KNOWLEDGE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COVID-19 AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NASSARAWA-EGGON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: One of the major components and indices of sustainable national development is sound health because only a healthy populace can contribute to any society's purposive development. Recent occurrences have threatened the health and wellbeing of Nigerian society, with the most recent being the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemics, in general, are not merely serious public health concerns; instead, they give impetus to disastrous socioeconomic and political crises wherever and whenever they occur. COVID-19, in addition to being a cankerworm to the global public health of the century, is considered an indicator of a deficiency in social advancement. Despite many efforts by health institutions to prevent the spread and contraction of the deadly virus, the virus continues to spread, which poses a threat to sustainable national development. This study assessed the knowledge and effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention and sustainable national development in Nassarawa-Eggon LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Global risk society theory was adopted and used in this study. A survey design was used in the study, where a sample of 399 respondents was selected from a population of 169,449 using Yamane and Bowley's sample selection formula. Furthermore, a multistage cluster sampling technique using clusters was adopted to select 5 political wards out of the 14 political wards in the Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used as the main instruments for data collection. This study revealed that knowledge from the media, peer groups, healthcare workers and religious leaders influences effective preventive measures against COVID-19 to ensure the sustainable development of Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. This study recommends the regulation of information disseminated from the media, the provision of only factual and concise information from appropriate and authorized bodies, and the indulgence of members of society in friendly and healthy conversations by health workers, which will increase people's knowledge about how to prevent themselves from contracting diseases for sustainable national development in Nassarawa-Eggon, Nasarawa State and Nigeria.

Keywords: COVID-19, Sustainable National Development, Knowledge and Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Humans in the pursuit of survival have experienced a series of pandemics throughout history, some of which were more catastrophic than others to the human race. Pandemics are not merely serious public health challenges; they also inflict great damage to socioeconomic and political crises wherever they occur. COVID-19, in addition to being a cankerworm to the global public health of the century, is considered an indicator of inequity and deficiency on social advancement. Despite many efforts by the World Health Organization and other health

institutions to prevent the spread and contraction of the deadly virus, the virus continues to spread globally.

The first modern COVID-19 pandemic was recorded in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and most of the first cases were associated with source infection from a seafood wholesale market (Huagang, Chan, Kok, Zhu, Chu, To & Yaun, 2020). Consequently, malaria or disease has spread to every region of the world, with the exception of Antarctica. Due to its complicated nature, the disease has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 is typically not easy to prevent or control; therefore, the best way to prevent it is by adopting measures that will reduce possible exposure to the virus that causes the disease (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many preventive and control measures have been introduced globally to contain the dreaded coronavirus.

Nigeria recorded her index case on the 27th of February 2020, and since then, the number of cases has continued to increase sporadically; the announcement of this index case spurred the Nigerian government with the aid of vital health agencies to embark on measures aimed at curtailing the spread of the disease. Surprisingly, despite all preventive and control efforts of the Nigerian government following the outbreak, the disease as of 30 April 2019 had spread across 36 states, with 19,932 confirmed cases, 319 discharged cases and 58 deaths (NCDC, 2020).

It is plausible that the knowledge that individuals in a society have about a disease or pandemic is essential to the prevention of the continuous spread of such disease, which will in turn ensure a health workforce for sustainable national development. The outbreak of COVID-19 was met with myths and misconceptions in Nigeria, as some people perceived it to be a biological weapon, while others viewed it to be spiritual. For instance, Olapegba, Ayandele, Kolawole and Oguntayo (2020) carried out a study on the initial assessment of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) understanding and perceptions in Nigeria; their study revealed that a large percentage of Nigerians believe that COVID-19 is a biological weapon designed by the government of China. This, according to Hassan (2020), is evident following the diverse sources of information concerning COVID-19 that are available to Nigerians. This implies that there may be no consensus among Nigerians as to what the real source of the virus is. Abati (2020), in the same light, asserted that a good number of Nigerians also opined that COVID-19 is a plague caused by sins and the unbelief of human beings.

While this may be consistent with many religious beliefs, it is believed that it may foster carefree attitudes in and among Nigerians, helping them relax and depend only on prayers and spiritual healing without adhering to hygienic practices. This means that the environment in which people live shapes their understanding of attitudes and behaviour towards social phenomena such as the spread of disease. As observed by Olapegba et al. (2020), the continuous increase in the number of cases indicated that carrying out prevention and control measures in the country met with stiff resistance, most of which were politically, socially and behaviourally inspired.

