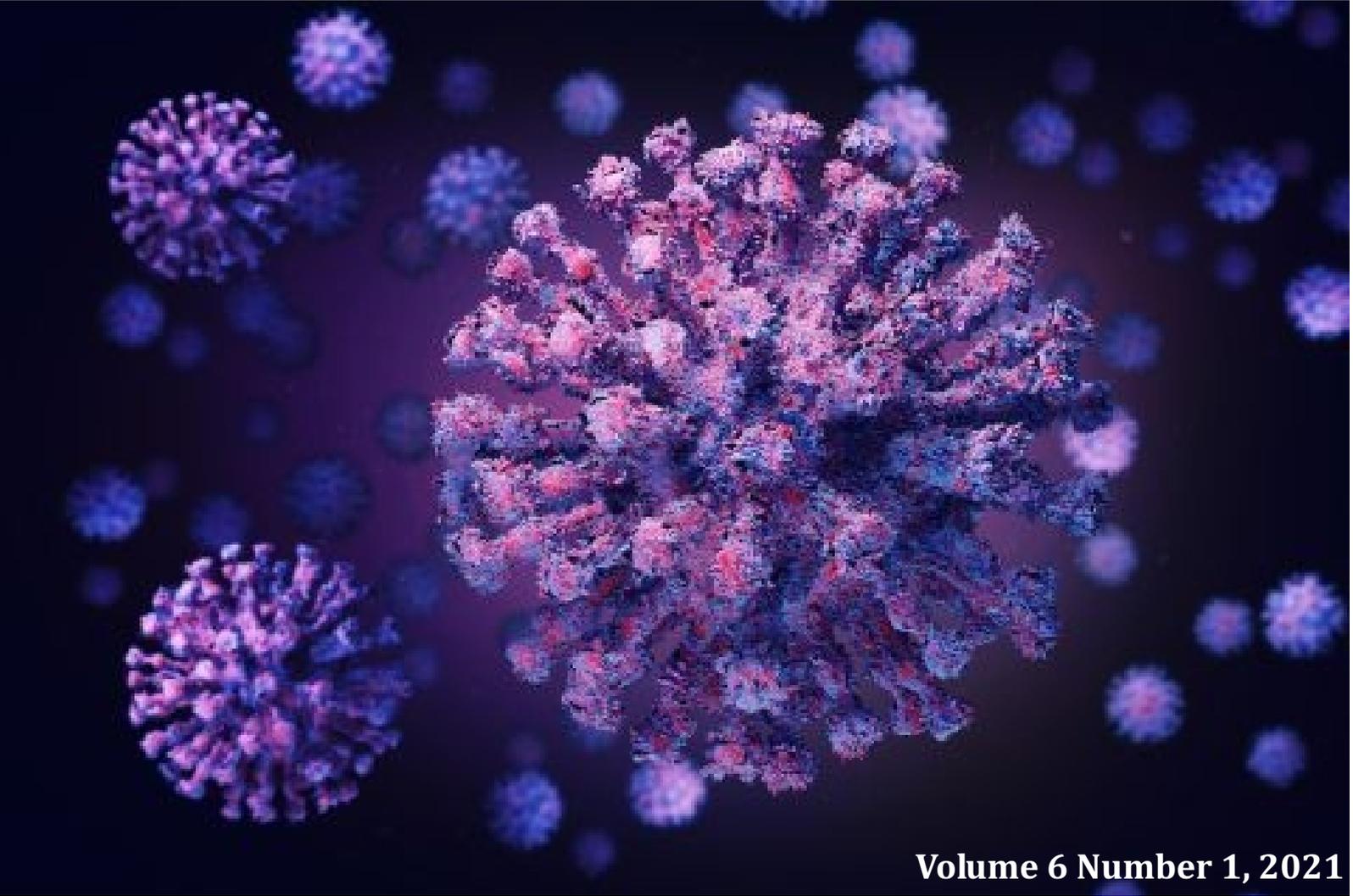




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Covid-19 Lockdown, Delayed Payment of Workers' Salary and Food in Imo State Civil Service, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study is to examine the effect of covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary on food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria. The outbreak of covid-19 brought the world to a halt via lockdown order and altered the lifestyle of people globally. Amidst that, it distorted payment of workers salary and constituted great challenges to their well-being despite the directives from Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning to ensure continuous payment of workers salary no matter the impact of covid-19 on the economy. It is from the foregoing that the objectives of the study were drawn. Specifically, the study was to ascertain the extent covid-19 lockdown amidst delayed payment of workers salary has impeded affordability of food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research. Stratified random sampling by proportional procedure was used. The sample size of 637 civil servants was drawn from the total population of 6370. Four point Likert scale and mean scores of the responses were used to analyze data. Secondary sources of data were employed largely from journals, textbooks, newspapers, web pages and government documents. To complement it the questionnaire was used as primary source. Game theory was adopted as the theoretical umbrella. The findings show that, to a significant extent workers could not afford garri, bread, rice, beans, yam, plantain, palm oil, vegetable, meat, fish, chicken etc. The study recommends for control of prompt payment of workers salary, introduction of price control mechanism and subsidized credit to workers for livestock production.

Keywords: Civil Service, Covid-19, Food, Imo State and Workers' Salary

Introduction

The outbreak of covid-19 on 31st December, 2019 brought the world to a halt via lockdown order and altered the lifestyle of people globally. Amidst that, several workers were confronted with issues bordering on distortion of payment of salaries for several months by the state government despite the directive of the Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning to ensure continuous payment of salary no matter the impact of covid-19 on the economy. Hence, the persistent spread of infection and death heralded by panic brought all activities around the world to stop either temporarily or permanently. In confirmation of that, Nwosu-Igbo (2020) submits that there was shutdown of borders, schools, offices, churches, markets, social gatherings and temperature checks, the use of hand sanitizers, nose masks became routine in public places and in homes.

Precisely in Imo state, workplaces were shutdown for several months until the ease of lockdown was introduced. Even at that, only workers on essential duties and those on grade levels 14 and

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above were asked to resume duties three times per week. Others were to work from their homes and public gatherings were restricted. To substantiate this, Holmes, (2020) posited that some of the employers used it as a pretext to withhold wages or refused to pay outstanding wages to workers. That propelled a huge disruption in the economy, altered the life styles of people globally and caused several workers a significant drop in their well-being, (“civil servants and covid-19 test”, 2020).

