.5% holds HND/ university degree certificate while 13.5% of the respondents are postgraduate degree holders. There exists educational attainment amongst the respondents in the study area.

revealed that some of their un-purchased product got expired, 56% affirmed there was increase in the price of goods leading to low patronage, 20% of the respondents were unable to order for more goods due to travel ban. It was recalled that travel ban affects businesses of those into essentials. This data indicates that the sudden emergence of the pandemic affected businesses of the respondents.

labourers were not available to help with the farming activities. This therefore implies that covid-19 at a point resulted in suspension of farming activities in the study area. This agrees with the finding made by Aromolaran *et al.* (2021), that the outbreak of Covid-19 reduced availability and increased cost of farm labour, which in turn, resulted in a decline in land area cultivated.

The study went further to ascertain challenges encountered by the farmers and Table 5 revealed high cost of labour by 18% of the respondents, 46% of the respondents agreed that one of their major challenges was that agro chemical product which foster the growth of crop plants and yield buoyant harvest became highly costly; 11% of the respondents suffered from unavailability of agricultural extension while 25% low

sales of farm produce. This analysis agrees with a similar finding that ‘farmers are among the vulnerable groups who might be restricted from working on their farmland, accessing markets to sell their products, or to even buy seeds and other essential inputs needed for the plants’ (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2020).

Table 5: The challenges encountered by the farmers during the peak of lockdown

Major challenges	Frequency	Percent (%)
Increased cost of hiring labourers	18	18
Increased cost of agro-chemicals products	46	46
Suspension of Agricultural extension which aid farming production	11	11
Low sales of farm produce	25	25
Total	100	100

Restriction of movement as one of the strategies to control the spread of Corona-virus affected people’s business in different ways. The data in Table 6 shows that 35% of the respondents affirmed to reduced business profits, 11% revealed that goods ordered online were not delivered, 28% of the respondents affirmed that closure of business affected daily expenditure while 26% lost interest in embarking on their business activities due to the location. The study confirmed that people were unable to do their daily businesses which requires

physical contacts and therefore the restriction imposed on people affected the respondents in the category of business owners. This agrees with the study of Asegie *et al.* (2021), the findings revealed that in order to reduce social gatherings, certain business activities were banned by the government; some businesses are devoid of necessary inputs and customers due to movement restrictions, and others crippled due to financial shortage.

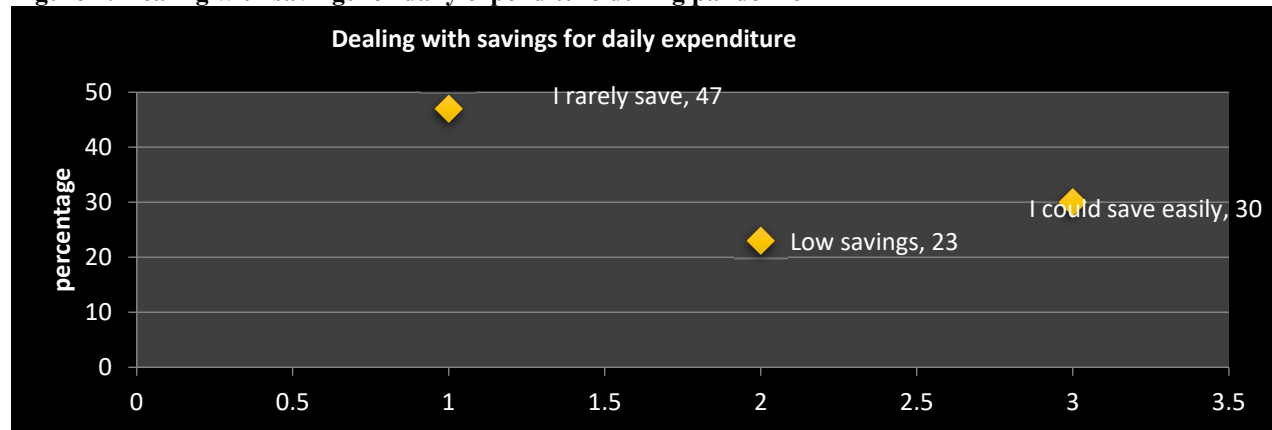
Table 6: Restriction of movement and effects on Business

Effects of movement restriction on business activities	Frequency	Percent (%)
Reduced business profits	35	35
Goods ordered not delivered	11	11
Closure of business affects daily expenditure	28	28
Loss of interest in the business due to location	26	26
Total	100	100