Excerpts from the above discussion show that the diffusion of misinformation on COVID-19 and the influence of culture and social structure have emerged as significant problems worldwide (The Lancet, 2020), including in Nigeria, where 'myths' surrounding methods to prevent or cure infection have the potential to hamper prevention of the spread of diseases

(Amzat, Aminu & Kolo, 2020). This in most cases of Nassarawa Eggon create tension, apprehension and a lack of definite reality and or truth in respect to what are the sign and symptom of the disease and how does it spread to people, and therefore, this study is a response to the gap identified above because information about COVID-19, among other pandemics, may account for the apprehension of knowledge regarding the causes, spread and infection of COVID-19, which may put people at risk of coming in contact with the virus, thus hampering sustainable national development. As such, it becomes necessary to examine how knowledge and effectiveness of the preventive measures of the virus affect sustainable national development in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework: Conceptualization of Coronavirus Disease

Coronaviruses belong to the *Coronaviridae* family in the order Nidovirales (Zhong, Zheng, Li, Poon, Xie & Chan, 2003). The corona represents crown-like spikes on the outer surface of the virus; thus, it was named a corona virus. The sizes of coronaviruses are minute in nature (65–125 nm in diameter), and single-stranded RNAs are encompassed as nucleic material, with sizesranging from 26 to 32 kb in length. The subgroups of the corona virus family are alpha (a), beta (b), gamma (c) and delta (d) coronaviruses. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), H5N1 influenza A, H1N1 2009 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cause acute lung injury (ALI) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which are fatal in nature because they metamorphose to pulmonary failure.Until the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak caused by SARS-CoV, 2002, in Guangdong, China (Zhong, et al 2003), it was believed that the virus could only infect animals. Approximately ten years later, another pathogenic corona virus known as Middle East respiratory syndrome corona virus (MERS-CoV) became endemic in Middle Eastern countries (Wang, Shi, Jiang, Zhang, Wang & Tong, 2013).

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has become an important health threat worldwide with numerous health and economic implications. The disease first occurred in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and since then has spread to almost all continents in the world. As described by the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is a viral infection that causes respiratory illness (WHO, 2020). The disease is basically transmitted from person to person through contact with droplets of an infected person. Although most people can easily recover from the illness without specialized treatment, people who are older and those with existing medical conditions such as cancer, chronic respiratory infections, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases are more likely to experience severe illness and death due to COVID-19 (WHO, 2020). The virus SARS-CoV-2 is the main causative organism of COVID-19, with shortness of breath, dry cough and fever as its most common symptoms (Mayo Clinic, 2020; World Vision, 2020).

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable development is an organizing principle that aims to meet human development goals while also enabling natural systems to provide necessary natural resources and ecosystem services to humans. The desired result is a society where living conditions and resources meet human needs without undermining the planetary integrity and stability of the natural system. Sustainable development attempts to find a balance between economic development, environmental protection, and social well-being. The Brundtland Report in 1987 defined

sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Currently, the concept of sustainable development focuses on economic development, social development and environmental protection for future generations.

Sustainability is a social goal for people to coexist on earth for a long time. The specific definitions of this term are disputed and vary with the literature, context, and time. Experts often describe sustainability as having three dimensions (or pillars): environmental, economic, and social, and many publications emphasize the environmental dimension. In everyday use, sustainability often focuses on countering major environmental problems, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, loss of ecosystem services, land degradation, and air and water pollution. The idea of sustainability can guide decisions at the global, national and individual levels (e.g., sustainable living). A related concept is sustainable development, and the terms are often used to mean the same thing. UNESCO distinguishes the two as follows: sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e., a more sustainable world), while sustainable development refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it. Sustainable development has the potential to be a groundbreaking concept that can revolutionize the way nations act on a national level and, more so, on an international level.

