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ISLAMIC SCHOLARS' PERCEPTION OF COVID-19 AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ITS VACCINATION IN NIGERIA

Abstract. Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria and other parts of the world constitutes a serious health challenge hampering development of almost all spheres of lives. To rescue the situation, many steps have been taken globally and communally to contain the pandemic. A significant aspect of the steps towards containing the pandemic is the introduction of vaccines against the deadly disease. However, the issue of vaccination against the pandemic has generated series of mixed reactions and attitudes. This study was however carried out to investigate Islamic scholars' perception and attitudes towards Covid-19 and its vaccination in Nigeria. The study was a descriptive one. The stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the participants based on creedal affiliations across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. A researchers' designed questionnaire was employed. T-test and ANOVA statistical tools were used to analyse the data collected at alpha level of 0.05 level of significant. The findings showed that most of the respondents agreed that Covid-19 is Islamically categorised under *Rijz*, *Ta'un*, and *Waba'*. The restriction of movement, hand washing, using of nose/face mask, social distancing etc. and other measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19 are in tandem with the teachings of Islam. In addition, most Islamic scholars disposed negatively to the vaccination against COVID-19 due to ambiguity surrounding the vaccine. It was recommended that government needs to constitute health professionals to carry out more researches on the content and safety of the vaccines, publish the outcomes and sensitise masses on the need to get vaccinated. Islamic scholars should organise workshops and revisit the issue of permissibility of Covid-19 vaccines from the point of Islam. Government should provide convincing clues about vaccination. If found safe and *halal*, Islamic scholars should change their mind set and attitudes towards vaccination and endeavor to encourage their subjects.

Keywords: Covid-19, Islamic, Nigeria, Perception, Scholars, Vaccination.

Introduction

Coronavirus called as Covid-19 a disease that emanated from a region called Wuhan in China country. This virus is permeated to many countries and destroy them economically, politically and even educationally. It is further said

that what baffles someone is the fact that the incident looks like the manifestation of predictions made some years back. Several accounts have given hints about the outbreak that has spread to the whole world and also affected global economy. For instance, Sylvia (2008) in her book titled “End of Days: Prediction and prophecies about the end of the world” pointed out that illness like the present coronavirus will come and spread to the world. In 1555, a prolific writer, Nostradamus forecasted that in year 2020, the world will experience queen (coronavirus) which will originate from East and blow to different countries. He further described the virus as a disease that can easily be contacted from infected person.

Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has also predicted that when the universe is coming to an end, strange things will occur such as outbreak that would prevail around the globe. This shows that coronavirus has been predicted since 1,450 years ago by the noble Prophet where he advised that if you hear of outbreaks of a pandemic spreading in a land, do not go there; but if the disease occurs while you are in a place, do not leave that place (Sahih Bukhari-pp. 5728).

The outbreak of the Coronavirus has precipitated series of actions and efforts to contain the pandemic. Part of the global efforts to curtail the pandemic is a step by various governments to embark on lock-down syndrome. In many places, workers and civil servants are ordered to stay at their homes. For instance, Russian President, Putin, ordered every of his citizens to stay at homes or be jailed for 15years. Also, China is a country where a lot of people patronise because of her stable economy. China is regarded as the second-largest in the world economy and consequently, this serious outbreak diminishes China’s economy which had led China’s products reduce in demand (Kinsell, 2009; and Yunus, Abubakar & Abudu 2020).

Furthermore, Zhang Yi, the Chief Economist at Zhonghai Shengrong makes it clear that in 2008 China faced global financial crisis but it is revealed that coronavirus pandemic that disturbs all the ramification of Chinese people including socio-economic as well as education. In addition, it is stated that this pandemic has afflicted numerous people in Italy which has destabilised the country’s economy (Yunus, Abubakar & Abudu 2020). It is further described that massive number of people had died due to the COVID-19 and it still prevails in many countries such as Iran, France, Spain, US. UK. Japan, among others (Zhang, Yang, Wang, Zhan & Bian 2020).