People are expected to save for daily expenditure through income generated from livelihood activities hence the respondents were asked question about their experience regarding savings for daily expenditure in the peak of the pandemic. The figure 1 below shows the data analysis of how individual dealt with their savings for expenditure during pandemic. 47% of the respondents affirmed that they could rarely save during

lockdown, 30% agreed they could easily save while 23% of the respondents agreed to low savings compared to how it was before the emergence of the pandemic. This agrees with the study conducted in Pakistan by Ali *et al* (2020) which focused on socioeconomic impact of COVID-19. The study confirmed that the income for about 64% of respondents decreased due to the outbreak of covid-19

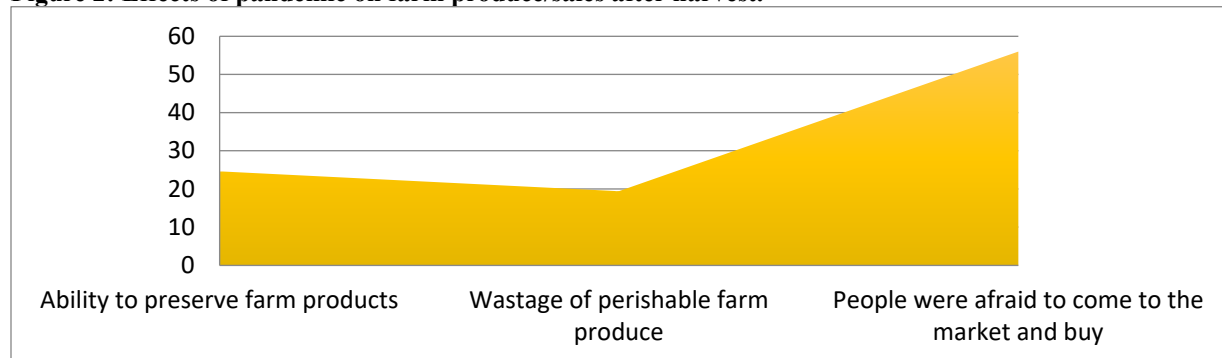
Figure 1: Dealing with savings for daily expenditure during pandemic



The data gathered on the field to find how farm produce were affected by the pandemic was presented in figure 2 as follows; 25% of the respondents revealed that they were able to preserve their farm products, 19% revealed that perishable farm produce was wasted, 56% observed

that people were afraid to come to the market and buy farm produce. This implies that farmers faced the challenges of low patronage of their farm produce in other way there was low cash inflow for them.

Figure 2: Effects of pandemic on farm produce/sales after harvest.



To cushion the effects of covid-19 on livelihoods, a total of 75 respondents out of 200 which constituted 37.5% revealed they opted for additional source of income to cope with the economic challenge posed by the pandemic. The data in Table 7 below revealed that 10% of the respondents engaged in the sale of nose mask from house to house, 15% adopted online business while 10%

ventured into production of handwash learnt through YouTube videos. 10% of the respondents also involved in home delivery of some essential local made products and food items. This analysis is evidence that some of the respondents survived due to additional source of income they embarked on during the restriction measures imposed by the federal government.

Table 7: Additional source of income ventured by the respondents during the pandemic

Additional source of income adopted	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sale of face mask	20	10
Online business	15	7.5
Home delivery of local made products and food	20	10
Production of hand wash through YouTube training	20	10
Total	75	37.5

The emergence of Covid-19 came with a threat to life

hence the need to ask the respondents about their

experience as seen in the Table 8 below. 51% of the respondents entertained the fear of contracting the disease, 40% had the fear of staying idle, 9% feared that

the rate of criminal activities will increase. It was deduced from the responses that the emergence of Covid-19 was a threat to life of the respondents.

Table 8: Covid 19 as a threat to life.

Perception of covid as a threat to life	Frequency	Percent (%)
Fear of contacting the disease	102	51
Fear of been idle	80	40
Fear High crime rate	18	9
Total	200	100

According to the livelihood framework adopted for this work, feeding is one of the crucial aspects of human capital which can also be threatened in times of shocks and disease outbreak. This section explained the experience perceived on feeding during the pandemic as stated in Table 9 below. It is evident that the thought of

contracting the disease through contact with people affects the ability for food purchase as agreed by 30% of the respondents. Inflation on food items greatly affected the respondents as indicated by the majority which constituted (52.5%) while 17.5% of the respondents agreed to have experience absence of food items.

