



COVID-19 Pandemic and Globalisation: A Periscoping Analysis

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic historically originated from Wuhan, China in 2019. It is zoonotic, which means that it is transmitted from animals to humans. Corona viruses (CoV) are a large consortium of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from conventional cold to several diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), and even death. It was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2020 because of its trans-national and global reach. Since becoming a pandemic, it has devastated the world in every ramification, including over six hundred thousand fatalities. Many countries of the world are today counting their loses in both human and material resources. COVID -19 is no respecter of persons as the high, the mighty and the downtrodden have been affected. Relying on the system theory, the paper argued that globalization has turned the World to a village without boundaries; and as a result COVID-19 is spreading in a pattern that no virus has ever enjoyed. The paper, therefore, recommended among others a global approach premised on global exchange of ideas, information, research findings and collaboration to stem the tide of Covid-19.

Keywords: Corona Virus, COVID-19, Globalisation, Pandemic

ABSTRAIT

La pandémie de COVID-19 est historiquement originaire de Wuhan, en Chine, en 2019. Elle est zoonotique, ce qui signifie qu'elle est transmise des animaux aux humains. Les virus Corona (CoV) sont un grand consortium de virus qui causent des maladies allant du rhume conventionnel à plusieurs maladies telles que le syndrome respiratoire du Moyen-Orient (MERS-CoV) et le syndrome respiratoire aigu sévère (SRAS-CoV), et même la mort. Elle a été déclarée pandémie par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) en 2020 en raison de sa portée transnationale et mondiale. Depuis qu'elle est devenue une pandémie, elle a dévasté le monde dans toutes ses ramifications, y compris plus de six cent mille morts. De nombreux pays du monde comptent aujourd'hui leurs pertes en ressources humaines et matérielles. COVID -19 ne fait pas acception de personnes car les hauts, les puissants et les opprimés ont été affectés. S'appuyant sur la théorie du système, le document a soutenu que la mondialisation a transformé le monde en un village sans frontières; et par conséquent, le COVID-19 se propage selon un schéma qu'aucun virus n'a jamais connu. Le document



recommandait donc entre autres une approche globale fondée sur l'échange mondial d'idées, d'informations, de résultats de recherche et de collaboration pour endiguer la vague de Covid-19.

Mots clés: Virus Corona, COVID-19, Globalisation, Pandémie

INTRODUCTION

Corona virus (CoV) are a large consortium of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from conventional cold to severer diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), and even death. It has animal or zoonotic origin, thus suggesting that it is transmitted from animals to humans. Research has it that SARS - CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans, while MERS-CoV was transmitted from dromedary camels to humans. There are other known corona viruses that are hosted by animals that have not yet infected humans. Snakes were originally suspected as a potential source for the outbreak of Corona virus. However, contradictory views deemed it unlikely and suggested bats instead. As at February 2020, the search for the animal origin of Covid-19 was ongoing and researchers are yet to make specific observation regarding this.

Corona virus (later named COVID-19 by the WHO) was historically discovered in the China in the city of Wuhan, in 2019 and got its name corona virus from a distinctive corona or "crown" of sugary-proteins that project from the envelope surrounding the particle. Its earliest symptoms include coughs, fever and breathing difficulties. In advanced and sever cases, it can cause pneumonia, sever acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV), kidney failure, organ failure and even death. As at May, 2020, COVID-19 has spread to nearly all the countries of the world, causing over 600,000 deaths and over 6 million people infected (What is corona virus, 2020).

The spread of COVID-19 could be attributed to globalization which has enhanced access to an emerging world without boundaries (Eze and Otunko, 2017). This suggests ease of contact through migration to other parts of the world and hence the spread of COVID-19 through contacts. Globalization could be seen as interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life; from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual. It is this interconnectedness of various peoples of the world vis-a-vis emigration and migration that facilitated the global spread of COVID-19.

