

Impact of Covid-19 Social Distancing Protocol on the Private Sector Dance Troupes in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The confirmed case of Covid-19 in Lagos State made it the epicentre of the virus in Nigeria. To this end, the federal government adopted public health protocols to curb its spread which included social distancing at the end of March 2020. The response measure of social distancing had grave consequences on the services of the private sector dance troupes in the state. This study adopted the exploratory research design. The population comprised private dance troupes based on a random selection of troupes that could be reached through mobile phones and other social media platforms. The objective of the study was to provide data on the impact of the social distancing measure on dance service providers in Lagos State and to establish the place of dance in the state's political economy. The findings showed that the Covid-19 social distancing measure impacted negatively on 100% of dance service providers in the private sector during the period under review and that this sector was neglected as a matter of the socio-economic policy of the state. It was recommended that the policy of the government should not be discriminatory against dance operators in the private sector; a policy that addressed the plight of such operators should be formulated; alternatives that leveraged digital technology should be explored to scale up modes of dance presentations that guaranteed job and social security for all times in the sector. The study concluded that the deleterious impact of the measure of social distancing on the dance economy of the private dance troupes of Lagos State could have been mitigated if there was a policy framework that guaranteed culture security which would have benefitted both the private dance

troupes and Lagos State economy during the first four months of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Keywords: Dance, Deleterious impact, Covid-19, Social distancing, Private dance sector

Introduction

Out of nowhere, "since December 2019, a new type of coronavirus called novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV, or Covid-19) was identified in Wuhan, China. Covid-19 has then rapidly spread to all over China and the world." (Zhu, Wei, Niu). In Nigeria, the federal government had already inaugurated a multisectoral National Coronavirus Preparedness Group (NCPG) as of January 31, 2020, ("FG sets up") a month after the public acknowledgement of the pandemic in Wuhan, China - through the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), to plan its containment by strategising to forestall the importation of the virus into Nigeria. Soon after this pre-emptive measure, precisely on "February 27, 2020, the Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first Covid-19 case in Ogun State and the country became the third country in Africa to recognise an imported Covid-19..." (Journal of Global Health). The public knowledge of the index case of the coronavirus startled the entire Nigerian polity. Certainly, it was an imported health condition by an Italian according to medical and media reports. While in the previous three months cases of the spread of the virus with multiple daily deaths in Wuhan, China, were shown on mainstream international and domestic media channels for most of the world, the scope of its spread had not dawned on Nigerians.

The clear danger the virus posed on global health was acknowledged on 11 March 2020, when was declared globally, "We have therefore made the assessment that Covid-19 can be characterized as a pandemic." (World Health Organization). In March, the NCDC tweeted, "the 1st #Covid-19 death in Nigeria has been recorded. The case was a 67-year-old male who returned home following medical treatment in UK." ("Nigeria records"). This one death with the growing numbers of Covid-19 pandemic patients, forced the federal government to do a re-think. Lagos State gained the notoriety as the epicentre of the coronavirus in Nigeria as the entry point for international travellers. In its wisdom, the federal government considered and approved the order to lockdown Lagos and Ogun States in the first instance, as well as Abuja. This meant that government and commercial functions had to be shut down for

fourteen days in the first instance and possible extensions if the situation was not under control. The measures outlined for public health safety among others by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and adopted by the federal government of Nigeria were: physical and social distancing, washing of hands; wearing of face mask, covering sneezes and coughs, keeping unwashed hands away from the face, the ventilation of indoor spaces, stay at home order, quarantine of those infected and a curfew from 12:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. daily.

This study sets out to prove the hypothesis that social distancing, as one of the preventive measures against the coronavirus, had a deleterious impact on the private dance sector in Lagos State in the first four months of its implementation and enforcement. The goal of this study was to provide data on the impact of the social distancing measure of Covid-19 on dance service providers in the private sector in Lagos State to create awareness of the existence and exclusion of a vibrant and active informal sector of the state's economy and proffer solutions for future lockdown measures. The objectives of the study, therefore, were to: establish the presence of private dance troupes in five selected local council development areas of Lagos State that form part of the political economy; determine the registration status of these private dance troupes with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) as a legal institution; establish the number of personnel in the private dance troupes in each of the selected local council development areas in Lagos State; identify the private dance troupes that were booked for and executed performances and those which could not within the first four months of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Lagos State; determine the percentage of personnel of the private dance sector of Lagos State that benefitted from palliatives provided and distributed by the government of Lagos State during the Covid-19 lockdown; make recommend-ations towards the welfare of private sector dance service providers; and recommend measures to avert hardship for the private sector dance troupes of Lagos State during public safety emergencies for a sustainable economy for both the dance troupes and the State.