1.1 Effect of Covid-19 on Global Activities

As a result of serious illness, the economies of above countries are drastically reducing in global markets as many activities such as trading are shutdown on short notices and travellers and foreign investors are discouraged due to this spreadable ailment. Harvard Business Review (2020) agreed that due to the current coronavirus, it is possible that the world would experience another global recession that could lead to the global trade crisis. Undeniably, COVID-

19 has caused lots of damage to many countries and is still causing which makes them face unbearable conditions.

In Nigeria, the federal government ordered the lock-down where businesses, schools, religious activities and any form of social gathering with large attendance of people were prohibited. Although the lockdown has presently been relaxed, it has not been totally lifted as some categories of civil service of workers are still asked to be working from home. Also, many businesses have not come back fully on their feet.

The rapid spread of this pandemic called for urgent close down of almost all facets of development in the affected countries. Economic, religious, education, social and political affairs have been adversely affected. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020) reported that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, over 290.5 million students across the globe are affected educationally as a result of closures of all schools.

The closure of schools in Nigeria in 2020-2021 might be described as a setback in the country's education system because the students who are supposed to be in the schools receiving lectures or preparing for final examination were sent home. In addition, some schools that have already started terminal or semester examinations were also compelled to stop the examination and send their students home and up till now many universities in the country have not fully recovered and organised particularly in the aspect of the school academic calendar. This is because in 2020, when the Covid-19 case continues to increase and situations became unpalatable, the federal and state governments instructed that schools, markets and religious houses be shut down with immediate effect. As a matter of fact, the prolong closure of schools in Nigeria, most especially the tertiary institutions has precipitated the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to postpone dates for 2020 admission processes. In an attempt to rise to the situation, some scholars like Yusuf (2020) suggested virtual classes as alternative to physical classes. However, this might have gone a long way in assisting students that are missing a lot as a result of the closure of schools but alas the reverse is the case. This is so because students from low-income families who lack access to modern technology, Internet, nutritious food and child care services as well as children with disabilities may not be able to benefit from virtual teaching and learning.

Furthermore, it is also noted that learners who are expected to read, attend lectures and involve in the schools' activities were asked to stay at home. This may lead them to involve in many kinds of illicit deed and partake in illegal activities which can affect the future of our nation since we always assume that these learners are future leaders. Thus, education is a very important instrument of development in a given nation and it is the most powerful defense to change the world (Mandela, 2003).

1.1.1 Concept of *Rijz*, '*Tā'ūn*' and '*Wabā*' and Islamic Remedies for Containing Pandemic

Islam an absolute submission to Allah's will whether in good or bad condition, is a religion that fully explained what men are supposed to do in life. It is further explained that nothing was omitted in the book of Allah. (Q 6: V 38). This implies that Islam has expounded how to deal with every situation and tackle the challenges in every sphere of life. It is known that every religion preaches and admonishes moral which can be used to stabilise community, society, nation and world at large. The glorious Qur'an 'and we send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers' (Q 17: V 81). From the above verse which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (SAW) shows that believers are expected to take this book (Qur'an) as guide and cure for different illness and diseases that confront man such as COVID-19 which the entire world is experiencing now.

In Islam, pandemic is a form of punishment or affliction from Allah. This is termed '*rijz*'. Part of the connotations of *rijz* as it has been inferred from the glorious Qur'an include sin, punishment, affliction and plague (Ahmad & Ahad, 2020). In addition, the terms '*tā'ūn*' and '*wabā*' are used synonymously or interchangeably to connote epidemics or pandemic. *Tā'ūn* could be described as a situation involving the death of many people as a result of a common disease. While '*wabā*' is referred to epidemics that wreck significant havocs in the society (Shabana, 2021). Ibn Al-Qayyim (rahimahullāh) explained that although there could be some similarities between a plague (*Tā'ūn*) and an infectious/contagious disease (*Wabā*), the terms have some differences. Every plague is contagious (if Allah's wills it) but not every contagious disease is a plague. Likewise, with general illnesses (known as *Al-Amrād*), of which plague is just an example (Abu Khadeejah, 2020). Hence, the contemporary outbreak of corona virus could be categorised as falling under the classes of the terms *rijz*, '*tā'ūn*' and '*wabā*'.