On account of that, several angry workers in Imo state threatened to defy the lockdown order in search of money and food which is a basic necessity of life for their respective families, following the controversy and distortion on payment of their salary by Imo state government for about five months with effect from February, 2020, (Nwokocha, 2020) despite the fact that, the Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning was directed to ensure continuous payment of salary no matter the impact of Covid-19 on the economy, (Bello 2020).

Statement of the problem

The contention was premised on the well-being of workers amidst the rapid spread of covid-19 that halted several activities globally despite the directives from Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning to ensure continuous payment of workers salary no matter the impact of covid-19 on the economy. One of the major challenges was starvation because the Federal and states Government ordered a compulsory self-isolation in order to mitigate the spread of the dreaded virus. Given the lockdown order of the government, several people were stopped from engaging in economic activities which led to a gross shortage of cash, foodstuffs and translated to poverty, unemployment and threatened human survival

In addition to that, basic necessities of life such as food, water, healthcare and myriad of others haunted civil servants and worsened their plight socially and economically. It was worsened when the state government delayed the payment of workers salary for about five months. It made meeting basic needs of life extremely difficult as workers precisely could not find food to purchase. Even when they found food in the market, there was no money to buy them. Similarly, basic necessities of life such as food, water, healthcare and myriad of others haunted civil servants and worsened their plight socially and economically. On that footing, the following question was raised:

Research Question

- I. To what extent has covid-19 pandemic characterized by delayed payment of workers salary impeded affordability of food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria?

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to examine the impact of covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary on food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is to:

- I. Ascertain the extent to which covid-19 pandemic characterized by delayed payment of workers salary has impeded affordability of food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Covid-19

Corona viruses are a large family of zoonotic viruses. These viruses are transmitted from animals to humans causing illness ranging from the common cold to severe respiratory diseases, (McLeod 2020). Furthermore, it means a family of viruses that range from the common cold to more severe illnesses like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, (D'Amore, 2020). Basically, it's spread between people on a close contact *via* droplets from coughing, sneezing or talking. In the course of breathing, the droplets could fall on surfaces, ground and infect someone through touching a contaminated surface and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. It has a lifespan of 72 hours or 3 days on the surfaces and may happen pre symptoms and post stages of disease. The period of exposure to onset of symptoms is about five days but could range from two to fourteen days, (Fehintola & Fehintola, 2020).

