

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES' COMPLIANCE WITH CORONAVIRUS PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS OF SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

***Balogun, F. A., Adejumo, S. A.**

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Faculty of Environmental Design and Management
University of Ibadan*

And

Bako, A. I.

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Faculty of Environmental Design and Management
University of Ilorin*

Corresponding Author: balogunfemi@gmail.com; 2348052090896

ABSTRACT

This paper examines religious activities' compliance with Covid-19 preventive measures in southwestern Nigeria. The concept of religion governance and theory of citizens' participation are used as an anchor for the study while a cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. Primary and secondary data were sourced using structured questionnaire and published materials. Convenient sampling technique was used in selecting 141 respondents across the southwest geopolitical zone in Nigeria while Google Survey structured questionnaire was used in collecting information from the respondents. From sampled religious centres, 28% use soap and water for hand washing, 19% use alcoholic-based hand Sanitizers and 14% ensure the use of nose mask, fewer number, 3% ensures hand gloves while 6% use other measures in worship centres. 43% claimed that there are relief packages (cash, 10%, food items, 27%, alcoholic-based hand sanitizers, 5% and nose/face mask, 4%) distributed by individual philanthropists to worship centres. Ridge Regression shows that the presence of law enforcement agency is not a function of religious activities' compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures at $r=0.002$; $p<0.05$. The study concluded that over 50% of religious centres in the southwest of Nigeria complied with COVID-19 preventive measures. However, in controlling the spread of the virus, frequent public enlightenment from media on COVID-19 preventive measures, distribution of palliative measures by the government to citizens, and more enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures in cities were suggested.

Keywords: Religious activities; Compliance; COVID-19; Preventive measures; Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease otherwise called COVID-19 is a pandemic considered as the most essential worldwide wellbeing catastrophe of the century and the best test that the mankind looked since the Second World War (Indranil and Prasenjit, 2020). COVID-19, aside from turning into the best danger to the worldwide general wellbeing of the century, is being considered as an indication of the shortage of social headway. Since the news of the ailment in December 2019, it spread the world over and has in the long run influenced each landmass of the world. The pace of the spread has made the World Health Organization (WHO) to portray the Covid-19 as a pandemic (2020). Universally, the affirmed instances of COVID-19 tainted individual as at May 10, 2020, were 3,917,366 out of which 274,361 death has been recorded. In Africa, there are whole of 42, 626 affirmed cases, while 1,369 passing were recorded by WHO (2020). Correspondingly, in Nigeria, an aggregate of 41,180 COVID-19 pandemic cases have been confirmed, with 18,203 recovered and 860 demises from various conditions. As indicated by the WHO, the basic side effects of COVID-19 contamination incorporate fever, sleepiness, dry hack, windedness, hurts, agonies, and sore throat (Mehmet, 2020).

Till now there is no report of any clinically endorsed antiviral medications or antibodies that are viable against COVID-19. Nevertheless, there is a second wave of the virus which appears to be more deadly and spread faster than the first wave. It has quickly spread the world over, presenting huge wellbeing, monetary and social difficulties to the whole human populace. The simple spread of this infection made individuals wear nose and mouth cover as careful steps, utilization of gloves and hand sanitizer day by day that brought about the age of a tremendous

measure of clinical squanders in the earth. A great many individuals have been put on lockdown to decrease the transmission of the infection. This pestilence has additionally changed the individuals' way of life; caused loss of employment and jeopardized the food of a huge number of individuals. Correspondingly, organizations and significant markets have closed down to control the spread of the infection. Besides, numerous nations are battling to hinder the transmission of the ailment by testing and rewarding patients, isolating speculated people through contact following, confining huge social events, keeping up total or halfway lockdown among different measures.

In Nigeria, the instructive framework from pre-school to tertiary training has been short down since the long stretch of March 2020 alongside the conclusion of all strict love places. The conclusion of strict focuses and suspension of religion exercises over the globe was received since Covid-19 pandemic expressed. Numerous houses of worship in Nigeria and different pieces of the world have suspended the congregational adores as a feature of endeavours to limit the spread of the illness. Additionally, in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S. A's.) Office of Theology and Worship suspended church assembling however urged worshippers to remain at home yet participate in different manners, including petition circles, little gatherings and web-based life. In like manner, the Roman Catholic in the United States had suspended the open festival of Mass and abstained from the commitment to go to Sunday Mass; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has shut a few sanctuaries briefly and suspended religion social affairs in Hong Kong, Mongolia, South Korea, Japan and Seattle. A clashing reaction to the administration order was recorded among a strict gathering in South Korea (Shincheonji Church of Jesus) attempted to challenge their legislature and opposed sharing participation records which diminished government reaction to COVID-19 flare-up in their nation. Washington State turned destructive as 45 out of 60 individuals present at the training were affirmed to have COVID-19 with 3 hospitalized and 2 as of now kicked the bucket (Brian, 2020). The pioneers of the Catholic Church in Nigeria have taken a few measures and activities. They have suspended Masses, Easter exercises and different social affairs in the Lagos Archdiocese, the Abuja Diocese and numerous different sees in the nation, as a method of reacting proactively to the pandemic. Additionally, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) reported the conclusion of all congregation branches in confined territories of the nation, due to coronavirus pandemic. In severe consistency with the administration's order, the congregation refused administrations, house association however connected all individuals in 30 days Personal Prayer Retreat starting from 22nd March 2020.

