

# Internet Meme as a Campaign Tool to the Fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The outbreak of Coronavirus known as Covid-19 witnessed a digitalized era of unprecedented campaigns in Nigeria. Citizens engaged in using social media during the period to sensitize people and to call on the government to help prevent the spread of the virus. Facebook appears to be among the platform tremendously used by Nigerian to create awareness on Covid-19 in the country. People used social media platforms globally to respond to the threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic. Within this context, the paper discusses the application and implication of internet memes as a campaign tool for the fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria. The paper examines internet memes as a unique form of narratives to help avert the wide spread of the virus. The study captures and highlights the usage of photograph memes on Covid-19. The paper employs semiotic and qualitative content analysis methods. The paper anchors on the theoretical lens of the visual rhetoric of multi-participant popular online content. Internet memes on Covid-19 explore issues that contain visual metaphors aimed at establishing what Nigerians are passing through as well as stimulating government participation. Social media usage in connection with the pandemic in Nigeria is by creation, uploading, and sharing of internet memes on Covid-19. The paper articulates that internet memes served as an avenue for direct communication, which apparently contributes to creating awareness on Covid-19 to the general public.

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*Index terms*— awareness, covid-19, campaign tool, communication, internet memes, nigeria.

## 1 Introduction

he outbreak of coronavirus known as Covid-19 witnessed a digitalized era of unprecedented campaigns in Nigeria. Citizens engaged in using social media during the period to sensitize people and to call on the government to help prevent the spread of the virus. Facebook appears to be among the platform tremendously used by Nigerian to campaign against Covid-19 in the country. Covid-19 has created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way people perceive the world in their everyday lives. Not only the rate of contagion and patterns of transmission threatens the sense of agency but the safety measures put in place to curtail the spread of the virus, which require social distancing, washing of hands, the use of masks, among others. Social media, in this regards, has zipped information, and misinformation around the world at unprecedented speeds, fueling panic, racism, T and hope. Social media has become a space for collective grieving for the contestation of Covid-19.

Technological transformation and citizens' participation in communication on coronavirus is one of the notable aspects of contemporary campaigns in Nigeria. Cinema, television, magazines, newspapers, and the social networking sites are awash with numerous visuals including but not limited to photographs. One of the distinct features of social networks, especially Facebook, is its popularity, affordability, accessibility, and the capacity of sharing and distribution of information, messages and photographs for the consumption of the users (Gwandu, 2019). The proliferation of the information and communication technologies gadgets has contributed to the

### 3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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43 active participation of citizens in the creation and dissemination of media content, hence the emergence of what  
44 is globally recognized as citizen journalism. The usage of social networking sites has facilitated the ventilation  
45 of opinions, and improved the participation of the hitherto passive recipient into active members in the business  
46 of production and consumption of communication messages (Nnaane, 2014).

47 Technological developments in the field of internet impact the large group of people that uses this media source  
48 to obtain health information. Social media is such a new development and drastically changes websites from a  
49 static source to a many-to-many communication channel. The use of information communication technology  
50 especially, via social media, has transcended the use of words alone to the creation of images on Covid-19.  
51 Many of the social networking sites users do so without regard to the issues of decency, decorum, or ethical  
52 consideration. One significant effect of this development is that Nigerian citizens can scarcely avoid noticing the  
53 presence of these Internet memes. The Internet memes are so ubiquitous and unavoidable part of the networked  
54 social environment of coronavirus campaign communication on the Internet which forced people to become, if  
55 not producers or distributors at most, consumer of these Internet memes.

56 Social media renders enormous contributions to the fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria. These contributions  
57 could be positive or negative. Within this context, there is a paucity of research in the area. Most of the researches  
58 done in the related area were studies of photographs of Covid-19, as presented in Newspapers, News Magazines  
59 as well as mainstream media (Hand in Gwandu, 2019). This calls for a thorough study of the visual rhetorical  
60 analysis of how social media users apply Internet memes as tools to the fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria.

## 61 2 II.

### 62 3 Objectives of the Study

63 Based on the gap identified in the literature, the following objectives are set: Omoruyi (2015) observes the  
64 prevalence of internet memes on prominent personalities by the users of social media in Nigeria. Gwandu (2019)  
65 states that the inappropriate manipulation of scientific digital images typically does not arise from intent to  
66 deceive or to obscure information. More often, the inappropriate manipulations are simply due to ignorance of  
67 the basic principles.” It seemed to this author that often, what is needed is an explanation of why manipulations  
68 are right, or wrong. In more ways than the traditional media, social media networks, particularly Facebook  
69 and Twitter, played central roles in the fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria. Omoruyi (2015) notes the use of  
70 internet memes in the campaigns via social media, especially Facebook is apparent. Other studies on social  
71 media bordered on citizen participation in social media for the fight against Covid-19 campaigns.