On the measures spelt in Islam on how to contain the spread of pandemic, the Qur'an is a complete book that cures diseases, it is used to treat people's ailments and make their life better. It is noted from the verse that Qur'an cures both physical and spiritual illnesses. It has power to treat every contagious disease that ails us as pointed out from Qur'an where Allah says: And when I am ill, it is [God] who cures me." (Ash-Shu'ara:80).

Similarly, It is reported by Aishat, the wife of the prophet where she asked the messenger of Allah (PBUH) about the outbreak and she was told by prophet that pandemic is a chastisement that God sends upon whomsoever He wills, and that God has made it a compassion for the believers, for there is no one who stays in his land at the time of a plague, bearing that with patience and seeking Allah's reward, knowing that nothing will befall him but that which Allah has destined for him, but he will be given a reward like that of a martyr (Al- Bukhaari, 3474). From the above Hadith of the messenger of Allah shows

that when there is outbreak such as corona virus, Muslims are expected to have faith in Allah by exercising lots of patience and look for Allah's reward. It is also believed that nothing will befall on them except what Allah has decreed which can make them to be rewarded like that of a martyr. More so, the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him), did not underestimate dealing with the pandemics, nor did he panic, but rather ordered the Muslim to be cautious, and he advised him to deal practically with the pandemic to prevent it is better than to mourn and cry over the spilled milk (Al-Gorany, 2021).

Zaru (2020) noted that personal hygiene and cleanliness, which have been highlighted globally in the battle against the coronavirus, are also intrinsic parts of Islam. "Wudu", which is the Islamic ritual for cleansing and purification involves washing the hands, feet, face and head before each of the five daily prayers and there are sinks outside mosques all over the world. Zaru (2020) further reported that Islam holds personal hygiene in a high esteem as Islamic adherents are enjoined to always ensure purification of their environment, wash hands before meals, prayers, when waking from sleeping and when touching anything impure or filthy. Al-Gorany (2021). Noted that among the methods of preventing disease and the epidemic in Islam are the methods of treatment canvassed for by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) which include maintaining cleanliness, and preserve it is a manifestation of faith and adherence to morality and humanity

Apart from the steps taken by various governments across the globe in form of lock-down, closure of schools, advocating for social distancing, issuing of orders on wearing of nose masks etc., there is a latest further step particularly from the sides of government of the world. This has to do with the vaccination issue. Vaccine has been introduced and people are expected to go for vaccination against Covid-19. However, the issue of Covid-19 vaccine has generated lots of controversies with some people speaking for and the induce of vaccination for against the disease. It is against this backdrop that this study is conducted to investigate the Islamic Scholars' Perception and Attitude Towards Covid-19 and its Vaccination in Nigeria.

1.12. Muslims' Attitudes Towards Vaccination

Ebrahim (2014) submitted that the aim of vaccine is to stimulate our immune system to produce antibodies exactly as it would if we were exposed to the disease. Once a person has been vaccinated, he/she develops immunity to that disease, without having to contract the disease first. Hence, this reality makes vaccine a powerful tool for healthcare. It is on this premise that Ebrahim (2014) posited that vaccination is in line with the Islamic principles of Al-Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Objectives of Divine Law) which are:

- I. preservation religion and morality (hifz al-din);
- II. preservation of life and health (hifz al-nafs);
- III. preservation of progeny (hifz al-nasl);
- IV. preservation of intellect/sanity (hifz al-'aql); and

V. preservation of wealth (hifz al-mal).

Similarly, Iqbal (2021) reported that Muslim Scholars under the umbrella of Ajma' held that vaccination against Covid-19 is in line with the principles of Sharia. The group also noted that Islam allows medicine to be taken to contain any diseases that may spread to others and as such, the contagious nature of Covid-19 makes adoption of vaccine inevitable. Similarly, the Fatwa Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also held that the vaccine was halal. The reason advanced for this is that the content of the vaccine is medicinal in nature and not in form of a foodstuff. The primary objective in the introduction of vaccine is to save life which has overridden any normal religious prohibition (Iqbal, 2021).