Universally, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected religion in different manners, including the wiping out of the love administrations of different beliefs, the conclusion of Sunday Schools, just as the crossing out of journeys encompassing observances and celebrations (Burke, 2020). The Vatican declared that Holy Week observances in Rome, which happen during the most recent seven day stretch of the Christian penitential period of Lent, have been dropped. There is a worry that the infection might be difficult to control during the movement and social occasions around Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. Gatherings for Taraweeh supplications during Ramadan were dropped in a few nations as mosques overall were closed down (Al Amir, 2020). Chamber of Senior Scholars from Saudi Arabia encouraged the Muslim world when all is said in done, to get ready for Ramadan while keeping preparatory and preventive wellbeing measures with respect to demonstrations of love, which incorporates maintaining a strategic distance from social events, for example, mutual Iftar and Suhur dinners. Worldwide limitation on development and religion enacts has affected numerous individuals to have additional time to burn thus the open-door cost of time spent on strict exercises has diminished (Brian, 2020). As the vulnerability of the coronavirus pandemic keeps on developing, individuals with strict foundations will probably go to their confidence to discover solace and comfort in this time society lockdown. The pandemic is making the social component of chapel cooperation decline fundamentally. For the most part, benefits have been live-spilt where gatherers have just observed the pastorate. Then

again, if a congregation has no spilling administration or if numerous individuals are not on the web (because of variables, for example, age or pay), at that point social removing may quickly convert into a fast decrease in the social advantage of being engaged with chapel.

Several preventive measures were introduced by the government which include: partial and total lockdown of human activities involving religious, social and economic large gathering; regular hand washing with soap or alcohol-based sanitizer; social distancing; wearing of nose/face mask among others were introduced by Epidemiologists in controlling the spread of the pandemic since at the moment there is no approved cure for it. This paper examines religious activities' compliance with Covid-19 preventive measures in southwestern Nigeria with the aim of improving on how to curb the spread of the pandemic in the region.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ANCHOR

Concept of religious governance and theory of citizens participation was used as an anchor for this study. The concept and theory are fitting to this study in examine religious activities compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures in the southwestern states of Nigeria. According to the United Nations Development Policy (1996), governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a county's affairs at all levels (religious activities included). It also states further that governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. International Institute of Administrative Sciences (1996) opined that governance is a broader notion than government by saying that governance refers to the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority, influence and enact policies, take decisions concerning public life, economic, social and physical development. In other words, governance involves interaction between the formal institutions (private and public) and those of civil society. Asian Development Bank (2014) examines governance from the perspective of power exercise when they said that governance is how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development, which means the way those with power use that power.

Kanfman (1999) described governance as involving government, civil society and the private sector. In the religious context, this implies that the responsibility of managing religious affairs is not limited to governments but also include a wide variety of stakeholders including Muslim Association of Nigeria (MAN), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Traditional Religious Worshippers Association of Nigeria (TRWAN), professional religious associations and other members of the civil society. Each of these actors has a specific role to play in compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures in the Southwestern States of Nigeria based on its source of legitimacy and comparative advantage. The government creates conducive political and legal environments. Religious associations regulate and govern religious practices. The civil society facilitates political and social interaction by mobilizing groups to participate in religious activities. Though each of the actors has its weakness and strength, the major objective is to promote and foster constructive uniformity of religious activities and practices in the States.

Religious governance can be poor and good. Poor religious governance has contributed to the increasing partial compliance with the rules and regulations governing religious activities and practices during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in the residential neighbourhoods of Southwestern States in Nigeria. Increasing urbanization coupled with inadequate physical planning tools and strategies exacerbating the ability of the governments in enforcing strict compliance with the rules and regulations governing religious activities in urban and rural areas during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, hence, the manifestation of disorderliness which is one of the indicators of poor religious governance. Adopting from the idea of United Nation Development Policy (1996) on good urban governance, good religious governance is a sub-set of governance. It occurs when religious norms and practices empower and encourage people to

take increasingly greater control over their religious development in a manner that does not impinge upon the accepted right of others. Good religious governance is among other things that encourage participatory, transparent and accountability. It is also effective, equitable and promotes the rule of law. Extracting from the opinion of Nguyen and Hoai (2013) on urban governance, religious governance can be explained as coordinating efforts of religious stakeholders using governments' power and policy to orientate, adjust and monitor the religious operation and development process in urban entities to ensure the protection of the legal rights of citizens, promotion of the rule of law, communal order, social and religious values, and protect environmental quality to create and sustain a sound and healthy urban quality of life, most especially during and after COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in the States. Religious governance cannot be inclusive, collective and successful without the full participation of the citizens in terms of decision-making, level of compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures, and practices.

Andre (2012) defined citizens participation as a process by which individual, either voluntarily or obligatorily stand alone or form a group and determines the lots of the people or identify the community. In the opinion of Spiegel (1968) citizens participation is defined as a process whereby programmes are tie to the people. Drawing from the definitions of citizens participation by Andre (2012) and Spiegel (1968), religious stakeholders and their members can be saddled with the programme of strict compliance with the COVID-19 preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus. Cogan and Sharpe (1986) traced the origin of citizen participation to ancient Greece and Colonial New England in the 1900s. During this period, governmental processes and procedures were programmed to facilitate external participation which was later institutionalized citizen's participation in the mid-1960s with President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programmes. Three rationales for citizens participation was identified by Cahn and Camper (1968) which include: that individual knowledge of participation promotes dignity and self-sufficiency; human resources and energies the individual citizen within the identified community are fully utilized; provision of better insights and approaches to issues which contributes to the soundness of community solutions. Effective adoption of these rationales can be of help in benefiting the citizens' participation to the planning process in terms of religious activities compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures and foster cooperation among religious sets in stopping the spread of the virus in the States.

