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## Job Insecurity in the Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic: Implications on Imo State Workers' Emoluments

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was to assess the job insecurity in the phase of Covid-19 pandemic: implications on Imo State workers' emoluments Ex-Post Facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Imo state. The population of the study comprised all workers in Imo state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 workers which constituted the sample size for the study. The Main Instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "COVID 19 Pandemic, Job Insecurity and Workers Emoluments Questionnaire (CPJIWEQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out to ensure that the instrument had the accuracy, appropriateness, completeness and the language of the study under consideration. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.84 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and simple regression. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. From the results obtained it was observed that there is high extent of job insecurity in Imo State. The results also proved a significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State. Finally, the results proved that a significant effect of COVID 19 pandemic on workers' emoluments in Imo State. One of the recommendations was that government should also be concerned about insecure work and worker's emoluments as they have a negative impact on macroeconomic development and growth in Imo State.*

**KEYWORDS: Job Insecurity, Covid-19 Pandemic, Workers Emoluments and Imo State**

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### Introduction

Job insecurity according to Rosenblatt (2005) is the threat perceived by the employee on the continuity of his or her current job. Hartley, Jacobsson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991) noted that job insecurity is situated between employment and unemployment because it refers to employed people who feel threatened by unemployment. Job insecurity has been conceptualized from two points of view, that is, as a multi-dimensional concept or as a global concept.

Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt cited in Njoku (2015) saw job insecurity as a sense of powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation. Borg and Elizur (2000) identified two main themes within job insecurity including: cognitive job insecurity, which refers to the likelihood of job loss and affective job insecurity, which refers to the fear of job loss. Working in life has been subject to dramatic change over the past decades as a result of economic recessions, new information technology, industrial restructuring and accelerated global competition (Hellgren, Sverke, and Isaksson, 2003). As a consequence, organizations have been forced to engage in various adaptive strategies in order to tackle new demands and remain vigorous in this unpredictable environment. They have two options to become more profitable; they can either increase their gains or decrease their costs, often by reducing the number of employees. These organizational options often surface in actions like outsourcing and privatizations, often in combination with personnel reductions through layoffs, offers of early retirement and increased utilization of sub-contracted workers (Burke & Cooper, 2000; Tetrick & Quick, 2003). These changes have impacted tremendously on organizational structures and have created a continuous need for organizational changes in terms of retrenchments, rightsizing, mergers and acquisitions and downsizing. As a result of these changes, job insecurity has emerged as one of the most important issues in working life and has brought the issue of insecure working conditions to the forefront (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent time, there have been problems of job insecurity due to many factors, especially, covid-19 pandemic and this has constantly remained a major constraint to smooth operations of the labour market in the world. Workers have probably been experiencing some forms of job insecurity in the phase of covid-19 for some month especially those in unskilled labour. In recent years, due to changes in working life many workers have suffered greatly from job insecurity and of course poor emoluments in the globe including Imo State. It is on this ground that this study is carried out to assess the job insecurity in the phase of Covid 19 pandemic as it affects workers' emoluments in Imo State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent of job insecurity in Imo State
2. Examine the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State.
3. Examine the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on workers' emoluments in Imo State

### **Research Question**

1. What is the extent of job insecurity in Imo State?
2. What is the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State.?
3. What is the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on workers' emoluments in Imo State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>0</sub><sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers' emoluments in Imo State.

### **Concept of Job Insecurity**

Job insecurity has been defined as the subjectively perceived and undesired possibility to lose the present job in the future, as well as the fear or worries related to the possibility of job loss (DeWitte, 2005 & Vander Elst et al 2014). It can be differentiated between cognitive and affective job insecurity with the first referring to the cognitive probability of losing one's job and the latter referring to the fear and worry of losing one's work. Another way to differentiate job insecurity is differentiating between quantitative insecurity which refers to worrying about the loss of job itself and qualitative which refers to worrying about losing important aspects of job, for example, salary, health insurance, and social life. (Chung & Van Oorschot, 2010). Landsbergis, Grzywacz, & Lamontagne (2014) noted that job insecurity varies by race, ethnicity, and immigration status. In two nationally representative US samples, more Blacks than non-Blacks experienced perceived job insecurity. Immigrant women in Sweden were more likely to work in temporary jobs than native born women. Erlinghagen (2008) analyzed self-perceived job insecurity among 17 European countries and found significant cross-country differences in individuals' perception of job insecurity. Not only were the findings driven by social-structural or institutional differences, but also the perception of job insecurity was influenced by nation-specific unobserved characteristics (e.g., religiousness, general assessment of job security, and basic trust in fellow human beings) (Boya et al., 2008).