On the other hand, According to an online report by the Associated Press (2020), the Indonesian Ulama Council observed that vaccination is *haram* because the vaccines contain haram substances. Also, Ghaly (2021) noted that some *fatwas* issued by scholars from Asia has discouraged Muslims from taking the Chinese vaccine. The vaccine is adjudged *haram* because of the belief that it is being manufactured with an ingredient derived from pork.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been carried out with respect to coronavirus and various responses and attention they have attracted. For instance, Farzanegan, Feizi and Gholipour (2021) investigated globalisation and outbreak of COVID-19: An Empirical Analysis. The study examined the relationship between globalisation, Covid-19 cases, and associated deaths in more than 100 countries. Their findings showed that countries with higher levels of socio-economic globalization are more exposed to COVID-19 outbreak.

Furthermore, Eladio, Estefanía, Pablo, Ana, Muriach and Baliñ (2020) investigated from a qualitative point of view, final-year nursing and medical students' perceptions and fears triggered by the immediate voluntary incorporation into professional practice requested by the Spanish government as an exceptional COVID-19 measure. They were able to find out from the study that despite the threats posed by COVID-19, students were willing to accept the government appeal due to social commitment, vocation, and professional ethics. Also, Fardeen and Shareena_(2020) investigated the difficulties faced by businesses located in different countries including India. The study found that the businesses located not only in India but in other different countries have faced huge crisis with reduced operations and less profits compared to previous years while most people lost their jobs as well.

Hayatuddin, Ahmed, Muhammad, Umar and Bashir (2020) studied the lockdown effects on economic activities in Nigeria as the lockdown response measure to COVID-19 pandemic claim to pose a serious and potentially long-term socio-economic threat to individuals, households, businesses as well as public sectors in Nigeria. The results indicated that most socio-economic challenges including job loss, increase social vices, rise in poverty level, fall in economic activities, as well as fall in the level of GDP faced by individuals was

not a resultant of the lockdown. Hu, Wu, Su, Xie, Zhang, Lin and Nie (2021) investigated population migration, spread of COVID-19, and epidemic prevention and control: An empirical evidence from China.

Usoh, Adeyele, Essahmed, Diah, Suleiman, Agwaru and John (2021) examined the various realities in the form of variables associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and determines the influence of these realities on the behaviour of micro, small and medium scale businesses while Yunus, Abubakar and Abudu (2020) examined the covid-19 pandemic lockdown: Online Platforms as Panacea for Effective Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Secondary Schools. They found that different online platforms are accessible to school children to use in order to continue with their unabated studies. They further found that this online teaching boosts the learners' academic attainment.

It could be observed from the foregoing that none of the previous studies has concentrated on the Islamic scholars' perception and attitudes towards Covid-19 and its vaccination in Nigeria. This is the gap which this study aims at filling and this consequently constitutes the problem which the study tries to solve.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate Islamic scholars' perception of Covid-19 and attitude towards vaccination in Nigeria. Specially, the study sought to examine:

- a. Islamic scholars' perception of Covid-19
- b. Islamic scholars' perception of measures to contain Covid-19
- c. Islamic scholars' attitude towards vaccination against Covid-19
- d. Differences in Islamic scholars' perceptions of Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation
- e. Differences in Islamic scholars' perceptions of measures to contain Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation
- f. Differences in Islamic scholars' perceptions of vaccination against Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