3. STUDY AREA

The study was carried out in the south-western states of Nigeria. Geographically, Southwestern Nigeria lies within longitude 20 48' - 6 0 0' E and latitude 50 5' - 9 0 12'N. Southwestern Nigeria is located in the southwestern part of Nigeria and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Kogi and Edo States in the east, and Kwara State in the north. Its coast in the south lies on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean (See figure 3.1). The largest and most influential ethnic group in Southwestern Nigeria is Yoruba. The study location is made up of six states namely Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos states. In terms of religion, Southwestern Nigeria is roughly split half between Muslims and Christians with a very small minority who practice traditional religion. The region has most of the cathedrals in Nigeria where the largest congregations of Christian religions are found which justify the conduct of the study in the selected areas.

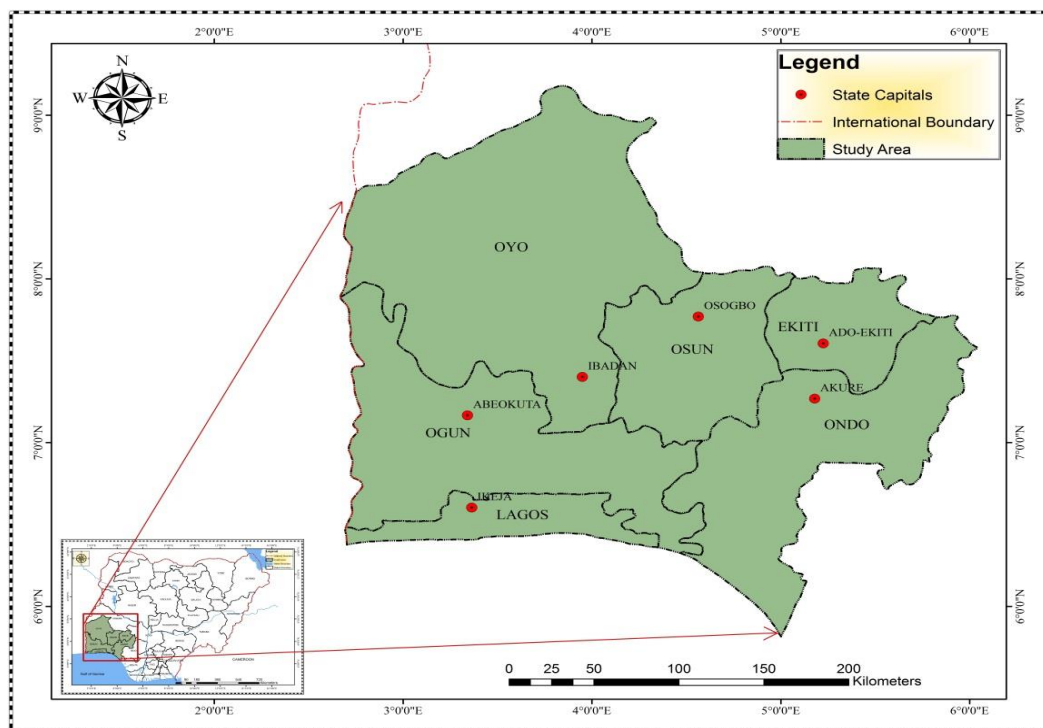


Figure 1: Map of Southwest States of Nigeria

4. METHODS

The approach in this research employed a systematic and theoretical analysis which formed the methods and principles that is linked with the knowledge that encompasses the concepts of best practices applied to get a specific result (Igwenagu, 2016) and the problem paradigm to some sets of agreement (Samar, 2017). Thus, the principles of research, assumption analysis and the procedures formed part of the approach to inquiry (Heidi et al., 2017). The study correctly understood the method that formed the centre-base of this research as it forms the key point of a good inquiry with the important rationale of the choice, the method of data collection and the practical steps employed (Hirsjarvi, Remes and Sajavaara, 2013).

The secondary method of data collection was used to extract information on the past research works and a primary data collection method was employed to get responses from the respondents. A convenient method of data collection was employed such that, in each state of the southwestern region of Nigeria, close associate to the researchers were selected from which the questionnaire links were distributed. These people were instructed on how to distribute the questionnaire links to friends as well as groups they are part on the social media. Those selected also informed their respective groups to share the questionnaires to the groups they belong within their community in order to ascertain fair representative. The questionnaire was designed to capture the basis for the research, both closed and open questions were used. The open questions were used to extract peoples' perception on the inquiry.

Due to the current pandemic, and lockdown strategies on-going in Nigeria and beyond the questionnaire was electronically designed using the google form and distributed the links through social media. Method of analysis used is an excellent representation and interpretation (Creswell, 2013) where the integrity of the data is being maintained. This investigation is being approached from the perspective of qualitative and numerical description and the strategy thus emphasize on the deductive approaches (Stephen and Kasim, 2015). Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Ridge regression) at $p \leq 0.05$.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The proportion of participations based on responses from the respondents include: Oyo (26%), Ekiti (25%), Lagos (17%), Ondo (12%), Ogun (11%) and Osun (9%). The marital status of the respondents revealed that the singles were 53%, married were 45% while divorce and separated are not significant. Figure 2 showed and validated the assertion of U S Department of State (2017) that, Christianity dominates all the six states in the south-west, Ekiti has the highest number and Lagos with the lowest (71%). As part of the compliance with government directive on COVID-19 preventive measures, 87% claimed they use room apartment as worship centre during the period of the lockdown (See figure 3). Ekiti, Ogun and Osun (90%); Lagos, Ondo and Oyo (80%) use room apartments as worship centre. However, 6% said they worship at the Cathedral with the highest in Ekiti (9%) and Lagos (8%) while Osun is the least where no one use Cathedral during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. An insignificant number of persons used fortify mosque (3%), multipurpose hall (2%) and open ground (1%). It could be established here that, the people complied with the government directives as majority complied by using room apartment for worship. Result shown in figure 4 that, not less than 70% claimed the suspension of religious gathering has affected their religious activities most especially in Ondo (88%), Lagos (79%) and Osun (77%). In these three states, 80% claimed they are affected, 70% in Oyo and Ekiti are affected while 50% in Ogun state. It is evident that, peoples' religious activities such as vigil, collection of tithing and offering, open crusade, missionary work etc. are affected across the southwestern states of Nigeria. Although, 92% of the people across these states claimed the suspension does not affect answers to their prayers (See table 1) while 7% said that answers to their prayers were affected and 1% could not ascertain. Even with the rate of compliance as stated above, the majority (67%) said they are not happy with the suspension most especially the respondents from Ekiti (83%) and Ondo (88%) while 60% in Ogun, Osun and Oyo (See figure 5). In Contrary, 63% of the people in Lagos said they are happy with the suspension which might be as a result of the fact that Lagos is the epicenter of the Corona virus. The majority are not happy with the suspension which might be linked to the adverse effect on their socioeconomic characteristics as larger number of people in southwest of Nigeria are on daily wages.