72 While the efficacy and efficiency of traditional media campaigns are well documented in the literature, social  
73 media use such as Twitter or Facebook, use remains significant in dissemination messages to the public on  
74 coronavirus. Traditional media campaigns are used widely to inform the public on Covid-19 for a wide variety  
75 of objectives and have shown positive outcomes in terms of reach, public awareness, and to an extent, behavior  
76 change. As more consumers turn to the internet to get information on Covid-19, health organizations have begun  
77 to turn to social media as a tool for connecting with the public. An emerging topic which very few studies have  
78 analyzed is the efficacy of Internet memes to campaign against Covid-19. Preliminary reports have demonstrated  
79 considerable reach associated with social media applications and have the potential for engaging specific target  
80 audiences. However, given the rapid and exponential growth of social media use, the development of best practices  
81 by public health organizations are crucial for adapting social media to every day public health practice (Anand,  
82 Gupta and Kwatra, 2013).

83 Reports suggest that social media is a very feasible option that is relatively easy to adopt but requires adequate,  
84 and appropriate human resources to maintain. A lot of overarching benefits of social media were identified for the  
85 general public, patients, and health professionals. Social media users have the potential to increase the number  
86 of interactions, and thus, are provided with more available, shared and tailored information. Social media can  
87 generate more available health information as users create and share medical information online. Blog sites create  
88 a space where individuals can access tailored resources to deal with health issues. Social media can widen of access  
89 to those who may not easily access health information via traditional methods, such as younger people, ethnic  
90 minorities and lower socioeconomic groups. The important aspect of using social media for health communication  
91 is that it can provide valuable peer, social and emotional support for the general public and patients. For example,  
92 social media can aid health behavior change, such as sharing information on Covid-19 among members of the  
93 public. Cousineau and Paris in Anand, Gupta and Kwatra (2013) reported that people used health-related social  
94 networking sites to discuss sensitive issues, and complex information with health professionals.

95 A report commissioned by the Region of Peel Public Health department reviewed the current and potential uses  
96 of social media on the public health stage. The review had emphasized the shift towards participatory methods  
97 for health consumers from the “traditional gatekeepers” of health information. Given the variable quality of  
98 health information available through social media, public health organizations can provide credible information  
99 to consumers how, and when they want it as their main motivation for reaching out via these channels. The  
100 potential to reach target audiences is also a factor, given that Facebook boasts the potential to reach over 500  
101 million members of the exact audience you are targeting. Public health is also taking advantage of the reach of  
102 social media by enlisting it for “Infoveillance” (Marshall, Owen and Bauman, 2004).

103 Organizations can use social media for syndrome surveillance by monitoring the frequency of searches related

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104 to a particular illness, enlisting the public to report infections or symptoms, and mapping outbreaks with new  
105 tools and data mined from existing social networking sites. Furthermore, surveying the public's beliefs regarding a  
106 public health topic can provide critical information informing the types of messages that will be most effective. In  
107 public health surveillance, social media can provide communication in real-time and at relatively low cost. Social  
108 media can monitor public response to health issues, track and monitor disease outbreak like Covid-19, identify  
109 misinformation of health information, identify target areas for intervention efforts and disseminate pertinent  
110 health information to targeted communities. Health professionals can aggregate data about patient experiences  
111 from blogs, and monitor public reaction to health issues. Social media may have particular potential for risk  
112 communications as they can be used to disseminate personalized messages immediately thus making outreach  
113 more effective (Anand, Gupta and Kwatra, 2013).

114 There is the potential that information on social media may contribute to health care policy making, as medical  
115 blogs are frequently viewed by mainstream media. The main uses of social media focus on increasing interactions  
116 with others and facilitating, sharing and obtaining health messages. The general public mainly used social media  
117 for themselves, family members, and friends to obtain and share information on a wide range of health issues.  
118 Patients can share their experiences through discussions forums, chat rooms, and instant messaging or online  
119 consultation with a qualified clinician. Some health professionals were reported to use social media to collect  
120 data on patients and to communicate with patients using online consultations (Newbold and Campos, 2011).

121 Another benefit of social media for health communication is the accessibility and widening access of health  
122 information to various population groups, regardless of age, education, race or ethnicity and locality, compared  
123 to traditional communication methods. Social media allows users to generate peer-to-peer discussion in a way  
124 not enabled by traditional websites. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) have suggested that  
125 organizations need to recognize and understand the social media landscape and where the conversations about  
126 them are already being held (cognize), develop strategies that are suitable, work out how often and when they  
127 should enter into conversations and be aware of what others are doing and act accordingly.

128 Different studies have highlighted different benefits for health communication, but there are not enough studies  
129 indicating its long-term effects. As there is an expected increase in the use of social media, there is a dearth of  
130 research supporting the effectiveness of social media applications on an Internet memes. Most studies conducted  
131 were observational and analyzed the current health-related "conversations" taking place over social media. There  
132 is a deficit of peer-reviewed research on the use of Internet memes which is significant to this study.