The Study Area

Lagos State is acclaimed as one of the cultural centres in Nigeria. The local councils of Surulere, Victoria Island, Ajegunle, Bariga and Badagry where dance activities from diverse cultural origins are easily identifiable were studied. These five local council development areas constitute 9% of the

local government administrative units in the state. The dance troupes that are in Lagos are mainly made up of both indigenes; those who have willingly migrated to the area to trade with their dance skills and of course those who have fled the villages and towns with the hunger and desire to hug the bright city lights and hustle spirit of Lagos to eke a living. With their talents, they sweat out in some decrepit spaces to serve their skills to entertainment seekers who, like them, form the tapestry of the social life of Lagos. They count when “the Lagos State government estimates the population of Lagos at 17.5 million, although this number has been disputed by the Nigerian government and found to be unreliable by the National Population Commission (NPC) of Nigeria, which put the population at over 21 million in 2016” (Population of Lagos State 2021).

Dance troupes in Lagos State perform around the clock and almost on every occasion to the extent that they have gained prominence as invaluable items in entertainment spaces from the sacred to the secular. Dance is the singular index of celebration in Lagos State known for its endemic “owambe” excesses (owambe is a local sobriquet for a party laced with social dancing and praise singing in the south west of Nigeria and especially in Lagos). The economic and premium entertainment value that dance exhibitions bring to Lagos is the characteristic that makes the state different and vibrant from any other state or city in the whole of the West African sub-region.

Dance and the Nigerian Society

Dance is a human activity and a characteristic that represents the cultural ethos and a system of communication among people in Nigeria. Essentially, dances are social products of communities that encapsulate the ethos of those communities. In this sense, dance is a very complicated phenomenon that deploys symbolic actions and pauses to communicate ideas of a people’s heritage. Effectively, only the community confers the title of dance - either literally or metaphorically - on any choreographic work that represents and promotes its ethos. As stage entertainment, dance sheds its communal purpose and assumes the status of a commodity. Entertainment is not new or strange to Lagos State where the Glover Memorial Hall was built in 1887 (Lagos hands over), the National Theatre and the resident National Troupe of Nigeria, the Musical Society of Nigeria Centre (MUSON), African Shrine and Freedom Park are situated. It boasts a lot of other spaces where different dance forms and styles are exposed. It is equally where the first professional dance

company was established in 1966 by Hubert Ogunde (Clark 101) and Afrobeat music and dance styles were birthed and added to the repertoire of highlife and other dance styles in the late 1970s.. Lagos State is arguably where most of the music videos in Nigeria are shot. Besides, the theatre, festivals, carnival, sports, and commerce of the state also attract dance entertainment variously for the products launch, branding, reality television shows, ground-breaking occasions and other sundry events.

At present, there is a swarm of what is termed contemporary dance in Lagos State. This upsurge is attributable to the instrumentality of the National Troupe of Nigeria and the French Cultural Centre. The former is for making forays into both indigenous and modern dance forms with its traditional and emancipating approach to movement in the training of its dance personnel. The latter is for experiments and training of some Nigerian dancers, albeit, surreptitiously, from the mid-1990s. Between the two, an upsurge has been recorded in the form and style of what can rightly be termed theatre dance in Nigeria. Also, the influence of Western-style dance entertainment through the media, videos, DVDs and the social media, has impacted the visual space and commanded a commendable following among those in the teenage bracket especially. A third wave, concerned essentially with musical videos, has pervaded the state and has not escaped the recognition of dance connoisseurs.

From 30 March 2020, the first day of the lockdown as announced by the President and Commander-in-Chief, Muhammadu Buhari, all businesses, schools and organisations were shut down in Lagos. The 'Hustle City' as the state is nicknamed, locked its doors and the din of its bustle diminished to a whisper. The unpreparedness or absence of forewarning of the citizenry translated to helplessness, unmitigated and palpable quiet anger and panic buying with unbudgeted funds. The numerous dance troupes plying their trade in Lagos State and contributing to the political economy of the State either overtly or otherwise were not exempted from the social distancing protocol. This tapestry of dance troupes with diverse oral traditions and thriving contemporary styles that form a cosmopolitan folklore and source of subsistence for a segment of the population became a victim of the measures for curbing the spread of Covid-19; especially the social distancing measure. Covid-19 provided the opportunity to test the veracity of the constitutional provision in Chapter II. Article 14 (2) (b) states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of

government: ..." (Constitution of the Federal Republic n.pag.), regarding the circumstances of the private sector dance troupes in Lagos State.

Constitution of Lagos State Private Sector Dance Troupes

The concept of a private-sector dance troupe presupposes that there is a public-sector dance troupe in Lagos State. There is a public dance unit in its Council for Arts and Culture domiciled in the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. Its objectives are stated in the Act establishing it. The statutory responsibilities of such dancers in government include the preservation, propagation and promotion of the state's dance culture. For this purpose, only a negligible number are in the employ of the state. So, it is safe to say that there are dancers in the public service of Lagos State, but a few. During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, these personnel received their monthly salaries regularly. Private dance troupes exist as an unnoticed, quietly active and burgeoning sector of the Lagos political economy. The constitution of this sector is premised on a diversity of forms and styles. Principal among these is traditional troupes, town union groups, contemporary, dance hall and freelance dance groups whose personnel span between professionals and amateurs. It is pertinent to note that the private sector dance troupes of Lagos State are made up of both those who are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission as well as informal ones. Some of these informal troupes that are yet to register with the corporate affairs Commission are in embryonic stages and are anything, but structured.