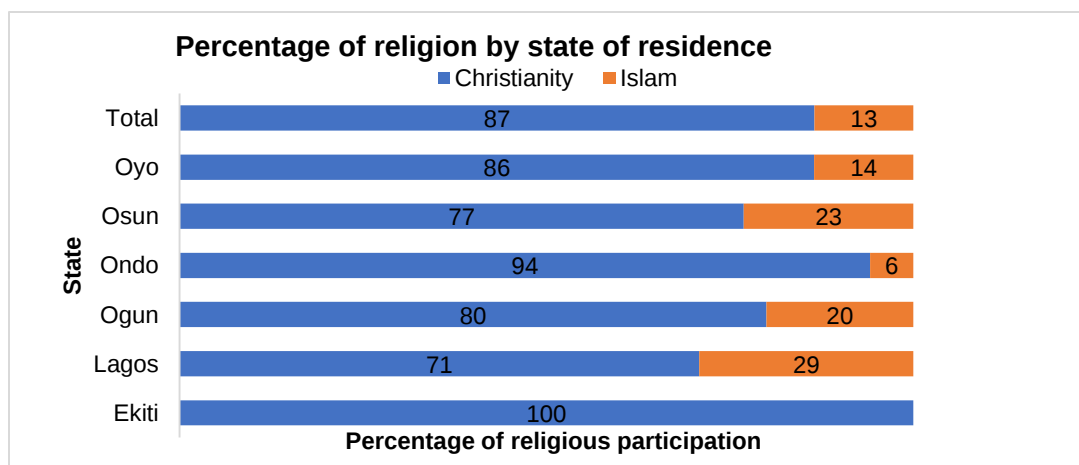


Figure 2: Religion participation by state of residence

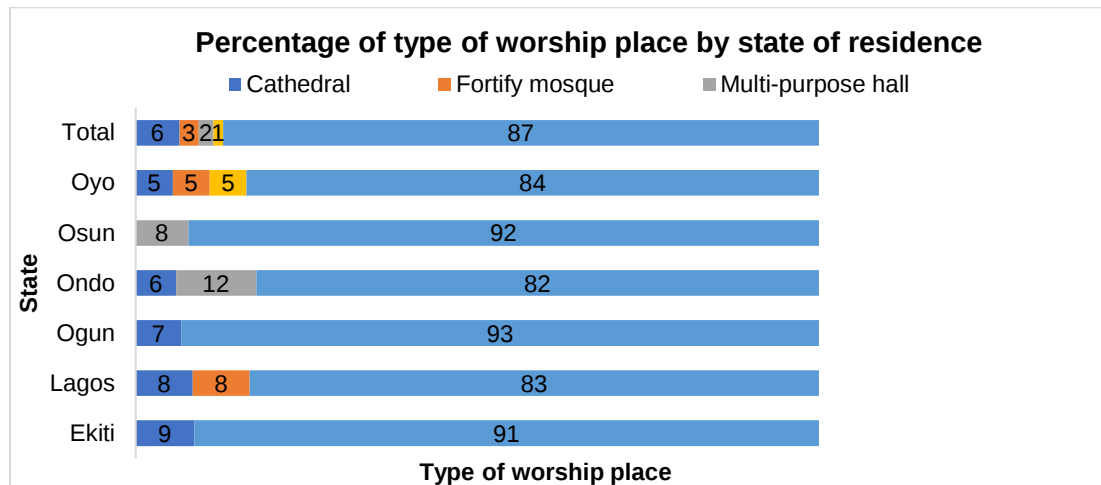


Figure 3: Worship places used by residents during COVID-19 Lockdown

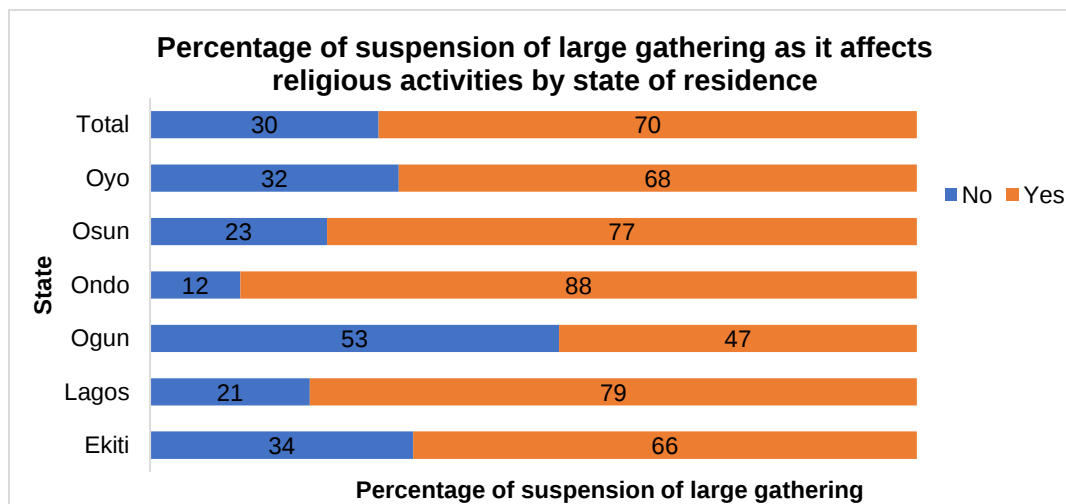


Figure 4: Effects of suspension of large gathering on religious activities

Table 1. Suspension of religious gathering as it affects answer to prayers

			State of Residence						
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Total
Has the suspension of religious gathering in large number affected answer (s) to your prayer?	May be	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.4%
	No	Count	34	21	15	14	13	32	129
		% within State of Residence	97.1%	87.5%	100.0%	82.4%	100.0%	86.5%	91.5%
	Yes	Count	1	2	0	3	0	4	10
		% within State of Residence	2.9%	8.3%	0.0%	17.6%	0.0%	10.8%	7.1%
Total		Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		% within State of Residence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

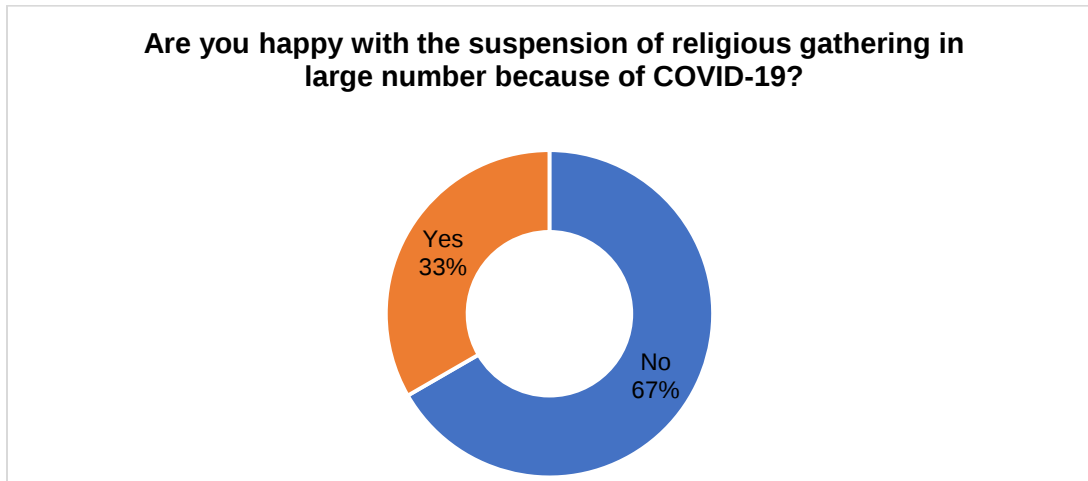


Figure 5: Peoples' happiness on suspension of religious gathering

Before the suspension, evidence showed that majority of the people in Nigeria are religious as 64% claimed they meet three times or more at their religious place of worship per week with Ekiti (80%), Oyo (76%), Osun (54%), Ogun (53%), Lagos (50%) and Ondo (41%) while 16% meet twice in a week and 7% claimed at least twice in a day (See table 5.2). During the suspension of religious gathering, it is shown that majority complied with the government directives in keeping safe, as 62% does not meet at their respective worship centres with more than 7 in 10 in Ogun (87%), Lagos (75%) and Ondo (71%) (See table 3). In Osun (69%), Oyo (51%) and Ekiti (49%) claimed they do not meet at all while 29% said they still meet at least once in a week.