Information on Preventive Measures for COVID-19 and Sustainable National Development

Over the years, information has become one of the most veritable tools for knowledge acquisition in society, comprising media, peer groups and religious leaders, among others. The media has become an active technological tool in information dissemination in Nigeria, as well as a news and communication channel for the citizenry of Nigeria. Media is a vehicle or means of communication that disseminates information from a particular source to the target public or audience. In cases where any media intended for a larger audience is called mass media. Mass media refers to any form of technology with the goal of providing information to a large audience and is the primary tool for providing information to the general public. The media are divided into two forms: electronic media and print media. Electronic media includes electronic ways of disseminating information such as television, radio and digital media, while print media includes newspapers, magazines and journals. Mass media, on the other hand, is a conglomeration of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, digital media and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram. These forms of information dissemination have been aided through the invention and use of smartphones and personal computers where all the mass media outlets mentioned above can be accessed in a single device.

For many years, the media has been known for its efficacy in the dissemination of information to the masses, especially young people, within the shortest time frame. In Nigeria, as a result of constant power outages, which make it impossible to obtain reliable information at all times from sources such as radio and television, both young and old people depend on social media for daily news on trending issues. These diverse media outlets and communication networks played an important role in facilitating uprisings such as the Arab Spring (AlSayyad & Guvenc, 2015), indicating that its power lies in live pictures conveyed by video recording of events as they unfold. The international live streaming of events is capable of mobilizing a large population of citizens for positive or negative ends. Moreover, it has played an important role in crippling dictatorial regimes. Unfortunately, these various outlets have been abused as

unscrupulous people hide under their anonymity to defraud or relay false information. As the importance of social media is not lost to the general public for information engagement, its abuse in Nigeria, especially during this emergency period, is not lost to any keen observer.

For instance, concerning the use of face masks, many people were discouraged from using face masks after seeing the video of a man whose face and lips allegedly reacted to the face mask produced in China (Bothra, A. S; Das, M; Singh, M; Pawar, M. and Maheswari, A. 2020). This video, which trended heavily, affected the use of face masks and prompted the production of locally made masks due to fear of the Chinese face mask. Again, there were numerous video clips that dissuaded the masses from accepting any COVID-19 vaccine for the fear that it was a plot to wipe away Nigerians and Africa as a whole; this controversy is still persistent until now, especially in developing localities such as Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A.

Similarly, the role of healthcare personnel and the information they receive regarding the fight against COVID-19 in particular and other communicable diseases in general cannot be overemphasized. This assertion is supported by the postulation of Amzat and Razum (2018), who opined that healthcare personnel play a central role in the prevention, management and containment of diseases in society. This is because they have firsthand contact with, as well as information about, the pandemic; consequently, they are in a better position to properly educate people about preventive measures to observe. Consequently, it is only when this enlightenment and education of the people is properly done that people will do away with the myths and misconceptions that surround the outbreak of pandemics such as COVID-19.

A major challenge that undermines the control and prevention of COVID-19 in Nigeria is poor compliance (Ojoma, 2020). The response to COVID-19 prevention and control, as reported in some states, was below expectations, especially for the public. Most people, especially at the early stage of the disease outbreak, demonstrated nonchalant attitudes with a total lack of commitment to preventive guidelines by government authorities (Ojoma, 2020). In some parts of the states and their local governments, the compliance level was reportedly zero. This will definitely hinder sustainable development across all fronts. People were seen to be performing their normal duties as usual without face masks, washing or sanitizing their hands or defaulting lockdowns and social distancing directives (Ishola, 2020; Rukayyat, 2020; Oyoyo, 2020). For this and many other reasons, this study provides timely and justified information on people's level of knowledge of the COVID-19 pandemic, effective use of knowledge and sustainable national development in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. of Nasarawa state.

The compliance level in Nassarawa-Eggon cum Nasarawa state can be said to be low, as observed by occurrence in the state. This was reported by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) (2020), who confirmed that the president of the Association of Resident Doctors, Nasarawa State Chapter Dr. Peter Idoko, tested positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, it was confirmed that out of the 238 confirmed cases in the state at that time, 68 involved healthcare workers, including 9 doctors. Seven of these health workers were from Nassarawa-Eggon (Nigeria Medical Association, Nasarawa State Chapter, 2020). The use of facemasks and social distancing are the most common preventive measures in Nassarawa-Eggon, and even as such, people rarely wear such masks or distance themselves. Excerpts from the statements above show that even health workers do not stringently adhere to preventive measures, and if health custodians default, how much more are the members of the public? This also explains why this study is imperative in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. This study was anchored by risk society theory.