Commoditisation of Dance in Lagos State

Dance is chiefly an item of commerce in Lagos State. The commodification of dance in Lagos State is not a recent development. The cosmopolitan setting has transformed the cultural function of dance in traditional settings into a social commodity. As a cultural function, it is a way of life of a people, but as a social function, it is providing a service for which it seeks pecuniary patronage. It has a long history from the Lagos concert halls beginning in the mid-19th century. Due to its cosmopolitan nature and availability of expendable income, there is a high demand for entertainers in Lagos State. This has attracted the setting up of dance troupes by individuals or groups essentially for economic purposes. Only a negligible minority of such troupes represent town unions. The setting up of dance troupes has conferred economic status on the dance as a

product. Dance, therefore, offers job opportunities and provides services for people to earn a living.

In the absence of a national endowment for the arts, individuals take on the responsibilities of organising the youth and running dance practices with the hope of having their debuts with the dream of subsequently navigating their ways to stardom someday. To survive, these groups generate or copy dances from villages, sometimes based on residual knowledge, for 'sale' in the city. Others create expressive movements and coin them as contemporary dance – in some cases, the narratives and images of the so-called dances are personal and obscure. However, in their mixed forms and idioms, the concept of the commodification of dance in Lagos State cannot be faulted amid the claim of the supremacy of culture and tradition because now, it is offered as art. There are also claims that some of the dance groups have been set up to mop youths from the streets and engage them in more useful forms of activities for themselves and society. This is a laudable idea in a nation the component of culture is not aggregated to meet the objective of national development. Nevertheless, there is the other side to it: to sustain themselves, the products of such dance troupes are never offered for free to the public; they are revenue-generating to guarantee a return on investment (ROI).

Through the commodification of dance, some young persons have been able to raise themselves from their bootstraps and are on their way up the social ladder. These have served as an inspiration to others who seek economic opportunities. It is not possible to overlook the fact that some dancers are being exploited. This attitude swells the statistics of dance service providers in Lagos State more than any other state in Nigeria and could as well be considered a social burden if policy designers in the State are ignorant of the presence of this population, their potential and contribution to the value chain of the Lagos State economic ecosystem. It should, however, be pointed out here that the dance art in Lagos is lacking in canons, but is surplus in commodities.

Covid-19 and the Criminalisation of Socialisation

Dance and dancing are participatory both in the processes of production and consumption. It is their natural and cultural mandate to reconcile and socialise individuals, societies and nations. The only option available to the Lagos State dance audience and industry at present remains live performances. This physical-psychical 'conversation' is, therefore, only

possible if persons congregate or assemble in a particular space. In other words, a group of persons must work at creating the performance and another group of persons must assemble as spectators. Any other arrangement short of this is not known to the Lagos audience as dance in the sense of the absence of immediacy. This is a social standard for participating in the dance as theatre.

In Nigeria, "as of Sunday, 29 March 2020 the Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC)...confirmed 111 Covid-19 cases nationwide including one death." (Nigeria:

Government locks down, par. 3). The first lockdown commenced on 30 March 2020. On 13 April 2020, the lockdown was extended for another fourteen days, thus worsening the fear, trepidation, anxiety and angst among the populace. The extension was justified because the pandemic was gaining ground as the statistics of those infected were on the increase and the entire populace ought not to be exposed to the danger of infection and avoidable possible deaths. There were promises of possible incremental lockdowns as long as the danger posed by the virus persisted. By implication, the lockdown was the commencement of the criminalisation of socialisation in Lagos in peaceful times.

Meanwhile, the right to freedom of association is recognised in international law and the Nigerian constitution. This principle forms the provision in Section 40 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) which states inter alia, "Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests." (Constitute 22). In section 42 (1) it is guaranteed that,

A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by any reason only that he is such a person:- (a) be subjected either expressly by or in the practical application of any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions are not made subjects.... (22)

Against this backdrop, there was an infringement on the constitutional rights of citizens of Lagos State (Ogun State and Abuja)

when the President and Commander-in-Chief, in his address stated that, “all citizens in these areas are to stay in their homes. Travel to or from other states should be postponed. All businesses and offices within these locations should be fully closed during this period” (Buhari par 35). Adjacent to the constitutional provision in section 42 (1), citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions were not made subjects; were exempted from these restrictions except travelling to these three administrative areas.

