



Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on the Economy of a Low-Resource Setting

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Abstract

Introduction: The lockdown policy imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted various businesses, including trading, inter-state travel for purchasing/selling and supplying goods and services, hospitality industries, and state revenue generation. The study assessed the impacts of COVID-19 lockdown on the economy of a Nigerian low-resource community.

Methods: This study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey conducted in Ado-Odo Ota local government area (LGA) of Ogun State, Nigeria, using a structured questionnaire to collect data on the economic impacts of COVID-19 lockdown on 383 participants aged 20 to 60 years in January and February. Data analysis was done using IBM-SPSS version 25.

Results: During the lockdown, 26.1% of the respondents lost their jobs, 34.5% experienced salary cuts, and only 6.5% got regular salaries. More than half (53.8%) of participants could not meet their basic needs. All respondents (100.0%) stated that food prices and other necessities were higher during the lockdown than before. The odds of losing jobs were 18.74 [95%CI: 6.20–56.60; P<0.001] and 4.32 [95%CI: 1.50–12.43; P<0.001] times higher among the staff of private organizations and those doing personal businesses than among government workers. The rate of clients/customers loss was 15.21 [95%CI: 7.59–30.51; P<0.001] and 7.07 [95%CI: 3.26–15.34; P<0.001] higher among self-employed and private companies than government establishments.

Conclusion: Every worker should enjoy job security to mitigate the job and income loss during a crisis. Loans and grants should be available for small businesses, particularly to overcome the problem. Food security should be provided by subsidizing goods and providing supports to help meet the daily needs of households during emergencies.

Keywords: COVID-19, Lockdown, Economy, Pandemic, Coronavirus



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Introduction

Global development is contingent upon the degree of economic activity in terms of social interaction, which includes commerce, interstate transportation of goods and services, hospitality, education, financial services, health care centers, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), among others (1). Consequently, economic development is inextricably linked to all forms of social welfare because it is frequently reliant on crucial financial resources, employment generation, and growth promotion.

The lockdown policy imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted various businesses, including trading, interstate travel for purchasing/selling and supplying goods and services,

hospitality industries, and revenue generation for states. Banks are laying off employees, resulting in increased unemployment, domestic violence, and widespread food theft resulting from hunger and a reduction in stats (2, 3). As to regular people's jobs, COVID-19 heightened fear of job loss as businesses could not pay their employees, forcing them to lay off. However, Nigeria is not unfamiliar with economic problems. During the 2016 financial crisis, Nigeria's monetary authorities protected the local currency against forced devaluation against the dollar and implemented a managed-float foreign exchange system that performed admirably from 2016 to 2019 (3). Following the 2016 economic crisis or recession, it was commonly considered that Nigeria's financial issues were caused mainly by the unexpected and

protracted decrease in oil prices. However, none anticipated that a public health catastrophe in 2020 would precipitate an economic crisis. What distinguished the 2020 financial crisis from previous economic crises or recessions in Nigeria was that most economic agents who could have assisted in reviving the economy could not do so due to fear of getting the COVID-19 disease (3). Additionally, economic agents ceased business activities on March 30, 2020, when the government imposed and enforced social distancing laws and mobility restrictions in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun states (4) implying that even exempted sectors were indirectly affected by disruptions to supply chains and falling consumer demand. After its first confirmed case, Nigeria's federal and state governments implemented lockdowns across most cities and states. This included closing all borders and many non-essential businesses. Nigeria also faced declining remittances and export demand caused by the global recession. We estimate the economywide impacts of these lockdown policies and global shocks using a multiplier model of Nigeria calibrated to a 2018 social accounting matrix. We simulate Nigeria's 8-week lockdown (March–June).