Risk Society Theory

Risk society theory is embedded in the works of Beck (1992) and Giddens (2002), who evaluated how globalization brings about certain risks to society. For them, the risk society is not the one with more risks than the others but one in which individuals are quite individualized can subjectively grasp the gravity of the situation in which they find themselves. Individualization is the subjective aspect of a risk society. The dangers related to air quality, water and land, which run according to the places in which we live, the things we eat, and the objects that surround us take on the role of risk only in the society of individuals, i.e., in complex social settings that involve a strong degree of individualization. According to Beck, in today's society, to change is an internal world of social roles, family memberships, and gender identity in crisis and leaves only the face of society in the individual. Institutions with hinge functions between the individual and society (trade unions, parties) tend to lose the integrative function and deliver the individual to society without any intermediate filter.

According to their theory, risk production is democratic, and this would suggest that all social classes suffer in the same way the real effects of these risks. In reality, it is not so: those who have a high degree of schooling also have means to inquire about the possible risks such as feeding and can find ways to mitigate the effects related to these specific risks; for example, those who do not have great economic problems may invest a good part of the resources for feeding and choose more controlled products. No social class can, however, choose the type of air to breathe, so by the time the risk society will not melt on class division but will tend increasingly to globalization and therefore the democratization of risk and its effects (Chichi, 2002).

Giddens see globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities, causing local occurrences to be shaped by events occurring thousands of kilometres away. This phase of modernity is characterized by the social effects of the risks caused by man. His work "In the Consequences of modernity" introduces the concept of globalization into social theory (Giddens, 1994). Modernity involves various forms of risk. On each dimension of globalization, we encounter the possibility of risk, on the economic dimension, the collapse of economic growth mechanisms, on the political dimension of the growth of the totalitarian system, on the military dimension of nuclear conflict, on a large scale, on the industrial dimension, degradation and ecological disaster. The risks that arise are different from the risks of the past determined by human activities (Poloni, 2006). Therefore, COVID-19 is a health risk as a result of globalization.

Globalization, which signifies the compression of time and space, aids in the transmission of diseases on a global scale, facilitating the spread of COVID-19. The world has been witnessing global trade, people movement, and health globalization (Youde, 2020). The global transmission of diseases is one of the dysfunctions or latent functions of globalization, which offers both opportunities and catastrophes. The world is a global village; hence, the health of individuals is intrinsically linked irrespective of distance. Beck (1992; 1999) and Giddens (2002) introduced the idea of risk society theory. The theory is concerned with the unintended and unforeseen side effects of modern life, which backfire on modernity (itself) (Wimmer & Quandt, 2006).

The spread of COVID-19 has shown how the world is vulnerable to risks through social connectedness due to advancements in transport technology. This theoretical background about

pandemic-induced disruption and risk explains the globalization of COVID-19. It is, therefore, not surprising that COVID-19 has engulfed the world, resulting in sociomedical impairments. Nigeria also faces the growing burden of COVID-19, and this has impeded national development in its entirety because the whole world has closed, while in some countries, there are strict restrictions of movement, with socioeconomic and political activities stranded and left unattained.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was utilized for this study. This design enabled the researcher to collect a large amount of data in a short period of time and was relatively cost effective. Furthermore, close-ended questions enable us to probe precisely the knowledge and effectiveness of preventive measures for COVID-19 in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

This study was conducted in Nassarawa-Eggon LGA. Although it is not the epicentre of COVID-19 in Nasarawa State, its lack of social institutions, such as banks, media houses and tertiary institutions, and its proximity to Lafia, which is the state capital and the epicentre of the state, make it vulnerable. Consequently, most inhabitants of Nassarawa-Eggon go to Lafia for their economic transactions and some of their social activities. This makes them have contact with people in the "centre of the centre"; most of the information the people of Nassarawa-Eggon receive about situations such as this comes mostly from the media (electronic and print), their cultural and religious leaders and from those who frequent other places. This may breed adulteration of information, which will lead to the development of myths and misconceptions about COVID-19. This study, therefore, is necessary to determine how knowledgeable people are and the effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention measures in Nassarawa-Eggon viz-a-viz National development.