### **Concept of Covid-19 Pandemic**

COVID-19, subsequently named SARS-CoV-2 is an illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), has rapidly spread to almost every region of the world. The infection has no immediate treatment and vaccine, and it has according to World Health Organization (2020) become a worldwide pandemic causing significant morbidity and mortality. The most likely ecological reservoirs for SARS-CoV-2 are bats, but it is believed that the virus jumped the species barrier to humans from another intermediate animal host. This intermediate animal host could be a domestic food animal, a wild animal, or a domesticated wild animal which has not yet been identified. During previous outbreaks due to other coronavirus (Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)), human-to-human transmission occurred through droplets, contact and fomites, suggesting that the transmission mode of the COVID-19 can be similar. According to Anand, et al (2003), prevention is, so far, the best practice in order to reduce the impact of COVID-19 considering the lack of effective treatment. The recommended preventive measures include washing your hands with soap, covering the mouth when coughing, maintaining 1-meter distance from other people and monitoring and self-isolation for fourteen days for people who suspect they are infected (CDC, 2020).

### **Concept of Worker's Emolument**

According to Lawal (2006), emolument or salaries are the entire entitlements of an employee after a given period of time; it could be for a month or for a day. Emoluments usually refer to wages and salaries of workers. However, many scholars have argued that there are also many

benefits accrued to an employee for such employee to put in his or her best into surpassing expected goals and objectives in the organization. As Armstrong and Moriscited in Aimuan and Joseph (2017) pointed out, salaries or wages are the reward that individuals receive from organization in exchange for their labour and that every organization has its distinct salary system. Choosing a successful salary system depends on considerations of salary levels, salary structure and individual pay determination. Milkovich and Newman (1999) state that; Salaries and Wages refer to all forms of financial returns and tangible services and benefits employees receive as part of an employment relationship. According to him, it is paid in the form of wages, salaries and employee benefits such as paid vacations, insurance, maternity leave, free traveling facility, retirement benefits, etc. He indicated that the term 'wage' is used to denote remuneration to workers doing manual or physical work. Thus, wages are given to compensate the unskilled workers for their services rendered to the organization. Wages may be based on hourly, daily, weekly or even monthly bases. According to Dessler (2011), worker's emoluments can be divided into 2 forms- Direct and indirect Emoluments (Salaries and Wages). Direct Compensation is usually limited to the direct cash benefits that the employees receive on monthly, bi-monthly or weekly basis for the services they render as employees of a particular organization. While indirect compensation as the indirect financial and non-financial payments employees receive for continuing their employment with the company which are an important part of every employee's compensation (Dessler, 2011),

### **Covid-19 Pandemic and Job Insecurity**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had a substantial impact on global economies and individual employment (Qualtrics, 2020). The Nigeria government announced a social lockdown to reduce the spread of the virus to prevent the healthcare centres becoming overwhelmed by large numbers of COVID-19 cases. The lockdown included a ban on all non-essential travel as well as the closure of the majority of non-essential businesses, instructing workforces to complete their work from home (if feasible) (Bell et al., 2020). Conversely, involuntary job loss and unemployment have consistently been shown to have a significant and long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic (Gallo et al., 2000). Compounding this, the emergence of depression following job loss increases the risk of continued unemployment (Stolove et al., 2017). COVID-19 has caused an unprecedented crisis to all industries around the world. Tourism, lodging, and travel businesses, markedly sensitive to serious shocks such as the prevalence of epidemics, are suffering a sharp drop in demand (Chang et al., 2020). In the case of Nigeria, the entrance of foreigners into the country was restricted in response to COVID-19, and demand for domestic travel also decreased significantly, causing a serious management crisis to industries and businesses. Uncertainty of employment in these industries, which has been increased by the virus, therefore poses an immediate threat to organizational performance and viability (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020).

It is obvious that, even before COVID-19, modern working environments faced uncertainly due to technological changes, economic fluctuations, and political insecurity, thus unable to guarantee employment stability to all employees (Etehadi and Karatepe, 2019). Organizational restructuring and scale-downs have increased employees' perceptions of job insecurity—the subjective and unconscious perception of job loss (Niesen et al., 2018)—but COVID-19 has aggravated this situation. Job insecurity can spread among employees for two specific reasons (Mauno et al., 2014); First, changes in an organization caused by quantitative job insecurity, such

as layoffs, downsizing, and mergers, affect certain groups within the organization, inducing their perceptions of job insecurity, and, Second, certain threats or stressors can be interpreted similarly or collectively by employees of different work units.

### **Job Insecurity and Worker's Emolument**

Increasing job insecurity and low wages have a negative impact on macroeconomic development and growth. Quak and van de Vijzel (2014) noted that it is a political choice to allow the spread of insecure employment conditions, for example by deregulating the relationship between employers and employees. It is also a political choice to reverse this trend, but one that requires a broader understanding of the global economic context in which policy decisions have to be made. To reverse the trend towards insecure, unstable, unprotected and low-paid work currently affecting many workers all around the world, the solution must also take account of the broader context of power relations within the global economy. This is becoming even more important as, at global level, economic power relations are pushing workers more and more in the direction of job insecurity (Michael, 2011). In the scope of government agencies, system improvement schemes on emolument already begun to happen in the teaching profession, law enforcement, as well as employees in other government agencies such as the ministries. However, not all public agencies/governments managed to make improvements in the area of remuneration. In addition to remuneration, an improvement over the insecurity of work (job insecurity) in the earlier study still became one of the problems in relation to the efforts to increase employee engagement in any organization. Quak and van de Vijzel (2014) asserted that the measures on wage-led growth, inclusive growth, redefining the ownership of capital, and regulating the financial sector must be all part of an effort to rebalance the economy in favour of creating more secure jobs. Monetary, fiscal, financial, social, economic, labour, gender and environmental policies need to be geared towards reducing inequality, strengthening democracy in the workplace, and providing income security, good working conditions and employment opportunities (Caldbeck, Ronald, Mohindra and Arne, 2014).

