

**THE PERCEPTION OF MASS MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR SENSITIZING  
THE PUBLIC ABOUT INFECTIOUS PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF  
CORONA VIRUS IN BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

**BY**

**OKPOGAN P. TAMARALAYEFA  
ART1601499**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**JULY, 2021**

**THE PERCEPTION OF MASS MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR SENSITIZING  
THE PUBLIC ABOUT INFECTIOUS PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF  
CORONA VIRUS IN BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

**BY**

**OKPOGAN P. TAMARALAYEFA  
ART1601499**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS  
(B.A) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION, TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS,  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,**

**AUGUST, 2021.**

## **DECLARATION**

This projects work is based on a study undertaken by me in the Departments of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Mrs. M. G Akintaro . All ideas, opinions and views are products of my personal research and where the views of others have been expressed, they have been duly acknowledged.

---

**OKPOGAN P. TAMARALAYEFA**  
**ART1601499**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research was duly carried out by **OKPOGAN P. TAMARALAYEFA with Mat. No Art** in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under my supervision and has been approved and accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements, for the awards of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Mass Communication of the University of Benin, Benin city, Nigeria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Project Supervisor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Head of Department**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**External Examiner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His immeasurable grace and ever increasing love throughout my university education. And to my lovely parents, Mr Kenneth Okpogan and Miss Ebis Agukeme Meye who supported, trusted me and saw me through the process of my University Education. Special appreciation to Mr Bright Ebbah for seeing me through and guiding me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My utmost gratitude goes to God Almighty who made all things perfect, for the provision, guidance, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, and whose unfailing love and mercy has made this research work a success.

I also wish to pay special tribute to my project supervisor, Mrs. M. Grace Akintaro who was the light to this research work, throughout the study period. Ma'am I gained a lot. Thank you ma'am for every push.

Special appreciation goes to my amazing parents Mr. Kenneth Okpogan and Miss Ebis Agukeme Meye for their love, support and prayers towards the success of my education. Their consistent calls and daily pushes with checkup was a factor to keep me on check and going toward achieving a success.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Department of Mass Communication. A special thank you to my lecturers that have broken and molded me to a graduate.

Special thanks to my friends Ndidiamaka, Obinna, Amarachi and Jennifer for helping me out through the whole thing. May your lights never go

out. I want to thank Mr Jimon keniye for helping me throughout my days in the university. God bless you all

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Title page	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	i
Declaration	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ii
Certification	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	iii
Dedication	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	iv
Acknowledgements	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	v
Table of Contents	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	vii
Abstract	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	x

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of the study	...	...	..	...	..	1
1.2	Statement of Problem	...	...	...	...	...	8
1.3	Objectives of the Study	...	...	...	..	...	9
1.4	Research Question	...	...	...	...	....	10
1.5	Significance of the Study	...	...	...	...	...	10
1.6	Scope of the Study	...	...	...	...	...	12
1.7	Limitation of Study	...	...	...	..	...	12
1.8	Operational Definition of Terms	...	...	...	..	...	12

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	What Is The Mass Media?	...	...	...	...	14
2.0.1	Characteristics of the Mass Media	...	...	...	16	

2.0.2	The Mass Media and Nigerian Society	...	...	...	...	...	18
2.1	Mass Media Strategies for Creating Awareness	...	...	...	...	...	22
2.2	Health Communication	...	...	...	...	...	26
2.3	Media Health Communication Activities in Nigeria	...	...	...	...	...	29
2.4	The Role of Media Campaigns on Health Behaviour	...	...	...	...	...	34
2.5.1	Covid- 19 Crisis Response Strategy	...	....	...	...	...	41
2.5.1	Outbreak of Coronavirus in the World	...	...	...	...	...	42
2.5.2	Covid-19 in Nigeria	...	...	...	...	...	43
2.6	Covid-19 Pandemic: The Indispensability of Mass Media in Crisis and Health Communication and Promotion	...	..	...	...	...	46
2.7	Covid-19 Symptoms and Modes of Transmission	...	...	...	...	...	52
2.8	Empirical Review	...	...	...	...	...	56
2.9	Theoretical Framework	...	...	...	...	...	57
<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>							
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>							
3.1	Research Design	...	...	...	..	...	63
3.2	Population of Study	...	...	...	...	...	64