1.4 Research Questions

- 1 What are the perceptions of Islamic scholars on Covid-19?
- 2 What are the perceptions of Islamic scholars on measures to contain Covid-19?
- 3 What is the attitude of Islamic scholars towards vaccination against Covid-19?
- 4 Will there be any difference in the perceptions of Islamic scholars on Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation?
- 5 Will there be any difference in the Islamic scholars' perception of measures to contain Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation?
- 6 Will there be any difference in Islamic scholars' attitude towards vaccination against Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

H02: No significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of measures to contain Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

H03: There is no significant difference in Islamic scholars' attitude towards vaccination against Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

1.3 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive study of a survey type. The study employed stratified random sampling technique to select 500 participants based on creedal affiliation such as *Tijaniyyah*, *Qadiriyyah*, *Izalah*, *Salafiyah Ahmadiyyah*, *Tabligh* and others across 6 states from North-central, North-East, North-west, South-west, South-East and South-South geo-political zones in Nigeria. This makes the total number of the participants to be 500. However, only 450 respondents participated in this study and their results were used in the analysis of this study. Questionnaire designed by the researchers was used to elicit information from the respondents. The items were structured on a four likert scale viz; Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was both content and face-validated through the assistance of experts in the fields of Islamic Studies and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was subjected to pilot testing and found to have a coefficient of reliability (r) of 0.80 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Methods. The researchers administered the questionnaire via personal visits to the scholars and through WhatsApp messages. Percentage distribution was used to analyse the demographical data of the respondents. The questionnaire items for the research questions were answered using percentage analysis. The t-test statistical tool was used to test all the research hypotheses at alpha level of 0.05 level of significant.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentages
Male	354	78.7
Female	96	21.3
Total	450	100%
Age		
30-39 years	222	49.3
40-59 years	207	46.0
60 years and above	21	4.7
Total	450	100%

As shown in table 1 above, out of the total respondents (450) 21.3% of them were females while 78.7% were males. This implies that the majority of the Islamic scholars across the six geo-political zones are males. Also, this finding revealed that the respondents are majorly within the ages of 30 and 39 years (49.3%) followed by respondents within 40 and 59 years (46%) while the least population of respondents are from 60 and above (4.7%).

Table 2: Respondents' positions in the society

Post in the Society	Frequency	Percentages
Imam/Amir	119	26.4
Mufassir/Mufti/Missioner	96	21.3
Nai'b Imam	35	7.8
Others	240	53.3
Total	450	100%

The Table 2 above presents the various positions held by Islamic scholars in the society. These positions include the Amir or Imam (26.4%), Nai'b l Imam (7.8%), and the Mufassir/Mufti/Missioner (21.3%) amongst others. However, the findings of this research indicated that Islamic scholars who did not fall among the listed posts take the highest responses (53.3%) while the position of the Nai'b Imam have the least responses in this study.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Creeds/ Affiliations

Creeds/Affiliations	Frequency	Percentages
Izalah	35	7.8
Qadiriyyah	63	14.0
Salafiyyah	49	10.9
Tabligh	14	3.1
Tijamiyyah	103	22.9
Others	186	41.3
Total	450	100%

However, Table 3 shows the various creedal affiliations of the Islamic scholars in the society. These respondents consist of the Izalah, Qadiriyyah, Salafiyyah, Tabligh, Tijaniyyah amongst others. It revealed that those who did not belong to those creeds dominated the responses of this study followed by the Tijaniyyahs (22.9%), the Qadiriyyahs (14%), the Salafiyyahs (10.9%) and the Izalahs (7.8%), while the least among the Islamic scholars are the Tabligh (3.1%).

Table 4: Frequency Distributions on the six Geo-Political Zones

Geo-Political Zones	Frequency	Percentages
North-central	205	45.6
North-east	14	3.1

North-west	35	7.8
South-east	14	3.1
South-south	42	9.3
South-west	140	31.1
Total	450	100%

Table 4 above illustrates the responses of Islamic scholars in the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The results show that majority of the respondents are from North-Central zone of Nigeria with 45.6% while the least respondents are from South-east with 3.1%.

Research Question One: what are the perceptions of Islamic Scholars on COVID-19?

