

The Use of Comic Musical Skits to Overcome Fear and Anxiety during the Outbreak of Covid-19 in Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria experienced its first index case on 27th February 2020, when an Italian was diagnosed as having contracted Coronavirus. With the rise of Covid cases, social media was agog with myths, fables, information (both true and false), and fake drugs that could be used to cure Coronavirus. This research examines three indigenous-oriented comic musical skits that were aimed at allayed the fear of contracting Covid-19. The theory applied to this study is psychoanalytic. It is argued that comic musical skits were forceful tools used to alleviate the fear of contracting Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19 in Nigeria, Hausa Comedians, Psychoanalysis, Comic Musical Skits, Fear.

Introduction

As of the time of writing this paper, 20,273,569 people had contracted the virus, with 739,490 deaths and 13,201,059 recovered. The United States of America is recorded to have the highest number of cases at over 5,251,446 million people with over 166,192 deaths. Other countries with high numbers of infected people are Brazil, India, Russia, Peru, Chile, Spain, Mexico, with others following close behind. In Africa, there were by the time of writing over 870,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus across the continent, with a number of African countries enforcing containment measures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

According to John Hopkins University and Africa Center for Disease Control on Covid-19, the number of recoveries is high with 295,242 patients fully recovered and 13,246 deaths. Nigeria has recorded 46,367 cases of Covid-19 with quite a good number of patients recovering from the disease.² These recoveries have, however, not stopped the Nigerian Centre of Disease Control (NCDC) from insisting on the wearing of mask in public; embarking on constant broadcasts of the importance of washing hands; not touching

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2 Abdur Rahman Alfa Shaban, 'Africa COVID-19 stats: 874,036 cases; 18,498 deaths; 524,557 recoveries,' *Africanews*, 29 July 2020, www.africanews.com/2020/07/13/coronavirus-in-africa-breakdown-of-infected-virus-free-countries (accessed 13 July 2020).

the face; maintaining social distancing; informing the public on the need for people over 50 to avoid going out into public places, as well as people with preexisting medical conditions such as diabetes and the need for people to report suspected cases to the appropriate bodies.

However, the fear of contracting Covid-19 has elicited the making of countless online videos and audio clips that either debunk the existence and spread of the disease or explain the serious implications of falling under its scourge. Social media with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube and particularly WhatsApp, have all been used in the proliferation of information (both real and fake) about Covid-19. While many of these videos have illustrated their messages through the use of frightening scenes of patients suffering and dying from the disease, some have showed patients who have recovered from the disease talking about their experiences while others are comic videos, which in their own way of trying to inform the public, have mimicked politicians, church members and other famous personalities all in a bid to drive away fear and anxiety from the minds of their target audiences. Based on the existing facts available to this study, this paper shall illustrate how Nigerian citizens were enlightened about the devastating effects of not complying with the rules related to Covid-19. Freud's conception of anxiety or fear, as well as other psychoanalytic theorisation by others was applied as the theoretical tool to explore this.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. The Conception of Anxiety and Fear in Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud, who is also known as the father of psychoanalysis, was the first to coin the term “anxiety neurosis” in 1895 and went on to explain anxiety as the critical problem of neurosis.³ With his theory evolving over the years, Freud in 1926 linked the cathexis of previous traumata and their memories to the specific effects of anxiety, which he states in the following:

“Anxiety is not newly created in repression; it is reproduced as an affective state, in accordance with an already existing mnemic image. If we go further and enquire into the origin of that anxiety-and of affects in general-we shall be leaving the realm of pure psychology and entering the borderland of physiology. Affective states have become incorporated in the mind as precipitates of primeval traumatic experiences and when a similar situation occurs, they are revived like mnemic symbols.”⁴

3 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, translated by Nicola Luckhurst, London: Penguin Books, 2004 [1895].

