



Effects of Socio-Cultural Behaviour on Covid-19 Protocol among Rural Dwellers in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examines the effects of socio-cultural behaviour on Covid-19 protocol among rural dwellers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study is a guided by two research questions and research design is the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was drawn from members of community-based organisations in five rural communities in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The purposive and convenient sampling techniques were adopted using 400 members of the CBOs. The instrument used for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire titled-“Assessment of effects of socio-cultural behaviour of rural dwellers in the prevention and spread of covid-19 Questionnaire (AESCBRDPSQC)”. The questionnaire is complimented by the use of observation in data collection. The instrument was validated using face and content validity and the reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method. The descriptive statistics mean and percentage were used to analyze the data collected. The study reveals that the socio-cultural behaviours such as the religious rites, festivals, pattern of greeting and funeral rites and festivals undermine the observation of the Covid-19 protocols. The study also reveals that there were innovative socio-cultural behaviours such as the drinking of herbal drinks to boost immunity, and the use of local made face mask from local fabrics. The study concludes that some socio-cultural behaviours of the people in rural communities tends to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and that such ingenious innovative actions of the rural communities in times of pandemic should be encouraged and integrated into the national health system.

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic was a big threat to the entire globe including Nigeria. According to Adelokun (2020), the

sudden outbreak of coronavirus-2019 (Covid-19) pandemic was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It is also referred to as serious acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). Similarly, (WHO) on 30 January 2020 announced that this outbreak had constituted a public health emergency of international concern. According to Chen, Zhou, Huang, and Wang (2020) research has it that the novel coronavirus was initially named 2019-nCoV and officially as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARSCoV-2). According to the World Health Organisation, a total of 44 case-patients with pneumonia of unknown etiology were reported to its office by the national authorities in China on December 31, 2019. The causal agent was not identified until January 11 and 12, 2020, when the World Health Organisation received further detailed information from the National Health Commission in China that the outbreak was associated with exposures to seafood market in Wuhan city. Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, & Siddique, (2020) note that within the first fifty days of its outbreak, the coronavirus killed more than one thousand eight hundred persons and infected over seventy thousand others.

The World Health Organisation lists the creation of awareness and dissemination of information about the Covid-19 virus, its causes and how it spreads as the best way to prevent and slow down the transmission of the disease. As preventive measures, WHO recommends regular washing of hands with soap under a running tap, use of hand sanitiser, wearing of face mask and observing social and physical distancing in public places. Scholars such as Funk, Gilad, Watkins and Jansen (2009) and Collinson, Khan and Heffernan (2015) avert that in time of outbreak or emergency such as the case of the coronavirus, there is the need for aggressive awareness and enlightenment of the citizens to contain the spread. They avert that awareness could elicit the changes in the behaviour of the citizens in

response to an outbreak and alter the progression of the infectious agent. This change in behavior may be difficult or downright impossible if such negates widely held socio-cultural beliefs of the people. Socio-cultural milieu influences the behavioral pattern and ways of life of a people, their food, technology, medical practice and their relation with one another.

African people are noted for their strong cultural values and these values are more engrain in rural communities where the people are bound by the trado-religious beliefs. Culture can be conceptualized from three perspectives. First, it can be seen as the matrix that incorporates and totals all the realities perceived by a people. Secondly, can be seen as the vector that orients and gives meaning to all existence and all practice; and finally, it is an order, a hierarchy in which, put into context, objects and choices, facts and events, the present and the future, assume, in relation to one another, their specific weights and their particular heights, their explanations and their justifications Culture defines the habits and customs of a people, the way people cope with living and changes and the way people develop. Habits and customs of a people are specific and observable behaviors. These behaviours define their relations and the actions of the people. The cultural norms people develop is to makes their life more organized, rational and understandable. As a result of these norms most of the people essentially behave in a given manner and this makes the action of the people more predictable. Socio- cultural behaviour are institutionalized and accepted within a given community or society. The people have a way of sanctioning those who do not hold on to that behavior. When a behaviour has been institutionalized it is difficult for such behavior to change. The Covid-19 protocol is a new normal requiring a new way of social relation and behavior.