The paper shall concede to the suggestions by Kurdle (1999), that in defining globalisation, it should be considered with regard to the specific intent of those using the term. Since the paper interrogates COVID-19 from the prism of globalisation as espoused by Awake in Aja (2001), it defines globalization as the growing interdependence of world peoples and activities through shrinking space, time and disappearing borders. Globalization creates a global village based on shared values.

Globalization and COVID-19 are both existential realities. It represents the current picture of our complex world which has become a global village (Aja, 2001). The reality about globalization is that virtually everything is shared, from technology to information, ideas, economic strategies and even to diseases like COVID-19. The globe has become a system, and when one subsystem roars the rest echo. COVID-19 which was first discovered



in Wuhan province of China has since spread like wild fire to other parts of the world and has since become a nagging pandemic.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Dean Koonzt, an American, had in 1981, predicted in his book the “eyes of darkness” the outbreak of corona virus. According to him, the virus was going to ravage and unsettle the world, with Wuhan, a city in China as its take off point. Corona viruses are zoonotic and there are four known geniuses’ in the family viz: Alphacoronavirus, Beta-coronavirus, Gamma-coronavirus and Delta coronavirus. The first two only infect mammals including bats, pigs, cats and humans. Gamma-coronavirus mostly infect birds such as poultry while Delta-coronavirus can infect both birds and mammals (What is corona virus, 2020).

True to Koonzt’s (1981) prediction, Corona virus started in Wuhan, China in 2019, with symptoms that included fever, coughs, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Though this is argued as one of the conspiracy theories around corona virus pandemic, facts contained therein seem to validate the work of Koonzt. The virus got its name coronavirus from a distinctive corona or “crowns” of sugary-proteins that project from the envelope surrounding the particle. However, in several cases, it can degenerate to system failure and even death. The pandemic has recorded humongous fatalities. Governments, global organisations and corporations, research institutes and individuals have made frantic efforts to stem the tide and flatten the curve of the pandemic by resorting to researcher on all fronts and in many countries of the world. In order to curb the spread of the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) has rolled out precautionary measures. So far, it has wrecked global economy, sports, tourism, production and every other strata of social and economic life, globally.

COVID-19 may have originated from Wuhan, China, but the world has gotten its fair share of the spread, consequences and fatalities. It is indisputable that the disease has spread across countries as a result of globalisation which in compendium is world without boundaries. This is because within the platform of the logic of insufficiency of humans, every being is dependent on another. There is no superiority of humans and nations; rather what we have remains the interdependence of persons and nations upon another (Ozumba, 2011). No nation has been able to attain a state of autarky or autarchy. The beauty of life is the nature of inter-relationship existing between individuals and nations, highlighting a great level of interdependence and connectivity. It is this unavoidable gap that birthed globalization. Interdependence and cooperation is therefore, an indispensable international character (Otunko, Ebubechukwu & Otusile, 2019). The willingly limitations of the concept of continental submission in form of integration that is binding nation states to form regional blocks such as European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and global integration like United Nations (UN), the ushering of the concept of New World Order, the renaissance of free market oriented democracy, the collapse of the Soviet Union, activities of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) and the advancement in information technology have all contributed to making the world a global village. Globalization and COVID-19 pandemic are both global realities. It represents the current picture of our complex world which has become a global village. Today, we experience Japanization of America, Japanization of France,



Americanization of Europe, Europeanization of America, etc. Globalization is a networking process that is self-propelling (Aja, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted the systems theory as its tool of analysis. Systems theory was propounded by David Easton in his book ‘‘ political system’’ in 1953. Like many other theories in social sciences, systems theory has a commonsensical appeal. It is natural to think of phenomenon as parts of wholes. The commonsensical appeal of systems theory is not a phenomenon unique to contemporary social sciences. Plato and Aristotle viewed the Polis as a political system made up of international elements. Thomas Hobbes had argued that by systems, we mean any number of men joined by one interest or one business (Alan, 1975).

