



PSYCHOPHILOSOPHY OF BEGGING POST COVID-19 ERA TRAUMA AMONG UNEMPLOYED EDUCATED CITIZENS IN ILORIN EMIRATE OF NIGERIA.

*DR. ABDULLAHI IBRAHIM SALAH-DEEN; &
**DR. IBRAHIM ALI ALLAFIAJI

*Institute of Education, Department of Arts and Sciences Education, Kwara State University, Malete. **Department of Arts and Sciences Education, Kwara State University, Malete.

ABSTRACT

The effect of Covid-19 has rendered some people to have begging mindset, especially, in Ilorin Emirate of Nigeria. This practice has become a career or profession from one generation to the other. Some of these beggars, use proceeds from begging to cater for their needs. These beggars are educated. As a result of this sorrow situation, this paper sets to investigate the psychology of philosophy of adult educated street beggars in Ilorin Emirate of Nigeria. Based on this, 15 educated adult street beggars were purposively interview

INTRODUCTION

Education should correlate positively with the alleviation of poverty, unemployment and reduction of anti-social behaviours. However, Covid-19 has proven it to be negative. Begging mind-set is too rampant especially, in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara state. Yes, people's sufferings during and aftermath the eruption of every epidemics are witnessed worldwide. The Covid-19's effects are enormous. These effects are not only felt by humans but also animals which has led to begging on the street. This paper is an attempt to investigate the psychology of philosophy of adult educated street beggars in Ilorin Emirate of Nigeria using focus group interview.

Psychophilosophy

Psychophilosophy is literarily defined as a philosophy that changes an individual's personal psychology (<https://www.wordsense.eu/psychophilosophies/>). It is also a field of study which combines psychological and philosophical concepts or understandings (<https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/psychophilosophy>). It has been technically described as a personal belief system whereby one interprets the behaviors and emotions of others through psychological theory and application; a perspective on life that stems from intentional introspection on one's own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to subsequently understand the psychological framework underlying others' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (<https://everydaypsych.com/psychophilosophy/>).



in troop to understand their psychophilosophy of begging. The data saturation resulted in revealing 3 major themes that cause the street begging among the informants. The research suggests solutions for government of Kwara state, educational stakeholders and policy makers to help educated adult street beggars secure job, empower them to curtail the menace of begging in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara state.

Keywords: Psychophilosophy; Ilorin Emirate; Street begging; Covid-19; Trauma, Unemployment.

According to oxforddictionaries.com, “psycho-philosophy” came about in the 1920s, with its earliest use in The Burlington Magazine (<https://everydaypsych.com/psychophilosophy/>)

Relationship between Psychology and Philosophy

Psychology and philosophy share the same roots: both study primarily of human beings, although one revolves around what the human condition is (philosophy), while the other tries to understand why the human condition is what it is (psychology) and how it functions exactly, given particular contextual locations.

However, in terms of historical approaches, philosophy far precedes psychology, being born several centuries before the birth of psychology officially took place.

This needs to be clarified right at the beginning, that although the fields share similarities, one clearly outweighs the other in terms of the time of conception, as well as overall concern. Owing to this fact, all of the psychology can be said to be a part of philosophy, at least in as much as all psychological positions have philosophical underpinnings or precedents (<https://www.upgrad.com/blog/psychology-vs-philosophy/>).

Importance of Education

Education is a powerful instrument by which economically, socially and politically marginalized citizens can make their voices known. Education is also a lifeblood of human being. It is a bedrock for man’s development and socio-economic progress of a country. Education has different meanings due to various fields of human endeavours. As in business studies (2023), education is the act of learning and teaching, acquiring and imparting knowledge which includes preparing children for mature life.

According to the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, 61 million children do not have access to basic education and 758 million adults in the world are illiterate because they have never got any education (<https://www.norad.no/en/front/thematic-areas/education/right-to-education>). Also UNESCO and the United Nations (2023) suggest that, education is a right for all, men, women, children and adults which its violation recourses to the law courts or administrative tribunals. Nigeria is a country that regards law and does not violates it. Nigeria’s government strongly believes that, education is only a means that its citizens can have to grow intellectually, politically, morally, psychologically, and economically, the reasons, it adopts education as a basic engine for



the nation progress. In Nigeria, every child must know how to read and write and have a skill as well.