Food

Food is a basic need of life for sustenance such as rice, yam, beans, garri, egg and myriad of others. Its affordability depends on how much money a worker has because affordability is paramount to food access. In other words, if a worker is denied his or her salary for several months, he or she finds it difficult to demand or afford food, (Costigan, 2020). Summarily, it is the ultimate consumable commodity which serves as biological needs, (Lupton, 2020).

Empirical Review

The paper titled Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis: the Nigerian experience and structural causes, authored by (Ozili, 2020). Economic and structural data were collected from multiple sources, namely: the Central bank of Nigeria, World Bank, Oxford, etc. Data on purchasing managers index (PMI) and inflation was collected from the Central bank of Nigeria. The sample period was from January 2020 to June 2020. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the study. Findings revealed that, the economic downturn in Nigeria was triggered by a combination of declining oil price and spillovers from the Covid-19 outbreak. The study recommended provision of financial assistance by the government to businesses and a small number of households that were affected by the covid-19 outbreak. The study could not pin down the specific scope of the study in Nigeria. Again, it does not have a mirror with which it was analyzed. Similarly, the study titled unemployment in the time of Covid-19 authored by Blustaina, Duffy, Ferreirac, Cohen-Scalid, Cinamone and Allan (2020) was aimed at exploring how unemployment crisis amidst covid-19 differed from previous unemployment periods; examining the nature of the grief evoked by the parallel loss of work and loss of life; recognizing and addressing the privilege of scholars; examining the inequality that underlies the disproportionate impact of the crisis on poor and working class communities; developing a framework for evidence-based interventions for unemployed individuals; and examining the work-family interface and unemployment among youth. It recommended that research efforts be constructed from the lived experiences of the individuals who are now out of work, to develop and assess interventions and the collective scholarly efforts of our community include incentives and outcomes that support unemployed

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individuals such as online workshops and resources could be shared with participants and other communities. The study did not clearly state the methodology used, no theoretical framework, it did not specify the scope of the study and findings of the study were not shown. In a related study titled the Impact of Delayed Emoluments on Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Outlining the crisis and solutions was authored by (Aimuan & Unufe 2007). The aim was to evaluate and highlight the significance of prompt payment of salaries and wages as crucial factors towards achieving the objectives of any local government. The study was descriptive. Expectancy theory was the theoretical umbrella for this discourse. The study recommended for local government councils across the country to give the necessary attention that emoluments deserve, as this will help boost the morale of employees which will in turn result in higher productivity. The study could not state clearly the methodology used. There were no findings of the study and the reviewed literature was not properly criticized. In a similar context, the article titled Covid-19 virus outbreak lockdown: What impacts on household food wastage? It was authored by Jribi, Ismail, Doggui and Debbabi (2020) and aimed at determining the impact of Covid-19 lockdown on Tunisian consumer awareness, attitudes and behaviors related to food wastage. The study used online survey and 284 respondents. Findings revealed that, the reasons for discarding food were overcooking, inappropriate storage and overbuying. It recommended for consumers' needs of information for taking further action. The methodology was not clearly stated as to the total population and how the number of respondents was generated.

Gap in Literature

The reviewed literature did not investigate the extent covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary impeded affordability of food in Imo state. Thus, such unaddressed inadequacies, incompleteness and incommensurability created the yawning knowledge gap the study filled.

Theoretical Underpinning

The study gave consideration to Game Theory whose major proponents are John Von Neumann a mathematician, Oskar Morgenstem an economist (1940), Hayes (2020) and Tucker, A. W. (1950). It is relevant to this study because it has expanded and applied to political science, administration, economics, and biology among other disciplines. Game theory can describe a number of specific phenomena: interpersonal relations, competition, war and political affairs. Is a social situation among competing players who employ strategies, optimal decision making of independent, interdependent and competing actors in a strategic setting. The outcome depends on the decisions of two or more autonomous players, one of which may be nature itself, and where no single decision maker has full control over the outcomes, (Bhuiyan 2020).