## 133 4 a) Participation in Social Media by Health Care

134 Professionals Social media provide health care professionals (HCPs) with tools to share information, to debate  
135 on health care policy and practice, to promote health behaviors, to engage with the public, and to educate,  
136 and interact with people regarding their health issues (Bernhardt, Alber and Gold, 2014). HCPs can use social  
137 media to potentially improve health outcomes, develop a professional network, increase personal awareness of  
138 news and discoveries, motivate patients, and provide health information to the community (Fogelson, Rubin and  
139 Ault, 2013). Physicians join online communities where they can read news articles, listen to experts, research  
140 medical developments, consult colleagues regarding patient issues, and network. In this perspective, they can  
141 share cases and ideas, discuss practice management challenges, make referrals, disseminate their research, or  
142 engage in health advocacy. For instance a survey of more than 4,000 physicians conducted by the social media  
143 site by Fogelson et al., (2013) found that more than 90% of physicians use some form of social media for personal  
144 activities, In contrast, only 65% use these sites for professional reasons. Nearly a third of physicians have reported  
145 participating in social networks.

146 Unlike physicians, pharmacists have been relatively slow to adopt social media. Much of the growth in  
147 the professional use of social media among this group appears to involve pharmacist-specific social networks.  
148 The surveys have shown that many pharmacists use Facebook. Although this use is most often for personal  
149 communications, more than 90 pages on Facebook are related to the pharmacy profession, such as the Pharmacists  
150 Interest Page, the American Pharmacists Association, and the Cynical Pharmacist. Only 10% of pharmacists use  
151 Twitter, and a search for pharmacists on LinkedIn identified 274,981 profiles (Grindrod, Forgione, and Tsuyui,  
152 2014).

## 153 5 b) The Use of Social Media by Hospitals

154 People appreciate businesses that speak in a human voice. Nevertheless, many healthcare organizations have  
155 been slow to adopt social media, mainly because executives have not yet realized the benefits of these platforms.  
156 Studies have shown that teaching hospitals and those with high bed capacities adapt more rapidly to social media  
157 (Bennett, 2013). Social media can help hospitals in different ways. It can increase patient volume, reach a new  
158 audience, introduce new services, create awareness, improve outcomes, provide excellent customer service, and  
159 maintain the reputation of health organization. An example of using social media platforms is Facebook, which  
160 is technically a free advertising resource that may be utilized for local, national, and global exposure of practice  
161 or healthcare organizations. It can offer paid advertisement placement, which is different from a search engine,  
162 pay per click adverts since Facebook can better target advertisements in its user's news stream, based on having  
163 information about their users and users' preference (Bennett, 2013).

## 7 DAMAGE TO PROFESSIONAL IMAGE:

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164 Hospitals across the globe are turning to social media as a means of distributing their message, educating  
165 people and their patients, and marketing their services. Barry (2010) identified the primary social media uses  
166 for 1800 hospitals using social media: supplying information to a general audience (97%), providing content  
167 about the entire organizations (93%), announcing news and events (91%), furthering public relations (89%), and  
168 promoting health (90%). Hospital systems such as the Mayo Clinic, Henry Ford Health System, Innovis, and  
169 Scripps Health use blogs or interactive, informal communication Web-based pages, linked with Facebook, Twitter,  
170 and YouTube to expand their reach to people and the patients.

171 The importance of social media for health organisations relates to their need to manage their online reputation  
172 while combating then spread of misinformation and opinions based on a fallacy. While a growing body of scholarly  
173 evidence links online health information to positive health-related behaviors, the growth and ease of social media  
174 platforms have also resulted in concerns about the quality and reliability of the information provided through  
175 this medium (Lustria, Smith and Hinnant, 2016).

### 176 6 c) The Dangers of Social Media in Creating Awareness on 177 Covid-19

178 Poor Quality of Information: The main limitation of health information found on social media, and other online  
179 sources is a lack of quality and reliability (Sajadi, 2011).

180 Authors of medical information found on social media sites are often unknown or are identified by limited  
181 information. Also, medical information may be unreferenced, incomplete, or informal. While evidencebased  
182 medicine de-emphasizes anecdotal reports, social media tend to emphasize them, relying on individual patient  
183 stories for collective medical knowledge. Similar problems exist with traditional online media; however, the  
184 interactive nature of social media magnifies these issues, since any user can upload content to a site. Social  
185 media users may also be vulnerable to both hidden and overt conflicts of interest that they may be incapable of  
186 interpreting (Sajadi, 2011).

187 Social Media Risks: Here are some dangers in using these relatively new platforms in healthcare.

188 a. Message control. The speed at which messages can spread through social media allows for a little time to  
189 think, react, and control situations as could be done in traditional media. Therefore, it is important to think  
190 carefully before posting any information. If unsure about the content of your post, ask someone who can provide  
191 guidance. For example, the communication department may be of help. b. Privacy and security breaches. Privacy  
192 and security are top consumer concerns when sharing their health information through social media. Healthcare  
193 providers should do the following when using social media. Use privacy settings to protect personal information  
194 and content as far as possible. Monitor their internet presence to ensure that personal and professional information  
195 published on their sites and content posted about them by others is accurate, and appropriate. Online actions  
196 and content can negatively affect the reputation with possible farreaching consequences on their medical career.  
197 Keep professional and appropriate boundaries when interacting with patients online and ensure that patient  
198 privacy and confidentiality are maintained (Singh, Wal, Awani and Tiwari, 2016).