A system is considered to exist in any environment and to be composed of parts which through interaction are in relation to one another. Systems theorists agree that every system has several components, if we are treating the family as a system, the individual members would be its elements. The elements of a political system could be individuals, groups or nations depending on the scope of the system. For the purpose of this study, it can be argued that a system comprises:

- i. The actions of nations as components of the global system.
- ii. The structure and functioning of the system which results from the interaction of nations.
- iii. The environmental factors which condition both the actions of nations and the operation of the system.

The world is composed of cross-cutting relationship wherein the values and expectations of individuals, communities, national societies, nation states and transnational systems form complex sets of overlapping and interacting networks (Vama, 1999).

The place of inputs and outputs and feed back in a political system cannot be overstressed. Inputs include demands – indications from political system’s environment of what is wanted, demanded, required and supports – the extent to which the society is willing to consider the system and/or its leaders legitimate. Legitimacy is one of the most significant concepts to flow from the systems approach. It suggests that political leaders and their governments can lose authority, that is, the mass public’s rejection of their rights to rule, if they are unresponsive to the demands of the people. Outputs boil down to various aspects of the policy making process, rulemaking, rule interpretation and rule enforcement. Feedback refers to the influence of outputs, inputs, etc, ultimately on decisions. An interest group makes demands (inputs) on congress, asking for the passage of a particular bill. Despite these demands, congress may defeat the bill (output). There will be feedback resulting finally in a reaction of the interest group on congress decision. It could be civil disobedience, etc, (Alan, 1975).

The international system is always in a state of flux and as such, the nature of governments’ of national units is also regarded as of considerable importance to the stability of the international system. Johari (2005, pp.86 – 87) summarised the international system thus:



- a). If international relations is a system as a whole, it has parts (states), that are interrelated and interconnected;
- b). If international relations is a system, then what happens with a subset may reverberate to other areas of the system;
- c). International relations is therefore a system as no state is an island unto itself.

The whole is therefore, more important than the parts. Integration, synthesis pattern and organization take precedence over compartmentalisation, isolation and disaggregation. The relevance of the theory to the study cannot be over stretched as COVID-19, though with Wuhan as its take off point, it has engulfed the world. Systems analysis of COVID-19 nay international relations is of the view that various international phenomena are indivisible.

THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

COVID 19 by its pandemic nature has affected every stratum of the society, refugee and asylum inclusive. Refugee and asylum does not exist in a vacuum, suggesting that if COVID-19 affects host states, refugee and asylum being a subset cannot be insulated from the consequences of the pandemic. Under international law, people fleeing persecution have the right to seek asylum, and while nations around the world have closed their borders, they still have an obligation to help asylum seekers by not sending them back into danger. However, countries like Malta and Italy barred vessels with refugees transiting the Mediterranean from docking in harbours in Italy and Malta. This prevents rescued migrants from coming ashore, and leaves those fleeing violence in their home countries without viable options.

Congestion, poor access to health care tends to exacerbate risks of infection and thereby worsen the vulnerability of refugees to COVID-19 infection. Preventive measures such as social and physical distancing, quarantine and adequate hygiene are almost none existing and impossible to implement in many refugee camps due to congestion. Lockdowns, reduced access to health workers, wide spread poverty and dearth of essential supplies are factors that worsen the vulnerability of refugees.

Denial to information and communication has worsened the state of refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in Bangladesh, refugee camps were denied access to internet. Humanitarian aid workers who rely primarily on WhatsApp to coordinate emergency services and share important information with camp residents have to resort to pamphlets and megaphones. Additionally, the communications shutdown also hinders the ability to remotely 'contact trace' as a means of controlling transmission of the virus (Refugee & asylum seekers, 2020).