4 Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete*

Freud devised a structural model of anxiety in which he posits that the personality of a person is comprised of an id, ego, and superego with anxiety resulting from conflict between these forces and the need to inhibit unacceptable thoughts and feelings from emerging into conscious awareness. Consequently, anxiety is a signal of unconscious fantasies of imagined dangerous situations. These fantasies are provoked by instinctual wishes or by perceptions of external situations.⁵ Anxiety becomes problematic when defence mechanisms are no longer able to inhibit its manifestation adequately and symptoms therefore surface.

Freud observed the relationship between fear and anxiety noting that fear and anxiety are unpleasant and undesirable experiences, which he explains here:

If the memory image of the hostile object is in any manner freshly cathected (e.g., by fresh perceptions), a condition arises which is not pain but has a similarity to pain. It includes unpleasure and the inclination to discharge corresponding to the experience of pain. Unpleasure is released from the interior of the body- is freshly provoked- by the cathexis of memories.⁶

However, fear and anxiety are two different experiences. Sweeny & Pine, in their work titled “The Etiology of Fear and Anxiety”, posit that fear is different from anxiety noting that the latter provoke more intense reaction than the former. Thus, they define the term “fear” as a specific emotion which occurs as a result of the perception of potentially dangerous stimuli while anxiety is a fear-like state that is out of proportion, in terms of duration, degree of avoidance, or subjective distress, relative to the current level of danger provoked by potential fear stimuli.

According to Akhtar (2014), fear may be unidentified yet the tone of the situation can reveal dangers that are real and external. In his words, Akhtar posits thus:

Fear is a response to external danger; anxiety to dangers emanating from the internal world...[It] is a “dysphoric reaction to an actual object (e.g., a wild animal, a knife-wielding drunkard), event (e.g., an

Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, J. Strachey and A. Freud (eds), London: The Hogarth Press, 1926d, p. 93.

5 Robert Michels, Allen Frances and M. Katherine Shear, ‘Psychodynamic Models of Anxiety,’ in *Anxiety and the Anxiety Disorders*, A. Hussain Tuma and Jack D. Maser (eds), New York: Routledge, 1985.

6 Sigmund Freud, *A Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Standard Edition, Vol. 1, London: The Hogarth Press, 1950a, pp. 295–343.

earthquake, a stampede), or situation (e.g., watching a horror movie, losing control of a car on an icy road) that is felt to be threatening.”⁷

To explain the severity of fear, Akhtar identifies with Grand (2002) who postulated four stages of dysphoria in the face of approaching danger: “(a) apprehension (mild anticipation of a bad occurrence); (b) dread (the conviction that one is facing danger and a person’s reluctance to encounter this impending danger); (c) Panic, which is an overwhelming sense of being afraid and alarmed hyperactivity; and (d) terror,-a feeling of doom. (Grand, 2002)”.⁸ Although fear causes a discomfiture of consciousness and the sub-conscious, it is a necessary emotion which supports the survival instincts of any living thing (including animals and people). Fear serves as a protective device and warns an individual of impending danger such that the individual gets prepared to face or avoid the unpleasant predicament. Some fears are widespread while others emanate as a result of “developmentally unfolding, epigenetic sequence of fantasies that are specific to human beings.”⁹

Despite the differences between anxiety and fear, the two terms have similar characteristics. Fear and anxiety both evoke a sense of dread, that something bad is about to happen. Also, both are unpleasant and both can serve as alarms that alert an individual to a likely danger yet their difference lies in the fact that fear is a response to external danger while anxiety reacts to internal uncertainties. Akhtar insists that no matter their similarity or dissimilarities, fear and anxiety coexist. He traces this to the notion that external threats become more pronounced due to internal vulnerabilities, which also can be externalised.¹⁰

1.2. Methodology of the Research

The method applied to this research is a careful study of video clips that feature humorous information about Covid-19. A qualitative study deploying the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and others was applied to guide this research to conclusion.

2. Overcoming Fear and Anxiety with Comic Musical Skits during the Outbreak of Covid-19

The first comic musical skit examined for this paper is titled “Corona Part 2.” It was acted and produced by four young men dressed in women’s

7 Salman Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering: Fear, Greed, Guilt, Deception, Betrayal, and Revenge*. London: Karnac Books Ltd., 2014, pp. 4–6.