Ilorin Emirate

Wikipedia in its submission maintained that Ilorin is the capital city of Kwara State in Western Nigeria and that as of the 2006 census, it had a population of 777,667, making it the 7th largest city by population in Nigeria(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilorin>).

The location of Ilorin Emirate according to Athaqafy and Gbodofu (n.d) is at the South of River Niger that is located in the middle belt of Nigeria between the Northern and the Southern part of the Country. Sheikh Alimi bn Janta founded the Emirate nineteenth century of the Christian Era. Ilorin Emirate consisted of almost all the Yoruba Land before the colonisation of Nigeria by the Briton when the Emirate was weakened and later limited today to only five Local Government Areas namely; Ilorin West Local Government, Ilorin East Local Government, Ilorin South Local Government, Moro Local Government and ASA Local Government Areas.

Ilorin Emirate is considered the largest Islamic Emirate in Nigeria and the whole of West Africa. The percentage of the Muslims is 89% of the total Population.

According to the official website of the Kwara State Government(<https://kwarastate.gov.ng/government/lgas/?amp>), Asa as one of the Local Government Area that constitutes Ilorin Emirate is located in Kwara state, North-central Nigeria and has the city of Afon as its headquarters. Asa LGA comprises of several towns and villages which include Ogbondoroko, Afon, Laduba, Aboto, Balah, Eyenkonn, Pampo, Ogele, and Olowokere.

According to the website, Asa local government area covers a total area of 1,286 square kilometers and a population of 126,435 as at the 2006 census. It features two distinct seasons which are the rainy and dry seasons. Asa LGA is known for the cultivation of a wide range of crops such as rice, corn, coconut and vegetables. Cloth weaving and dyeing are other key economic enterprises in the area.

Trade is also popular amongst dwellers of Asa LGA with markets such as the Alapa market and the Ogbondoroko main market attracting thousands of buyers and sellers of various commodities. Islam and Christianity are the widely practiced religions in Asa LGA while ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Hausa, and Fulani are represented in the area. Asa LGA is home to a number of festivals such as the Awon festival and the Egungun festival. Its major tourist attractions are the Shehu Alimis Mosque, the well at Kwo Alapa district, and the cattle dam and grazing reserve at Ila-Oja.

Another Local Government that constitutes Ilorin Emirate is Ilorin East Local Government Area. Ilorin East local government was created in 1991 from Ilorin Local Government with the Headquarters at Oke-Oyi. The Local Government has 11 wards. Its headquarters are in the town of Oke Oyi. It has an area of 486 km² and a population of 204,310 at the 2006 census.

The major towns are Iponrin, Apado, Oke-Oyi, Panada-Agbeyangi, Ile-Apa, Lajiki, Elesin-Meta, and Eudo Are. The major languages spoken are Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani. Ilorin East is also popular for its Maize, Cereal, Locust Beans and Cassava farmers. The LGA also has huge deposits of Granite, Clay and Kaolin. Its major festival is the Yawo Dancers festival. Tourists can visit the Sobi Hills, Pottery or Okuta Iponrin.

Likewise Ilorin South Local Government Area as one of the constituents of Ilorin Emirate. Ilorin South local government was created in 1996 with Headquarters at Fufu. It is made up of three



districts and has 10 wards. It has an area of 174 km² and a population of 208,691 at the 2006 census. The major Towns: Ilota, Fufu, Gaa-Akanbi, Kangie, Gaa Osibi, Omode.

Yoruba and Fulani are the major languages spoken. It also has some important markets, which include Cattle Market Sango, Gada Market, Ogidi Market. Ilorin South is popular for its maize, cereal and cassava farmers. Just like the other side of town, the Yawo Dancers festival is also a major one in Ilorin South Local Government Area. Its main tourist attraction is the Kwara State Amusement Park.

In addition to the above is Ilorin West Local Government Area. Ilorin West local government was created in 1991 from the old Ilorin Local Government Area with Headquarters at Oja-Oba. The Local Government area has four districts 4 wards. It has an area of 105 km² and a population of 364,666 at the 2006 census. The major towns are Egbejila, Warrah Osin, Aremu, Ogidi, Oloje, Bani, and Adewole. Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani are the major languages spoken within the LGA.