Tenets of the theory: Game theory has the following tenets:

- 1) It comprises of a set of players.
- 2) There is a set of strategies available to each of the players.
- 3) Its outcome is determined by the strategies employed by each of the player.
- 4) Again, there is a payoff attributed to each of the players in line with the outcome.
- 5) There is information set.
- 6) Lastly, equilibrium has to be reached.

Application of the theory to the study

Game theory is apt for the study because the society is in a strategic interaction with the virus and the appropriate analytical tool for the study of strategic interaction becomes the game theory, (Holden 2020). Interestingly, the world is interconnected and every effort made to mitigate the impacts of covid-19 requires coordination because an outbreak anywhere puts all others at greater risk of contacting it. Despite that, coordination is insufficient thus the need for cooperation arose in order to overcome the loss of global welfare that could emerge if players behave non-cooperatively, (Caparros & Finus 2020). Similarly, the interaction between human beings and SARS-CoV-2 that causes covid-19 is its attack on us and our relationship with one another. The virus, community and policy makers are the players in the game who depend on compliance and control some of the rules of the game such as how much we interact with one another. To the virus, the payoff represents the extent it wants to infect several people while that of individuals is a combination of health and economic effects. The opponent in the game is the virus that multiplies its damage through a strategy of infecting multiple people who would as well infect others. That led to a lockdown order. Furthermore, policy makers were expected to manage the rules of the game until a vaccine is discovered, (Holden 2020).

Sadly, workers and Imo state government had an opposing interest on wages and working conditions instead of ensuring that the welfare of workers were met in line with the pandemic. In pretext, Imo state government as a policy maker strategically adopted delayed payment of workers salary for about five months without considering the fact that, for workers to survive and obey the rules of the game, they required their salary to meet their basic needs. That worsened the plight of workers and they threatened to defy covid-19 rules of the game which signified lack of cooperation. The payoff was hunger and hardship that translated to workers inability to afford food items. To pull out of the aforementioned challenges, the players should embrace cooperation as the framework advocates by ensuring that workers are paid regularly and all government regulations complied with.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between covid-19 pandemic characterized by delayed payment of workers salary and affordability of food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was a survey research. Stratified random sampling by proportional procedure was used. The total population of the study is 6370, ("Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. 2012). A sample size of 637 was generated using 10% of the total population 6370 in line with Obasi (1999) who submits that, if the population was a few thousands a 10% sample would do among others. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. A self administered questionnaire was distributed proportionately among the civil servants to compliment the secondary source largely adopted from journals, textbooks, web pages, newspapers and government documents. A four point Likert scale was used. Data was analyzed using mean item and percentages.

Data Presentation, Findings and Discussion

The result of the study was presented bearing in mind the objective. It revealed the following:

Table 3: Percentage, Decision and Mean Scores of Respondents on the extent Covid-19 Pandemic characterized by Delayed Payment of Workers Salary Impeded Affordability of Food on the following:

S/N	Items	Very High Extent 4	High Extent 3	Moderate Extent 2	Low Extent 1	Mean	Decision
1	Garri	450(71%)	150(24%)	27(4%)	10(2%)	3.63	Accepted
2	Bread	401(62%)	146(22%)	6(10%)	39(6%)	3.45	Accepted
3	Rice	390(61%)	210(33%)	30(5%)	7(1%)	3.54	Accepted
4	Beans	331(51%)	299(46%)	7(1%)	10(2%)	3.52	Accepted
5	Yam	356(56%)	250(39%)	31(5%)	0(0%)	3.51	Accepted
6	Plantain	300(47%)	261(41%)	59(9%)	17(3%)	3.32	Accepted
7	Palm oil	517(81%)	80(12%)	37(6%)	3(1%)	3.74	Accepted
8	Vegetable	559(88%)	48(7%)	27(4%)	3(1%)	3.82	Accepted
9	Meat	498(78%)	130(20%)	9(2%)	0(0%)	3.76	Accepted
10	Fish	570(89%)	50(8%)	15(2%)	2(1%)	3.86	Accepted
11	Egg	608(95%)	23(4%)	6(1%)	0(0%)	3.94	Accepted
12	Chicken	620(97%)	10(2%)	7(1%)	0(0%)	3.96	Accepted
13	Crayfish	627(98%)	10(2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3.97	Accepted
14	Okro	410(64%)	212(33%)	15(3%)	0(0%)	3.62	Accepted
15	Melon seed (Egusi)	455(71%)	160(25%)	2(1%)	20(3%)	3.64	Accepted
16	Tomatoes	382(60%)	218(34%)	23(4%)	14(2%)	3.51	Accepted
17	Ogbono (bush mango seed)	599(94%)	30(5%)	7(1%)	0(0%)	3.92	Accepted
	Total Grand Mean	8073	2287	308	125	62.71 3,68	Accepted

Source: Authors Field Work, (2020).