Table 4 revealed average number of worshipers before COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Majority (69%) of the worship centres on an average have less than 150 members with highest in Ondo (88%) and the least in Ogun (60%). Among the worship centres with 150 or more members, Ogun leads with 40% followed by Lagos 38% while Ekiti, Osun, Oyo and Ondo have 34%, 31%, 30% and 12% respectively. Considering the average number of worshipers during the COVID-19 lockdown in different religious centres across the southwest region, the result presented in table 5.5 showed that majority (92%) have less than 40 members which is in compliance with the government's directives that forbids gathering of 50 people at a time, and majority across the six states.

Table 2. Meeting in places of worship before the suspension of religious activities

			State of Residence						
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Total
How many times do you meet in your place of worship before the suspension of religious gathering in large number?	At least twice a per day	Count	0	1	2	1	3	3	10
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	4.2%	13.3%	5.9%	23.1%	8.1%	7.1%
	More than three times per week	Count	14	2	6	2	2	13	39
		% within State of Residence	40.0%	8.3%	40.0%	11.8%	15.4%	35.1%	27.7%
	No response	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		% within State of Residence	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	Not at all	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	Once per week	Count	3	6	2	2	1	2	16
		% within State of Residence	8.6%	25.0%	13.3%	11.8%	7.7%	5.4%	11.3%
	Thrice per week	Count	14	10	2	5	5	15	51
		% within State of Residence	40.0%	41.7%	13.3%	29.4%	38.5%	40.5%	36.2%
	Twice per week	Count	3	4	3	7	2	4	23
		% within State of Residence	8.6%	16.7%	20.0%	41.2%	15.4%	10.8%	16.3%
Total		Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		% within State of Residence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3. Meeting in places of worship during the suspension of religious activities