3.3	Sample Size	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	64
3.4	Sampling Technique	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	65
3.5	Instrument of Data collection	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	66
3.6	Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	67
3.7	Method of Data Analysis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	67

**CHAPTER FOUR:**

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

4.1	Introduction	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	69
4.2	Presentation of Analysis based on Bio data	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	69
4.3	presentation and analysis of data dazed on other Items in the questionnaire	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71
4.4	Discussion of Findings	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	77

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.0	Introduction	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	82
5.1	Summary of findings	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	82
5.2	Conclusions	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	83
5.3	Recommendations	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	84
	References	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	86
	Appendix	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	90

## ABSTRACT

The study examined on the perception of mass media as tools for sensitizing the public about infectious pandemic: a case study of corona virus in Benin City, Nigeria. Survey method was adopted and the instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. Using the Taro Yameni formula, 400 people were sampled from the population of 1,495,800 in Benin City being the capital of Edo state, these Statistic figures of 2016 population census, during the cause of this survey. 400 questionnaires were distributed through the city and all 342 were retrieved. Data collected was analyzed in tables and simple percentages. The media play an important role in the dissemination of information on the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The novel Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), first identified in Wuhan China in December 2019, has rapidly spread to almost every region of the world. To prevent spread of the virus, civil societies and government agencies embarked on enlightenment campaigns for good hygiene and social distancing. However, it is important to measure whether the population is receiving information that calms it down, as well as whether such news are in accordance with the magnitude of the issue. This study assessed knowledge and perceptions about COVID-19 among the general public in Nigeria during the initial week of the pandemic lockdown in the country. The findings affirm that Nigerians are highly knowledgeable about COVID-19 and their premier sources of information about the pandemic is the social media. Covid -19 pandemic is one of the major public health concerns in the country. Using the mass media in creating the awareness through media campaign of breast cancer has become imperative.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of The Study**

Media works as a bridge between government and society. Media have been recognized as robust power to form how we experience this world. Whether a viewer or a reader, we just close our mind and open our eyes. In crisis like corona virus media played a very significant role in making people aware about the situation, calm the junta and encourage them to do positive action.

Communication in its simplest form is the exchange and distribution of information, ideas, attitude and feelings from a sender to the receiver. It is central to the heart of any endeavour, therefore cutting across all spheres of human activities (Umeri& Galadima, 2008). This implies that without effective communication especially in the wake of crisis like that of Covid- 19, it will be a daunting task to achieve any meaningful and positive result and behaviours.

Communication creates room for a common pool of ideas, strengths the feeling of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thoughts into action, reflecting every emotions and need from the humblest tasks of

human survival to supreme manifestations of creativity and destruction (Umeri & Galadima, 2008).

The world is fast becoming a global village and a necessary tool for this process is communication of which mass media is a key player. The quantum development in the mass media industry all over the world is very rapid as one innovation replaces another in a matter of weeks. Emerging trends in socio-economic growth shows a high premium being placed on information and communication technology (ICT) by homes, organizations and nations.

World Health Organization on 30 January 2020, officially declared the COVID-19 epidemic as a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2020). Corona-virus disease 19 (COVID-19) is a flu-like illness caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome. It is an unknown acute respiratory disease that spreads mainly through the respiratory tract killing thousands of people across the nations, countries and continents. Boston University (2020) revealed the best current medical knowledge which indicates that around 80-85% of those affected experience only mild illness, with cough and fever. They further maintained that, generally about 14% of older individuals or those with underlying medical issues suffer from more severe symptoms with 5% becoming critically ill.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wahan China. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China including Nigeria. There is presently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and there is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19.

The sensitization and awareness campaign were to sensitize the populace on the cause of COVID-19, its symptoms, consequences and prevention methods. The media particularly social media, radio and television is used as a veritable instrument for creating the needed awareness and COVID-19 health education. Although some scholars argued that the use of social media is exclusively reserved for the educated. Government of Nigeria adopted media institutions with other traditional means of mass mobilization to create proper awareness of COVID-19 among rural communities. These institutions particularly the television and radio station adopted native vernacular or language as their means of communication.