## 199 7 Damage to Professional Image:

200 A major risk associated with the use of social media is the posting of unprofessional content that can reflect  
201 unfavorably on HCPs, people, and affiliated institutions. Social media convey information about a person's  
202 personality, values and priorities, and the first impression generated by this content can be lasting. Perceptions  
203 may be based on any of the information featured in a social media profile, such as photos, nicknames, posts, and  
204 comments liked or shared, as well as the friends, causes, organizations, games, and media that a person follows.

205 Weaknesses in Health Care: Opponents of online social communities for patients argue that some patients  
206 may not understand the limitations of the Internet. Some worry that because standards of care have not been  
207 established for health information on social media Web sites, people may be vulnerable to false information  
208 provided for them online. People need to fully understand that any advice provided on social media However,  
209 on social media sites such as AmericanWell.com, which provides video conferencing between physicians in the  
210 continental United States and patients in Hawaii, health information is available for anyone regardless of their  
211 location (Singh et al., 2016). Health care providers also face limitations and barriers if they want to share  
212 Covid-19 stories using social media. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996  
213 ensure patient confidentiality, stating that physicians can use patient data without their consent only for three  
214 purposes: treatment, payment, or health care operations. Therefore, HIPAA requires physicians to obtain patient  
215 consent before displaying information anywhere, including public and restricted networks. However, individual  
216 information regarding Covid-19 has remained a topic of discussion on social media.

217 Legal Issues: The widespread information on Covid-19 on social media in the country needs an urgent  
218 introduction of a new legal framework. Although several constitutional rights can be applied to the use of  
219 social media, such as freedom of speech, freedom from search, and seizure and the right to privacy; however,  
220 these rights can be successfully challenged. For example, in 2009, a U.S. District Court upheld the expulsion of a  
221 nursing student for violating the school's honor code by making obscene remarks about the race, sex, and religion  
222 of patients under her care. The court concluded that the school's honor code and confidentiality agreement signed  
223 by each nursing student-governed the standards of acceptable behavior, dismissing the student's claim that her

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224 right to freedom of speech had been violated. A similar ruling was made in a case in which a student posted  
225 pictures of herself as a drunken pirate on MySpace.

226 Therefore, physicians and other healthcare providers should not discuss patients' illnesses, medical conditions,  
227 or personal information online without the patients' permission. The permission when obtained should be clearly  
228 stated in the post. Use a disclaimer to state that the posted opinions represent your views, not those of your  
229 employer. Legal cases should never be discussed on social media because most current case law dictates that  
230 such information is discoverable, however, this may depend on the purpose for, which the information is sought  
231 (Singh et al., 2016). Therefore, the proceedings literature examined in this study are significant and serve as a  
232 framework for the current study.

233 V.

## 234 8 Theoretical Framework

235 The study is guided on the theoretical lens of Visual Rhetoric which is an art of effective communication through  
236 images typography, and texts. Visual rhetoric encompasses the skill of visual literacy and the ability to analyze  
237 images for their form and meaning. Drawing from the theoretical lens of rhetorical analysis, visual rhetoric  
238 examines the structure of an image, and the consequent persuasive effects on an audience. Visual rhetoric  
239 implicates the use of images. Using images is apparent to visual rhetoric because these visuals or images help  
240 in forming the case or arguing the point that the writer formulates. Similarly visual rhetoric encompasses how  
241 people arrange segments of visual text on social media. Visual rhetoric also involves the selection of different  
242 fonts, contrastive colors, and graphs, among other elements, to shape visual rhetoric text. One of the ideas one  
243 can apply, when analyzing a visual text is to look for its significant meaning.

244 In the application of visual rhetoric, scholars like Msughter (2018) and Gwandu (2019) are of the view that the  
245 meaning should be deeper than the literal sense that a visual text holds. In this perspective, there is a need to  
246 dissect a visual text to understand the meaning behind the image or text. Analyzing a text that includes a photo,  
247 painting, or even cartoon of the bold eagle with additional written words, would bring to minds the conceptions  
248 of strength and freedom rather than merely a conception of a bird. This, including an understanding of the  
249 semiotics creative and rhetorical choices made with coloring, shaping, and object placement. Visual rhetoric view  
250 images as sensory expressions of cultural and contextual meaning, as opposed to purely aesthetic consideration.  
251 Visual rhetoric has been approached and applied in a variety of academic fields including art history, linguistics,  
252 semiotics, cultural studies, business, and technical communication, speech communication, and classical rhetoric.  
253 Visual rhetoric seeks to develop rhetorical theory in a way that is more comprehensive and inclusive about images  
254 and their interpretations. Within this context, there is a nexus between the theory and the study as people used  
255 social media platforms globally to respond to the threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic. Citizens were  
256 engaged in using social media during the period to create awareness and sensitize people as well as calling on the  
257 government to help prevent the spread of the virus while others were also using Internet memes to attack the  
258 government.