Natural Resources such as Maize, Yam, Beans, Vegetables and Cassava grow in abundance in Ilorin South. While there are naturally occurring large mineral deposits of Granite, Clay and Kaolin.

The major festival in Ilorin South is the Yawo Dancers festival. Tourist attractions include the Old Alfa Alimi Mosque, Old Central Mosque, Oloje Poultry, Knitting of Cloth, Okuta Ilorin, Major Crutchleys Grave, and the Emir Turbaning Mosque.

Moro local government is another Local Government Area that add up to make Ilorin Emirate of Today. It was created out of the Ilorin Native Authority in 1976. It shares boundaries with Oyo and Niger State respectively. The headquarters is located at Bode-Saadu. The local government has 17 wards. It has an area of 3,272 km² and a population of 108,792 at the 2006 census. Its major towns are Bode-Saadu, Ipaiye, Lanwa, Ejidongari, Olooru, Malete, Jebba, Arobadi, and Elemere.

The predominant languages are Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani. Moro is famed for its Yam, Corn, Cassava, Groundnut and Rice farms. It also has large deposits of mineral resources such as Granite, Talc, Dolomite, Tin, Stone, Marble, Dolomite, and Silica sand.

The major festivals are the Aaron Festival (Shao), and the Alagbe Acrobatic Dancers. Tourists can visit the Wreckage of Mungo Park, River Niger, Jebba Bronze Figures, Ogunjokoro, Jebba Bridge, and the Jebba Bronze figures.

Street Begging

According to Yusuf (n.d) begging is the act of pleading for assistance that may come in form of gift, money, food or clothes with no service in return. Kennedy and Fitz Patrick (2001) define begging as requesting for money from people in public areas. Beggars approach people for food, clothes, favor and not necessarily money alone (Yusuf, n.d; Olawale, 2007). Lynch (2005) categorizes begging into three namely; passive begging, active begging and aggressive begging. Passive begging is a particular spot using a sign and collecting donation from passerby. Active begging is to confront the passerby and ask them for donation while aggressive begging is to the act of confronting the passerby to continuously inform them of a threat for donation.

Yusuf cited Chikwolobe (2011) to have considered Street begging as the act of approaching passerby in public and requesting for any form of gift. He also referred us to John, (2010) as he considered the act of securing material benefit which could be in form of gift donation or charitable donation.

Covid-19

Covid-19 pandemic also known as the coronavirus pandemic is a global cancer that has left an unforgettable scar on the earth. Covid-19 is a virus that was first detected in the Chinese city of



Wuhan in December 2019. (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic), although, some researchers have traced its existence before 2019.

The effects of coronavirus are multifaceted. Covid-19 has created a gravious tension to the world. A study on the devastating effect on Nigerian socio-economic well-being, health sector and the role of Nigerian social; workers found that the virus of covid-19 has had a huge impact on the socio-economic well-being of Nigerians and that the Nigerian health system is ill prepared to combat the virus (Henry, 2020). Studies found that, Covid-19 has affected thousands of people, sick and healthy, it has rendered the hearty person a sick person. Its common symptoms are fever, cold, cough, bone pain, breathing problems and pneumonia (Abid Haleem, Mohd Javaid and Raju Vaishya, 2020).

According to the world health organization reveals that, the covid-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and has posed unprecedented challenges to public health, food systems and the world of work (WHO, 2020). Furthermore, WHO emphasizes that, the number of undernourished people during the covid-19 epidemics is nearly estimated at 690 million or even more. The impact of covid-19 is serious to the extent that, the abled, high income household begged for food and money for survival.

Humans are not only affected by the virus of Covid-19 but also the animals. Another problem of the Covid-19 is that, the vaccines for treatment the virus is not made available until thousands of people including animals have died. The available remedies were bygiene precautions / protocols such as regularly washing of hands with soap and water or with hand sanitizers that kill most of the illnesses causing germs.

Trauma

Trauma of Covid-19 has significantly affected the health care system including centers and patients during and after the pandemics. The domestic violence has increased by 25% even in the United States (Nicholas, Oluwatosin, Ahmed, Bhani, Napatkamon and David, 2023). Psychological trauma is an event in which a person is highly stressful such as being in war zone, a natural disaster or an accident (Jayne, 2020). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), trauma is an event like accident, rape, or natural disaster and a person who experiences it physically and emotionally harm.

