

DEVELOPING COPING MECHANISM DURING COVID 19 LOCKDOWN THROUGH THE ART OF PAPER FOLDING

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Abstract

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic all over the World was unprepared for, Nigeria was among the first countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to identify COVID-19 (corona virus) cases and has since implemented strict measures to contain the spread of the virus. Lockdown became inevitable to curtail the spread of Corona virus. Although government relaxed the lockdown on some days when people go out to stock the house food and essential needs, yet the psychological torture from this confinement is evident in idleness, feeling of stress, loneliness and boredom as a result routinely eating, playing, sleeping and perhaps a few other things away from their gainful engagement of the past. It was house arrest indeed, time is ticking, morale at a very low ebb, voluntarily or mandatorily because of the suspension of active economic, social and religious engagements. This study discusses the how engaging of youths in art related activities helped and provide a form of coping mechanism and escape therapy from boredom during Covid 19 lockdown. 50 participants were selected online based on interest and engaged in creative paper fold called Origami therapy challenge. The results shows that engaging hands on skills at a time of lockdown and isolation as witnessed during this pandemic would be a positive intervention to boost morale and serve as escape avenue from stress and boredom.

Key Words: Boredom, idleness, mechanism, escape therapy, Covid 19.

Introduction

The fight against COVID-19 has been one of the greatest challenges in the history of man. By August 14th 2019, Covid-19 have spread from China to other parts of the world affecting 213 countries in its ravaging for almost nine months. The first case of Covid 19 was confirmed on the 27th of February 2020. The case is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020. After then the confirmed cases of coronavirus was steadily on the rise untill July, such that by August 16th 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)).

The period between March and June in Nigeria was characteristically a devastating period of incarcerations, isolation, quarantine, lockdown, hunger, depression, fear, anger, trauma of different sorts and need to prevent the infection of covid 19. Devastating because never in recent history has any infectious disease been so widespread that would make developed nations wanting of solution. Therefore, international community needs to work together through WHO to prepare for the containment of COVID-19 transmission and spreading in other countries, Nigerian government also made frantic efforts by responding by shutting of borders , imposing lockdown , ban on interstate travels, airports shut, schools and offices, clubs, and services considered to be non-essential closed. The explanation given is that it is important to protect the community from exposure to the infection, all residents in the potential risk areas were encouraged to stay at home, [Eranga \(2020\)](#) says “in a bid to slow the rate of spread of the virus, the Federal Government

of Nigeria, on several occasions, imposed targeted lockdown measures in areas with rapid increase of Covid-19 cases". However, as cases spread to other States total lockdown or partial lockdown was eventually extended as they deem it fit.

Basically government is saddled with enormous responsibilities such as limiting or preventing the spread of infection in the country. Relieving pressure on the health care system and protecting people's lives, health and jobs. Ensuring that health and all necessary medical care resources are available, limiting the impact on critical services like health care, police, energy supply, communications, transport and food supply systems. Continuously providing information and implementing the right measures at the right time. Alleviating the impact on people and businesses by providing crisis packages to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic.

Assessing the performance of government during this pandemic, one could give 20% above average in the way she responds through various agencies to public health emergencies, testing, discovering isolating, treating new cases of coronavirus and constantly providing timely direction and information. The President, Minister of health and Governors occasionally and frequently address the nation and states claiming they have sufficiently made provisions for them yet there was a large gap between the policy and implementation. This paper seeks to discuss the neglected part of social welfare, the psychological impact of lockdown and present art activity engagements as way of coping with such difficult times.