Effective and timely communication during crisis cannot be exaggerated because it promotes knowledge, awareness and it is also a good means of creating, understanding and clearing the air against information overload and

misinformation. Communication is a process through which needs, emotions, desires, goals and sentiments are expressed among human beings using codes, symbols, and language understood by several parties (Keghku, 2008)

Mass media has a prominent role to play in modern society. It can bring about radical changes and improve social situation as it influences our social, civil, cultural, political, economic and aesthetic outlook. Modernization has converted media into an indispensable feature of human activity. However, factors like age, education, economic condition, personal needs and availability of proper components decide the quantum and frequency of media use. This is evident from the fact that most media centres are located in urban areas. The majority of consumers of media products are also concentrated in and around cities and towns.

According to Virginia Paul, Priyanka, Singh, Sunita B. John (2013), Scientific literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity. It involves the negotiation of socio-scientific issues and requires ability to make informed decisions regarding these issues as they have moral and ethical implications too. Issues with a scientific dimension on a daily basis through the media. If the idea of scientific literacy is

to have relevance for situations where students encounter science, it has to include the ability to engage constructively in socio-scientific issues in examining a variety of real world issues and grounding scientific knowledge in such realities. In today's world, such issues might include the impact on society of: global warming, genetic engineering, animal testing, deforestation practices, nuclear testing and environmental legislations.

The emergence of Corona-virus as a global pandemic is of paramount concern to the world and. the reality of COVID-19 as a deadly disease in Nigeria poses even a greater risk to the people. Research has it that, when an individual comes in contact with an infected person, there are high chances of the individual becoming infected and the end result in most cases is death as vaccines are undergoing tests. As a result, the mass media adopt sensitization and awareness creation as tools to curb radical effects of this notorious COVID-19 on the people.

The influence of media on society has been growing fast renewals in the community. Renewal of the intangible changes nothing and there are negative toward the positive direction. Media influence is related to other aspects such as the nature of a communicator, the content / information from the media itself, as well as responses from the community. Consciously or unconsciously, people

are often influenced by mass media, such as persuading the media to use a particular product or indirectly persuaded to support a particular political ideology or political party.

The mass media comprise all technological or mechanical devices engaged by a source with the intent of reaching a diversified and heterogeneous audience with messages simultaneously. Okunna (1999) believes that mass media are a variety of channels through which mass communication takes place.

Mass media remain a key component and veritable tool in the campaign toward sustainable health development in Nigeria. This is so because through adequate health communication and campaigns on issues of health such as prevention practices, cure eradication of diseases like corona virus. The mass media have proven to be very concern about our health development.

According to Akinfeleye (1987), Health communication basically could be described as the form of communication disseminated by the mass media for adequate health care delivery office. Office of disease prevention and health promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human services posits that health communication is the study and practice of communicating promotional health information, such as in public health campaigns, health education, and between doctor and patient.

Hence, it was right to assert that media health communication is the dissemination of health information by the media in order to influence peoples' health choice and improve their health literacy for sustainable health development. As a concept, media health communication seeks to: increase audience knowledge and awareness of health issue, influence behaviours and attitudes towards a health issue, demonstrate healthy practices, demonstrate the benefits of behaviour changes to public health outcomes, advocate a position on a health issue or policy, increase demand or support for health services and argue against misconceptions about health.

Controlling the spread of infection on a population is an important mandate of public health sector. Mass media campaign can be used to provide information on current and effective vaccination, drug therapy and social distancing measures.

This study, therefore, posed to assess the level of public awareness on COVID-19 among the people in the light of media sensitization campaign and the impact of the campaign on their precautionary health behaviour.

## **1.2 Statement of The Problem**

The human health state considered the most critical to any country survival of a truism that healthy population bring about the desired goals. The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) discovered in 2019 spread from person to person. The first case of COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa has been confirmed in Nigeria.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is presently in Nigeria, the patient who first brought it to Nigeria is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and flew into the commercial city of Lagos from Milan on 25 February 2020. (BBC News, 2020).

Globally, more than 80,000 people in nearly 50 countries have been infected. Over 2800 have died, the vast majority in China's Hubei province.

The sensitization and awareness campaign were to sensitize the populace on the cause of coronavirus, its symptoms, consequences, and prevention methods. The media (particularly social media, radio and television) was used as a veritable instrument for creating the needed awareness and coronavirus health education, although some scholars argue that the use of social media is an exclusive reserve of the educated.