Sample Size Determination/Techniques

Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula was used to select 399 respondents for the study at a 0.05 error margin. A questionnaire was used for the collection of primary data, while a multistage sampling technique was used to reach the respondents, and Bowley's representative method was used to determine the number of questionnaires that were given to the five (5) selected wards in the L.G.A. The selected wards were the Nassarawa-Eggon (25,111), Alogani (11,684), Igga/Burumburum (9,444), Umme (9,781) and Mada Stations (8,781) wards, resulting in a total of 64,801 participants. The households were selected using systematic sampling (the skip interval method) to ensure an equal chance for participation among households.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Respondents' Sociodemographic Characteristics in the Nassarawa-Eggon Group

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
18-28	252	63.2
29-39	102	25.6
40 and above	45	11.2
Total	**399**	**100**
Sex		
Male	194	48.6
Female	205	51.4
Total	**399**	**100**
Marital status		
Single	234	58.6
Ever-Married	165	41.4
Total	**399**	**100**
Religion		
Christianity	213	53.4
Islam	171	42.9
TAR	15	3.7
Total	**399**	**100**
Occupation		
Farming	42	10.5
Civil servant	114	28.6
Business	15	3.8
Student	228	57.1
Total	**399**	**100**
Education		
Primary	24	6
Secondary	255	63.9
Tertiary	105	26.3
No formal Education	15	3.8
Total	**399**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 reveals the sociodemographic distribution of the respondents by age, sex, marital status, religion, occupation and level of education. The age range of the respondents was 18 years and above, with respondents aged 18-28 accounting for the majority (63.2%). As seen in the age distribution, the majority of respondents were young people between the ages of 18 and 28 years. The results also indicate that both sexes were represented in the study, with males representing 48.6% of the respondents and 51.4% of the respondents being females. This is an

indicator that the conclusion reached by the end of this study will represent the opinions of both sexes. Additionally, 58.6% of the respondents were single, further emphasizing the young and vibrant labour force prevalent in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. The results also revealed that 53.4% belonged to the Christian faith, and most of the respondents were students and civil servants who had achieved secondary and tertiary education (57.1% and 28.6%, respectively), suggesting that the population of this study has attained a certain level of education and can contribute purposively to the subject matter under study.

Table 2: Symptoms of COVID-19 (multiple choices)

Symptoms	Responses	
	Number of respondents	**Percent**
Fever	276	21.4%
Sore throat	270	21.0%
Dry cough	273	21.2%
Loss of taste	132	10.3%
Skin rash	114	8.9%
Discolouration of the skin	84	6.5%
Regular tiredness	138	10.7%
Total		**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 reveals how respondents within the study area experienced symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, sore throat, dry cough, loss of taste, skin rash, discolouration of the skin and regular tiredness. The respondents were given the liberty to choose as many as they reflected the symptoms that they were familiar with. Fever was the most common symptom of COVID-19 among 21.4% of the Eggon people. Dry cough and sore throat followed closely, with 21.2% and 21%, respectively. Skin discolouration seemed to be the least common symptom (6.5%), suggesting that fever, sore throat and dry cough are the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 among people within the study area. This indicates that the people of Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. have knowledge of the symptoms of COVID-19, which in the long run signifies the effective use of knowledge for national development.

Table 3 Preventive measures for COVID-19 (multiple choices)

Preventive measures	Responses	
	Number of respondents	**Percent**
Use of face mask	262	54.4%
Use of hand sanitizer	205	31.0%
Regular washing of hands	218	11.2%
Maintaining social distance	136	3.4%
Total		**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows the preventive measures that respondents were aware of. The table revealed that 54.4% of respondents were aware of the use of face masks as a preventive measure against COVID-19. The respondents were least aware of maintaining social distancing as a preventive measure against the virus. This suggests that people in Nassarawa Eggon are generally fairly aware of COVID-19 preventive measures.

Table 4 Respondents' Rating of the Effectiveness of the Preventive Measures of COVID-19 in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A.

Effective measures	Rating						
	SA*	A*	U*	D*	SD*	Mean	Std. D
Due to my experience or someone I know; I consider preventive measures of COVID-19 to be effective	15 (3.8%)	147 (36.8%)	42 (10.5%)	163 (40.9%)	32 (8%)	2.91	1.632

* SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree
Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2023

The results in the table reveal respondents' ratings of their experience with the effectiveness of COVID-19 preventive measures. With a mean score of 2.91, respondents were generally undecided about how effective COVID-19 preventive measures were. With a standard deviation as high as 1.632, there was a high level of disparity in respondents' ratings of how effective COVID-19 preventive measures are. This shows that there are mixed feelings and opinions about the effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention measures in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. This may be due to myths and misconceptions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding justifies the rationale for embarking on a study of this nature.