WHO (2020a), has advised that the ways to protect yourself and prevent the spread of Covid-19 include: Get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn and follow local guidance on vaccination; Keep physical distance of at least 1 metre from others, even if they don't appear to be sick and avoid crowds as well as close contact; wear a properly fitted mask when physical distancing is not possible and in poorly ventilated settings; clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water; cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of used tissues immediately and clean hands regularly and lastly, if you develop symptoms or test positive for Covid-19, self-isolate until you recover. But has our socio-cultural

behaviour supported preventing the spread of Covid-19 in Nigeria? Nwagbara, Osual, Chireshe, Obasanjo, Saeed, Khuzwayo & Hlongwana, (2021), posit that cultural behaviour can influence knowledge, attitudes, perception, and preventative practices regarding corona virus- 2019 (Covid-19). As a result of this understanding the cultural behaviour of a people is important in the implementation of measures for the prevention and control of any disease outbreak. Socio-cultural factors are the large scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings, belief and behaviours of the people. Social subjects undergo constant changes and interactions that must be considered in order to understand how complex relationships occur. One cannot fail to associate and consider these aspects in the determination of related singular aspects. These socio-cultural aspects are embedded in several health areas, especially those most stigmatized by society, such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Corona virus. Understanding these Socio-cultural factors may lead to better outcomes in relation to health directives and even treatment (AIVES & Oliveira, 2019).

Nwagbara, et al (2021), noted that poor knowledge regarding the disease, not having the right attitude towards the prevention of Covid-19 and poor practices against the virus will lead to more spread of Covid-19 pandemic in both Nigeria and other Africa countries which include the study area. To control and prevent contacting and spreading Covid-19 in the rural area, rural dwellers need to possess appropriate knowledge regarding the disease, have correct attitude and follow correct practices against the virus. Further studies conducted in Sub-Saharan (SSA) reported that residents were noncompliant with proposed health and safety measures recommended by the government. In accordance to the advice of WHO (2020b), efforts were made by Government of every nation to enforce the wearing of facemask, maintaining of social-distancing and self-isolation, to curtail the spread of Covid-19, yet adherence to these preventive measures was poor due to some socio-cultural behaviours found among the rural dwellers. It is against this background that this study is been carried out.

Two research questions guided this study: What are the socio-cultural behaviour of rural dwellers that may undermine the observation of protocols for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State? What were the socio-cultural strategies for preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State?

2. The Covid-19 Protocols

There are a number of protocols outlined by the WHO (2020b) for the prevention of the spread of corona virus (Covid-19) some of them are :

- Get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn and follow local guidance on vaccination.
- Keep physical distance of at least 1 metre from others, even if they don't appear to be sick. Avoid crowds and close contact.
- Wear a properly fitted mask when physical distancing is not possible and in poorly ventilated settings.
- Clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of used tissues immediately and clean hands regularly.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive for Covid-19, self-isolate until you recover.

2.1 The relationship between Nigerian cultural behaviour and managing the spread of corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic

Social or Physical Distancing

The Covid-19 virus primarily spreads when one person breathes in droplets or aerosols that are produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. Physical distancing refers to actions taken to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease. For an individual, it refers to maintaining enough distance (6 feet or more) between yourself and another person to avoid getting infected or infecting someone else. Directives to work from home, and cancelling meetings and larger events help enforce physical distancing at a community level

Wear a Properly Fitted Mask

Wearing of nose mask is one of the measures to manage and prevent the spread of corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic (WHO, 2020a), In wearing the nose mask, WHO, (2020b) advice we should do the following:

- Make sure your mask covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- Clean your hands before you put your mask on, before and after you take it off, and after you touch it at any time.
- When you take off your mask, store it in a clean plastic bag, and every day either wash

it if it's a fabric mask or dispose of it in a trash bin if it's a medical mask.

- Don't use masks with valves

Make Your Environment Safer

The risks of getting Covid-19 are higher in crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. Outbreaks have been reported in places where people have gather, often in crowded indoor settings and where they talk loudly, shout, breathe heavily or sing such as restaurants, choir practices, fitness classes, nightclubs, offices and places of worship.