Migrants globally have long been seen as harbingers of diseases that must be stopped at all cost. Xenophobia and racism is already rampant as the world looks for scape goats for the outbreak of the pandemic. These ill feelings have undermined the rights and protection of refugees. Authorities in Greece have also increased security at the border with Turkey, and agents have targeted asylum seekers with tear gas, rubber bullets and at times live ammunition. While these abuses have been carried out by Greek police for years, they have significantly increased in recent months, as the border clampdown tightened further as part of the government's response to corona virus.



There were palpable shortage of foods and attendant food insecurity in refugee camps as countries lockdown and restricted movements to stem the tide of COVID-19. It was clear there will be shocks on both the demand and supply sides of world economy through multi transmission mechanism. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UN) has recently explained what this means to food and agriculture. The containment measures that governments around the world are putting in place include a severe and unprecedented reduction in the transportation of goods and people, and this has negative implications on ocean freight and air freight. Even as pandemic experts working with various scenarios, FAO is foreseeing, through a quantitative analysis, the potential outcomes of the global economic recession on hunger (COVID-19 global economic recession, 2020).

Early April, 2020, the first cases of novel COVID-19 were confirmed in a Greek refugee camp in Lesbos which has hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees since the start of the war in Syria. The refugees who were stranded on the Greek Island had frosty relationship with local residents. The resultant effect were attacks on sites planned for new or expanded facilities and the departure of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), that provided essential goods and social services. These ill feelings have undermined the rights and protection of refugees. As the number of refugees' increases, their protection against disease can only be safeguarded through resettlement into better living conditions and robust asylum procedures that protect human rights. However, the two UN agencies mandated to resettle refugees and migrants, UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), stopped all resettlement travel indefinitely. Such measures were a direct negation of the UNHCR's own international standards (Aguilera, 2020).

Impact of Corona virus on the Economy

The downturn effect of COVID-19 on world economy is enormous. COVID-19 pandemic came with global lockdowns of many countries. Lockdowns stipulate that people be restricted thereby clamping on the economy. Worlds topmost economies such as US, China, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and many others went under economically. Kristalina Georgieva, managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) called it a recession at least as bad as the Global Financial Crisis or Worse.

The outbreak of the pandemic all over the world has affected the political, socioeconomic and other structures of the whole world. Topmost economics of the world like the US, China, UK, Germany, Italy, Japan and the rest have been left to lick their economic wounds. Oil prices in the international markets have plummeted. Industries have closed, with about 6.6 million jobs lost in the US alone (COVID-19 Socioeconomic impact, 2020). Quoting the International Labour Organization:

More than 2 billion people worldwide work in the informal economy⁷ in jobs that are characterized by a lack of basic protection, including social protection coverage. They often have poor access to health-care services and have no income replacement in case of sickness or lockdown. Many of them have no possibility to work remotely from home. Staying home means losing their jobs, and without wages, they cannot eat. As of 22 April 2020, close to 1.1 billion informal economy workers live and work in countries in full lockdown, and an additional 304 million in countries in partial lockdown. (ILO Monitor, 2020)



The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) observed that a global jobs crisis is ravaging most countries of the world with trade unions in eighty-seven percent of countries surveyed reporting that companies have announced they are laying off workers as a result of the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Global COVID-19 survey, 2020). America and Europe are hardest hit with majority of companies in America and Europe laying off workers. Eighty percent of countries in Africa and seventy-six percent of countries in the Asia-Pacific have companies where workers are losing their jobs also. This has grave implication on the economy considering the continuous appeal by US citizens for the Trump government to create more jobs and in Africa the high rate of unemployment facing Africa's leadership. According to the findings drawn out in the fourth ITUC Global Covid-19 Survey of 130 trade unions from 100 countries, including 16, G20 countries and 32 OECD countries, carried out between 25 - 28th May 2020, shows the world on the brink of a global jobs and income crisis not seen in decades, while expectation on government to act towards ameliorating the crisis is on increase (Global COVID-19 survey, 2020). On Saturday, February 8th, the Nikkei Asian Review reported that China is blocking FOX Conn from reopening its Shenzhen plant given the working and living conditions at that factory and that Fox Conn had independently decided to keep its Zhengzhou plant closed pending government review. The Zhengzhou factory, aka, "I phone city" is where the bulk of world's I phones are assembled (Corona virus outbreak and technology, 2020)