			State of Residence						
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Total
How many times do you meet in your place of worship during the suspension of religious gathering in large number?	At least twice a per day	Count	1	2	0	1	0	3	7
		% within State of Residence	2.9%	8.3%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	8.1%	5.0%
	More than three times per week	Count	1	0	0	0	2	2	5
		% within State of Residence	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	5.4%	3.5%
	Not at all	Count	17	18	13	12	9	19	88
		% within State of Residence	48.6%	75.0%	86.7%	70.6%	69.2%	51.4%	62.4%
	Once per week	Count	6	3	0	1	0	6	16
		% within State of Residence	17.1%	12.5%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	16.2%	11.3%
	Thrice per week	Count	10	1	2	1	2	6	22
		% within State of Residence	28.6%	4.2%	13.3%	5.9%	15.4%	16.2%	15.6%
	Twice per week	Count	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	2.7%	2.1%
Total		Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		% within State of Residence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. Average number of worshippers before COVID-19 lockdown

			State of Residence						
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Total
Average number of worshippers before COVID-19	0 - 49 persons	Count	10	5	2	3	3	12	35
		% within State of Residence	28.6%	20.8%	13.3%	17.6%	23.1%	32.4%	24.8%
	50 - 99 persons	Count	9	5	4	5	3	8	34
		% within State of Residence	25.7%	20.8%	26.7%	29.4%	23.1%	21.6%	24.1%
	100 - 149 persons	Count	4	5	3	7	3	6	28
		% within State of Residence	11.4%	20.8%	20.0%	41.2%	23.1%	16.2%	19.9%
	150 - 199 persons	Count	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	2.7%	2.1%
	200 - 249 persons	Count	4	0	2	1	0	4	11
		% within State of Residence	11.4%	0.0%	13.3%	5.9%	0.0%	10.8%	7.8%
	250 - 299 persons	Count	3	1	0	0	1	0	5
		% within State of Residence	8.6%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	3.5%
	300 persons and above	Count	5	7	4	1	2	6	25
		% within State of Residence	14.3%	29.2%	26.7%	5.9%	15.4%	16.2%	17.7%
Total		Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		% within State of Residence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Average number of worshippers during COVID-19 lockdown

			State of Residence						
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	Total
Average number of worshippers during COVID-19	0 - 19 persons	Count	30	19	15	13	10	32	119
		% within State of Residence	85.7%	79.2%	100.0%	76.5%	76.9%	86.5%	84.4%
	20 - 39 persons	Count	3	2	0	0	2	3	10
		% within State of Residence	8.6%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	8.1%	7.1%
	40 - 59 persons	Count	0	2	0	2	1	0	5
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	11.8%	7.7%	0.0%	3.5%
	60 - 79 persons	Count	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
		% within State of Residence	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
	100 persons and above	Count	2	0	0	1	0	2	5
		% within State of Residence	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	5.4%	3.5%
Total		Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		% within State of Residence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 6 presents measures put in place by the religious leaders where 3 in 10 (30%) of the religious leaders ensure social distancing at the place of worships, 28% use soap and water for handwashing, 19% use alcoholic-based hand sanitizers and 14% ensure the use of nose mask,

fewer number, 3% ensures hand gloves while 6% use other measures differ from the global standard. However, there is a significant difference in the measures put in place by religious leaders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through religious activities in worship centres across the six states of southwest Nigeria. Besides, an equal proportion (21%) of individuals use alcoholic-based hand sanitizer, soap and water, 24% use nose/face mask and social distancing while 6% use hand gloves and 5% other measures (See figure 7). Invariably, more than 50% of the worship centres comply with COVID-19 preventive measures. It can be deduced that there is good religious governance in the southwestern states of Nigeria which also validated the assertion of United Nations Development Policy (1996) that governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a county's affairs at all levels, religious activities inclusive.