Nigeria government adopted inclusive media institutions, i.e. television stations, radio stations, and newspapers together with other traditional means of mass mobilization to create proper awareness of coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. These institutions particularly the television and radio stations adopted native vernacular or language as their means of communication.

In Nigeria, the ability to contain this virus also lie within the help of the mass media. This study, therefore, was poised to assess the level of awareness of corona virus among residents of different rural communities in Nigeria in the light of media sensitization campaign in the country and the impact of the campaign on their environmental health behaviours.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The aim of this study is to assess the influence of mass media as tools for sensitizing the public about infectious pandemic: a case study of corona virus in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the level of public awareness on Covid -19 campaigns in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the knowledge level of Covid -19 created by the media campaign.

3. Determine the influence of Covid -19 media campaign on health behaviour in Nigeria.
4. Examine the public perception of Covid -19 media campaign.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of public awareness on Covid -19 campaigns in Nigeria?
2. What is the knowledge level of Covid –19 created by the media campaign?
3. To what extent is the influence of Covid -19 media campaign on health behaviour in Nigeria?
4. How did the public perceive Covid -19 media campaign?

#### **1.5 Significance of The Study**

This research provides more insight to our knowledge of the mass media in sensitization and creating awareness of important matters.

The study would enable relevant agencies concerned with eradicating COVID-19 in Nigeria and to appraise the media framework for possible

modification and modernization. The study exposes Nigerians perception of the media as an institution concerned with the people's welfare and highlight the potency of the media as an instrument of mass education.

Empirically, this study was carried out to identify the perception of mass media as tools for sensitizing Nigerians about infectious pandemic. This study would be of utmost importance to investors, government and the researchers because it would provide policy recommendations to the various Nigeria stakeholders taking adequate measures in the broadcasting industry for rapid capacity investment.

The changing character of the broadcasting industry especially, the television station reforms including the licensing of online radio and television stations has affected the industry in recent times and would push studies on the perception of mass media as tools for sensitizing Nigerians about infectious pandemic to new evidence(s). It will contribute to existing literature on the subject matter.

This research would contribute to the existing literature on related topics as it would give researchers an opportunity to read and make reference to when discussing issues concerning mass media as a tool in sensitizing the public on

infectious pandemic. Also, it would benefit organizations and media practitioners as more knowledge would be gained from this research.

### **1.6 Scope of The Study**

This study was intended to examine the perception of mass media as tools for sensitizing the public about infectious pandemic: a case study of corona virus in Benin City, Nigeria. The study is restricted to COVID-19 media awareness and its impact on the health behaviour in Benin City.

### **1.7 Limitation of The Study**

A study of this nature is bound to experience certain problems such as the constraints that are imposed on the researcher. The following are the likely challenges this research may face.

### **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined operationally.

**Pandemic:** A pandemic is defined as “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”. The classical definition includes nothing about population immunity, virology or disease severity.

**Disease:** A disorder of structure or function in a human, animal or plant especially one that produces specific symptoms or that affects a specific location and is not simply a direct result of physical injury.

**Infectious:** (of a disease or disease-causing organism) liable to be transmitted to people, organisms, etc. through the environment.

**Mass media:** refers to a diverse array of mass technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication.

**Perception:** The ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. The way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

- 2.0 What Is The Mass Media?
  - 2.0.1 Characteristics of the Mass Media
  - 2.0.2 The Mass Media and Nigerian Society
- 2.1 Mass Media Strategies for Creating Awareness
- 2.2 Health Communication
- 2.3 Media Health Communication Activities in Nigeria
- 2.4 The Role of Media Campaigns on Health Behaviour
- 2.5 Covid- 19 Crisis Response Strategy
  - 2.5.1 Outbreak of Coronavirus in the World
  - 2.5.2 Covid-19 in Nigeria
- 2.6 Covid-19 Pandemic: The Indispensability of Mass Media in Crisis and Health Communication and Promotion
- 2.7 Covid-19 Symptoms and Modes of Transmission
- 2.8 Empirical Review
- 2.9 Theoretical Framework.

#### **2.0 What Is The Mass Media?**

McQuail (2000) describe mass media as a means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in a society

to a greater or lesser degree. Media is a plural of medium, which means a channel or vehicle through which something is carried or transmitted. In other words, mass media are channels of communication in a modern society, primarily the print and the electronic media.