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Data on **Table 3:** showed that items 1 to 17 had mean scores above the criterion mean of **2.5** and was accepted. None of the items had mean score below the criterion mean of **2.5**. The grand mean (**3,68**) was above the criterion mean, which showed that Covid-19 pandemic characterized by delayed payment of workers salary impeded affordability of food items to a very high extent. Based on the above presentation of the results of the study, the following findings were decrypted:

- 1) Garri was not within the reach of workers.
- 2) Increase in price of flour led to upsurge on bread prices thus, affordable was difficult.
- 3) The prices of rice rose to its peak and made affordability difficult.
- 4) Affordability of beans was impeded by delayed payment of workers salary amidst Covid-19

- 5) Yam was expensive because farming could not take place which affected its affordability.
- 6) Plantain was out of the reach of workers coupled with the hike in its price.
- 7) Palm oil was not affordable because the price was astronomically increased.
- 8) The quantity of vegetable previously bought was reduced tremendously.
- 9) It was difficult for workers to pay the price of meat with little or no income.
- 10) The price of fish rose given covid-19 such that workers who were not paid could not buy it.
- 11) Eggs were rotten since dealers could not supply to consumers which made it difficult to find.
- 12) Low demand and supply of egg led to scarcity of chicken thus affordability became difficult
- 13) Crayfish as well was unaffordable to civil servants in the state.
- 14) Workers could not afford enough Okro as they wanted instead, they mixed it with melon seed
- 15) Melon seed (Egusi) became an essential commodity to worker because of paucity of fund.
- 16) Tomatoes were scarcely available because of transport challenges and its price increase.
- 17) Its price rose to the peak and made workers unable to buy it amid delayed payment of salary.

Discussion

The goal of every government is to ensure the security and welfare of the citizens. Sadly, Imo state government locked down to protect the interest of workers in order to avert the danger of contacting the virus without prompt payment of workers salary which was tantamount to inviting other diseases and death. Evidently, item 1 (garri) on table 4 was not affordable. Again, Table 3: clearly revealed that, there was a 200% increase in price of garri from the previous price. In the same context, Echeruo, Patience in Nwokocha (2020) explained that a paint of garri formerly sold for ₦500 rose to ₦2000 and caused the money and food budgeted for a week to be consumed in three days. Amidst that, peril stared workers on their faces as fishes, egg and meat were scarce to purchase for children feeding. Workers were hungry and could not eke out their livelihoods thus; they had to beg and did other undignified things to survive. Most households drank garri and salt with mostly tap water because they could not afford to buy sachet water, (“Lockdown: Hungry people more dangerous than covid-19, Nigerians cry out,” (2020). They became distraught because their meager salary wasn’t paid promptly, (Ezugwu 2017). Hence, they could not buy the same quantity of goods with a fixed income level despite the fact that, economic activities were practically kept on hold. Inflationary rate worsened their purchasing power. Their ability to afford the same quantity of goods and services they usually enjoyed dropped despite income level maintaining its status quo. Thus, food shortage crept in third quarter of 2019 and metamorphosed into food crisis in the first quarter of 2020, (Okonji 2020).

Stretching further, item 2: (bread) on table 4 revealed that, a loaf of bread which is a staple food in most Nigerian household that previously sold for ₦300- ₦350 increased to ₦400 - ₦450, (Ayoade 2020). It was attributed to the fact that, the period between March and August 2020 witnessed increase in price of flour from ₦10, 000 per 50kg bag to ₦13, 500 per bag. Sugar had an upsurge in price from ₦13, 500 per bag, went as high as ₦29, 000 and down to ₦19, 000 per bag in the corresponding period. Margarine rose from ₦5, 800 to ₦11, 000 in price. A 25 litre can of vegetable oil which previously sold for ₦13,000 hiked to ₦16,000 while Milk which was hitherto ₦29,000 went up to ₦52,000 and calcium propionate increased from ₦25,000 to ₦34,500, (Olowoyo 2020).The price increase made workers to reduce their consumption style by substituting essential foods with poor-quality foods which led to reduction in diet quality, (Gain Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, 2020).