## 259 9 VI.

## 260 10 Research Method

261 Using Semiotic and Qualitative Content Analysis approach, the study seeks to critically examine internet meme  
262 as a campaign tool to the fight against Covid-19 sites is limited by the fact that it is not based on their 32 ( A )

263 Global Journal of Human Social Science -Year 2020 © 2020 Global Journals in Nigeria. Semiotic analysis,  
264 which studies the signs in images, was used in this study in order to answer the research question based on the  
265 signs and photographic image of the internet meme. As Rose (2001) explained, semiotics "offers a very full box  
266 of analytical tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning"  
267 (p. 69). The major strength of semiotics is that it is a sophisticated analytical tool for explaining how signs  
268 make sense (Rose, 2001). In conducting the semiotic analysis, the study interpreted the photos by looking at the  
269 colors, angles, background settings, eyes contact, dressing, and gestures poses in the photos.

270 Besides the photos, the study looked at the captions accompanying the photos to read the dominant, preferred  
271 ideology of the photos. Because images can be polysemic and therefore open to interpretations, considering  
272 captions along with the photos can help a researcher to find out which signs to read, and which signs are  
273 privileged. As Barthes (1977) had argued, captions are like anchors; they help the readers to choose the correct  
274 level of perception.

275 Therefore, with the aid of qualitative content analysis, the study looked at the text to determine the dominant,  
276 preferred meaning of the photo. The study discusses purposively selected sample units of analysis of internet  
277 memes that were used to create awareness on Covid-19 in Nigeria. What makes the sampling purposive is the fact  
278 that there were many social media platforms that were used to campaign against Covid-19. However, Facebook  
279 seems to be used predominantly by the citizens and most of the pictures or cartoons on Covid-19 were found  
280 on Facebook pages. The content categories of the study are similar to the proposition of Buchel (2012) that  
281 Internet memes are used as attack tools, a platform for sharing sensitive ideas, a tool for responding to incidents  
282 or previous posts, pulling a prank, and derailing a topic.

### 11 VII.

## 12 Findings and Discussions

Internet Memes were used in Nigeria to campaign or create awareness on Covid-19 in the following ways:

### 13 a) Internet Meme as an Attack Tool

Internet memes have been used to attack or attract the attention of other social media users. This is because getting attention is the first step to any meaningful campaign. Numerous Internet memes were used to portray the love for money, and the Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje, has been used in this direction. For instance, an internet meme on Facebook 28 of April 2020 shows how excited the Governor was when the President promised to render the necessary assistant needed in the state to fight Covid-19.

Based on the intended message, the internet meme must have been produced by the member(s) of the opposition of the government. It was meant to depict the climax of how the Governor loved collecting money in dollars. It shows how the Governor is ready to siphon the money or to put it in his babanriga or agbada (big clothe) rather than using the money to fight Covid-19 in the state. The implication is that most of the citizens are of the view that the Nigerian government is using Covid-19 as an avenue to generate money.

Other memes in this category is those showing how incompetent the Nigerian government is in the fight against Covid-19 in the country. The picture shows how Almajiri are using the already used sachet of pure water to make face mask to protect themselves from Covid-19 in the country.

Another internet meme in this category shows how the Almajiri carries food in polyethylene bags and are begging from door-to-door to feed themselves. This is an indication that the Nigerian government is This shows that Lagos area boys were complaining over the first two weeks lockdown in the state without knowing that an extra two months will soon be added. The response of the President shows that Lagos State will be shocked when extra two months will be added instead of two weeks. The implication is that instead of the President and the Vice to feel remorseful over the plight of Lagosians, they are busy making a caricature of them.

### 14 b) Internet Meme as Platform for Sharing Sensitive

Ideas Social Media users find the Internet memes handy in the dissemination of awkward ideas. Because of the humorous nature of memes and lack of attribution to most of the Internet members, citizens find the Internet memes as a veritable campaign tool for the spread of nasty ideas that may warrant societal detest. For instance, Internet memes were used to show how other countries are releasing a huge amount of money to fight Covid-19 while countries like Nigeria is simply advising people to stay at home and wash their hands. Internet meme was used in this perspective to show how police officials were chasing Nigerian citizens who flout the stay at home order. This depict scenario or paint a picture of a lack of appropriate measure in handling the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. It is apparent in the picture that, instead of the Nigerian government to provide palliative just the way other countries are doing to fight the virus, the government is busy using uniform men to force people to stay at home.

Another Internet meme shows how the citizens are making an effort to adhere to the guidelines that were put forward by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in the country. This is apparent as some of the citizens are doing everything possible to maintain social distancing. For example, the picture shows how some bike men are trying to maintain distance by creating space between them and the passengers.

The picture shows that Nigerian citizens are law-abiding as far as the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic is a concern. That was why the bike man sat on the tank of the motorcycle and allowed the woman to sit on the passenger's sit while leaving his normal sit to create two meters distance as approved by NCDC.