Table 5: Effect of Information on the Preventive Measures of COVID-19 and the Spread of COVID-19

S/N	Information	Rating (%)				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Does information from media affect effectiveness of preventive measures?	165 (41.4%)	216 (54.1%)	9 (2.3%)	6 (1.5%)	3 (0.7%)
2	Information from healthcare personnel affect effectiveness of preventive measures	135 (33.8%)	225 (56.4%)	15 (3.8%)	18 (4.5%)	6 (1.5%)
3	Information from religious leaders affect effectiveness of preventive measures	141 (35.3%)	216 (54.1%)	30 (7.5%)	9 (2.3%)	3 (0.8%)

* SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree
Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 5 shows the respondents' opinions on how information from the media influences the effectiveness of preventive measures against COVID-19, and the respondents were rated based on how the various forms of print and electronic media provide information on the subject matter under study. From the table above, 41.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that the information they received from the media about COVID-19 affects how they feel about the effectiveness of ways to prevent the virus; 54.1% of the respondents agreed, 2.3% of the respondents were undecided, and 1.5% and 0.7% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. This finding indicates that most people in Nassarawa-Eggon receive information about COVID-19 from television. The table also reveals that information from the

radio also affects the effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention measures, as 35.7% and 54.0% of respondents affirmed COVID-19 prevention.

Furthermore, the table also shows that information from healthcare personnel and religious leaders influences the efficacy of COVID-19 prevention measures. From the table above, it can be deduced that this information plays a role in establishing knowledge that also influences the effectiveness of preventive measures in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A.

Table 6: COVID-19 Pandemic and Sustainable National Development

S/N		Response		
		Yes	**No**	**Total**
1.	Did the lockdown protocol affect food production and supply?	375 (94%)	24 (6%)	399 (100%)
2	Has COVID-19 affected the activities of businessmen?	348 (87.2%)	51 (12.8%)	399 (100%)
3.	Has COVID-19 protocol restricted people and labour mobility?	363 (91%)	36 (9%)	399 (100%)
4.	Did COVID-19 protocol put most business activities on hold?	369 (92.5%)	30 (7.5%)	399 (100%)

* SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree
Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2023

The results from the table above show that the menace of COVID-19 has placed the economy at a disadvantaged position, as it has affected the agricultural sector, as it provided a hurdle for food production and supply, affected business activities, restricted people and labour mobility and placed most business activities on hold and are ingredients of national development. This shows that certain indices must be established to ensure economic stability in society.

Test of Hypothesis

Information on the preventive measures of COVID-19 does not affect the spread of COVID-19 in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
Information	4.1172	.51216	226
Do you consider preventive measures of COVID-19 to be efficacious?	1.10	.297	224

The table presents descriptive statistics examining the hypothesized lack of a significant relationship between media exposure and the efficacy of COVID-19 preventive measures in Nasarawa-Eggon LGA. The variable "medCons", which refers to receiving information about COVID-19 (information from media, healthcare personnel and religious leaders), had a mean

of 4.1172 (SD = 0.51216), indicating moderate access to information. The variable "Do you consider preventive measures for COVID-19 to be efficacious?" is scored at a mean of 1.10 (SD = 0.297), suggesting that respondents generally agree that the preventive measures for COVID-19 are efficacious. These values reflect 224 respondents. These statistics offer insights into respondent consideration and perceptions of information sources, contributing to the assessment of media exposure's association with COVID-19 preventive measures in the region.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study contextualized information from the media to reflect information from both electronic and print media as well as social media sources. This study revealed that information from the media builds up knowledge about COVID-19 and boosts preventive measures against the contraction of the virus, hence ensuring that individuals in the area are healthy, which is one of the major catalysts for sustainable national development. This is consistent with the postulation of Ewodage (2020), who observed the gesture of Radio Nigeria, which disseminated information to the general public on ways to abstain from the virus. Similarly, Olapegba et al. (2020), in their study of the knowledge and perception of novel coronavirus disease, observed that certain misconceptions surround the outbreak of the disease and that only timely and accurate information can ameliorate such misconceptions.