Despite the good intentions of the government, at the point that isolation and restriction became government order due to Covid-19, socialisation was criminalised in Lagos State. Every administrative action affirmed this denial of liberty because the state went further to ensure strict compliance, by setting up a task force and there were reports of resistance and arrests as of 30 April 2020 when, “the Lagos State Covid-19 Task force, on Wednesday, arrested more than 50 fun-seeking youths who had attended a party at 84, Parks and Gardens, Idi-Oparun Bus Stop, opposite Abattoir at Abule Egba, Lagos in violation of the lockdown, public gathering and social distancing directives of the federal and state governments” (oolasunkanmi par 1). There were widespread breaches of the social distancing protocol as a measure of the citizens’ resistance to the restrictions on socialisation as reported,

...Task force also sealed more than 10 social and religious centres due to non-compliance with the government’s directive on social distancing and ban on social and religious gatherings. Some of the facilities sealed include The Harvest Lagos, Bay Lounge, The Heavens Suites, Angle Villa Bar, Ehi Guest House and Gardens, Egbeda, Mountain Top Hotels and Suites, Ojodu. (“Lagos Covid-19 Task Force”)

To demonstrate the level of seriousness in the implementation of the restriction of movement of persons including inter-state travels, “... all violators were arraigned in Lagos State Special Offences’ (Mobile) Court” (par 11) and there were convictions and penalties. In one of such violations, “Nollywood actress, Funke Akindele and her former husband AbdulRasheed Bello, popularly known as JJC Skillz, were...convicted and fined N100,000 each by an Ogba Magistrate Court for flouting the Lagos State Infectious Disease (Emergency Prevention) Regulation 2020” (“Covid-19 Lockdown: Funke Akindele”). The foregoing presents

convincing evidence of the violations of the prohibition order by religious, social or even private gatherings of more than 20 persons in any space at any time in Lagos State during the period. Some of the private sector dance personnel who ply their trade at some of such spaces would not have been able to do so or be arrested for doing so due to restrictions in respect of the social distancing regulation. These are proofs that there is no gainsaying that Covid-19 restriction ipso facto was the criminalisation of socialisation. For as long as the isolation subsisted, every dance service provider in Lagos State was condemned to exist in penury. It is safe then to hold the view that dance service providers in the private sector in Lagos State, were unable to earn any income as all their earlier booked performances were subject to the doctrine of force majeure courtesy the Covid-19 restrictions and penalties for violations.

Nigerians are wont to hold onto the notion of being their brother's keepers. This notion did not hold water in the face of Covid-19 as regards the welfare of the private sector dance troupes. More so, the socio-economic system of Lagos State is without a doubt capitalist through and through. Although some diehard socialists/Marxists may tout the socio-economic mantra of the state as redemptive, worker-friendly and inclusive to have access to the levers of power, no iota of action served as proof of this philosophy as far as the private sector dance troupes were concerned. The parlous state of affairs in the private sector dance sector stems from the fact that the economy of Lagos State does not recognise the existence of such a sector. The results are several years of a policy of exclusion and neglect. It is, therefore, pertinent to consider the hardship that private sector dance service providers, who remain unknown statistics among the estimated 20 million population of Lagos, had to undergo especially with the existential threat of Covid-19 and the criminalisation of socialisations that it posed.

Covid-19 Palliatives and the Private Sector Dance Personnel of Lagos State

In the face of the danger to the economy that public safety measures adopted posed for the citizens, the federal government considered the welfare of the residents of Lagos and Ogun States as well as those in Abuja. This was contained in the national broadcast by President and Commander-in-Chief, "for residents of satellite and commuter towns and communities around Lagos and Abuja whose livelihoods will surely be affected by some of these restrictive measures we shall deploy relief

materials to ease their pains in the coming weeks” (Buhari, par. 49). Although it was a good intention, however, its implementation was anything, but equitable.

To this effect, the federal government came up with the policy of business support for MSMEs and approved the implementation of “...low-interest loans to boost local manufacturing and production across critical sectors, including but not limited to the pharmaceutical, aviation, hotels and the hospitality industry, private schools, road transportation, technology companies, and the creative sector,” (Fatoba 15). While the federal government through CACOVID received approximately N99b from institutions and sectors (23), it disbursed N3.3 billion to Lagos State under Victim Support for Covid-19 interventions (16) to all the states. The federal government support for Lagos State stood at N3, 373,719,910 (22). Deriving from the announcement by the President and Commander-in-Chief, contributions of Lagos State towards palliatives were also augmented by other bodies to the palliatives pool namely, NGOs, CSOs, individuals and private organisations. Reports had it that,

There are different accounts of what LASG committed to being spent:

- N20 billion – The passage of the law to combat and stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Lagos State and connected purposes empowered the governor to spend N20 billion to combat the pandemic in the state.
- N10 million – 57 local governments were rallied to assist the state with the Governor’s stimulus programme in the sum of N10 million.
- Unquantified – Private sector palliative contributors (Assessing- Covid-19 Pandemic...8)

The above are the sources and sums of money that were to make palliatives available to every household in Lagos State. There were claims as of the period under review to the effect that no personnel of any of the private sector dance troupes in the five local council development areas benefitted from palliatives. With such information at its disposal, this study sought to establish the veracity of this allegation of exclusion from the palliatives measure which was both a national and state policy. However, discrepancies trailed the distribution of palliatives in Lagos State as it was reported that,