McQuail further describes the mass media as the organized means for communicating openly and at a distance to many receivers within a short space of time. The mass media are impersonal communication sources that reach large audiences. The primary function of the mass media system is to provide information to several millions of people. The mass media are extremely influential. Each of the media is presumed to affect perceptions and behaviour in a distinctive way. They can affect the society and vice versa. The mass media are the uniquely modern means of public communication and much of their importance lies in the fact that they are a major cause of whatever modes of perception, thought, public discourse, and political action. Because of their size and the large number of people they reach, the mass media have tremendous impact on society.

Murphy (1977) sums up societal impacts of the media in different ways as oil, glue and dynamite. As oil, Murphy asserts that media of communication keep the world running smoothly by helping individuals adjust to the reality of

lives. They keep society on and healthy by suggesting solutions that are socially acceptable. As glue, social cohesion is maintained by communication. Murphy contends that the media gives all of us including strangers something to talk about by setting agenda of discussion. And that over the years, communication builds up and reinforces the fabrics that hold a society together.

Murphy also describes the mass media as dynamites that can rip the society apart. A good example of this is the propaganda campaigns that preceded the Russian Revolution in 1917 and Hitler's rise to the German Chancellorship in 1933. Similarly, the mass media particularly the newspapers and magazines played a tremendous role in the struggle for Nigeria's independence in 1960.

### **2.0.1 Characteristics of the Mass Media**

Weaver cited in Daramola (2000) identified five major characteristics of the mass media. These are:

1. The first characteristic derives from the name, mass media which implies that media is designed for, distributed to and consumed by mass audiences. The mass audiences are very large, either in terms of number

or proportion of total population and the audience exist in large, heterogeneous societies either industrial or transitional societies.

2. The second characteristic of the mass media is that they are big businesses, employing millions of people and making billions of naira as the case may be as profit.
3. One other characteristic of the mass media is that they are sole disseminators of news (defined as factual, current and verifiable information about recent events). The mass media also disseminate other sorts of information –fictional stories, political advocacy, and strictly utilitarian information like recipes.
4. The mass media are also characterized by speed with which they gather information and frequency with which they distribute it. Media producing organizations are continuously gathering information and are in instantaneous communication with their sources of information. The speed and rhythm of this ongoing process of gathering and distributing information, especially news, sharply differentiate mass media from other media and exert enormous influence on the character of their messages.

5. The fifth characteristic of the mass media is that they are all twentieth-century phenomena. In other words, they all developed and attained maturity during roughly the same period, in response to the same circumstances and in pursuit of the same purposes.

### **2.0.2 The Mass Media and Nigerian Society**

The mass media play a pivotal role in the development process of a country. The mass media are generally regarded as channels of communication that are capable of reaching heterogeneous audiences simultaneously with uniform messages. The mass media in Nigeria regularly cover all sorts of issues such as health, music, fine art, crime, sports, and political events (Meyer, 2002; Soola, 2004).

The mass media transmit ideas and new information to target audience in the society. Tosanwumi (1994) has observed that the mass media educate, inform, and entertain. Beyond these functions, they also persuade and catalyze social mobilization. In other words, the mass media can be regarded as powerful sources of information because they have the capability to penetrate every segment of the society. They have the ability to disseminate messages about

issues, ideals and products. Furthermore, the mass media have the capacity to create awareness and knowledge about issues of national interest.

The traditional mass media usually consist of radio, television, newspaper, and magazine. The radio has been regarded as the most pervasive and most effective medium in reaching the country's widely dispersed, heterogeneous audience. It is reputed worldwide for being the cheapest, simplest and most portable medium of mass communication for reaching people. Soola (2009) has reasoned that the radio is not limited by electricity, which is hardly available and epileptic in its supply when available. In addition, the radio is as extremely mobile: people could listen to a radio program in their car, home, or office. However, due to the downturn in the Nigerian economy and its toll on people's purchasing power, both the hardware and software of this medium has become expensive for an average income earner.

Soola (1999) has observed that radio sets and batteries are expensive in Nigerian society. He also added the batteries of these radio set are becoming less long-lasting. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the radio, being ubiquitous in nature, can be regarded as a powerful source of information. Television possesses the unique characteristics of sound, sight, and motion, which it combines with simultaneity. It also transcends the bounds often

imposed by illiteracy on information and knowledge acquisition. In addition, its status conferral on individuals or demonstrated practices is unrivaled (Soola, 2009; Soola, 1999). In other words, television has the capacity of audio-visual presentation of programs and, by virtue of its ownership and operational structure, can be regarded as an urban medium. In addition, television has the ability to reach a heterogeneous audience in both rural and urban settings.