To make your environment as safe as possible:

- Avoid the 3Cs: spaces that are closed, crowded or involve close contact.
- Meet people outside. Outdoor gatherings are safer than indoor ones, particularly if indoor spaces are small and without outdoor air coming in.
- If you can't avoid crowded or indoor settings, take these precautions:
- Open a window to increase the amount of natural ventilation when indoors.
- Wear a mask (see above for more details).

Keep Good Hygiene

By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses that cause colds, flu and Covid-19.

To ensure good hygiene you should:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with either an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. This eliminates germs that may be on your hands, including viruses.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately into a closed bin and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently, especially those which are regularly touched, such as door handles, faucets and phone screens.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The choice for descriptive survey design is based on the fact that this design will aid the researcher to collect data to assess the effects of socio-cultural behavior of rural dwellers on

prevention of the spread of covid-19 in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State. Purposive and convenient sampling technique was used for this study where the researcher relied on his own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study. Therefore, the population of this study comprises members of five CBOs drawn from five communities from Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State. 400 adult members of the CBOs were administered the instrument. The instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled- “Assessment of effects of socio-cultural behaviour of rural dwellers in the prevention and spread of covid-19 Questionnaire (AESCBRDPSQ)”. The questionnaire contained instruction on how to fill it and consisted of twelve (12) items, to generate data for the study. It was divided into Sections A and B. Section A contained items on demographic information such as, age, gender, educational status, working experience and employment status. Section B contained twelve (12) items and sort information relating to socio-cultural behavior of rural dwellers in prevention of the spread of covid-19 in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State. The section B of the questionnaire has modified likert-type response options of four (4) point rating scale. For Section B option of strongly agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3,

Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)= 1. Also 50 people from the rural communities in Emohua were interviewed on how their socio-cultural behaviour affect the observation of the Covid-19 protocols. The face and content validity of the instrument (questionnaire) was established by three experts in the Department of Adult and Non formal Education, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test retest method was used. The instrument was administered to a pilot study group of ten person who were not part of the sample for the study. After two weeks the same instrument was administered to them. The two set of the administration of the instrument was correlated using pearson product moment correlation statistics and the calculated co-efficient was 0.79 which indicates a high degree of consistence of the response. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions. Thus mean and percentages were used to analyze the data.

In order to determine the acceptance and rejection levels of each research question item, a division was made based on the criterion level of agree and disagree. Any mean from 2.5 and above is considered as agreed and any mean from 2.49 and below is considered as disagree.

4. Result

Research Question One: What are the socio-cultural behavior of rural dwellers that may undermine the observation of protocols for the prevention of the spread of Covid 19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean response of respondents on how socio-cultural behaviour of rural dwellers undermine the observation of protocols for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State.

S/N	Statement for consideration	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	X	Remark
1	Religious rites in religious gatherings.	161	148	52	39	400	1231	3.07	Agreed
2	Observation of cultural festivals	192	188	10	10	400	1362	3.40	Agreed
3	Observation of funeral rites	196	182	13	9	400	1365	3.41	Agreed
4	Pattern of greeting	209	186	3	2	400	1402	3.50	Agreed
5	The system of commercial activities	210	179	6	5	400	1394	3.48	Agreed
Grand Mean								3.37	Agreed

Table 1 above shows that all the socio-cultural elements which makes up the rural behavioral pattern were considered to have undermined the effective observation of the Covid-19 protocols. On how religious rites in religious gathering undermined the observation of the protocols for the prevention of spread of Covid-19, 161 respondents representing 40.25% strongly agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 148 respondents representing 37% agrees that agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols. While 52 respondents representing 13%

disagreed that agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols 39 respondents representing 9. 75% disagreed that agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols. The mean score of the respondents in item 1 is 3.07 consequently it is agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols. In item 2 which is on whether observation of cultural festivals the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 196 respondents representing 49% of the respondents strongly agreed that cultural festivals of the rural communities undermine the

observation of the Covid-19 protocols, 188 respondents representing 47% agreed that observation of cultural festivals the observation of Covid-19 protocols; while 10 respondents representing 2.5% disagree and strongly disagree respectively that cultural festivals of the rural communities undermine the observation of the Covid-19 protocols. The mean score of the respondents in item 2 is 3.40 consequently it is agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols.