8 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 4.

9 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 4.

10 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 8.

clothes. As they dance like middle age women, they sing about the outbreak of the Corona disease in China but particularly express their disappointment about China's refusal to warn the world about the killer disease. They note that China's insincerity to the world is against the preservation of humanity. However, the people of China should be forgiven by all Nigerians. Singing in Hausa, which is one of the major languages spoken in Nigeria, the comedians dressed as middle aged women show how such women in churches across Nigeria tend to sing about what ails their society. The following are their exact words:

2.1. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Muyafe, muyafe (four times).

Abin da China su yin manaa, muyafe (twice).

Su nan chi bera, (daiye), sun a chin kenkeso (daiye),

Sun nan chin taana, (daiye), har da kwado, ga targwada (daiye), har da haladu (daiye).

Tor mai zai sa Corona bai zai kama su baa? (*muyafe* twice then humming).

Praisss the Lord! Mu ne matan zumunta Assemblies of God's Church,

First Baptist Church, Caanan Redeem Christian Church of God, Living Faith, Dunamis.

Wannan she ne wakan mu na biyu, muna keran she corona.

Yaa in de kunan soraranmu, baru sarki ya bishekuu. (Ammin!).¹¹

“Let's forgive (said four times thus constituting the chorus).

For all that China has done to us all, we should forgive.

The Chinese eat rats, raw!, they eat cockroaches raw!

They eat earthworms while they are still alive and even frogs.

Bats too are eaten raw and pigs too.

Why won't corona infect them (the Chinese) greatly? (the chorus is said twice, then humming continues as the interlude).

Praisssse the Lord! We are the married women choir group from the Assemblies of God church; the First Baptist Church, the Caanan Redeem Christian Church of God; the Living Faith and the Dunamis Church.

This song is our second, which we have named corona part two.

As you all have listened to us, we pray that the King of Kings should protect you alllll.”

11 Zumuntan Matan Abcrlld, *Corona Part 2, YouTube,2* April, 2020,<https://youtu.be/Hntj139xXX0> (accessed 15 April 2020).

The one minute, five seconds video is a deliberate mimic of these indulgent Christian women who criticise everything they hear or see in their communities through the songs they sing in church. To alleviate the fears of the Nigerian community, the song's major aim is to inform Nigerians about occurrence of the disease and how it has developed into a viral disease. They sarcastically accuse the Chinese for their habit of eating exotic animals without cooking them, insinuating that this may have been the cause of the spread of Covid-19, as can be deciphered hence:

2.2. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Su nan chi bera (dainye), sun a chin kenkeso (dainye)

*Sun nan chin taana (dainye), har da kwado, ga targwada (dainye), har da haladu (dainye).*¹²

“The Chinese eat rats, raw; they eat cockroaches raw;

They eat earthworms (raw) while they are still alive and even frogs (raw).

Bats too are eaten raw and pigs too.”

Akhtar contends that fear plays an important role in prejudice.¹³ The funny music skit is prejudicial and externalises the fears of the Nigerian populace about the exotic eating habits of the Chinese by stating how the Chinese people are fond of eating cockroaches, earth worms, frogs etc., without taking into cognizance that these animals may harbour disease-causing pathogens. This makes the comedians ask; “*Toor mai zai sa Corona bai zai kama su baa? Why won't coronavirus infect them (the Chinese) greatly?*”¹⁴

“Corona Part 2” is an indirect act of scrutinising the identities of supposedly dedicated Christian mothers who are interested in talking about the pain and fears of people. These women portray corrupt or deceitful Christian. They go about observing and criticising every perceived “evil” act in the community without verifying and proffering solutions. Instead of being the virtuous mothers/women talked about in the bible, they are consumed with the fear of their true self, hence they come together to create frightening figures and images in their songs and end up “project[ing] dread and danger.”¹⁵ In this study, the frightening images they create is the dread of contracting the coronavirus from a “rat-eating” race, which has no connection whatsoever to the staunch Christian values of forgiving people who might have cause harm to others.