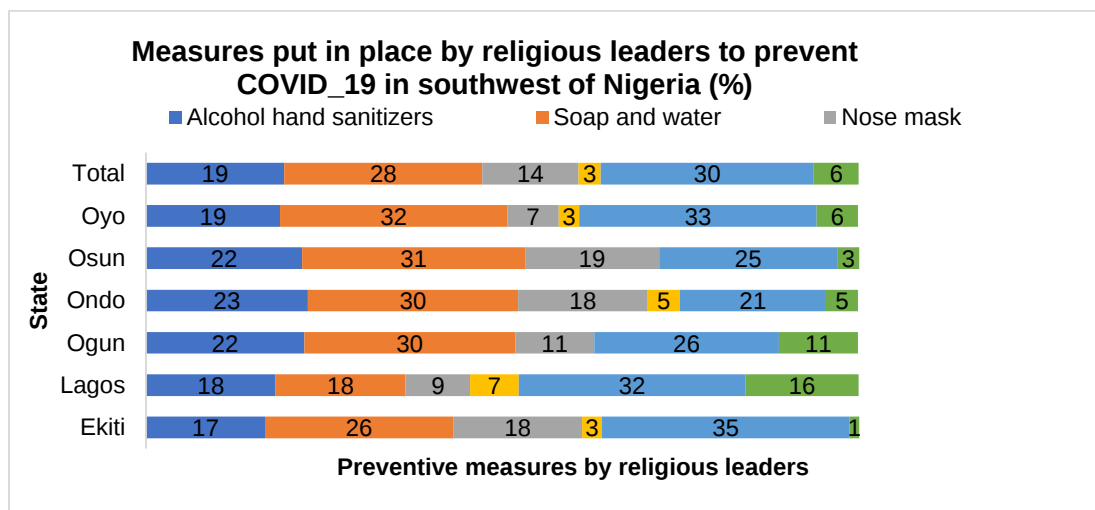


Figure 6: Measures put in place by religious leaders in preventing COVID-19

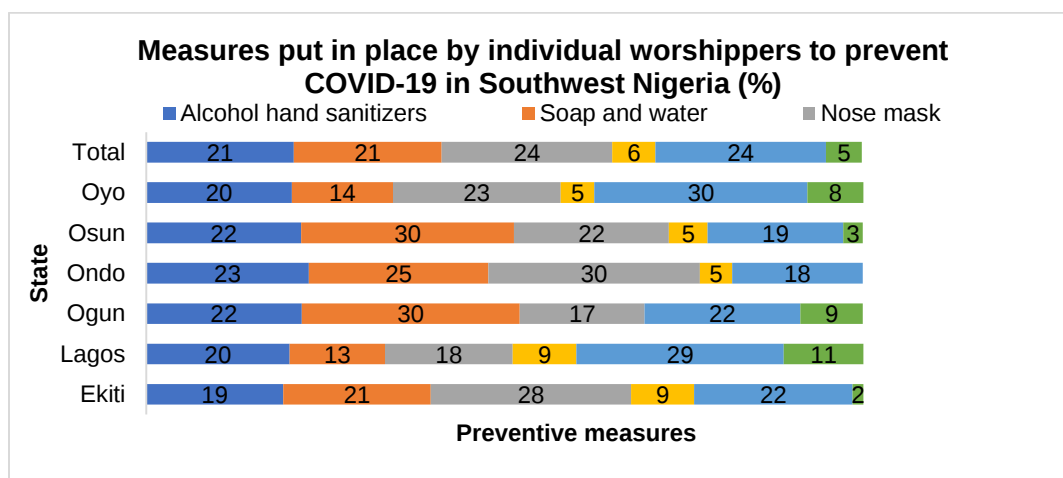


Figure 7: Measures put in place by individual worshippers in preventing COVID-19

Strict adherence to COVID-19 preventive measures such as regular hand washing with running water and soap, acholic-based hand sanitizer, nose/face mask etc. in worship centres

influenced people's perception of safety in places of worship during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown across the states. 31% claimed they are highly safe, averagely safe (16%), fairly safe (24%) while 29% said they are not safe. However, there is a significant difference in the peoples' perception of safety in places of worship across the states (see table 6).

The majority, (89%) of the people claimed that there is the presence of law enforcement agents during the COVID-19 lockdown in enforcing government's directives and ensure compliance to prevent the spread of coronavirus (See table 6). Among the law enforcement agents, 55% are police officers, civil defence (29%) and soldier (11%) with a significant difference of their presence across the southwestern states (See table 6). Lagos (58%) and Oyo (63%) feel the large presence of police than other states. 5% use other law enforcement agents which include Amotekun, COVID-19 task force, Man O War, neighbourhood security, Nigerian Legion, Peace Corps and Vigilante groups (OPC).

Table 6: Law enforcement agents ensuring Safety and compliance in worship centres

			State of Residence						Total
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	
Level of safety at worship places during COVID-19	Highly safe		9	5	4	5	1	16	40
		%	28	23	29	31	8	48	31
	Averagely safe		4	1	3	5	4	4	21
		%	13	5	21	31	31	12	16
	Fairly safe		7	5	0	4	5	10	31
		%	22	23	0	25	38	30	24
	Not safe		12	11	7	2	3	3	38
		%	38	50	50	13	23	9	29
Total		32	22	14	16	13	33	130	
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Percentage of perception of the presence of law enforcement agents by state of residence	May be		1	1	2	2	0	5	11
		%	3	4	13	12	0	14	8
	No		0	0	0	1	0	3	4
		%	0	0	0	6	0	8	3
	Yes		34	23	13	14	13	29	126
		%	97	96	87	82	100	78	89
Total		35	24	15	17	13	37	141	
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Law enforcement saddled with COVID-19 enforcement in Southwest of Nigeria	Police	Count	28	21	9	13	12	26	109
		%	49.1	58.3	52.9	54.2	54.5	63.4	55.3
	Civil Defence	Count	16	12	5	9	8	7	57
		%	28.1	33.3	29.4	37.5	36.4	17.1	28.9
	Soldier	Count	9	1	2	2	0	8	22
		%	15.8	2.8	11.8	8.3	0	19.5	11.2
	Others	Count	4	2	1	0	2		9
		%	7	5.6	5.9	0	9.1	0	4.6
Total	Count	57	36	17	24	22	41	197	
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Evidence from the investigation showed that 7 in 10 (70%) of the people claimed that the law enforcement agents are effective from which 19% highly effective, 20% averagely effective and 31% fairly effective with a significant difference across the southwest states of Nigeria (See table 7). However, 30% claimed that the law enforcement agents are not effective with a

significant difference across the states; not highly effective in Ondo (44%) and Lagos (38%) which can be attributed to weak political governance in respect of the enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures in worship centres.

Table 7: Effectiveness of law enforcement agents in ensuring compliance in worship centres

		State of Residence						Total
		Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	
Percentage level of effectiveness of law enforcement agents for compliance in place of worship by state of residence	Highly effective	6	6	0	3	2	9	26
	%	18	25	0	19	15	25	19
	Averagely effective	8	3	3	2	4	7	27
	%	24	13	21	13	31	19	20
	Fairly effective	12	6	6	4	5	10	43
	%	35	25	43	25	38	28	31
	Not effective	8	9	5	7	2	10	41
	%	24	38	36	44	15	28	30
Total	Total	34	24	14	16	13	36	137
%		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Ridge regression is used in analyzing the hypothesis that “the presence of the law enforcement agency is a function of religious activities’ compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures”. Table 8 presents the model summary of the religious compliance and it is evident that 9 percent of the variation in the compliance could only be explained by the presence of the Law Enforcement agents during the lockdown. The model does not improve as the Adjusted R-Square decreases. However, by determining the relationship between the presence and compliance, Table 9 presents the ANOVA of the regression and since the p-value (0.002) is less than 0.05, we then decide to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that, the presence of the Law Enforcement agency is not a function of religious activities’ compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures. Therefore, it means the lockdown has not been effective for the people to comply where people move about.