Living through a pandemic is traumatic. The trauma encountered through and after covid-19 differs. There are affected economically.

Previous studies have shown that COVID-19 has created a general state of worry and distress, especially among vulnerable groups such as beggars and people with no employment and some tender to commit suicide. A study carried out among 168 Arab participants on covid-19 related trauma reveals that the respondents commonly reported feeling down-hearted/blue and staying at home without money and food to eat had effected negatively on psychological distress (Amira, Abdulmajeed, Eman, Samah & Amin, 2021). Since the eruption of covid-19, its negative effects, people have experienced traumatic emotions and hopelessness until now (Trnka and Lorencova, 2020) and the level of trauma symptoms develop at higher levels in individuals (Liz, Yang, Feng, and Qiao, 2020).

Unemployment

Various factors trigger poverty, however, unemployment and underemployment are found to be the major ones. Unemployment is defined as the situation whereby a person who can work is actively searching for a job but is unsuccessful in finding one (Danill, 2022). Unemployment rate in Nigeria is alarming. According to the Federal Reserve, unemployment in the US has been projected to between 4% and 5% (Federal Reserve Bank, 2021). According to Anozie (2023) in Nigeria, the unemployment rate is to hit 41% in 2023. Hundred thousands of students have been graduated from



tertiary institutions and have no expectation to secure a job. Unemployment is the major problem of Nigeria. It causes other challenges like insecurity, banditry, kidnapping, and other related crimes (the Guardian, 2022).

Methods

Fifteen (15) adult street beggars were interviewed on Covid-19 trauma encounter question in Ilorin Emirate. Information garnered from only five (5) of them were used for this study due to saturation in data of the interviewees.

The interview was group interview. This type of interview was carried out in such a way that the interviewers met the interviewees in their natural settings, asked them same question and recorded answers from them at a time (Creswell, 2002). During the cause of interviewing, the researchers employed one adult street beggar as an interpreter to translate the question from Yoruba to Hausa language to the interviewees so as to fully explain the purpose of the interview in order to dig deep to the interview question and ease the question asked. The adult employed as an interpreter was also part of the interviewees and was given a token as a motivation. Before the interview, the interviewees were told that they were going to be appreciated financially so as to avoid change of their behaviour and remain who they are. Those interviewed were street beggars with family and have experienced Covid-19. They were educated. The least level of their education is primary school leaving certificates. The interviewees are 30 years of age and above. The interview was carried out early in the morning around 8 a.m till 9 a.m at a time when the interviewees are almost in group at the begging spot expecting the huge money to come in. The interview responses were recorded with tape. The interviewees' responses were later, repeatedly listened to, transcribed, coded, and summarized on the paper thematically and were sent to them for their consent approval for the first validity, revised and then given to qualitative research experts for revalidation and reclassification (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as in figure 1.1 below.

Interview Question

What you do think are the challenges facing unemployed people during and after and aftermath the COVID-19 pandemic?

One interview question was asked to the 15 informants in group. The question was not made dualised so that, the informants could be free to express to it in order to get deep understanding of the challenges they face as non-working class citizens which leads to begging. The profiles of those informants are as shown in the Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Profile of the Informants

No	Gender	Begging spot	Age	Years of Begging	Level of Education	Code
1	Male	Geri Alimi	31 years	3 years	Madrasah	BEM1
2	Male	Geri Alimi	35 years	9 years	Madrasah	BEM2
3	Male	Geri Alimi	33 years	7 years	Primary	BEM3
4	Male	Geri Alimi	37 years	2 years	Primary	BEM4
5	Male	Ója Oba	30 years	7 years	NCE	BEM5
6	Female	Oja Oba	30 years	3 years	WAEC	BEF1
7	Female	Oja Oba	35 years	5 years	Secondary	BEF2
8	Female	Oja Oba	31 years	10 years	Primary	BEF3
9	Female	Oja Oba	36 years	11 years	Primary	BEF4
10	Female	Geri Alimi	32.5 years	9 years	Secondary	BEF5
11	Female	Geri Alimi	36 years	5 years	Primary	BEF6
12	Female	Geri Alimi	32 years	6 years	Primary	BEF7
13	Female	Geri Alimi	30 years	12 years	Primary	BEF8



14	Female	Geri Alimi	34 years	6 years	Secondary	BEF9
15	Female	Geri Alimi	38 years	2 years	Madrasah	BEF10

Table 1.1 shows the profile of the fifteen (15) informants selected from the two major sites of street begging in Ilorin Emirate. According to the table, five were males coded (BEM) and nine were females coded (BEF). All the informants are adults above thirties with begging years of above tens and all the informants are educated either with Madrasah, Western education or both. The next section discusses the responses from the informants based on the Interview Question as follows.