12 Zumuntan Matan Abcrld..., video excerpt: 00:17–00:28.

13 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 17.

14 Zumuntan Matan Abcrld..., video excerpt: 00:29.

15 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 18.

“Corona Part 2” metaphorically tries to allay the fears of the Nigerian public. Instead of projecting the drastic effects of the disease, the comedians avoid singing about how not to contract the disease, thereby drawing the audience’s attention away from the fear of contracting Covid-19. They instead direct the audience’s attention to China and their exotic eating tastes, linking this habit to the start of the virus but sarcastically insisting that everyone should forgive the Chinese for allowing the outbreak of the disease in their country and then transporting it all over the world without regard to humanity, as depicted here:

2.3. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Muyafe, muyafe (four times).

Abin da China su yin manaa, muyafe (twice).¹⁶

“Let’s forgive (said four times thus constituting the chorus)

For all that China has done to us all, we should forgive.”

Freudopines that displacement in itself makes avoidance of a feared object/situation easier to bare.¹⁷ Hence, the skit is targeted at displacing the devastating effects of the viral disease so as not to make the fears/anxiety of contracting Covid-19 conscious and so they tactfully displace audience attention to married women’s groups in churches who are fond of singing about the things that ailsociety.

The next skit however deviates from the mild presentation of Covid-19 as acted out by the four comedians earlier discussed. In this skit, the men bring to the fore how Covid-19 spreads like wild fire, killing everyone in its path. In this skit, a group of five men with local drums, walk the streets of one of Nigeria’s northern states singing about how everyone needs to pray in order for God to intervene and stop further spread of the disease. The following are the lyrics of the song:

2.4. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Chorus

Gaiya muna Allah waidu;

Ka kare dukan duniya;

Ka kare dukan Nigeria

Chuta da koronavairios (said thrice)

Wangan anoma aka gani ta shao dukan duniya;

16 Zumuntan Matan Aberld..., video excerpt 00:03.

17 Sigmund Freud, ‘Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis,’ in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Strachey and Freud (eds)..., pp. 151–318.

Wagan chuta wagan ka gani ta shao dukan duniyan;

Chorus (twice).

Aha abin mamaki da ka gani;

Wadawo a kasar waje;

Sai kaibe shi wurin guda;

Anyi hau an gani maida koronavairios;

Chorus (twice).

Yan malamai adini musulmai dukan duniyan;

Da malamai na christa na christochi dukan duniya;

Don Allah ku taiyamuna adua, don Allah ku taiyamuna adua;

Chorus (twice).

Nine dan kwarai, nine dan dali, baban kwarai maka din nijeria;

Nijeria arje har Kebbi, gar a kebbi ma birni kebbi;

Birni Kebbi Mallam dali, nine na yi wannan waka chuta da koronavairios;

Chorus (thrice) till end of song.¹⁸

Chorus

“Greetings to the people of the world in the name of Allah,

There is something that is killing everyone in the world;

There is something that wants to kill everyone in Nigeria;

It is the disease called coronavirus (said thrice).

This phenomenon is so dangerous that it has taken the lives of so many in the world today;

This disease is so lethal that it has spread around the world, taking lives;

Chorus (twice).

This surprising situation that we are experiencing today;

Erupted in foreign lands;

Kept on spreading in a particular place;

Where it was intensely studied and discovered to be the deadly coronavirus.”

Chorus (twice).

We therefore call on all Muslims all over the world;

And all Christians all over the world no matter the denominations they belong to;

18 Untitled indigenous musical comic skit on coronavirus: ‘VID-20200328-WA0010,’ *Whats.App*, 00:00–2:26 (accessed 13 April 2020).

We ask in the name of Allah, that they should all pray for the world against this deadly disease (twice).

Chorus (twice).

I am the novel/ good musician, one who is good and truthful in Nigeria;

I am in Nigeria, in Kebbi state, even in the town of Birni Kebbi;

I am the great musician from Birni Kebbi,

I am the one that sings about the dangers of contracting coronavirus;

Chorus (twice).