In Nigeria the case is not different as critical sectors of the Nigerian economic space is grossly affected. The creative industry has its own dire experience since the COVID-19 outbreak. Its multifaceted structure has been heavily hit by the effects of this pandemic with impacts on the industry, stakeholders and the Nigerian economy. For instance, the cinema sector, which indirectly employs thousands of workers (of which 75% are youths between ages 18 and 25) has been shut down since the third week of March, 2020 (Corona virus fuelling increase, 2020). Consequently, employees are the most affected, not only are they faced with the increasing cost of living before the pandemic but are now faced with the possibility of losing their means of livelihood and many put out of job. A review of other sectors of the Nigeria economy critically point out the low income earners are most affected also and are really struggling to survive this trying period. The economic implications of the corona virus have unsettled the low income earners and have created a new generation of homeless Nigerians in major cities, especially Abuja, Lagos and Port-Harcourt (Corona virus fuelling increase, 2020).

Impact of Corona virus on Education

Education was badly hit by the pandemic. Many nations locked down as a result of the pandemic and this has implied effect on the education sector of most countries of the world, especially Africa. The pandemic has led to the total closedown of all schools from primary to tertiary levels which makes students becoming redundant at home and exposed to crime and other deviant behaviour. School closures due to COVID-19 have left more than a billion students out of school (Azeved et.al, 2020). The Report of Education in Emergency Working Group has also shown that about 46 million Nigerian students are affected by the schools' closure (EiEWG, 2020); from the report it is also observed that this represents a very significant percent of Nigerian total population (about 25%); and as such has its implications



for the future. Elsewhere, Andreas (2020) observed that even from the global perspective, it is arguable that the COVID-19 pandemic has really affected the education sector and has affected both learners and teachers from pre-primary to the tertiary education level. Universities closed their premises and countries shut down their borders in response to lockdown measures and the fear of the unknown within the peak of the corona virus outbreak. Remote learning became a lifeline for education during the pandemic but, the opportunities that digital technologies offer go well beyond a stopgap solution during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic considering the unpreparedness and backwardness in information communication technology and digital compliance in many countries of the world, especially in the developing countries like Nigeria (Oyediran et.al, 2020).

Report published by World Bank group (education) using data on 157 countries revealed that both the global level of schooling as well as learning would fall. It estimated a loss between 0.3 and 0.9 years of schooling adjusted for quality, bringing down the effective years of basic schooling that students achieve during their lifetime from 7.9 years to between 7.0 and 7.6 years. Close to seven million students from primary to secondary education could drop out due to income shock of the pandemic alone. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) revealed that about 40% of low and middle income countries have not supported disadvantaged learners during the temporary schools' shut down (Azeved et.al, 2020).

As fallout of the pandemic and consequent upon lockdowns, many countries closed down educational institutions. Unfortunately, not many educational institutions nay countries have facilities for e-learning. In Nigeria for instance, e-learning was frustrated by paucity of money as many parents were just battling with survival. The epileptic nature of our power supply didn't equally help matters. As the case stands now, not many countries can muster to open their educational institutions for overt inadequacies. Most public and private schools in Africa do not have facilities on ground for steady supply of running water, sanitizers, social distancing, isolation and quarantine.

Impact of Covid-19 on Sports

Sports do not take place in a vacuum. With global shutdowns, sports became almost an anathema. One of the biggest fallouts of the covid-19 pandemic was the postponement of the 2020 summer Olympics and Paralympics which was billed to take place in Toyo, Japan. On 24 March 2020, the International Olympic committee (IOC), and Tokyo Organizing Committee (TOC), announced that the 2020 summer Olympics and Paralympics would be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, making it the first time in the history of modern Olympic that an Olympiad has been postponed (Impact of COVID-19, 2020).