Findings

15 informants were interviewed using focus group discussion. The analysis was diminished to 5 informants due to repeated answers given by 10 of them. The findings of 5 informants clustered and generated three major themes as shown in the figure 1.1 below.

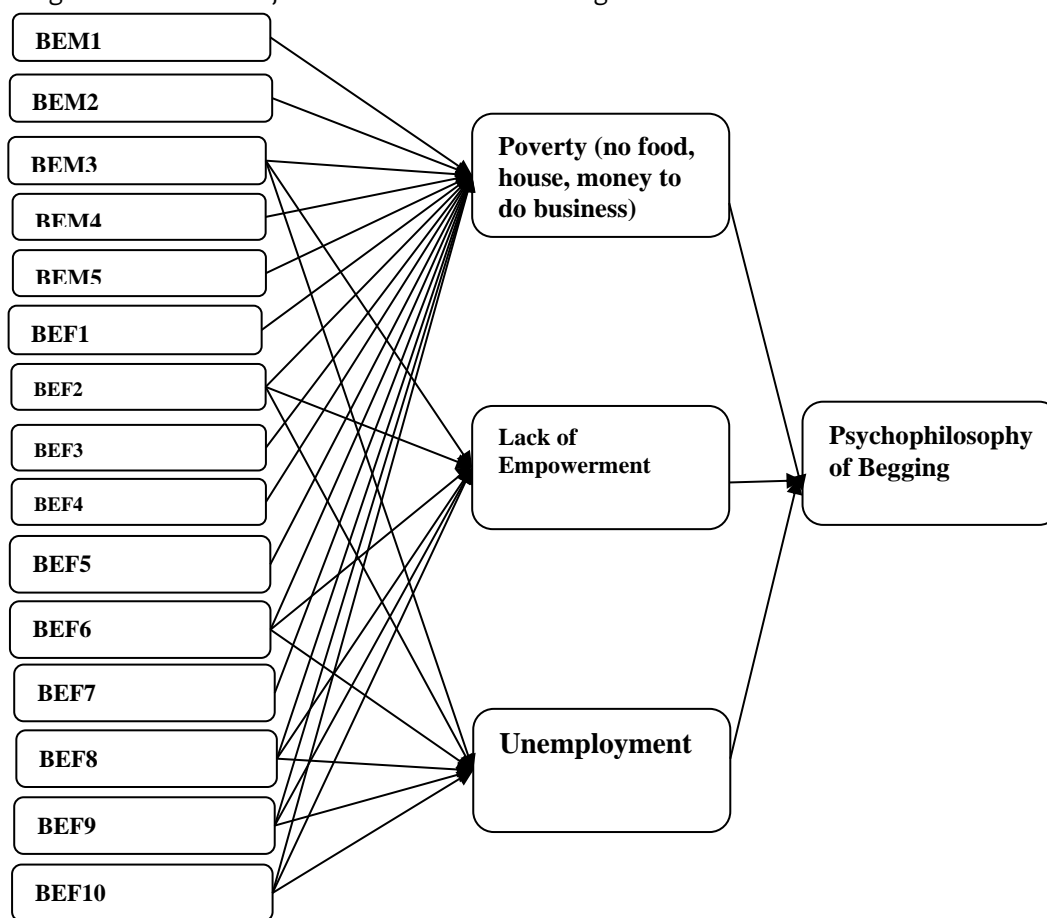


Figure 1.1 shows that, all the informants (BEM1 – BEF15) are of the opinion while answering to the question that, poverty triggers them to beg on the street during and after covid-19 epidemic. They add that they lack basic human necessities such as food, place to sleep and nobody cares to borrow them money to do business. Below is the response of some of them. The code (BEM) represents male beggar and the (BEF) signifies the female beggar. The numerical values stand for their serial numbers from one to fifteen.