In another internet meme, the real danger of coronavirus was shown how people could potentially die from the economic impact of Covid-19. It is apparent in the literature that more than 300 people who died since March 19, 2020, mostly during the first two phases of the coronavirus lockdown, lost their lives to hunger, financial distress, and the inability to get timely medical attention. Nigerian government claims its system is robust and capable of providing support to vulnerable people. However, ECOWAS warned that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic could increase the number of people at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition from 17 million to 50 million people between June and August 2020. The findings by the ECOWAS coincided with the category that shows how the Almajiri are begging from door-to-door to feed themselves. Evidence in the meme shows how the doctor remarks that, someone's test result came out positive for hunger instead of Covid-19.

Internet Meme as a Campaign Tool to the Fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria c) Pull a Prank Internet memes were shown ridiculing the evil of Covid-19, showing how God will defeat and shame the devil. People believe that coronavirus will not succeed in Nigeria just the way Ebola was completely defeated.

Many people also believe that the virus was created, which is an evil act to destroy or shake other countries' economies. Some people also see it from the political point of view, that the government is only increasing the figure of Covid-19 in the country to enrich themselves.

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## 339 15 Internet Meme on Facebook March, 2020

340 Another Internet meme also shows how Abuja and Lagos were under lockdown for weeks. Going by the statement  
341 made by the President that the lockdown will be eased in Abuja and Lagos on 4 th May 2020, there was a meme  
342 demonstrating how people in these places will be celebrating the good time after being under lockdown for weeks.  
343 The creature in the form of a devil carrying a sharp object indicates an evil ploy by the devil to spread more of  
344 the Virus on Nigerians.

## 345 16 Volume XX Issue VI Version I

### 346 17 ( A )

347 Another example of such meme is the one that shows how the Nigerian doctors are trying to stop Covi-19 in  
348 the country. This is apparent in the meme as the doctor is pushing the door so hard to prevent the coronavirus  
349 from coming out. This shows that the doctors in the country are working hard to curtail the spread of the virus.  
350 On the other hand, the police are also doing their job to ensure that people are in-door. This is evidence in the  
351 meme as the police person is trying to push people inside. It also means that force can be apply to people that  
352 want to go contrary to the instruction. Therefore, the current situation in Nigeria is how both the police and the  
353 doctors are doing their best to ease the wide spread of Cvid-19 in the country as shown in the meme.

## 354 18 d) Derail a Topic

355 It was on record that Chinese doctors visited Nigeria about the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the decision  
356 to welcome the Chinese doctors prompted a backlash from the Nigerian Medical Association, who argued that  
357 Nigeria does not need external intervention to manage the ongoing pandemic. But top government officials,  
358 including the Health Minister, defended the deployment stressing that the Chinese team will help advise local  
359 authorities on handling the pandemic.

360 Volume XX Issue VI Version I 36 ( A ) hospitals in the country; rather, they prefer to go abroad for treatment.  
361 Others were of the view that rich people especially politicians do not believe in Nigerian doctors and that could  
362 be the reason why they are always traveling abroad to seek medical attention. Still, now that Covid-19 is here in  
363 Nigeria, and there is no way for them to travel out, they will attend the same local hospitals that the commoners  
364 or poor people are attending. Internet meme was used to portray this where a politician was taken in a local  
365 hospital and when he complained, he was told that it is his project. Internet meme was also used to demonstrate  
366 how Nigerian politicians are not putting in place good

## 367 19 Conclusion

368 The findings of the study indicate that social media serves as an avenue to campaign against Covid-19 in Nigeria.  
369 Social media has remarkably contributed to citizen engagement to the fight against Covid-19. The study captures  
370 and highlights how the social networking sites served as an avenue that contributed to the citizen engagement as  
371 well as the application of unhindered freedom of expression, via the use of photographs, vanishing of authorship  
372 about the creation, distribution, and consumption of internet memes to create awareness on Covid-19. Empirical  
373 evidence from the study shows that Internet memes were used as a tool for conveying messages to the general  
374 public. As a tool for the fight against Covid-19, the study found that Internet memes were used to attack, share  
375 sensitive information, pull a prank, and derail a topic. The paper articulates that internet memes serve as an  
376 avenue for direct communication, which contributes to creating awareness on Covid-19 in Nigeria. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>© 2020 Global Journals