Fear is built in right from the beginning of the song. According to Freud, “Anxiety is not newly created in repression; it is reproduced as an affective state, in accordance with an already existing mnemonic image.”¹⁹ The two minute and twenty-six seconds skit warns people about the devastating effect of contracting coronavirus. The musicians use the already existing fear of contracting the disease as a major fact that they must transmit to the world. They thus bring in the drastic image of death and the near end of the world, as can be noted in the following lyrics:

2.5. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Wagan anoma aka gani ta shao dukan duniya;

Wagan chuta wagan ka gani ta shao dukan duniyan.

“This phenomenon is so dangerous that it has taken the lives of so many in the world today;

This disease is so lethal that it has spread around the world, taking lives.”²⁰

It is clear from the preceding lyrics that the musicians’ fear is projected out onto the public such that it draws people’s attention to their music and the spreading coronavirus. The portrayal of the fear of Covid-19 is used as a protective device to warn people of the pandemic so they can do all they can to protect themselves.

Again, this untitled skit relates the feeling of “dread” and “terror” in the hearts of the people. Dread and terror are two categories of fear that Akhtar²¹ identifies as an interpretation of a person’s reluctance to face danger and an overwhelming feeling of doom, respectively. Thus, the singer through his music, without weighing the consequences of his words, promotes feelings of dread and terror as a means of mandating the public to be very careful in order

19 Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms...*, p. 93.

20 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:30.

21 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 18.

to avoid getting infected. The song starts on a frightening note, which is aimed at calling the general public's attention to how critical it is for people to pay attention to the developing trend of Covid-19:

2.6. The Song Hausa Language and English Translation

Ka kare dukan duniya;

Ka kare dukan Nigeria

Chuta da koronavairios (chorus is said thrice).

“There is something that is killing everyone in the world;

There is something that wants to kill everyone in Nigeria;

It is the disease called coronavirus.”²²

The song does not rely on specific information about coronavirus, instead it describes how people are dying from an unknown disease that is lethal and incurable and causing the death of Nigerians. Even though many have died from this plague, the spread of the disease has not got to the stage where it seems the world will be depleted of people in a short while, yet this musician's message portrays it as such and in the process creates an avenue where onlookers and listeners develop high levels of anxiety.

The only information this skit is able to relay to the public is that the disease “Erupted in foreign lands” (*Wadawo a kasar waje*), and the name of the disease “Where it was intensely studied and discovered to be the deadly coronavirus” (*An yi hau an gani maida koronavairios*).²³ The humorous way in which the rendition is made is therefore a subtle means of alleviating the fears and anxiety of Nigerian society. The fear in the words cannot be literally identified, but the tone in which the musician calls for prayers from both the Muslim and Christian faiths gives an indication of the severity of the pandemic. This is observed in the following:

2.7. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Yan malamai adini musulmai dukan duniyan;

Da malamai na christa na christochi dukan duniya;

Don Allah ku taiyamuna adua, don Allah ku taiyamuna adua.

“We therefore call on all Muslims all over the world;

And all Christians no matter the denomination they belong to all over the world;

22 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:00–00:29.

23 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:53–01:03.

We ask in the name of Allah, that they should all pray for the world against this deadly disease.”²⁴ (twice)

The call made to adherents of the two major religions in Nigeria sends a message of a dreadful situation that needs the full cooperation of everyone irrespective of their religious commitments. According to the music video acquired from WhatsApp, the spread of Covid-19 needs the unifying efforts of all Nigerians and people of the world so that a solution can be found. The high death toll should not be left to medical personnel alone but that supernatural intervention through prayers by Muslims and Christians is also necessary in the complete eradication of coronavirus.