Government's Neglect and Lip- servicing

Although the federal government made frantic efforts at helping its citizens especially the poor masses during the pandemic by taking some measure to cushion the effect, according to Eranga (2020) “the Federal Government of Nigeria rolled out the following palliative measures for targeted groups: three months interest holidays for those holding Tradermoni, Marketmoni, and Farmermoni loans issued by the Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture, and the Nigeria Export and Import Bank”. President Mohammad Buhari, also announced an expansion of the initial number of households that would benefit from the direct distribution of food and cash from 2.6 million households to 3.6 million households, whom he described as most vulnerable in the society. Such gesture is expected of a welfarist government but regrettably a “gnome” called “Nigeria factor” soon bewitch the good intentions. Between policy and implementation, pronouncement and provisions come the evil cabals. In almost all states in Nigeria where palliatives were said to be given, citizens had alleged that the process of distribution of whatever that may have been made available for that purpose had been politicized. In some places serious fight broke out while in few places hoodlums bugled into stores where relief materials were kept and carted away all provisions there. For example people complained that a greater portion of the relief materials was reserved for party members when the goods arrived the local government. The two rounds of palliatives ended in the hand of middle men, according to Okon D. (2020)

“a CDA consists of about 300 families made up of both strong and weak people. I learnt the same package of two bags consisting of 3kg of rice, 3kg of garri, and 3kg of beans was given to more than 16 CDAs in my area. We gave

the package to six widows.”

In many CDAs where the food was not sufficient, the executives decided to give to only the few elderly. The above statement was a testament of what transpired in all CDAs in Nigeria on purported relieve materials.

Apart from the Lagos State’s palliative measures, the Federal Government’s conditional cash transfers (CCT) has torn Nigerians apart. On March 30, the Federal Government announced palliative measures such as food distribution, cash transfers and loans repayment waivers to ease the pains of its restrictive policies during this difficult time (Okon D. 2020). Even though government claims they achieved success, the transparency was also questionable, badly handled such that certain geopolitical zone were beneficiaries.

Effects of Lockdown

The ripple effects of Covid 19 lockdown ranges from Psychological distress from incarceration, Economic imbalance and Insecurity menace. Nigeria is a country where more than 80% of its population survives economically on a day-to-day basis, therefore their means of livelihood is sure to be hampered by lockdown. Therefore, disruption in the family routine may also have an impact on the mental health and emotional well-being of the children. UNICEF, (2020) affirms that “ School closure measures can negatively affect mental health and cause psychological distress among children. This is because Schools provide children with stable daily routines, structures, physical activity, social connections, and extra-curricular activities that are essential for emotional well-being and mental health. The incarceration of every one by imposition of lockdown, is

justifiable in all sense of it because government is responsible to secure and protect his people. However, pupils and students are agitating, restless and impatient about delay in school resumption. The second problem is financial drought leading to hunger and inability to meet their most basic needs to which social palliative and relieve materials distributed failed to address. The third is civil disorder caused during lockdown by **area boys** and men of the **under world** such as 'One Million Boys' 'Awawa Boys,' 'No Salary Boys,' etc, (plate I) these criminals attacked residents of Alimosho, Agege, Ojo, Ilamoshe Estate, Oke-Afa, Isolo in Lagos state and Sango, Ilaro, Abeokuta other parts of Ogun State (Thomas-Odia, Diamond, Adeowo and Ezeilo 2020). This challenge gave rise to forming emergency Vigilante groups in all CDAs to protect and curtail the excesses of the "one million boys".



One million boys' gang arrested

Plate 1:
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/07/breaking-leader-of-one-million-boys-shot-dead-in-ibadan/>

Idleness means not working, not active, not being engaged, used, not having much activity, not occupied or employed. Another author says it is not only a state of not working, though that is a key marker. It involves a departure from a range of values that make us the kinds of people we are supposed to be in order to live well (Gagnier and Dupré, 1995). From the above assertions, it is certain that during the Covid 19 lockdown, almost every one was rendered bone- idle except the health workers and those on essential services.

Boredom is a common complaint among children and adolescents. Boredom may occur when you feel energetic but have nowhere to direct your energy. It may also occur when you have difficulty focusing on a task. The first approach of boredom encompasses the subjective core impression that there is nothing meaningful to do and that the time is passing slowly accompanied by feelings of dissatisfaction, despondency, annoyance, stress, and a sense of entrapment (Spaeth M, Weichold K. and Silbereisen R. 2015). Constraint is the second approach to boredom which focuses on constraint--the extent to which one is forced to remain in a particular situation, location, or activity.