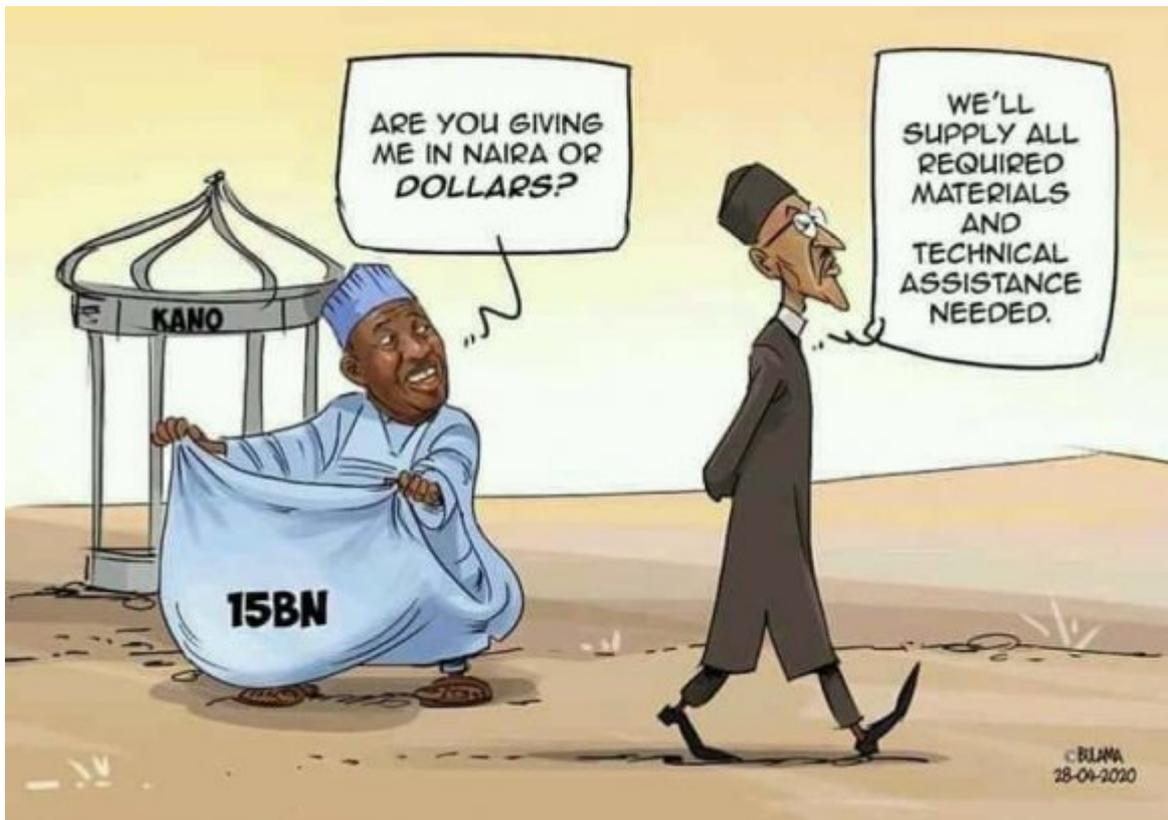


Figure 1:



Figure 2:



Figure 3:

**USA releases \$2 trillion to fight COVID19, Germany \$600 Billion, UK \$330 Billion, Canada \$20 Billion, Italy \$20 Billion & Somalia \$5 Million, Dubai \$500 Billion, Saudi Arabia \$1 trillion. NIGERIA stay at home & wash your hands**