In most monitored local government areas, including Agege, Mushin, Ikorodu, Sururlere and Epe, we discovered that palliatives were hijacked and diverted by politicians and shared among party members. Some residents who are not members of the party lamented the hijack and their exclusion from the whole distribution process. The ward chairman is in charge of the distribution of food in the Agege area in Lagos State. One “DeRica” of rice, one “DeRica” of beans and one sachet of tomato paste were given to a street with more than 30 houses. (Fatoba 26)

The above submission supports the allegations that that there was widespread abuse in the distribution of palliatives despite the good intentions of the federal and state governments. To mitigate the hardship on the citizens of Lagos State occasioned by the protocols to curb the spread of the Covid-19 in the state demanded the support and cooperation of every agency on the distribution chain to ensure that the efforts of government met their targets and assuaged the biting economic conditions during the first four months of the lockdown. This study, therefore confirms the allegation that the private sector dance troupes’ personnel were excluded from benefiting from the palliative. However, it is clear that the exclusion was not directed by the government of Lagos State, but by those who chose to act as incorrigible meddling middlemen. Effectively, since the personnel did not benefit from palliatives provided by the state, it is safe to conclude that the distribution of palliatives was anything, but equitable with the private dance sector as a glaring example among other disadvantaged segments in the state.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The number of dance troupes from the private sector as well as local development council areas was based on random selection. This was informed especially by those who could be reached through telephony, short message service, and e-mail and were willing to serve as respondents. These factors dictated the study population and scope. The researcher was conscious of and limited by the fact that the lockdown had decimated the incomes of the majority of the private-sector dance troupes in Lagos State. This informed the decision to target those troupes whose leadership could afford to expend on communication. While the names, local council development area locations, registration status, number of

personnel, bookings within the period, executed performances between March and July 2020, and the benefits from palliatives formed the demographics of the research. Other variables like gender, age, education, ethnic origin and religion were excluded in order not to deviate from the object of the study of the deleterious impact of Covid-19 on the private sector dance troupes in Lagos State, Nigeria, which is better explained as presented in the following data analysis:

Table 1: List of registered dance troupes in selected five local council development areas of Lagos State for the study as of March–July 2020

S/N	Name of Dance Company	LCDA	Reg. Status	No. of Personnel	Bookings within the Period	Executed Performances between March and July 2020	Benefitted from Palliatives
1	House of Dance	Suru- lere	CAC	25	2	Cancelled	Nil
2	Ijodee Dance Company	Ditto	CAC	15	0	Cancelled	Nil
3	Dogumbas Dance Ensemble	Ditto	CAC	25	4	Cancelled	Nil
4	J P Arts Academy	Ditto	CAC	30	0	0	Nil
5	Ivory Ambassadors	Ditto	CAC	--	0	0	Nil
6	African Kreative Dance Company	Ditto	CAC	10	2	Cancelled	Nil
7	Gifted Steppers Arts	Ditto	CAC	30	0	Cancelled	Nil

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8	African Kreative Dance Comp- any	Ditto	CAC	10	2	Cancelled	Nil
9	Gifted Steppers Arts Acade my	Ditto	CAC	30	0	Cancelled	Nil
10	Odidere Arts of Africa	Victori a Island	CAC	30	5	Cancelled	Nil
11	SPAN	Ditto	CAC	0	0	0	Nil
12	E-First Dance Compa ny	Ajegun le	CAC	21	0	0	Nil
13	Troupers Art Producti on	Bariga	CAC	6	0	0	Nil
14	Inside Art Produc tions	Ditto	CAC	13	0	0	Nil
15	Theatre -centric Produc tions	Ditto	CAC	21	0	0	Nil
16	Footprint Art Ambassa -dors	Ditto	CAC	36	0	0	Nil
17	Black Image Art Revolut ion	Ditto	CAC	16	0		Nil
18	Kings and Queens	Ditto	CAC	33	0	0	Nil

19	Footprint of David	Ditto	CAC	Not provided	0	0	Nil
20	Crown Troupe of Africa	Ditto	CAC	3	0	0	Nil
21	Ajidans Studio Productions	Ditto	CAC	10	7	Cancelled	Nil
22	Superior Art Heritage	Ditto	CAC	18	0	0	Nil
23	Illuminate Theatre Productions	Ditto	CAC	10	0	0	Nil
24	Omoseyitan Art	Ditto	CAC	10	1	Cancelled	Nil
25	Kininso Concept	Ditto	CAC	12	0	0	Nil
26	Gbadun Squad	Ditto	CAC	Not provided	0	0	Nil
27	Westsyde Lifestyle	Ditto	CAC	Not provided	0	0	Nil
28	Mbari Bajo Art Centre	Ditto	CAC	Not provided	0	0	Nil
29	Ijolomo Dance Company	Ditto	CAC	3	0	0	Nil
30	Dondudu Creations	Ditto	CAC	Not provided	0	0	Nil

Table 2: List of unregistered dance troupes in the five local council development areas of Lagos State selected for the study as of March–July 2020