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More so, item 3: on table 4: revealed that civil servants found it difficult to afford rice. To substantiate that, The Cable (2020) posits that, most workers diverted to consumption of locally produced rice for their meals because of price increases. Even at that, the price of a 50kg bag of local rice rose from ₦11, 500 to ₦18, 500 while a 50kg bag of imported rice increased from ₦18, 500 to ₦27, 500 in the month of March, 2020. The cost of one cup of imported derica of rice increased from ₦450 to ₦1000; and the cost of one cup of local derica of rice increased from ₦300 to ₦750. In the same vein, table 3: showed that the increase in price of rice ranged from 60% to 75%. Again, there was ban and restrictions on importation of staple food for households yet it's common because it comes in through permeable land borders, (Udegbumam 2020). Consequently, over 37% of people households were exposed to increase in prices of major food items, while about 12% of them experienced reduction in food consumption in order to manage the impact of the shocks, (Olurounbi 2020). Workers reconsidered their priority by getting food stuffs they could afford and skipped consumption of fruits and some foods considered as luxury. The mitigation plan was checking the quantity and quality of food consumed in order to survive. Some workers spent double of their usual budget on foodstuffs which was partly strained by decrease in supply of imported food, (Obadofin 2020).

In corroboration of the above view, item 4 on table 4: revealed that beans as a source of protein was not easily affordable by workers. Again, Item 5 table 4: showed that, yam was expensive and out of the reach of workers. The price of a tuber of yam, a substitute of rice in many Nigerian homes, increased from ₦236.90 in May to ₦250.70 in June, representing an increase of 5.83%. The increase was linked to covid-19 pandemic that coincided with the beginning of the planting season, caused a sharp decline in food production in 2019 and locust pandemic in 2020, food stocks declined and led to increase in prices of food items. It affected the poor, most vulnerable and became exacerbated by the travel, transport restrictions, night curfew, and irregular payment of workers salary etc, (United Nation Development Programme 2020).

Again, items 5, 7, 11 &15; on table 4 indicated that, workers could not afford yam, palm oil, chicken and tomatoes. Akinfenwa (2020) submits that, a kilogram of chicken previously sold at ₦1, 100 spiked to ₦1, 500/kg; 50kg basket of tomato initially sold for between ₦4, 000 to ₦5, 000, increased to between ₦13, 000 to ₦15, 000; a medium sized tuber of yam sold for ₦500 rose to ₦1, 200; 25 liters keg of palm oil increased from ₦9, 000 to ₦11, 000. This cuts across almost all categories of produce. Similarly, a bag of flour that sold for ₦9, 000 before Covid-19, now goes for ₦13, 000, while a bag of sugar at present costs ₦24, 000 as against the previous price of ₦13, 000. Butter rose to ₦12, 000 against ₦7, 500, while a bag of milk, which was ₦29, 000, increased to ₦52, 000.

Additionally, the study on table 4 item 9: indicates that affordability of beef did not have a remarkable improvement. A worker almost cried when she bought beef previously worth ₦1000 for ₦2000. In a related development, quarrel erupted between a civil servant who went to buy beef from the abattoir and a beef seller when he found how expensive it was, he demanded for additional pieces of meat and was turned down by the seller considering the cost of transportation. Another worker inferred that, given the hardship it took some effort to convince her husband that, she was not defrauding him when she was given ₦ 5000 to buy some food

stuffs at the market. The quantity of food items bought was so small, beef alone gulped ₦2000 among other food items, (Alagbe 2020).

Consequently, item 10 (fish) on table 4: was not affordable because fishes like kote and titus were expensive. It worsened by the sudden astronomical increase in prices of feeds by importers which increased the prices of fishes and made it a big burden on workers who could not afford it for consumption, (Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea 2020). Again, prices of raw inputs needed for fish such as packaging materials, fish, and spices increased. The materials were difficult to find for production of value-added products and producing at full capacity was difficult because of dwindled demand for fish, (The fish tank 2020).