Table 8: Model Summary on Religious Compliance

Model Summary							
Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Regularization "R Square" (1-Error)	Apparent Prediction Error	Expected Prediction Error		
					Estimate ^a	Std. Error	N ^b
.299	.090	.083	.067	.933	.967	.058	136

Penalty 1.000 Depvar How effective is/are the law enforcement agents in ensuring conformity with COVID-19 preventive measures in places of worship? Predictors Are there law enforcement agents saddled with the enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures in your city/town?

a. Mean Squared Error (10fold Cross Validation).

b. If N is smaller than the number of active (training) cases, this is due to excluding cases from estimation of the expected prediction error for reason(s) explained in the warnings table.

Table 9: ANOVA on Religious Compliance

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.208	1	9.208	9.727	.002
Residual	127.792	135	.947		
Total	137.000	136			

Dependent Variable: How effective is/are the law enforcement agents in ensuring conformity with COVID-19 preventive measures in places of worship?

Predictor: Are there law enforcement agents saddled with the enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures in your city/town?

Table 10 presents the distribution of relief packages to worship centres in various cities and towns. Evidence from the investigation showed that less than half (43%) claimed that there are relief packages, 42% said no relief packages while 15% said may be. There is a significant difference in the relief packages distributed to worship centres across the states, highest (57%) in Oyo and lowest (6%) in Ondo. 63% of the relief packages are from individual philanthropists, 30% from a non-governmental organization, 5%, 2% and 1% are from state, federal and local governments respectively (See table 10). However, there is a significant difference in the source of relief packages across the southwestern states. Besides, the people claimed that no relief packages emanate from religious bodies. The majority, 55% of the people in the southwest of Nigeria claimed that they receive other relief packages different from cash (10%), food items (27%), alcoholic-based hand sanitizers (5%) and nose/face mask (4%) which is the least among the relief packages provided. However, across the six states, evidence showed that after other relief packages, food items were more distributed and followed by cash gifts (See table10).

Table 10: Availability, sources and types of relief packages to worship centres

			State of Residence						Total
			Ekiti	Lagos	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo	
Availability of relief packages to worship centres in your town	Maybe		3	7	3	3	1	4	21
	%		9	29	20	18	8	11	15
	No		14	9	4	13	7	12	59
	%		40	38	27	76	54	32	42
	Yes		18	8	8	1	5	21	61
	%		51	33	53	6	38	57	43
	Total		35	24	15	17	13	37	141
	%		100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Source of relief packages	Federal government	Count	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
		%	0	10.5	0	0	0	0	2.3
	State government	Count	1	2	0	0	0	1	4
		%	5	10.5	0	0	0	4.2	4.5
	Local government	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		%	0	0	0	14.3	0	0	1.1
	Non-Governmental Organisation	Count	5	5	1	3	5	7	26
		%	25	26.3	14.3	42.9	45.5	29.2	29.5
	Individual Philanthropist	Count	14	10	6	3	6	16	55
		%	70	52.6	85.7	42.9	54.5	66.7	62.5
Total		Count	20	19	7	7	11	24	88
		%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Type of relief package	Cash	Count	2	5	3	4	4	8	26
		%	3.7	11.1	11.1	14.8	12.9	11	10.1
	Food items	Count	16	12	5	6	6	23	68
		%	29.6	26.7	18.5	22.2	19.4	31.5	26.5
	Sanitizers	Count	1	2	3	0	4	3	13
		%	1.9	4.4	11.1	0	12.9	4.1	5.1
	Nose/ facemasks	Count	0	2	1	0	4	2	9
		%	0	4.4	3.7	0	12.9	2.7	3.5
	Other	Count	35	24	15	17	13	37	141
		%	64.8	53.3	55.6	63	41.9	50.7	54.9
	Total	Count	54	45	27	27	31	73	257
		%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

As part of the effect of good religious governance, religious leaders from the southwest of Nigeria ensure that worship centres comply with the preventive guidelines and maintain physical distancing, hand washing with soaps and water, use of alcoholic-based hand sanitizers and nose masks. Also, government directives that forbid large gathering of more than 50 persons were ensured as majority abandoned their cathedrals and used room apartments that contain



the speculated number of people for worship during the pandemic although, other religious activities such as vigil, collection of tithing and offering, crusade, missionary work etc. were affected. As a result of these effects, the majority of the worshippers were not happy with the suspension of a large gathering in worship centres, more so, that it has affected their socio-economic activities.

The government proved to be responsive in the area of enforcement as the substantial number of police in collaboration with the COVID-19 task force, civil defence and soldiers were deployed in enforcing laws on Covid-19 preventive measures. The government (federal, state and local) did not do enough in the area of palliatives which may be the major reasons some worshippers did not comply and it was evident that the bulk of the palliatives to worship centres are from individual philanthropists. However, creation of conducive physical, the social and economic environment for living, conduction of house-to-house medical check for the infected persons, adoption of public enlightenment from media on COVID-19 preventive measures, emergent of effective online religious activities for household-based, effective distribution of palliative measures by the government to citizens to ease the individual economic hardship, more enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures at the cities' outskirts as enforcement is being experienced in the major cities of the states, and medical research support from the government in sourcing for local medication to coronavirus are recommended.

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