### **Method**

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Imo state. The population of the study comprised all workers in Imo state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 workers which constituted the sample size for the study. The Main Instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "COVID 19 Pandemic, Job Insecurity and Workers Emoluments Questionnaire (CPJIWEQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out to ensure that the instrument had the accuracy, appropriateness, completeness and the language of the study under consideration. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.84 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and simple regression. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Results**

#### **Research Questions One**

The research question sought to find out the extent of job insecurity in Imo State. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

**Table 1: Percentage analysis of the extent of job insecurity in Imo State**

EXTENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VERY HIGH EXTENT	70	46.67**
HIGH EXTENT	42	28
LOW EXTENT	23	15.33
VERY LOW EXTENT	15	10*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\* The highest percentage frequency

\* The least percentage frequency

**SOURCE: Field survey**

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the extent of job insecurity in Imo State. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (46.67%) of the respondents affirmed that the extent of job insecurity in Imo State is very high, while the least percentage (10%) of the respondents stated that the extent of job insecurity in Imo State is very low, meaning that there is very high level of job insecurity in Imo State.

**Hypothesis One:** The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State. In order to test the hypothesis, regression analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2).

**Table 2: Regression Analysis of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.84	0.71	0.71	0.52	0.71

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 148; N= 150; critical R-value = 0.197**

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.84 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 148 degree of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.71 predicts 71% of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 3)

**Table 3: Analysis of variance of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	98.82	1	98.82	366.97	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	39.85	148	0.27		
Total	138.67	149			

- a. Dependent Variable: Job Insecurity
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Covid-19

The above table 3 presents the calculated F-value as (366.97) and the critical f-value as (.000<sup>b</sup>). Being that the critical f-value (.000<sup>b</sup>) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables (Covid-19) on the dependent variable which is Job Insecurity. The result therefore is in agreement with the research findings of Qualtrics, (2020) who avowed that COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on global economies and individual employment. The spread of the virus COVID-19 led to a social lockdown and ban on all non-essential travel as well as the closure of the majority of non-essential businesses, instructing workforces to complete their work from home. Compounding this, the emergence of depression following job loss increases the risk of continued unemployment (Stolove et al., 2017). The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

**Hypothesis Two:** The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers’ emoluments in Imo State. In order to test the hypothesis, regression analysis was performed on the data, (see table 4).

**TABLE 4: Regression Analysis of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers’ emoluments in Imo State**

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.97	0.59	0.59	0.71	0.59

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 148; N= 150; critical R-value = 0.197**

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.97 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.5 alpha levels with 148 degree of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.59 predicts 59% of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers’ emoluments in Imo State. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers’ emoluments in Imo State. It was also deemed necessary to find out the influence of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 5)

**Table 5: Analysis of variance of the influence of COVID 19 pandemic on workers’ emoluments in Imo State**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	108.86	1	108.86	213.65	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	75.41	148	0.51		
Total	184.27	149			

- a. Dependent Variable: Worker Emoluments
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Covid-19

The above table 5 presents the calculated F-value as (213.65) and the critical f-value as (.000<sup>b</sup>). Being that the critical f-value (.000<sup>b</sup>) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables (Covid-19) on the dependent variable which is Worker Emoluments. The result therefore is in agreement with the

research findings of Quak and van de Vijssel (2014) who asserted that the increasing job insecurity and low wages have a negative impact on macroeconomic development and growth. It is a political choice to allow the spread of insecure employment conditions, and it is also a political choice to reverse this trend (Michael, 2011). The measures on wage-led growth, inclusive growth, redefining the ownership of capital, and regulating the financial sector must be all part of an effort to rebalance the economy in favour of creating more secure jobs (Caldbeck, Ronald, Mohindra and Arne, 2014). The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that job insecurity is the subjectively perceived and undesired possibility of job loss. Job insecurity is largely due to the factors that is outside the individual's control. It could be concluded that there is very high level of job insecurity in Imo State. The study also reveals that there is significant influence of COVID 19 pandemic on job insecurity in Imo State. Finally, it could be deduced that there is significant effect of COVID 19 pandemic on workers' emoluments in Imo State.

## **Recommendations**

1. Government should also be concerned about insecure work and worker's emoluments as they have a negative impact on macroeconomic development and growth in Imo State.
2. People in private firms who lost their jobs should be encouraged with survival funds in order to keep them and their dependent members of the family till better days come.
3. The government should measure the worker's emolument of growth, inclusive growth, redefining the ownership of capital, and regulation of the financial sector and also make an effort to rebalance the economy in favour of creating more secured jobs.



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