S/ N	Name of Dance Company	LGA	Reg. Status	No. of Personnel	Bookings within the Period	Executed Performances between March and July 2020	Benefitted from Palliatives
1	Squad One	Surulere	Not registered	Not provided	0	0	Nil
2	Drums View Concept	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
3	Queens Arts Academy	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
4	White Stones Ambassadors	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
5	Middon Dance Company	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
6	Golden Crown Arts Academy	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
7	Moseg Creativities	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
8	Afolasz Cultural Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
9	Ayanjo Dance Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
10	Regal	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil

	Dance Ambassadors						
11	Shelter Performing Arts Ensemble	Victoria Island	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
12	Arts Afrique	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
13	Success Performing Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
14	Gudugbe Dance Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
15	Bright Star Arts Ensemble	Ajegunle	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
16	Young Squad Production	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
17	Ijo Ola Theatre Productions	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
18	Mayhem Production	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
19	Jaft-Jay Productions	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
20	Golden Heritage Arts Production	Ditto	Ditto	30	0	0	Nil
21	Peter and Paul Dance Troupe.	Ditto	Ditto	Not provided	0	0	Nil
22	Daydream Arts Ambassadors	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	

23	Footprint Africa	Bariga	Ditto	20	0	0	Nil
24	Drums Ministry	Ditto	Ditto	8	0	0	Nil
25	Arts Castle Academy	Ditto	Ditto	25	0	0	Nil
26	Ennovate Dance House	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
27	Dachrism of a Art	Ditto	Ditto	6	3	Cancelled	Nil
28	ElaOsupa	Ditto	Ditto	16	0	0	Nil
29	Diamond Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	Not provided	0		Nil
30	Starlight Home of Entertainment	Ditto	Ditto	15	0	0	Nil
31	Pathfinder Art Productions	Ditto	Ditto	13	0	0	Nil
32	Olorunjeda Concepts	Ditto	Ditto	4	0	0	Nil
33	G.R.A.C.E .	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
34	Ibadi Dance Ensemble	Ditto	Ditto	Not provided	0	0	Nil
35	Dynamic Arts & Culture	Ditto	Ditto	12	1	Cancelled	Nil
36	Worowo African Entertainment	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
37	Art o Ten Productions	Ditto	Ditto	16	0	0	Nil
38	Chat Concepts	Ditto	Ditto	2	0	0	Nil

39	Orida Entertainment	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
40	New Generation	Ditto	Ditto	13	0	0	Nil
41	Feet-Motion Artistique Company	Ditto	Ditto	8	0	0	Nil
42	Ebony Sakara	Ditto	Ditto	Not provided	0	0	Nil
43	Aridbajo Art	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	0	0	Nil
44	Ibadi Dance Ensemble	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
45	Jedola Concept	Ditto	Ditto	Not provided	0	0	Nil
46	De' Diamond Troupe of Africa	Ditto	Ditto	13	0	0	Nil
47	Glorious Art Productions	Ditto	Ditto	15	0	0	Nil
48	Perfect-laff Entertainment & Films	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
49	Victor Akpan Studios	Ditto	Ditto	1	0	0	Nil
50	Gbenopo	Badagry	Ditto	24	0	0	Nil
51	Metohun Akere Cultural Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	28	0	0	Nil
52	Akohun Cultural Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	24	0	0	Nil

53	Delapaapa Arts & Culture	Ditto	Ditto	36	0	0	Nil
54	Ire Kanmi Cultural Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	22	0	0	Nil
55	Sato Troupe	Ditto	Ditto	20	0	0	Nil

Table 3: Summary of the distribution of dance troupes in the five selected local development council areas of Lagos State for the study

Local Council Development Area (LCDA)	Number of dance troupes	Number of dancers per LCDA
Surulere	19	175
Victoria Island	6	30
Ajegunle	9	51
Bariga	45	384
Badagry	6	154
Total	85	794

As summarised in Table 3, 85 dance troupes were identified in the five local development council areas of Surulere, Victoria Island, Ajegunle, Bariga and Badagry with a total of 794 dance personnel belonging to the two categories above (the total number of dancers with some of the registered dance troupes and most of the unregistered troupes did not disclose to the researcher for reasons known to the managers of such troupes). It is safe to hold the view that there is more than the total number of dancers reflected in the above table. These troupes have their specialities spanning traditional and contemporary dances. Their personnel are from diverse cultural and training backgrounds and these enrich the repertoires of the respective troupes. It is difficult to classify the troupes based on the purity of form and style because a greater percentage of the dancers are very fluent in indigenous forms and styles and have acquired some level of contemporary techniques to enhance their skill sets.

The troupes are known to be always busy with engagements all year round because of the need they meet within the social circle of Lagos State. Such engagements always build up after the Easter season and climax with Christmas. Most of these troupes had no engagements for the

period under review and even those who were booked for performances could not redeem the contracts as such were cancelled on grounds of force majeure. How then did the participants in this sector of the economy eke a living in the first one-hundred-and-twenty-three days that the lockdown that social distancing translated into the criminalisation of socialisation with adverse effects on their income?