Poverty Determines Psychophilosophy of Begging

Responses of all the 15 interviewees show that, poverty strongly contributes to the thinking of philosophy of begging as shown by the BEM1 through BEF 15.

[BEM1-BEF15] “... we **are poor** and our family members **are also poor**. We went through rigorous education where we paid for schooling, even, at the public level of education, ... hmmm, heee, we finish schooling, passing through national service (NYSC), and we have **no work**, where others getting jobs through knowing someone in the local government or someone in the authority. During the Covid-19, **food items were kept** by the authorities, they disallowed given them to citizens especially unemployed, so what do you expect of **poor people**, if you don’t have anyone. Some criminals get free money, they kidnap and no policeman to track them down. Haaa, haaa, haaa, politicians steal money of the country and nobody to question them, so what do you expect of **poor people**, they **will ask**. We can’t steal money, only thing, **poor people** could do is **to ask** from those who have job. People face tonnes of challenges aftermath Covid-19, everybody wants to survive ...”.

Lack of Empowerment prompts Psychophilosophy of Begging

Similarly, 5 informants argue that lack of empowerment during and after Covid-19 creates many challenges for the unemployed people in Ilorin to beg. For example, informants responded to the question saying:

“... without adequate **financial intervention** from government, or the family member, where a person as husband can’t afford to fully feed himself and has **nobody to support** him, the during Coronavirus era, and after it, ... kha, kha, kha, he **goes to street and asks**, if he does not want to go and do something illegal ...” [BEM3].

Another female interviewee says:

“I **have no husband**, he had died, he left the children with me, ... and I have **no family to support** me either with money or work, after the covid-19, as I **no work** and **no one to help**, I go to beg. I work as a bondswoman, I get a little money, a person will work from money to night, and you get like **100 Naira**, this money **cannot enough** for me and my children, if I have husband now, who can take care of us, I am now ready to follow, or you Mallam, are you interested to marry me ... hahahahaha” [BEF2].

The third interviewee expresses her view saying:

“we **don’t have any other hope** than to beg for money, because, even, after Coronavirus, people still suffer, you won’t see who to talk with **for help**, because everybody is affected ...” [BEF6].

Unemployment as A Cause for Begging

Almost 6 of the informants interviewed mention that unemployment is one of the challenges that lead to psychology of begging, when asked, some of them say:



*“ hehehe, you know I went to school throughout my life, and nothing to **compensate for it**. In the Covid-19 and after it, I encountered a great deal of humiliation, I carried my certificate around, and **no single person**, is there **to offer something** to do, so what do you want me to do, than, to come here seeking help from people passing by ... you must be surprised koh” [BEM3].*

Another informant that helped to translate narrated that:

*“ I would like to go for picking up unused items in the morning and come back at evening to beg as there is **no substantial work for survival**, I can speak English, **no work**, if a person continues to study, where is work”[BEF8].*

One of the informants said:

*“... you can have this baby girl, I can give her to you, if you **have work** or something for us, because no work in the country, for you to have work, you must know somebody to help you ...”[BEF9].*

Discussion

This study is purely qualitative. It seeks to understand the philosophy of begging among street beggars in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara state, Nigeria. The findings of this study reveal that, three major challenges lead to street begging in Emirate to be traumatic during and after Covid-19 as identified by the informants and seen in the above figure 1.1. The findings of the study are consistent with the studies of WHO, (2020) on the vicious effect of Covid-19, Trnka and Lorencova, (2020) and Liz, Yang, Feng, and Qiao, (2020) on its the traumatic symptoms and Anozie (2023) on the unemployment rate after the Covid-19 on the Nigerians.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The study recommends that Nigerian medical social workers have a significant role to play in passing out information regarding epidemics not only on covid-19 preventive measures to the general public. The Nigerian government should wake up to fix the health sector and be proactive to handle the occurrence of the epidemics in the future. Social worker practice in Nigeria should be promoted by the government through institutionalization of the profession. The study suggests that, everybody must learn or know something about the self-care practice to survive during the eruption of pandemics. There is a need of many future studies on how to cope during epidemics and avoid fake news that mislead people on some unprofessional social media.

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