Table 9: Feeding experience during the lockdown

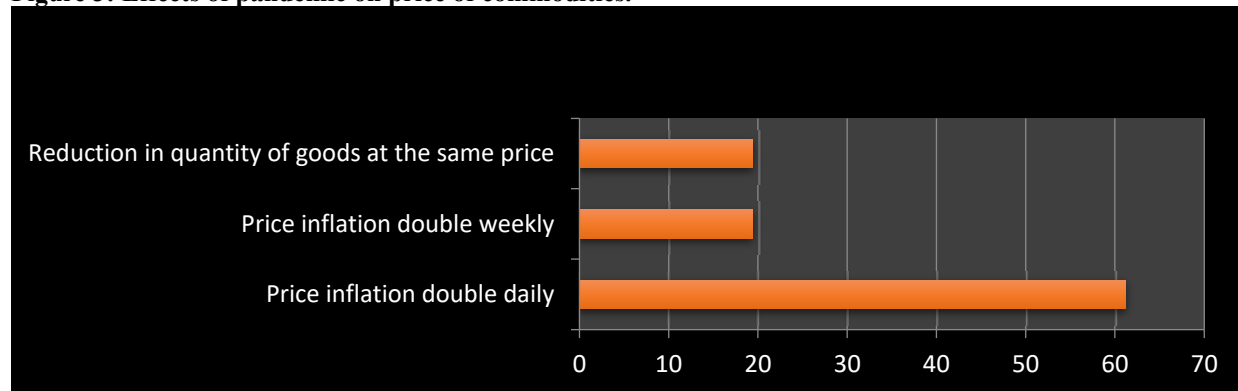
Feeding experience	Frequency	Percent (%)
Availability of food items at high cost	105	52.5
Availability of food but fear of going out	60	30
Absence of food items	35	17.5
Total	200	100

Effects of pandemic on price of commodities

Figure 3 below shows that 19.2% perceived that there was reduction in the quantity of goods but still sold at the same price, 19.4% perceived increase in the price of food and goods were double weekly while 61.4%perceived that the inflation associated with covid19-pandemic affected price of commodities as they agreed to sporadic increase in price of goods on

daily basis. This result is similar with the findings of Gu and Wang (2020) & Minten *et al* (2020), which revealed that covid 19 pandemic has a great impact on marketing and price of commodities in Shanghai, China adding that lockdown strategy as precautionary measure against covid-19 also resulted in disruption of trading particularly perishable goods such as vegetables.

Figure 3: Effects of pandemic on price of commodities.



Household property and livestock are examples of physical asset that people sometimes dispose to cushion the effects emanating from economic hardship, disaster or shocks. The respondents in the study area were examined to see if due to covid-19 pandemic, people had at any point consider disposing their property or livestock to cope. The data in Table 10 below explains

the condition of respondent’s physical assets during the peak of the pandemic. The Table revealed that only 2% sold valuable properties, 47% claimed none of their properties were disposed, while 21% sold some of the respondents sold livestock owing to hardship imposed by the pandemic while 30% of the respondents never sold livestock. This implies that people were able to

cope without disposing their properties or livestock.

Table 10. Sale of household Property or livestock owing to hardship caused by the pandemic

Sales of property or livestock	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sold valuable properties	4	2
No valuable property disposed	94	47
Sold live stocks	42	21
Live stocks not sold	60	30
Total	200	100

CONCLUSION

The study assessed covid-19 pandemic impact on livelihoods of Iwo inhabitants and findings revealed that covid-19 has negatively affected the livelihoods of people, ranging from halt in business and farming activities, low patronage, increased cost of labour, inflation in price of goods and services, diversification into other source of income amongst others. Thus, people’s social lives, activities and income were greatly affected as a result of lockdown order imposed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It is therefore, concluded that the Covid-19 has an impact on livelihoods of the people of Iwo Local Government. People acknowledge the fact that they ventured into new innovation and skills which is a part of the reasons why they survived aside their businesses and farming activities. The study recommends the need for adherence to precautionary measures so people can beat the spread of the phenomena for livelihood activities to continue uninterrupted. Planning should also encourage public spacing particularly to reduce the contraction of diseases that spreads quickly when people in large numbers come in contact.

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