In item 3, which is on whether observation of funeral rites, 196 respondents representing 49% of the respondents strongly agreed that observation of funeral rites undermine the Covid-19 protocols, 182 respondents representing 45.5% agreed that observation of funeral rites undermine adherence to the Covid-19 protocols, while 13 respondents representing 3.3% disagree and 9 respondents representing 2.2% of the respondents strongly disagree that observation of funeral rites undermine the observation of the Covid-19 protocols. In item 3 the mean score of the respondents is 3.41 consequently it is agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols. In item 4 which is on whether the pattern of greeting in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 209 respondents representing 52.3 % of the respondents strongly agreed that the pattern of greeting in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 196 respondents representing 49% of the respondents agreed that the pattern of greeting in the rural communities

undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, while 3 respondents representing 0.75% disagree and 2 respondents representing 0.5% of the respondents strongly disagree that the pattern of greeting in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols. In item 4 the mean score of the respondents is 3.50 consequently it is agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols

In item 5, which is on whether the system of commercial activities in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 210 respondents representing 52.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that the system of commercial activities in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, 179 respondents representing 44.7% agreed that the system of commercial activities in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols, while 6 respondents representing 1.5% of the respondents disagree and 5 respondents representing 1.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the system of commercial activities in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols. The mean score of the respondents in item 5 is 3.48 consequently it is agreed that religious rites in religious gathering undermines the observation of Covid-19 protocols. The grand mean of the responses is 3.37 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing and so it is agreed that socio-cultural behavior of rural dwellers that may undermine the observation of protocols for the prevention of the spread of Covid 19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What were the socio-cultural strategies for preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus in rural communities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Effects of Cultural Behaviour of Rural Dwellers on the Spread of Covid-19 Virus

S/N	Statement for consideration	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	X	Remark
1	Sealing of containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction	4	8	187	201	400	615	1.53	Disagree
2	Usage of homemade mask made up of clothes	188	181	24	7	400	1350	3.37	Agree
3	Consuming traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters	220	177	2	a1	400	1416	3.54	Agree
4	Modification of the pattern of religious worships to observe physical distance.	13	20	181	186	400	660	1.65	Disagree
5	Cleaning of hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.	168	151	60	21	400	1266	3.16	Agree
6	Suspension of funeral rites	158	122	74	46	400	1192	2.98	Agree
7	Suspension of cultural festival	120	89	133	58	400	1071	2.67	Agree
Grand Mean								2.70	Agreed

Table 2 shows the effects of cultural behaviour on the spread of Covid-19 virus. In item 1 which is on whether communities seal containment zone using

town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus, the 4 respondents representing 1% of the respondent strongly agreed

that communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus; 8 respondents representing 2% of the respondent agreed that communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus; while 187 respondents representing 46.75% disagreed that communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus and 201 respondents representing 50.25% of the respondents strongly disagree communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus. The mean response of the respondents in item 1 is 1.53 consequently is disagreed that communities used the socio-cultural way of sealing contaminated areas to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In item 2 which is whether people in rural areas use homemade mask made of cloths to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus, 188 respondents representing 47% of the respondent strongly agreed that rural communities made use of homemade mask for prevention of the spread of Covid-19; 181 respondents representing 45.25% of the respondents agreed that rural communities made use of homemade mask in the prevention of Covid-19 virus. On the other hand 24 respondents representing 6% disagreed and 7 respondents representing 1.75% of the respondents strongly disagreed that rural communities made use of homemade mask in the prevention of Covid-19 virus. The mean score of the respondents in item 2 is 3.37 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing and so it is agreed that rural communities made use of homemade mask in the prevention of Covid-19 virus.