In China just like the rest of the World, virtually all sports were either cancelled or postponed. The Women's football qualifiers for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics involving Australia, Thailand and Chinese Taipei, which was due to be played at the beginning of February, have been moved away from China to Sydney. Chinese government officials have issued a notice that all sporting events scheduled to hold before April, will be postponed indefinitely while they grappled with the corona virus pandemic as the continuous rise of cases involving stakeholders in the sports sector becomes an issue with no end in sight



regarding the COVID-19 outbreak in the world (Corona virus and football teams, 2020). Whereas, the effects on the sports sector is observed, other stake holders across the world in sporting activities were also affected; as they recorded loses within these periods. In Nigeria, such betting establishments like Betking, Sportybet, Bet9ja among others which have a great deal of patronage from sports loving youths and even an appreciable number of adults were out of business since most of the sports events were suspended due to COVID-19 outbreak. Same was applicable to Europe and the rest of the world. Many countries locked down and placed embargo on interstate shuttle to avoid further infections. Considering all this it is obvious that the COVID-19 outbreak impacted seriously on global economy.

Impact of Covid-19 on Aviation and Tourism

Aviation and Tourism are so interrelated that when one is affected the other echoes. At the peak of Covid-19, many countries placed travel bans as a measure to contain the spread of the pandemic. The United Nations World Tourism Organization estimated that global international tourist arrivals might decrease to 20-30% in 2020, leading to a potential loss of US\$ 30-50 billion. In many of the world's cities planned travel went down by 80-90%. Many tourists attractions around the world such as museums, amusement parks, cinemas, casinos and sports venues were closed (World Tourism Organization, 2020). The founder of virgin group Richard Bransen turned to the British government to seek for 7.5 billion dollar credit as bailout. Air France/KLM airlines took more strategic measures, drawing a revolving credit facility for a total amount of 11 billion pounds and 665 million pounds. India's aviation and tourism industries are seeking help form government to mitigate impact of covid-19. The story is virtually same, world over (Corona virus: Virgin Atlantic, 2020).

According to OECD Policy Responses to COVID-19, the tourism economy has been heavily hit by the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and measures introduced to contain its spread. Depending on the duration of the crisis, revised scenarios have indicated that the potential shock could range between a 60-80% decline in the international tourism economy in 2020. It has also been observed that beyond immediate measures through policies put in place by various countries of the world to support the tourism sector, countries are also shifting to develop recovery measures at the same time as things will not be the same again for a long time. These include considerations on lifting travel restrictions, restoring traveller confidence and rethinking the tourism sector for the future (Tourism Policy Responses, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Globalization is a necessary evil. This is primarily for the incontestable fact that no nation has been able to attain autarchy or autarky. Every nation leans on others for vital resources not within its territorial limits. Ozumba (2011) argued that the insufficiency of humans and the logic of complementarily made the evolution and sustenance of globalization inevitable. The spread of COVID-19 was facilitated by globalization. Since globalization is openness and world without boundaries, COVID-19 had no constraints limiting its spread. The interdependence in different facets of life ranging across the health, aviation, education, sports, economic sectors among others highlights the level of relationship existing among



individuals, groups, states, nations and even continents; as such an imminent danger to one has its implied effect on others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Individuals, groups and states should abide religiously by the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended guidelines for prevention, testing, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine and treatment of COVID-19.
- b. Since it is a global pandemic, nation states should selflessly share ideas, information and research findings on how to evolve curative drugs and vaccines to stem the virus
- c. Richer nations and organizations should be their brothers keepers by providing palliatives to poorer nations as injury to one is injury to all.

All hands must be on deck to evolve measures to better contain outbreak of viruses in future, as there may never be an easy end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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