Supply shocks occurred throughout the global supply chain due to numerous importers closing their plants and their borders, particularly China (5). Nigeria was severely impacted because it is an import-dependent economy; as a result, critical supplies such as pharmaceuticals, spare parts, and finished items from China were unavailable (3). The pandemic's impact was felt more locally, with an increased rate of job loss, salary reductions, and client/consumer loss affecting people's livelihoods and making life more difficult in an already deteriorating economy (6). Nigerians lost work as individuals and businesses confronted insurmountable obstacles resulting from the COVID-19 lockdown, now devouring the economy (2). However, the lockdown precipitated a transition from the 'going to the office to work' approach to working from home. Employers were required to develop mechanisms to monitor the employees' productivity by developing key performance indicators and providing benefits and allowances to work efficiently from home, ensuring data protection and security (7). As a direct consequence of the economic effect of the lockdown on businesses, in some cases, issues such as pay cuts and other incentives were hot topics being discussed between employers and employees (7). The outbreak of COVID-19 posed issues for Nigeria's commercial climate. It had a short-term effect on the sectors and markets (3, 8). If these markets and sectors had a

robust digital infrastructure, their operations would have been lightly impacted (3). During the COVID-19 outbreak, the only services available via the current digital infrastructure were telecommunications, digital bank transactions, and internet services (3, 9, 10).

Likewise, lockdown restrictions were not enforced on segments considered indispensable. "The federal government authorized exemptions for medical services supplied by public and private hospitals and pharmacies, food retail at markets during restricted hours, supermarkets and grocery shops, and prepared foods for delivery (4) implying that even exempted sectors were indirectly affected by disruptions to supply chains and falling consumer demand. After its first confirmed case, Nigeria's federal and state governments implemented lockdowns across most cities and states. This included closing all borders and many non-essential businesses. Nigeria also faced declining remittances and export demand caused by the global recession. We estimate the economywide impacts of these lockdown policies and global shocks using a multiplier model of Nigeria calibrated to a 2018 social accounting matrix. We simulate Nigeria's 8-week lockdown (March–June). The policies permitted farms, food and medication makers, and food wholesalers to continue their activities. Fuel stations, private security companies, and limited financial services were considered vital and exempted to ensure cash availability and online transactions. Public utility services, news firms, and telecommunications providers were exempted (6). Sectors or subsectors that were not exempted from the lockdown measures were considerably affected".

The impact on a sector or subsector at the national level relies on productive activities within the lockdown zones. Likewise, the overall immediate effects on the national economy depend on the importance of the sector in terms of its share of GDP or employment (11-13). With the increased unemployment rate, individuals cannot afford the essential amenities needed for survival, which leads to criminal activities, like the looting of government warehouses in Nigeria (14). On the demand side, lower export profits and currency depreciation were translated into more expensive imports, including basic foodstuff, with increased food costs (4) implying that even exempted sectors were indirectly affected by disruptions to supply chains and falling consumer demand. After its first confirmed case, Nigeria's federal and state governments implemented lockdowns across most cities and states. This included closing all borders and many non-essential businesses. Nigeria also faced declining remittances and export

demand caused by the global recession. We estimate the economywide impacts of these lockdown policies and global shocks using a multiplier model of Nigeria calibrated to a 2018 social accounting matrix. We simulate Nigeria's 8-week lockdown (March–June). Panic buying has also occurred in most countries with mobility constraints (15). Therefore, the study assessed the impacts of COVID-19 lockdown on the economy of Ado-Odo Ota, Ogun, and Nigeria.

Methods

Study Area

This study was conducted in Ado Odo Ota, one of the 19 local government areas of Ogun State. It was established on May 19, 1989, after the merger of Ota, part of the defunct Ifo / Ota LG, with Ado-Odo / Igbesa Areas of the Yewa South LGAs.

Research Design

The study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey conducted using structured questionnaire as the study instrument to obtain responses from people. The researcher used stratified random sampling to identify potential respondents and get the study population sample. Selected respondents were interviewed to give information on the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge, and perception of COVID-19 and its impacts on education, access to healthcare, and learning activities. The study was carried out between January 25 and February 13, 2021, to determine the effect of six-month lockdowns (March to September 2020) on the residents of Ado-Odo Ota LGA. This research used a multistage probability sampling technique.

Study Population

Ado-Odo Ota LGA has a population of 526,565 at the 2006 census and a population projection of 733,400 in 2016 as estimated by City-Population (16). The target population is composed of both men and women who reside within Ado-Odo Ota Local Government Area. The study included all available working-class adults, regardless of their level of education, ethnicity, complexion, or socio-economic status.

Sample Size Calculation

The sample size was calculated based on a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, using the formula below; the sample size was estimated at 383 adults.