The last skit is a comic one that satirises the government of Nigeria about the continued perpetuation of corruption even during the outbreak of Covid-19 in Nigeria. The skit, by Edo Pikin, is entitled “What is the difference between Corona and Ebola?” (subsequent use will be WITDBCAE) and is acted as a one-on-one interview with a supposed medical practitioner. Spoken in English, the interviewer asks the doctor what are the pertinent differences between the two dangerous diseases. The dialogue, which is punctuated with intermittent one-second frightening tunes, is presented thus:

Interviewer: “Good afternoon doctor, please sir what is the difference between Corona and Ebola?”

Doctor: “The difference is very, very clear. You understand *naa*. Ebola is an outdated Corona and Corana is an updated Ebola. Ebola is an old artist that does not have a stage to perform again. Corona is the new artist, the reign of the moment going on different tours. Ebola has seen its menopause; corona is the slaying queen. Now listen to me, corona is made in China and their product does not last. If only corona knows that the amount of roots and *agbo* (herbal medicines) we have in this country, then corona will go and squat with Ebola. The *oga pata pata* (the boss that totally oversees these diseases) of them all, the general overseer of them all is bad government. Do you know that the problem of this country is this country? Do you know that immediately corona entered into Nigeria, Nose masks moved from sixty naira to six thousand naira? Even hand sanitiser moved from five hundred naira to seven thousand, five hundred naira? We want to cash out for people to pass out. We want to make profit so that people will go six feet, you and the corona which is more deadly? Do you know that when coronavirus got to the airport and saw the Nigerian government, corona said hmm!

24 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 01:24–1:39.

No need to enter into this country because our senior colleagues are here already. The greatest mistake corona made was to come to Nigeria. We cannot have two diseases in one country. It is either corona stays and bad government goes or bad government stays and corona goes. You cannot use masks to prevent coronavirus but can you wear a nose mask to prevent corona leaders? Some viruses are infected while some virus are elected. Do you know that corona and bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus? Bad government is the *ogapatapata* of them all and the general overseer of them all. Bad government does not live abroad, bad government lives here in Nigeria, thank you.”²⁵

This comic narrative extracted from YouTube @abingoslayking explains the basic information about Covid-19 on one hand and likens the devastating effects of coronavirus to the bad and corrupt leadership in Nigeria on the other hand. Instead of intensifying fear, like the two other music-comedy skits earlier analysed, this video’s narrative humorously explains what coronavirus is and what it is not. The mock doctor likens coronavirus to “Ebola,” “a new artist” and a “slaying queen.”²⁶ The “doctor” further allayed the fears of his audience by stating that “corona is made in China and their product does not last. If only corona knows that the amount of roots and *agbo* (herbal medicines) we have in this country, then corona will go and squat with Ebola.”²⁷

Akhtar contends that when people do not want to face fear or anxiety, they unconsciously displace their fears from the actual object of fear to a “more acceptable substitute” which “becomes bound to a specific object/situation.”²⁸ In the comedy skit by Edo Pikin, the mock doctor transfers the fear of contracting Covid-19 onto the bad government in Nigeria. To the comedian, the bad government is responsible for the hike in the price of face masks (humorously referred to in the video as nose masks) and hand sanitisers, insisting that some sets of corrupt and unsympathetic individuals are using the pandemic to make financial profits instead of trying to put in place a holistic means of ending the spread of Covid-19.

Watching this skit, life during the outbreak of covid-19 becomes easier to bear because “the specificity of the fear now makes matters manageable through the active process of avoidance.”²⁹ The video directs people’s attention to the problems which Nigerians are already conditioned to. The bad government

25 Edo Pikin, ‘What is the Difference Between Corona and Ebola?’, *YouTube*, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1jwERWVMIs&ab_channel=McEdopikin (accessed 27 May 2020).

26 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:06–00:17.

27 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:17-00:25.

28 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 12.