S/ N	Items	Strongly agreed &Agreed	Strongly Disagree & Disagree d	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Covid-19 is a new deadly disease.	409	41	3.522	0.7036
2.	Covid-19 is subsumed under <i>Rijz, Ta'un, and Waba'</i>	389	61	3.269	0.7646
3.	In my view of Covid-19, it does not exist.	207	243	2.069	1.0541
4.	Covid-19 is a plot of Kuffar.	54	396	2.616	0.8885
5.	Covid-19 has cure Islamically.	400	50	3.313	0.7965
6.	The outbreak of Covid-19 is as a result of human sin	368	82	3.018	.7490
7.	The outbreak of Covid-19 portrays Allah's anger on the world	374	76	3.122	.7555
8.	The outbreak of Covid-19 points to the fact that the world is coming to an end	208	162	2.738	.8843
9.	The outbreak of Covid-19 has been forecast by the Prophet S.A.W	374	76	3.189	.8559
10.	The outbreak of Covid-19 is Allah's will	305	145	2.238	.9894

Table 5 reveals the perceptions of Islamic scholars on COVID-19. Firstly, out of the total of 450 respondents, 409 (90.9%) respondents agreed that

the COVID-19 pandemic exists while 41 (9.1%) disagreed with this report. Secondly, most of the scholars (389) agreed that COVID-19 can be what subsumed under *Rijz, Ta'un, and Waba'* which is the Arabic name for all kinds of deadly diseases. On the third item indicated that majority of the scholars estimated 243 of 450 (54%) respondents disagreed that global pandemic, COVID-19 does not exist. Moreover, 54 respondents among the Islamic scholars believed that COVID-19 is a plot of the Kuffar while 396 respondents disagreed that it is not. Finally, most of the Islamic scholars made up of 400 respondents strongly agreed that the COVID-19 has cure Islamically while the 50 respondents did not. Moreso, the majority of the Islamic scholars which made up 368 of the total respondents agreed that outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic is as a result of human sins, while (82%) believed that it is not. 374 of 450 respondents perceived that the outbreak of Covid-19 portrays Allah's anger on the world while 76 respondents strongly disagreed. Moreover, a very substantial amount of the total respondents is of the view that the outbreak of Covid-19 points to the fact that the world is coming to an end while others containing 162 respondents disagreed with it. A total of 374 respondents among the Islamic scholars strongly agreed that the outbreak of Covid-19 has been forecast by the Prophet S.A.W while 76 respondents did not agree. Lastly on the perceptions of Islamic scholars on COVID-19, a sum of 305 respondents strongly agreed that the outbreak of Covid-19 is Allah's will while 145 of them did not align with it.

Research Question Two: what are the perceptions of Islamic scholars on Measure to contain COVID-19?

S/N	Items	Strongly agreed & agreed	Strongly Disagreed & Disagreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Prophetic instructions on Taun can be applied to contain Covid-19	305	145	3.527	.7435
2	It is Islamically sound to adopt quarantine to contain the spread of Covid-19	382	68	3.391	.8163
3	It is Islamically genuine to restrict travelling and movements to contain the spread of Covid-19.	394	56	3.553	.7480

4	It is Islamically authentic to maintain social distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19	387	63	3.382	.8393
5	It is Islamically genuine to avoid hand shaking to contain the spread of Covid-19	387	63	3.351	.7960
6	It is Islamically genuine to use face/nose mask to contain the spread of Covid-19.	420	30	3.300	.6548
7	It is Islamically genuine to wash hands regularly to contain the spread of Covid-19.	415	35	3.524	.6371
8	In Islam, it is held that an epidemic threatens both personal and public health.	257	193	3.464	.6805
9	Infecting someone else with the virus ignorantly or deliberately is un-Islamic.	380	70	3.453	.6531
10	Dying as a result of Covid-19 is martyrdom.	284	166	2.811	.9426