The sample size was calculated using the formula below:

$$= \frac{z^2 \alpha / 2 p(1-q)}{d^2}$$

Where n=sample size

Z=standard normal deviation with 95% confidential interval=1.96; d=absolute precision=0.05. Therefore, from the above formula, the sample size was:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.2491}{0.0025} = 382.777024 \approx 383$$

Data Analysis

The completed data were coded and analysed using the IBM-Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS) version 25.0 for Windows IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA. The descriptive data included the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, knowledge and perception of COVID-19, and its impacts. Data were described as percentages/proportion, mean/average, and standard deviation and presented as charts or tables.

Inclusion Criteria

All working-class adults (males and females) aged 20-60 years were included in the study. The study participants were residents in Ado-Odo Ota LGA.

Exclusion Criteria

Teenagers, adults with no means of income before the lockdown, those who did not reside in Ado-Odo Ota LGA, or those unwilling to participate in the study were excluded.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical research clearance was sought and obtained from Nigeria's National Health Research Ethics Committee with NHREC Approval Number NHREC/01/01/2007-20/01/2021. Approval was also obtained from the LGA authority, as included in the appendices. Information obtained from the respondents was made confidential and only used for research purposes. The study procedure was adequately explained to each participant, and written consent was obtained from them before administering the questionnaire. Researchers did not collect data that can be used to identify or trace the respondents.

Result

Socio-demographic Information of the Respondents

There were 383 respondents with a mean age of 36.86 ± 11.14 years, minimum and maximum of 20 and 60 years, respectively. More than half of them (207; 54.0%) were females, and 176 (46.0%) were males. Age 20-30 years constituted the highest number of respondents (144; 37.6%), followed by 31-40 (28.2%), while age 51-60 had the least number of respondents (13.6%). The respondents were predominantly Christians (66.1%), 30.8% were Muslims, and just 2.1% were traditionalists. Similarly, married respondents constituted the majority (66.8%) of the respondents; 24.5% were single, and the rest (8.6%) were formerly married. Almost half of them (48.05) attained post-secondary education, 26.1% had either diploma or secondary education, and 25.8% had primary or no

education. The majority of the respondents (62.7%) owned businesses/self-employed, 20.4% were private organizations, and 17.0% were staff of governments. The highest proportion (40.2%) earned below 20,000 naira monthly, 14.1% made between 20000-50,000 naira, while 35.2% did not disclose their monthly income (Table 1).

Table 2 shows that only 29.2% were doing their main works during the lockdown, 26.1% lost their jobs, 34.5% experienced salary cuts, only 6.5% got regular salaries, 6.0% worked from home and received full payment, 24.5% were afraid they might lose their jobs, only 7 (1.8%) got new jobs, and 64.2% lost clients/customers during this pandemic.

As to livelihood during COVID-19 lockdown, more than half of the participants (53.8%) said they could not meet basic needs, 15.7% were able to meet

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of adult respondents

Parameter (n=383)	Response	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	176	46.0
	Female	207	54.0
Age category	20-30	144	37.6
	31-40	108	28.2
	41-50	79	20.6
	51-60	52	13.6
Religion	Christianity	253	66.1
	Islam	118	30.8
	Traditional	12	2.1
Marital Status	Single	94	24.5
	Married	256	66.8
	Separated/divorced/widowed	33	8.6
Academic qualifications	Post-secondary	184	48.0
	Secondary/diploma	100	26.1
	Primary/No formal education	99	25.8
Nature of job	Government worker	65	17.0
	Private company	78	20.4
	Personal business/self-employed	240	62.7
Monthly income (Naira)	<20,000	154	40.2
	20,000-50,000	54	14.1
	51,000-100,000	19	5.0
	>100,000	21	5.5
	No response	135	35.2

Table 2: Effects of COVID-19 lockdown on economic activities in Ota

Variable	Yes N(%)	No N(%)
Were you doing your major work during the lockdown period?	112 (29.2)	271 (70.8)
Did you lose your job during the lockdown period?	100 (26.1)	283 (73.9)
Did you experience a salary/income cut during this Pandemic?	132 (34.5)	251 (65.5)
Did you collect regular salary/income during the period?	25 (6.5)	358 (93.5)
Did you work from home and get full pay?	23 (6.0)	360 (94.0)
Did you have any fear you might lose your job because of COVID19?	94 (24.5)	289 (75.5)
Did you get any new job in the lockdown?	7 (1.8)	376 (98.2)
Did you or your organization lose any of your customers /clients during the lockdown?	246 (64.2)	137 (35.8)

basic needs, 18.0% had little left after meeting basic needs, while only 12.5% lived comfortably (Figure 1). All respondents (100.0%) said food prices and other necessities were higher during the lockdown than before.

Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (55.1%) who worked in private organizations and 22.1% of those self-employed lost their jobs during the lockdown, compared to 6.2% of government staff ($P < 0.001$). The rate at which people lost their jobs during the lockdown was 18.74 [95%CI-6.20-56.60; $P < 0.001$] and 4.32 [95%CI-1.50-12.43; $P < 0.001$] higher among the staff or private organizations and those doing personal businesses than among government workers.

Similarly, Table 3 displays 77.5% of those doing personal businesses and 61.5% of private companies lost clients/customers during the lockdown than 18.5% of government workers who experienced the same ($P < 0.05$). The rate of clients/customers loss was 15.21 [95% CI-7.59-30.51; $P < 0.001$] and 7.07 [95% CI-3.26-15.34; $P < 0.001$] higher among self-employed and private companies than government establishments.

Also, Table 4 shows 83.3% of self-employed and 78.0% of private companies said patronage dropped during lockdown compared to before it; this was significantly higher than 57.5% of government workers who experienced the same ($P < 0.05$) (Table 5).

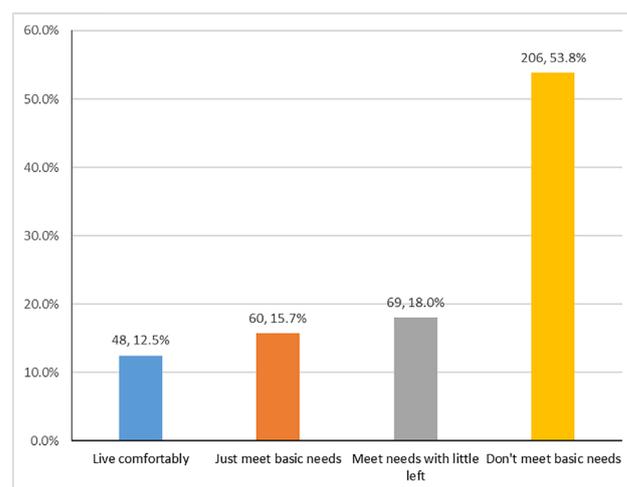


Figure 1: Livelihood during COVID-19 lockdown.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic limited business activities, which resulted in a decline in the already deteriorating economy of Nigeria. The findings of this study showed the effects of COVID-19 in the loss of jobs, irregular income, loss of clients/customers, increased tension in job loss, salary cut, and hike in food prices. This study found that many respondents could not do their primary works during the lockdown, which may have led to a high rate of job loss. The pandemic made many workers liabilities to their organizations, which led to a decline in revenue and may explain the significant loss of job rates.

Table 3: Respondents that lost their jobs during the COVID-19 lockdown

Nature of job	Yes	No	OR (95) CI	P value
Government worker	4 (6.2)	61 (93.8)	1.00	-
Private company	43 (55.1)	35 (44.9)	18.74 (6.20 – 56.60)	<0.001*
Personal business/self-employed	53 (22.1)	187 (77.9)	4.32 (1.50 – 12.43)	<0.001*
Total	100 (26.1)	283 (73.9)	-	-

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 5: Respondents who lost clients/customers during COVID-19 lockdown

Nature of job	Yes	No	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	P value
Government worker	12 (18.5)	53 (81.5)	1.00	-
Private company	48 (61.5)	30 (38.5)	7.07 (3.26–15.34)	<0.001*
Personal business/self-employed	186 (77.5)	54 (22.5)	15.21 (7.59–30.51)	<0.001*
Total	246 (64.2)	137 (35.8)		

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 4: Comparison between patronage from customers/clients during the lockdown and before COVID-19

Nature of job	Better	The same	Worse	X ²	P value
Government worker	11 (27.5)	6 (15.0)	23 (57.5)	14.513	0.006*
Private company	6 (12.0)	5 (10.0)	39 (78.0)		
Personal business/self-employed	26 (10.8)	14 (5.8)	200 (83.3)		
Total	43 (13.0)	25 (7.6)	262 (79.4)		