Table 4: Summary of distribution of registered and unregistered dance troupes in Lagos State during the period the study

Status	No. of troupes	%
Registered	30	33.71
Unregistered	55	66.29
Total	85	100.0

Of the 85 dance troupes, 30(33.71%) claimed to have registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission while 55(66.29%) were not registered with the same agency of government. These are summarised in Table 4 and depicted in figures 1(a) and 1(b).

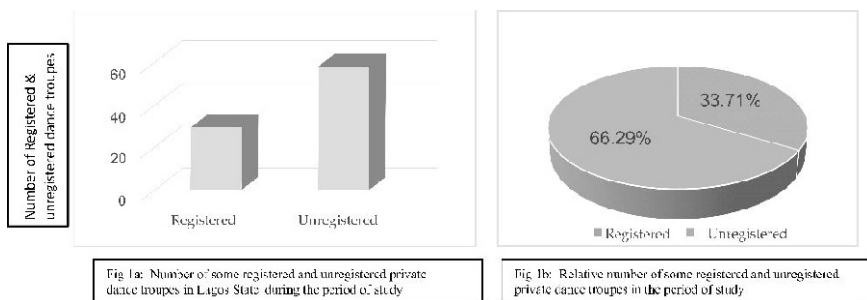


Table 5: Summary of booked and cancelled engagements of dance troupes in 5 selected local development council areas of Lagos State during the period of the study

Status	No. of bookings	%
Registered	23	85.19
Unregistered	4	14.81
Total	27	100.0

Within the period under review and between the CAC-registered and non-CAC-registered troupes, there were 27 performance bookings by clients. Due to the social distancing protocol occasioned by Covid-19, all the engagements were cancelled. Of the 30 CAC registered troupes 23 (85.19%) performances were booked and had to be cancelled and of the 55 non-CAC registered troupes 4 (14.81%) performances were booked and also had to be cancelled. These are summarised in Table 5 and depicted in Figures 2(a) and 2(b).

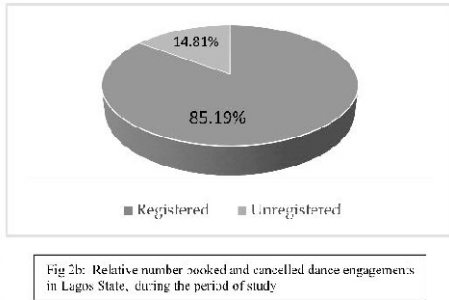
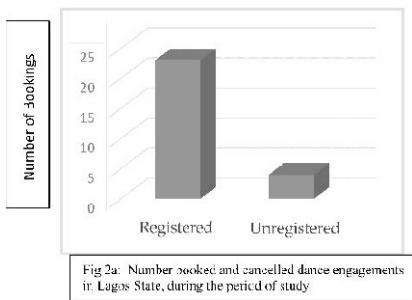


Table 6: Summary of unbooked registered and unregistered dance troupes in 5 selected local development council areas of Lagos State during the period of study

Status	No. of troupes	%
Registered	23	30.26
Unregistered	53	69.74
Total	76	100.0

Before the onset of the lockdown, of the 30 CAC registered troupes, 23 (30.26%) had no bookings and of the 55 non-CAC registered troupes, 53 (69.74%) also had no bookings; making a total of 76 unbooked troupes during the period under review. These are summarised in Table 5 and depicted in Figures 3(a) and (b).

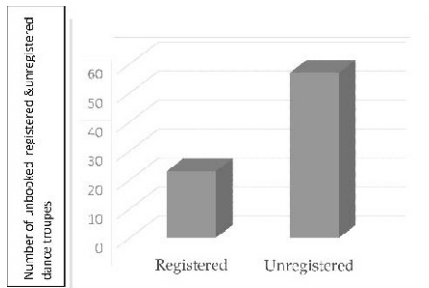


Fig 3a: Number of unbooked registered/unregistered dance troupes Lagos State, Nigeria during the period of study

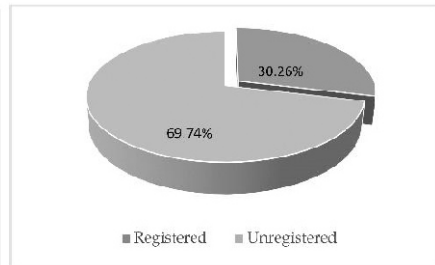


Fig 3b: Relative number of unbooked registered/unregistered dance troupes Lagos State, Nigeria during the period of study

Before the commencement of the lockdown, 23 (30.26%) of the registered dance troupes and 53(68.74%) of the unregistered dance troupes were not booked for any performance.

Troupes that benefitted from palliatives

A zero entry was received from respondents in this regard as reflected in Tables 1 and 2. Of the 85 private dance troupes studied, none benefitted from any form of palliative from March to July 2020.