Table 6 describes the perceptions of Islamic scholars on measures to contain COVID-19. The first item revealed that 305 Islamic scholars agreed that prophetic instructions on Taun (deadly disease) can be applied to contain Covid-19 while 145 respondents disagreed. Also, 382 respondents strongly agreed that it is sound to adopt quarantine in order to contain the virus while (68) Islamic scholars disagreed. The majority of the scholars agreed that it is Islamically genuine to restrict travelling and movements to contain the spread of the pandemic with 394 respondents while 56 disagreed. Similarly, 387 of the total respondents agreed that it is Islamically acceptable to maintain social distancing to contain the spread of Covid-19 while 63 strongly disagreed with the measure. Majority of the total respondent also agreed that it is Islamically genuine to avoid

hand shaking to contain the viral disease with 387 people while others abide by the statement. The Islamic scholars (420) strongly agreed that it is Islamically genuine to use face/nose mask to contain the spread of Covid-19, while 30 respondents strongly disagreed with the use of this measure. More so, majority of the scholars agreed that it is Islamically genuine to wash hands regularly to contain the spread of Covid-19 with 415 respondents, while 35 disagreed with it. Also, 257 of the total numbers of the respondents posited that an epidemic threatens both personal and public health while 193 did not agreed with it. and infecting someone else with the virus ignorantly or deliberately is un-Islamic with 380 of respondents. Finally, majority of the respondents (284) agreed that dying as a result of Covid-19 is martyrdom while 166 disagreed.

Most Islamic scholars perceived Covid-19 as a deadly disease that broke out as result of human transgressions of Allah's bound

Most of the measures for Islamic scholars per Covid-19 is a deadly disease that broke out as result of human transgressions of Allah's bound

Research Question Three: What are the attitudes Islamic scholars towards vaccination against Covid-19

S/ N	Items	Strongly agreed & agreed	Strongly Disagreed & Disagreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Covid-19 vaccine is safe	60	390	3.329	.6136
2.	Muslims need to take Covid-19 vaccine because it is safe	40	410	2.382	.7153
3.	Islamic Scholars need to discourage Covid-19 vaccine because it is not safe	394	56	3.443	.7170
4.	Covid-19 vaccine is anti-Islamic	387	63	3.392	.8393
5.	Covid-19 vaccine is a mixture of Halal and Haram ingredients	390	60	3.351	.7761

Table 7 reveals the what are the attitude of Islamic scholars towards vaccination against Covid-19. Out of 450 respondents 390 strongly disagreed that Covid-19 vaccine is safe to take while 60 agreed with the statement. It is also revealed from the table that 410 participants who strongly disagreed with Muslims that take Covid-19 vaccine however, only 40 respondents agreed that Muslims need to take Covid-19 vaccine because it is safe. Nevertheless, 394

Islamic Scholars discourage Covid-19 vaccine because they stated that it is not safe while 56 of them encourage people to take virus vaccine. 387 Islamic Scholars believe that Covid-19 vaccine is anti-Islamic while 63 did not. 390 participants believe that Covid-19 vaccine is a mixture of Halal and Haram ingredients while 60 disagreed with the statement. It could therefore be inferred that the attitude of Islamic scholars towards vaccination against Covid-19 is negative.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There was no significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

Table 8: ANOVA summary of showing the differences in the perceptions of scholars on COVID-19 based on their creedal affiliation.

Variables	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Between Groups	188.207	5	37.641	2.38	.038	
Within Groups	6906.921	437	15.805			Not rejected

***Insignificance at $p > 0.05$.**

Table 8 shows that the calculated f-Value is 2.38 with calculated alpha of .038 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha of .038 is greater than the critical alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis was hereby accepted. This shows that there was no significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

H₀₂: There was no significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of measures to contain Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

Table 9: ANOVA summary of showing the differences in the Islamic scholars' perceptions on the measures to containing COVID-19 based on their creedal affiliations.

