

## Correspondence

# Culture as a contributory factor in combatting the Covid-19 pandemic

### ABSTRACT

In a recent correspondence, the racial disparity was discussed regarding knowledge, attitudes and practices related to COVID-19. This paper highlights culture as a contributory factor in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic that is to be considered by each government around the world.

**Keywords** COVID-19, culture, government, public health

The spread of the COVID-19 virus has challenged the preparedness of the people and the various governments around the globe. This public health crisis made the governments of every country imposed stringent policies and systems to limit their casualties. However, with the uniform efforts and actions of the government, each country has shown different results. In a recent correspondence, racial disparities in knowledge, attitudes and practices related to COVID-19 in the USA<sup>1</sup> put forward the existence of significant disparity among races.

Each country contributes to the implementation of homogenous stringent policies such as limited mobility and social distancing. This was received and responded in varied ways by different cultural communities. In a recent study, with the homogenous stringent policies implemented, there are significant numbers of people behaving and complying in social distancing shown heterogeneous across the countries.<sup>2</sup> In a related study, cultural traits also influence the decision of an individual in which deciding his/her mobility is perceived relative to his/her culture.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, a ‘one size fits all’ solution as a kind of mentality and approach could not be considered response because the cultural determinant of each community is distinct. Likewise, the public must understand that ‘Culture may appear neutral, but its power to define identity and communities as a collective is based on values expressed through institutions such as health care, education, and families.’<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in way addressing the public; governments must recognize that ‘Culture shapes language, which in turn shapes communication both in message delivery and reception.’<sup>4</sup> Consequently, culture is also critical in communicating and responding during this time of

the pandemic. Moreover, culture is seen as a connection to each individual, and it expresses the collective sense of the behavior of people which in return this behavior contributes to spreading or suppressing the COVID-19 virus.

In conclusion, to effectively flatten the curve and triumph this public health crisis, the government must realize that culture contributes a significant role in combatting this COVID-19 virus. Governments should consider relevant cultural beliefs and values in the implementation of their policies.

### Authors’ contribution

All authors contributed to all aspects of the manuscript.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this paper.

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