Interestingly, items 11 (egg) & 12 (chicken) on table 4: were evidently not affordable. Similarly, Yahaya, Yusuf, Giginyu, Adama, Ramoni, & Adibe (2020) submit that, farmers were frustrated as they watched their investments went down the drain with poultry and fishery subsectors being the worst hit as the rainy season set in. Eggs that were supposed to be a major priority as a palliative with drastic high demand because of its nutritional value were marred with dwindling demand. The challenges of demand and supply of egg led to the scarcity of chicken which translated to high cost of the available few in the market thus, workers could not afford it.

Unfortunately, item 15 (egusi) on table 4: was difficult to afford partly because of the increase in prices that fluctuated as it was imported into the country thus exchange rate affected its affordability by workers who hadn't enough resources to purchase it, ("Food stuff prices in Nigeria (2020)"). In order to make ends meet, workers had to mix it with other things such as groundnut among others to increase its quantity at the detriment of its nutritional value.

Item 16: on table 4: indicates that, tomatoes were unaffordable. In support of this, Akinfenwa (2020) explained that workers experienced a drastic upsurge in the price of a 50kg basket of tomato which initially sold for between ₦4, 000 to ₦5, 000, to between ₦13, 000 to ₦15, 000.

Finally, Item 17 bush mango seed on table 4: revealed that it was unaffordable by workers. How to make huge profits marketing and distributing Ogbono, (2020) decries that, it is one of the most expensive soup ingredients. It witnessed increase in price due to the lack of its massive production and it became extremely unaffordable for consumption. Furthermore, Daily trust, (2020) submits that, a bag of bush mango sold at ₦127, 000. Each bag contains about 18 to 19 paint containers. A paint container costs ₦ 8,500 or ₦9, 000 but there might be future increase in prices. It suffices to say that, as food dried out in several households coupled with paucity of fund workers couldn't feed their children, (United Nation News 2020). Similarly, Nwobi, Enibe, Ugwunnadi & Husaini (2019) concurred that, three square meals was a mirage among workers and when a stomach is empty longer than necessary, glucose and protein contents in the body drops. Furthermore, the depletion of blood glucose in the body when the human brain is suppose to be at 80/120mg/dl for efficient performance could be harmful to workers.

Closing Remarks

Several workers were confronted with issues bordering on distortion of payment of salaries for several months by the state government despite the directive of the Ministry of Finance Budget and National Planning to ensure continuous payment of salary no matter the impact of covid-19 on the economy. Hence this study aimed at examining the impact of covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary on food in Imo state civil service, Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that to significant extent workers could not afford garri, bread, rice, beans, yam, plantain, palm oil, vegetable, meat, fish, chicken and myriad of others. Besides, the welfare of workers was overstretched when the state government made excuses with covid-19 pandemic for her inability to pay their salary promptly despite the fact that, economic activities were practically kept on hold as prices of food items increased. Amidst that, to address the challenges associated with the impact of covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary on food the recommendations below should be employed. In conclusion, the above findings have established that the covid-19, delayed payment of workers salary translated to workers inability to afford food items to feed on especially in terms of quality and quantity.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- 1) There should be a law in place to control prompt payment of workers salary. To achieve this, the house of assembly should pass a bill that any governor who delays in the payment of workers salary, should be made to pay 150% of the salary in arrears.
- 2) The government should as a matter of urgency initiate and reintroduce a price control mechanism by constituting a price control board. This should be as part of a larger income policy package and also employing wage control and other regulatory elements. The Board will help in placing a restriction on the prices of goods and commodities in our open markets. And to also mitigate the impact of inflation on consumers of various products.
- 3) There should be adoption and implementation of land-use policies where appropriate in order to enhance food security through setting aside adequate areas of agricultural lands, aquatic and other natural resources for the production of food and other sources of nutrition.
- 4) The government should provide waivers to fish feed importers so that Nigerian farmers can get fish feeds at lower rates.
- 5) The government should give workers soft intervention credit facilities to farmer's in different capacity such as fish, yam farmers etc through their various associations and make adequate waivers or mobility passes for the transportation of the food items and products across the country."
- 6) Government should give priority to vital issues and conduct proper community needs assessment for workers.
- 7) There should be subsidized credit to workers for livestock production. When this is done, food will be available for workers consumption.
- 8) Marketing margins should be harnessed to promote healthy price advantage to every channel member in the production, marketing and distribution of food items.

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