In item 3, which is on whether people in rural communities were consuming traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters to prevent contacting the virus, 220 respondents representing 55% of the respondents strongly agreed and 177 respondents representing 44.25% agreed that people in rural communities were consuming traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters to prevent contacting the virus. However, 2 respondents representing 0.5% disagree and 1 respondents representing 0.25% strongly disagreed that people in rural communities were consuming traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters to prevent contacting the virus. The mean response of the respondents is 3.54 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing and so it is agreed that people in rural communities were consuming traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters to prevent contacting the virus. In item 4 which is on whether in rural communities they

modify the pattern of religious worships to observe physical distance, the mean score of the respondents is 1.65 which indicates that rural communities did not modify their religious practice to observe social distance. 13 respondents representing 3.25% of the respondents strongly agreed and 20 respondents representing 5% of the respondents agreed that rural communities did not modify their religious practice to observe social distance; while 181 respondents representing 45.25% disagreed and 186 respondents representing 46.5% strongly disagreed that rural communities did not modify their religious practice to observe social distance.

In item 5, which is whether people in rural communities were cleaning their hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, 168 respondents representing 42% of the respondents strongly agreed and 151 respondents representing 37.75% of the respondents agreed that people in rural communities were cleaning their hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. On the other hands 60 respondents representing 15% of the respondents disagree and 21 respondents representing 5.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed that people in rural communities were cleaning their hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. The mean score of the respondents is 3.16 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing and consequently it is agreed that people in rural communities were cleaning their hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

In item 6, which is on whether people in rural communities suspended funeral rites during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19, 158 respondents representing 39.5% of the respondent strongly agreed and 122 respondents representing 30.5% of the respondents agreed that people in communities suspended funeral rites during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19. On the other hands 74 respondents representing 18.5% disagree and 46 respondents representing 11.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that people in rural communities suspended funeral rites during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19. The mean score of the respondents in item 6 is 2.98 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing and so it is agreed that people in rural communities suspended funeral rites during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19. In item 7 which is whether people in rural communities suspended cultural festivals during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19, 120 respondents representing 30% of the respondents strongly agreed and 89

respondents representing 22.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed that people in rural communities suspended cultural festivals during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19. On the other hands 133 respondents representing 33.25% disagreed and 58 respondents representing 14.5% strongly disagreed that people in rural communities suspended cultural festivals during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19. The mean of the respondents in item 6 is 2.67 which is above the criterion mean of disagreeing so it is agreed that people in rural communities suspended cultural festivals during the period of the outbreak of Covid-19.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study reveals that religious rites in religious gatherings in the rural communities negates the observation of the Covid-19 protocols. Nigeria is a multi-religious country with African religion, Christianity, and Islam as the major religion. Most African religious rites do not observe necessary personal hygiene and social distance. They dance and mix all sorts of thing to drink consequently their practice could be antithetical to the observation of Covid-19 protocols. This study reveals that people in the rural communities by their socio-cultural practice as a result of their observation of religious rites do undermine the necessary Covid-19 protocols such as social distance and good personal hygiene like regular washing of hands. This finding corroborates the study Adarsh, Neha, Manu and Asir (2020) carried out a study on rural community awareness levels, challenges and strategies adopted to combat Covid-19 that religious practice and rites are one of the challenges of the observation of Covid-19 protocols in African and in Nigeria in particular. The study also reveals that the observation of cultural rites and funeral rites negates the observation of Covid-19 protocols. Rural communities are predominantly culturally dogmatic and repugnant to western value systems. Most rural communities celebrate the death, have funeral rites that last for several days and in some cases do not avoid contact with the dead body. Having contact of dead body contaminated with the Covid-19 virus is a major mean of spread of the virus that is why during the Covid-19 burial ceremonies were suspended by the government and later all burial were to be supervised by the Ministry of Health. The findings of the study corroborates the study conducted by Steven, Iboro., Ottu, Olusola, Samson, Joshua, Abdullahi and Peter (2020) where it was found that suspension of cultural festivals and funerals are necessary protocol for prevention of the virus.