The long of weeks of in-activities (idleness) of citizens through this lockdown (most of which greater percentage are students) was a psychological challenge that open doors to boredom.

The main trust of this paper is that it seeks to break the distress chain of boredom and idleness in children and adolescents during lockdown through the art of paper fold.

Research Design

The study made use of non-experimental research, a longitudinal design that examines performance exhibited by the participants under study over a period of time. The challenge was over the period of lockdown with a task to model a day. The participants were drawn from both online and offline with majority of them being youths. The daily art engagements provided escape root from idleness and boredom prevalent during pandemic.

Engaging in Arts during incarceration

Bellow are works carried out by participants over a period of one month during the lockdown. The participants are divided into two: some are online participants while some are physically present for the paper fold projects

Participants representing the population



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9

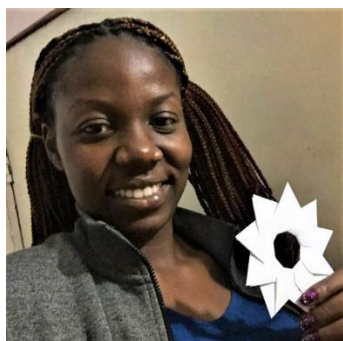


Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate13



Plate14



Plate15

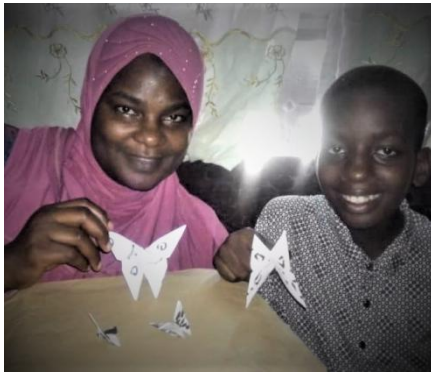


Plate 16



Plate 17

Exhibition of some the Projects



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21



Plate 22

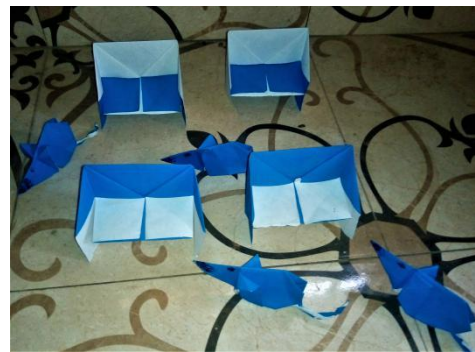


Plate 23



Plate 24



Plate 25



Plate 26

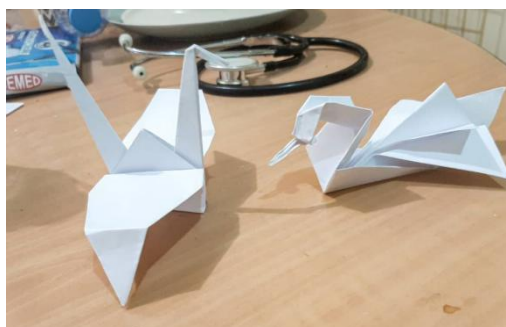


Plate 27



Plate 28



Plate 29



Plate 30



Plate 31



Plate 32



Plate 33



Plate 34



Plate 35

Conclusion

The experience of this paper folds according to participants is unique, this is own to the fact that 99% of them had not done Origami before. Yet the step by step and techniques of the folds were comprehended by participants, although not without repetition of some folds. The folding exercises embarked on during the lockdown provide gainful engagement in the place of idleness, it affords participants alternative activities in place of their regular and normal school or job routines. The Devil finds work for the idle hands” the experience also serves as diversional or a form of distraction which is an antidote against the rampant cases of rapes and killings during the Lockdown. It provides a form of therapy mechanism from emotional stress, boredom, idleness and trauma especially during lockdown and isolation.

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