Apuke (2017) further lends credence to this finding, asserting that radio reaches more people in Nigeria and that the majority of people in rural areas depend on the radio as their source of information. This may be due to the standard of living and lack of amenities and infrastructures in most rural communities. As observed by Comcowich (2020), the media has become an active technological tool in Nigeria, as well as a news and communication channel for the citizenry of Nigeria. Access to mobile telephones, especially among technologically savvy youths, has made the dissemination of information easy with a snapshot of the finger.

As revealed in the study, knowledge about COVID-19 is obtained from media channels such as television, radio and social media platforms, and such information influences the effectiveness of preventive measures against the disease. Savrum and Leon (2015) argued that the media acts as an information hegemon in terms of determining what information is made available to people as well as the impressions people have on issues; this can be contextualized as the case of COVID-19, where information about the virus is disseminated mainly through the internet and the media.

Furthermore, as much as the media creates an avenue for disseminating information, it also breeds fake news and misinformation in some cases. Mutua and Oloo-Ong'ong'a (2020) observed that the media played a vital role in providing information on the initial stages of the outbreak; this has influenced public perceptions of the disease and contributed to curtailing its spread. It therefore becomes plausible to attribute the spread of the virus to the reactions of community members to the virus due to myths, misconceptions and mistaken beliefs about the origin of the disease and how it could be contained as a result of incorrect information, which increased the mortality rate during the pandemic.

Finally, the media, as a tool of communication, provides large amounts of information outlets to Nigerians during this pandemic. The first coronavirus victim was announced through various media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and other websites. Since a good number of Nigerians have access to these platforms, it was easy to spread this information. Subsequently,

health care agencies such as the NCDC updated the masses on the number of cases that are positive, fatal or have recovered in Nigeria through these media platforms. This gave Nigerian citizens a better chance to be fully prepared for COVID-19, as opposed to the period of the influenza pandemic, in which there was limited news on the virus when it came to Nigeria.

This shows how viable the media is in preventing and curtailing the spread of diseases such as COVID-19. These findings are consistent with the basic tenets of risk society theory, which sees the world as a global village where nations and societies are joined together through the media and the internet. Consequently, sharing and receiving information about COVID-19 has become easy, and the easiest way to do so is through the media and the internet.

Since COVID-19 pertains to the health of individuals, this information comes from the healthcare sector. The study established a nexus between the information that people receive from healthcare personnel and the level to which they try to prevent contracting diseases. Knowledge of COVID-19 has been acquired through several channels; Amzat and Razum (2018) stressed that healthcare personnel are pivotal in the prevention, management and containment of diseases. This is because they are professionals who have been trained to do so, and they are the first point of contact between individuals and the treatment process.

Therefore, the role of healthcare workers in providing information and knowledge can aid in the prevention and spread of COVID-19. Ojoma (2020) observed that guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19, as proposed by the NCDC, have proven to be pivotal in reducing the spread of the disease, and credit should be given to healthcare workers, just as they were able to combat the Ebola virus some years ago.

Healthcare workers provide knowledge about COVID-19, thereby affecting the efficacy of preventive measures. Olapegba et al. (2020), in their study, found that misconceptions regarding the prevention of COVID-19 engendered different absurd practices, such as steaming self with hot water, drinking gins, gargling throat with salt water, consuming hot drinks made of ginger, pepper, lemon, garlic and all manner of herbs perceived to prevent the disease, all of which had adverse negative effects on people in society. This is followed by Aworinde (2020), who asserted that one of the major ways of thwarting the myths and misconceptions surrounding the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 is by relying on information provided by the approved and certified health institutions saddled with the responsibility of providing such information. Reliance on such information will boost preventive measures against COVID-19. The implication herein is that such adulterated information exposes members of society to such diseases and increases their vulnerability to contracting diseases. This negatively affects the achievement of sustainable development in society because it is only individuals with sound health who can constitute a health labour force, and in a situation where the majority of the population becomes infected and incapacitated and cannot work as a result of misinformation and misconceptions, it will slow down the economic base of the nation, which will hamper development.