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

The nature of most jobs in Nigeria requires physical presence and mobility. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown restriction, business interactions and activities were limited, leading to worker layoffs. Atalan (2018) (17) reported that the lockdown had decreased productivity, increasing job loss. Nigeria's largest bank, Access bank, had to downsize to mitigate the adverse effects of the lockdown (2). However, larger firms might have survived due to significant financial resources. However, the effects of the lockdown on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were usually more adverse. The lockdown had a devastating impact on the economy because SMEs accounted for 96% of businesses and 84% of jobs; they also contributed to around half of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) (8, 18). However, this may be a possible explanation for private workers (55.1%) and self-employed (22.1%) respondents, recording a higher rate of job loss than 6.2% of government workers. Tesso (2020) (10) also explained how smaller enterprises faced catastrophic losses, with millions of workers vulnerable to income loss and layoff.

Obi *et al.*(2020) (6) stated that the COVID-19 lockdown imposed many economic challenges nationwide, but the impacts are adversely felt locally. Most jobs in Nigeria cannot be carried out remotely, explaining the significant rate of people not working from home. Traders, laborers, artisans, and others who earn their living by going out daily to work were hard-hitted by the lockdown. Activities like these were limited, which cut off means of income, leading to hunger and further increasing the country's poverty rate, thereby affecting the economy. Obi *et al.*(2020) (6) also reported how the lockdown had shut the entire economy down, creating unemployment and increasing the poverty rate in the country. The Nigerian system is primarily based on survival. Many people search for manual jobs to feed for the day, but the lockdown affected this means of livelihood, which may be a possible reason for the significant rate of irregular income among the respondents.

A considerable number of respondents also reported a slash in salaries. This result may be due to organizations not working at the standard (total) capacity, limiting revenue, and cutting staff salaries. Buying and selling activities were also restricted, resulting in many respondents that lost clients and customers due to the lockdown. A similar study in Nigeria reported how traders were indebted due to perishable goods, change in customer patronage, effects on supply, which further led to inflation during the lockdown (6). Grace (2020) (19) also stated how the African regions were the last to register

COVID-19 cases but were already suffering from the effects mainly through their trade links with affected developed countries. Malls, accommodations, and bars were completely shut down, and owners of such establishments were left with the loss all through the lockdown. The situation was even more complicated because they needed social gatherings to survive, which was a major violation of the social distancing rule enforced by the government. Studies reported how social gathering establishments and accommodations ran at a massive loss during the lockdown, which affected both the owners and the employees, further increasing unemployment rates (20, 21).

The considerable loss of jobs and cut in salaries may explain the high number of respondents not meeting their daily needs. Also, the lockdown brought about panic buying and a stunt in the producing, processing, and distributing agricultural products, which brought about inflation and scarcity, thereby increasing hunger. Tesso (2020) (10) reported how panic buying brought inflation and shortages of preventive gear like hand sanitizers and masks. The Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) (5) also noted how the lockdown affected food systems, restricting food supply, production, and distribution, which led to inflation and may explain the decline in the consumers' purchasing power. The loss of jobs, income, and inflation in food and other daily needs may be responsible for the high crime rates witnessed in the country during the lockdown, as people sought different ways of survival. Obiezu (2021) (14) reported how Nigerians justify massive looting of COVID-19 supplies in nine states across the country, complaining of job loss and hunger as a reason.

Limitation

The study was focused on Ado-odo Ota, which may not show a wide representation of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the whole state. Regardless, the study effectively examined the lockdown's influence on this area.

Conclusion

The study found that COVID-19 lockdown negatively impacted the people's livelihood at the grassroots. Therefore, we advocate adequate preparation by the government and individuals towards unforeseen cases such as the pandemic that led to the lockdown. This can be done by providing palliatives to alleviate the suffering of the masses and wealthy individuals should help the neighbours in need. The people at the grassroots should be empowered to work from home by the government providing adequate Internet

facilities and a regular electric power supply. Private organizations and self-employed individuals should be encouraged by giving them soft loans and financial support to sustain their businesses, workers, and families. Also, the government should put in place a labour law to support organizations during crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic and discourage the indiscriminate laying off of workers.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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