The study reveals that the pattern of greeting in the rural communities undermines the observations the Covid-19 protocols. In the rural communities of Emohua in Rivers State Nigeria, the men greet by hand shake both from the front of their palm and the back of their hand, stands for some second greeting and praising one another. Among the women they stand praising and inquiring from one another the state of well-being of their family, children, husband and other relatives. This process and pattern of development negates the observation of social distance. The protocol holds that people should stay two meters apart to observe social distance, having hand shake bridge the 2 meter social distance and also creates the possibility of sharing the virus through the shaking of hand if contaminated. It was said that during the period of the outbreak, people were still holding on to their sociocultural behaviour such as greeting in the traditional ways. 209 respondents strongly agreed that the pattern of greetings undermines the observation of the covid-19 protocol. The study reveals that by their socio-cultural behaviour the people of the rural communities in are in high risk of transmission of the virus. This study corroborates the finding of Elnadi, Odetokun, Bolarinwa, Ahmed, Okechukwu, & Al-Mustapha (2021) that African disparity in attitude and practice towards the virus. The study reveals that 210 respondents representing 52.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that commercial activities in the rural communities undermine the observation of Covid-19 protocols as part of the observation of the lockdown to prevent the spread of the covid-19 virus commercial activities where temporally shut down. The study reveals that during the period of the outbreak of the virus commercial activities such of the period local markets were still operated in the villages. People usually gather in their numbers without the observation of social distance and the basic hygiene such as the washing of hand in a running water with alcohol hand sanitizer. This finding shows that the people within the period of the outbreak of the Covid-19 commercial activities were still operated by the local people without the observation of the Covid-19 protocols.

The study reveals that the rural communities did not seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction. To prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus, contaminated areas are sealed off from the public and the area disinfected. This protocol was not observed in the rural communities. 187 respondents representing 46.75% disagreed that communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus and 201 respondents, representing

50.25% of the respondents, strongly disagree communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus. The implication of this is that in the rural communities in the Rivers State Nigeria, people were freely moving with no area under restriction because of the contamination of the area. The consequence of this is that there is high risk of the spread of the virus. However, the study reveals that 187 respondents representing 46.75% disagreed that communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus and 201 respondents representing 50.25% of the respondents strongly disagree communities seal containment zone using town crier and social and cultural sanction to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus. The study also reveals that the people of rural communities in of Emohua in Rivers State Nigeria use several traditional methods to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Such methods include the use of homemade mask made from clothes, the consumption of traditional herbal medicine as immunity boosters, and cleaning of hands frequently with locally made alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. The implication of this findings is that the local people are very proactive and ingenious to have used local materials and resources to meet their need of containing the spread of the virus without waiting for external and foreign medical aid and support. The study also reveals that the people of the rural communities in Emohua in Rivers State Nigeria adjusted some of their socio-cultural behaviours in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the adjustment include the suspension of their funeral rites and cultural festivals. This was in line with the state government restriction of the all burial activities within the period of the pandemic.

6. Conclusion

The study examines the effects of the socio-cultural behaviour on the prevention of the spread Covid-19 virus in rural communities in Emohua in Rivers State Nigeria. Rural communities are more traditional than western oriented and the prevention of the spread of the Covid-19 requires a western oriented behaviour such as observing social distance of 2 meters, a proper hygiene like regular hand washing and sanitization. Other measure the government of the state was a total lockdown resulting in the ban in burial activities and cultural festivals. These measures are all alien to the people of the rural communities as it is not in tandem with their socio-cultural values and behaviours. From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that a number of the

socio-cultural behaviour of the rural communities are not in tandem with the Covid-19 protocol and so undermines the efforts in the prevention and spread of the virus. Some of the socio-cultural behaviours includes the pattern of greeting, the cultural festivals, the religious rites, and commercial activities. It can also be concluded that in spite of their level of technology, the people of the rural communities were able to make use of their local resources to meet the basic requirement for personal hygiene such as the use the local herbs to boost the immune system of people, the production of local hand sanitizers and the locally made face mask and that such ingenious innovative actions of the rural communities in times of pandemic should be encouraged and integrated into the national health system.

This study was limited to a few rural communities in Emohua local government area of Rivers State Nigeria. The study can be extended to other regions of Nigeria to ascertain the effects of socio-cultural behaviours on the prevention of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to ascertain if there will be variation of the effects on the basis of gender, level of income and education.

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