The study also revealed that the COVID-19 protocol adversely affected socioeconomic activities in communities in Nigeria. The study revealed that the COVID-19 protocol has affected food production in Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. because it has led to food insecurity and has disrupted agricultural activities. This is because the stay-at-home order by the Federal and State governments prevented farmers, suppliers and marketers from attending to their ventures, which has led to disruptions in the chain of demand and supply of agricultural products in these

areas. The World Bank (2020) stated that agriculture plays a critical role in the economy and plays a significant role in the sustainable development of Nigeria, as it is the largest employer of labour in the country, providing jobs for more than one-third of the country, which is approximately 35% of the total population. This shows that the stay-at-home order resulting from the COVID-19 protocol has affected the influx of food into markets for potential consumers.

This study revealed that COVID-19 has affected small-scale businesses in the area. This is because the majority of respondents in the study agreed that the COVID-19 protocol restricted people and labour mobility, led to the shutdown of manufacturing industries, led to a lack of productivity in businesses and led to a high rate of closures, which affected small-scale businesses in the study area. It is important to note that the stay-at-home order by the government restricted the movements of people with the exception of medical practitioners and security operatives in the country, and this gesture made it difficult for business activities to flourish, as markets were closed indefinitely and shop owners could not go about their daily business of buying and selling. The factors identified in this study are indices that influence the wave of sustainable national development in Nigeria, especially during the COVID-19 era, indicating the need for actions to stabilize the economy and set it on the right path towards development.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has been of immense concern to governments around the world and in Nigeria. This is seen in the promotion of preventive measures in an attempt to combat the spread of the virus and avoid its negative consequences on the health and wellbeing of people, which affects sustainable national development. To this end, this study assessed the knowledge and effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention measures and sustainable national development in Nigeria, with an emphasis on the Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The findings from this study reveal that COVID-19 is a social problem because it is a pandemic that has affected a significant majority of the world's population, especially people who are in rural areas and who lack adequate knowledge on how to protect themselves from contracting communicable viruses such as COVID-19. This served as the impetus that necessitated this study because it is an indicator that some indices have to be put in place to curb the spread of the disease, and it is on this note that some recommendations are suggested in the next subtheme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are suggested to increase the effectiveness of preventive measures against COVID-19 and reduce the spread of COVID-19 for sustained national development in Nigeria.

  i.   Since knowledge about preventive measures against COVID-19 is obtained through information from the media, efforts should be made to regulate the kind of information that is disseminated from the media; this gesture will help to check the excesses of fake news and misconceptions that may emanate from various media outlets. This also means that the media should be fully engaged in pandemics to ward off the issue of fake news. This can be achieved when media outlets are encouraged to receive and

disseminate only factual information that comes from appropriate bodies such as the NCDC and WHO.

ii. Second, governments, at all levels through the Federal Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency, should liaise with community and religious leaders as well as health practitioners in communities, especially rural areas, in a bid to ensure that information spread comes from them and other recognized verifiable sources only. Concomitantly, members of the community and society should always try to verify and authenticate the sources of information before disseminating it to their peers and members of the society.

iii. Healthcare personnel also play a great role in boosting the effectiveness of preventive measures against COVID-19 in society. Consequently, health workers should endeavour to indulge members of society in friendly and healthy conversations that will make people more knowledgeable about how to prevent themselves from the spread of disease. This can be achieved through the organization of informative rallies, workshops, seminars and other information dissemination strategies to ensure that information dissemination is regulated to members of the community.

iv. Additionally, since the people of Nassarawa-Eggon L.G.A. have strong cultural inclinations and cultural and religious leaders and clergy men always have access to people, it will not be unwise to encourage them to liaise and work closely with healthcare personnel to obtain correct and factual information about the pandemic so that they can disseminate it to their congregation. This can be achieved through the organization of periodic meetings between both parties, where deliberations about such issues and ideas can be shared between the former and the latter. This will ensure that members of the public obtain proper information about the pandemic.

v. Most Nigerians live in rural settlements that lack adequate amenities, and more simple preventive materials should be provided to people in rural settlements. The government at all levels and nongovernmental organizations should provide simple preventive measures such as face masks and hand sanitizers to people. This can be achieved when such items are taken to local hospitals and thus primary healthcare centres in the area from which they can be distributed to the people. Implementation of the abovementioned recommendations will boost and sustain national development in Nassarawa-Eggon, Nasarawa State-Nigeria

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