Variables	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Between Groups	576.184	5	115.237	6.999	.000	
Within Groups	7310.413	444	16.465			Accepted

***Insignificance at $p > 0.05$**

Table 9 show that the calculated f-Value is 6.99 with calculated alpha of .000 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha of .000 is less than the critical alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis was hereby rejected. This shows that There was a significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of measures to contain Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

Ho₃: There was no significant difference in Islamic scholars' attitude towards vaccination against Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

Table 10: ANOVA summary of showing the differences in the Islamic scholars' perceptions on Vaccination against COVID-19 based on creedal affiliations.

Variables	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig	Remark
Between Groups	276.535	5	55.307	7.813	.000	
Within Groups	3142.845	44	7.078			Accepted

***Insignificance at $p > 0.05$.**

Table 10 shows that the calculated f-Value is 7.81 with calculated alpha of .000 computed at critical level of 0.05. Since the calculated alpha of .000 is less than the critical alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis was hereby accepted. This shows that there was a significant difference in Islamic scholars' perceptions of vaccination against Covid-19 based on creedal affiliation

1. 4 Discussion of findings

This was carried out in order to investigate Islamic scholars' perception of Covid-19 and attitude towards vaccination in Nigeria. It was revealed from the findings of the study that most of the respondents subscribed to the fact that Covid-19 is Islamically categorised under *Rijz*, *Ta'um*, and *Waba'* which is the Arabic name for all kinds of deadly diseases. This is in agreement with the submission of Ahmad and Ahad (2020), Abu Khadeejah (2020) and *Shabana (2021)* who have respectively proclaimed similar assertions on the perception of Covid-19 within the purview of Islam. More so, the study established that most of the respondents supported the view that restriction of movement, hand washing, using of nose/face mask, social distancing etc. and other measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19 are in concord with the teachings of Islam on how to remedy the outbreak of a deadly disease. This is also in line with the submissions of Zaru (2020) and Al-Gorany (2021) that Islam tenaciously holds that precautionary measures should be taken in preventing and eliminating contagious or deadly diseases in the society.

Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the scholars disposed negatively to the vaccination against COVID-19 due to ambiguity surrounding the vaccine. This is in line with the previous submissions of the Associated Press (2020) and Ghaliy (2021) who respectively noted that Indonesian Ulama and

scholars from Asia were of the views that vaccines contain haram ingredients and as such, they opposed vaccination. This is however contrary to the findings of Ebrahim (2014) and Iqbal (2021) which revealed that vaccination is *halal* and that UAE scholars encourage taking Covid-19 vaccines.

Conclusion

The havoc wreaked by Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria and other parts of the world is conspicuous and has become a subject of concern to all and sundry. Many steps have been taken globally and communally to contain the pandemic. Among the trending issues with respect to the corona virus is the issue of vaccination against the pandemic. This has generated series of reactions and attitudes. This study was however carried out to investigate Islamic scholars' perception and attitudes towards Covid-19 and its vaccination in Nigeria. It could be concluded from the findings of this study that Covid-19 is Islamically categorised under *Rijz*, *Ta'un*, and *Waba'*. The measures like restriction of movement, hand washing, using of nose/face mask, social distancing etc. that are been taken globally towards containing the spread of the pandemic are in line with the teachings of Islam. Owing to the ambiguous nature of the content and safety of the vaccine, the Islamic scholars in Nigeria (irrespective of their creedal affiliations) displayed negative attitudes towards vaccination against Covid-19.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusions in this study, it is hereby recommended that government needs to constitute health professionals to carry out more researches on the content and safety of the vaccines, publish the outcomes and sensitise masses on the need to get vaccinated. There is need for the government to organise a national conference where religious scholars and health professionals would rub minds together and come up solid verdicts on the essence and inevitability of vaccination against Covid-19. There is a need for Islamic scholars to organize national workshops and revisit the issue of permissibility of Covid-19 vaccines from the point of Islam and come up with a position on the issue. Government should come up with convincing clues about vaccination and arranged for aggressive orientation of the masses on vaccination. If found safe and *halal*, Islamic scholars should change their mind set and attitudes towards vaccination and endeavor to encourage their subjects.

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