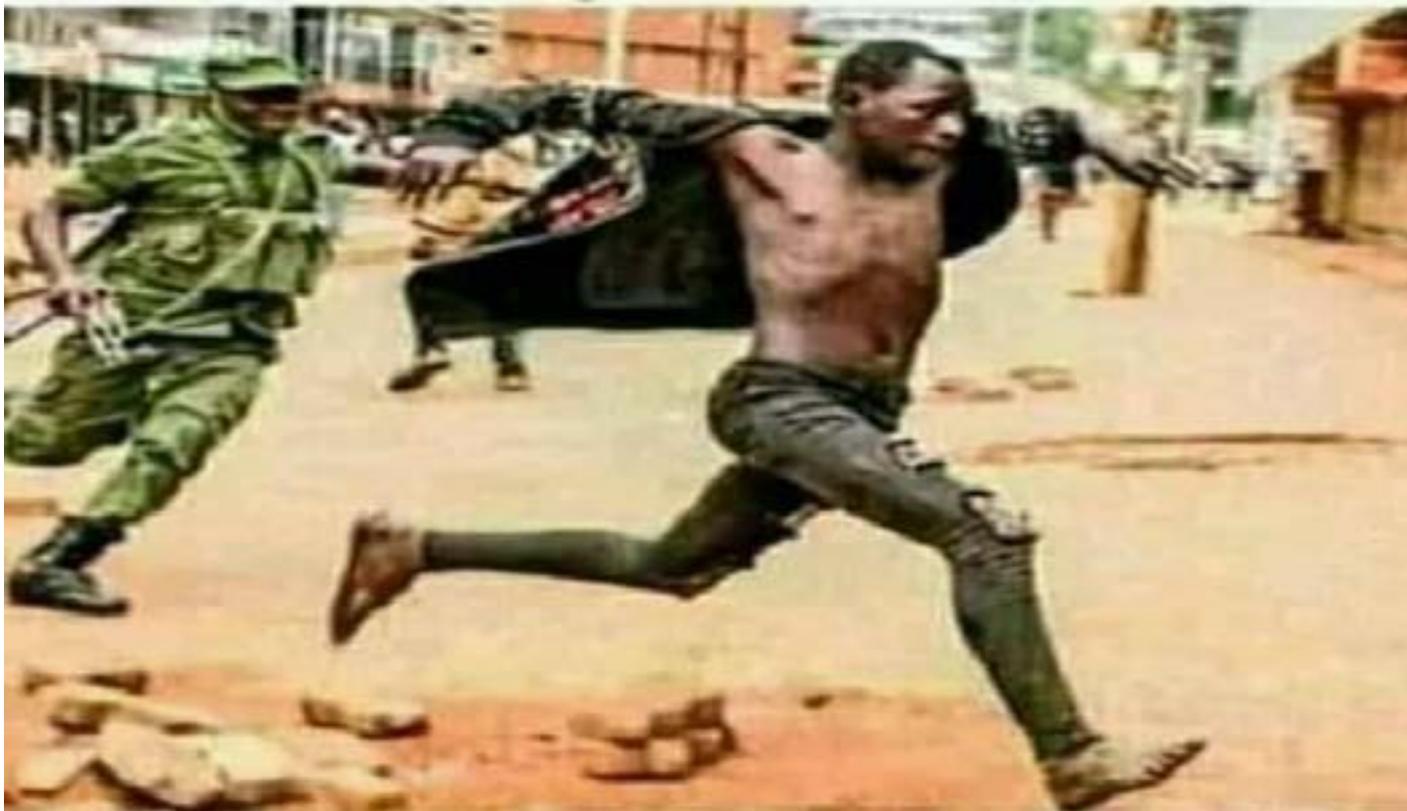


Figure 4:



Figure 5:

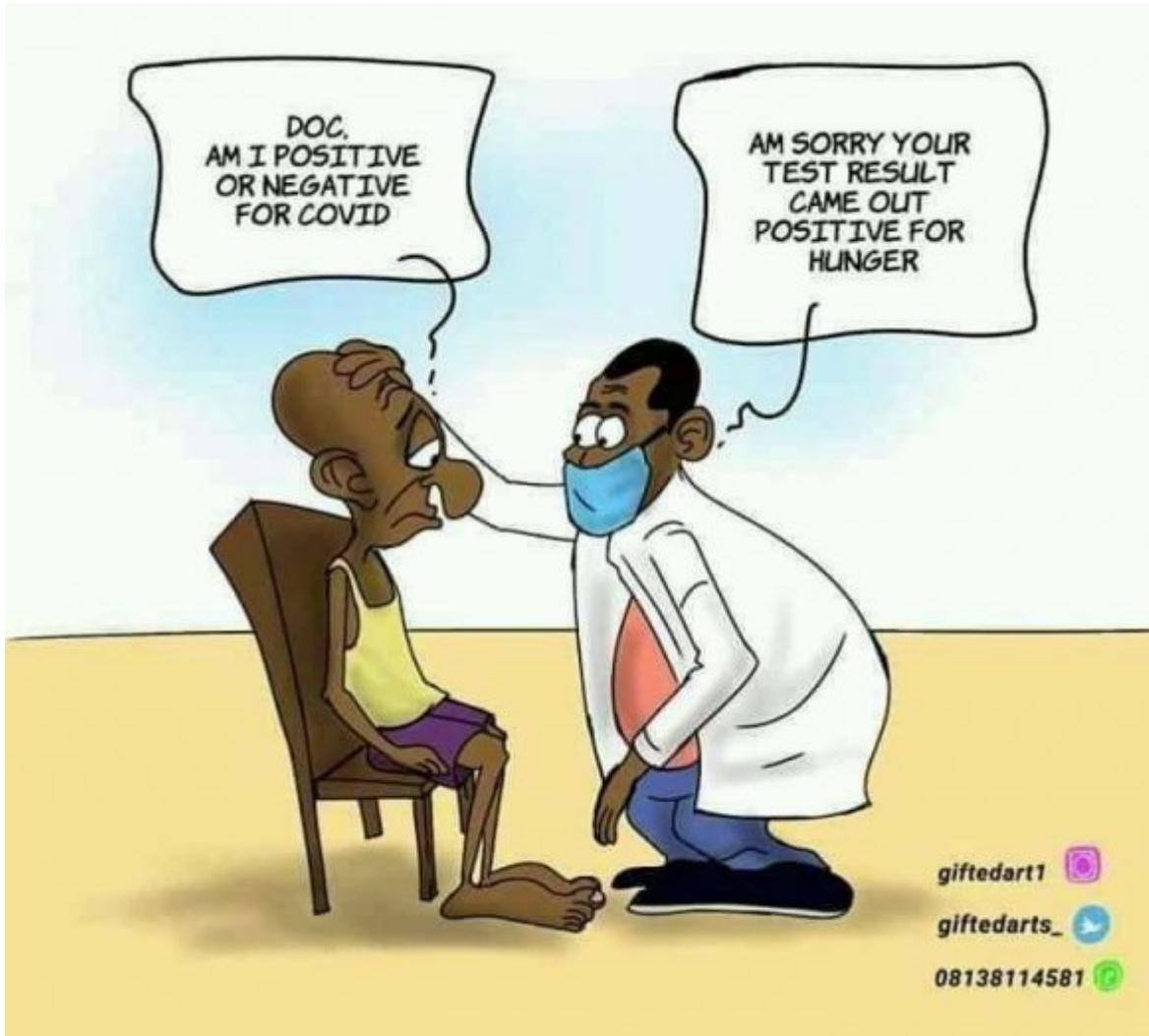


Figure 6:



Figure 7:



Figure 8:



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