29 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 12.

is institutionally entrenched such that scores of people die daily even before Covid-19. The fake doctor displaces the fear of contracting coronavirus with bad governance that has stunted political, economic and social growth, insisting that the use of face masks will not help Nigerians overcome bad governance. This is captured in these lines:

“The greatest mistake corona made was to come to Nigeria. We cannot have two diseases in one country. It is either corona stays bad government goes or bad government stays corona goes. You cannot use mask to prevent coronavirus but can you wear nose mask to prevent corona leaders? Some virus are infected while some virus are elected. Do you know that corona bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus?”³⁰

In their mission to inform the public about the serious implications of the spread of Covid-19, the comedians bring to the fore corrupt practices that make coronavirus less devastating than corrupt officials. Bad officials are metaphorically described as an “elected virus” and so getting infected by this virus is more dangerous than the infectious disease termed “infected virus.” This “elected virus” causes more death than coronavirus because bad officials will want to cash in on the pandemic rather than trying to find a lasting cure and dissuade further spread of the disease.

Freud insists that the advantage offered by displacement in overcoming fear is that the original offensive idea does not become conscious. In fact, Freud pointed out that displacement by itself renders avoidance easier.³¹ So, the skit downplays the “original offensive” fear of Covid-19 by portraying bad governance as a formidable and more deadly phenomenon that kills more people than coronavirus. The comedy skit, which is packed full with substantial information about covid-19, juxtaposes fear with the need for Nigerians to abhor corruption and stop others from indulging in corrupt acts. Therefore, by displacing the dangers of Covid-19 with bad governance, this video was able to dispel the myth of coronavirus not being a curable disease through the transference of public attention unto bad governance which is likened to an incurable disease.

According to WITDBCAE, the disease of bad governance is what is causing further deaths of patients who have been diagnosed with Covid-19. Corrupt government officials are more concerned with enriching themselves at the expense of innocent lives lost in the process of acquiring funds to treat coronavirus patients, as is stated thus: “We want to cash out for people to pass out.”³² So the deaths that are actually occurring in Nigeria are a result of

30 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:56-01:15.

31 Freud, ‘Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional...’, pp. 151–318.

32 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:43–00:44.

escalating corruption in the country and not the pandemic itself as noted thus: “Do you know that corona bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus?”³³

Conclusions

With the daily rise of coronavirus cases in Nigeria, the internet continues to be rife with various kinds of video clips that either warn the Nigeria populace about the devastating effects of contracting coronavirus or subtly seek to dissipate people’s fears about the disease. While some music and comic clips sing or narrate about the origin and environmental place from where the coronavirus started, how it is contracted and how to avoid it, others create fear in people by emphasising the potency of the disease, how fast it spreads and kills, why there is no cure and the possible end of the human race. The three comic musical skits studied in this paper are just a few of the many video clips that are on line and created to foster fear in the minds of their audience.

The clip titled “Corona Part 2” satirically transfers the fear of Covid-19 onto middle aged women who are fond of criticising the public instead of establishing avenues to assists young people, other women and their immediate communities. These women hide behind the church/religion to sing songs that frustrate their listeners in church. The untitled clip in which five men go about singing (in Hausa) to warn people of Covid-19 is another funny skit that propels people to face the disease with prayers rather than hiding away in fear and anxiety. These men therefore suggest that the only solution to solving Covid-19 is consistent and repentant prayers via the Muslim and Christian religions. WITDBCAE by Edo Pikin, the last comic skit analysed, displaces the fear of coronavirus by insisting that the Nigerian populace should rather be afraid of corrupt bad government instead of a disease that may likely die off. For this set of comedians, bad governance in Nigeria is more lethal than the Corona virus and according to these comedians, many people die in Nigeria as a result of misappropriation of funds allocated for the treatment of infected patients.

Finally, this paper concludes that all the clips studied target the psychology of people in order to either eradicate their feeling of dread or propagate fear, anxiety and dread in subtle ways. They also use various means to divert the fear of an imposing image (Coronavirus) onto an image that is more acceptable and acts as a substitute for the dangerous Corona virus (e.g. bad governance, over indulging Christian women). In this way, fear and anxiety of Covid-19 becomes more bearable and is not imprinted on the minds of people, who can go about their daily lives without succumbing to psychological breakdowns.

33 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 01:13–01:16.