Findings

The analysis presents compelling data on the deleterious impact of the Covid-19 social distancing protocol on the private dance sector in Lagos State as follows: In the five randomly selected local council development areas in Lagos State, it was established that there was the presence of 85 dance troupes in the private sector of the Lagos State economy. That 30 of these dance troupes were duly registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission while 55 of them were not registered at the time of this study.

The number of personnel in the private dance troupes studied was distributed as follows: Surulere -205; Victoria Island – 30; Ajegunle - 21; Bariga – 374; Badagry – 154 making a total of 794 dance personnel (these figures do not represent the actual numbers of all the personnel in the 85 dance troupes that were studied as some troupe leaders refused to disclose their personnel figures to the researcher for reasons known to them). Among these dance troupes, seven (7) operated as solos; one (1) as a duo; two (2) as trios; while the remaining seventy-five75 were in groups of between 4 and 36 persons. During the period under review, there were 23 and 4 performances bookings for the CAC-registered and non-CAC-

registered dance troupes, respectively, but not one of them could execute the performances scheduled within the first four months of the Covid-19 lockdown. Zero was recorded of the 794±-strong personnel of the private sector dance troupes from the five local council development areas of Lagos State studied when it came to ascertaining the number that benefitted from any form of palliatives during the period under review.

Recommendations

The Lagos State government should invest in research into the dance culture and economy within its local government and local development council areas and a census of the number of private sector dance troupes to inform and guide state policy direction concerning cultural and creative industries (CCIs) development. The Lagos State government should upgrade and formalise the operations of all dance troupes in the private sector by making registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission mandatory so that they can be recognised before the law and can seek public patronage in any form and benefit from any social/government largess in a pandemic or other such catastrophic situations. This will take the form of low-interest loans and the easing of registration, licensing, obtaining permits, etc. Mechanics, tailors, artisans, petty traders and all other informal business people will grow their businesses (Fatoba 15) FGN support informal sector.

Since it is within Nigeria's "...definition of small and medium enterprises ... micro enterprises: between 1 and 9 employees, and small enterprises: 10 and 49 employees" ("Micro, Small..."), and all the 85 private dance troupes studied and others are within the ranges, the government should partner with them towards developing a sustainable and inclusive private sector dance economy in Lagos State. This would open up the economy and serve as a model for other states in Nigeria. As a social service and for the public good, the Lagos State government should encourage the development of an enlightened private-sector dance (as well as public-sector dance) by equipping the personnel with the knowledge to leverage digital technology for dance presentations and entrepreneurship. This would have reduced the danger thrown at the dance economy by any pandemic. Such alternative methods of dance presentations guarantee a job and social security. The socio-political policies of the government of Lagos State should not discriminate against the private sector dance troupes and only concentrate on its public outfit in the Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture with only a 21-member

dance troupe. The government should seriously consider a policy framework to address the development and conduct of private dance troupes in the state as a significant economic sector in the CCIs to harness the potential in capacity development and job creation, and fillip their employability.

The Lagos State government should make up for the denial of palliatives to the personnel of the 85 private dance troupes with 764± personnel due to the harmful impact of the social distancing protocol of Covid-19 on the private dance troupes from March to July 2020 for loss of income. It should be noted that by extension if the 794±-strong personnel figure is extrapolated, the 57 local development council areas in the State stand to yield a minimum of 7,818.4±personnel who were denied Covid-18 palliatives within the period under review. By any measure, this cannot and should not pass as mere statistics or unknown quantity by any responsible government as there is the potential for this number to swell the population of reprobates. All should be identified and compensated as well.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to provide data on the toxic impact of social distancing measure of Covid-19 on dance service providers in the private sector in the Lagos State economy during the period under review and proffer solutions in case of future lockdowns. The findings of the study established that the Covid-19 social distancing protocol exacted economic hardship on the private sector dance troupes of Lagos State. In this regard, the data analysis has thrown up areas of shortcomings on the part of the private dance troupes as well as the government of Lagos State. Fundamental to the challenges of the private dance troupes is the state's socio-economic ideology which has no policy framework to regulate the operations of the sector as a critical source of alternative economy. Sentimentally and politically excluded, this aspect of commoditised performative culture has bred social insecurity for its practitioners including those who have been registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission that is recognised before the law. It also denied the state a veritable source of revenue. This policy error altered these assets into liabilities for the state. It also rendered the service providers as statistics. Hence, they had no locus to command the attention of the state during the implementation of the social distancing measure to access palliatives.

Because of the deleterious impact of social distancing on the private sector dance troupes of Lagos State, recommendations have been made for a sustainable and inclusive private dance sector economy in the state. The philosophy is that in flattening the curve of the virus through the social distancing protocol, there ought not to be a corresponding and simultaneous ‘flattening’ of the economy of dance personnel in the private sector of the state due to policy exclusion. The private sector dance economy should be perceived and attended to as a development strategy by the Lagos State government and if ignored, it is at the detriment of the state. The success in this sector could serve as a model for other states in Nigeria. This way, a major component of culture can assist in meeting the objective of nation-building and economic security for the dance sector and the state’s economy at all times.

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