However, television has its limitations in Nigeria; Soola (1999) has argued that television stations in Nigeria suffer from poor production capability, declining economic fortunes, and cheap foreign alternatives. He also observed that a stocktaking of a typical evening program offering on most Nigerian private television stations reveals that most of the programs are entertainment centered. It is pertinent to note that most of the limitations of the electronic media are man-made and systemic and not a creation of electronic technology. It is believed that all these limitations can be overcome, when the government, media owners and managers are committed to socio-economic development and growth of a nation.

The print media, on the other hand, can be used to educate, enlighten, and mobilize people to a particular issue of national interest. The print media primarily refers to newspapers and magazines, though other forms of print

media include billboards, posters, handbills, pamphlets, and brochures. Two unique advantages of the print media are its permanence and the possibility of information custody and storage for close reading and future use. Soola (2009) has, however, noted that certain user requirements often limit print media reach. The first user requirement is that he or she must be literate, at least in the local language. Among a predominantly non-literate rural population, print media reach is severely limited, particularly as more than 70 percent of them are published in the English language.

In addition, it should be noted that newspapers and magazines in Nigeria are becoming increasingly endangered by the anxiety to survive at all cost. This can be observed as most of the pages of a newspaper are clustered with advertisements. Nevertheless, the use of newspapers and magazines for development purposes is essential to enlighten and mobilize people.

The internet with its multimedia capabilities has affected the traditional ways individuals access the mass media in the society (Adaja, 2005). With the rise of internet as a new media, the possibility to express one's self has become easier. The internet is increasingly being defined by new digital technologies that empower users to develop, create, rate, and distribute internet content and applications (O'Reilly, 2005). Generally, the internet is a worldwide network of

computer networks, connected to each other by telecommunication links. It is made up of an ever-growing number of organizations and individuals who have decided to share information in this giant, interconnected open system (Norton & Smith, 1996). Okpoko (2006) argued that the principal functions of the internet are communication (e-mail), information gathering, and electronic marketing.

The advent of multimedia devices such as smartphones, iPads, and others have revolutionized the ways in which individuals access information. Individuals can have access to their radio and television programs with the use of their multimedia devices. People can also get sports updates and news reports on their cell phones.

## **2.1 Mass Media Strategies for Creating Awareness**

Against the backdrop of various theories and models that emphasize the importance of the mass media in creating awareness, it's clear that the mass media can be used to create awareness of covid -19 in Nigerian society. Covid -19 pandemic is one of the major public health concerns in the country. The mass media can be used in the following ways:

**1. The use of electronic media in creating awareness:** The radio and television can be used in the vanguard of creating awareness of breast cancer. Effective broadcast media use requires that both program type and time of airing be given due consideration. In other words, radio and television use for breast cancer awareness must be targeted at peak periods or “primetime,” when most audience members stay tuned to their sets.

In essence, the electronic media can apply its agenda setting function by spearheading a campaign that would create the awareness of Covid -19 in the Nigerian society. For example, television can be used to set an agenda by creating awareness of Covid -19 through scrolling messages on primetime news bulletins and programs. The radio can also be used to set an agenda by introducing musical commercials about Covid -19 during prime-time periods. Furthermore, the television can be used to create cues to action by showing documentaries that focus on the nature, causes, and consequences of breast cancer.

Also, a program could feature an episode in which a character gets Covid -19, which could help to enlighten and educate persons on the nature and causes of Covid -19.

**2. The use of the print media in creating awareness:** The print media can serve as an effective way to create awareness, or to remind the public of critical information about Covid -19. The print media are unique in being able to quickly reach a mass audience with a standard message. The print media can thus create awareness of an innovation and may be able to provide “how-to” information.

Furthermore, newspapers and magazines can apply the agenda-setting function in publishing news reports of Covid -19 on the front and back pages. In addition, public service advertisements on breast cancer can be published at vital parts of the front and back pages.

**3. The use of community media:** The Asia Institute of Journalism (1983) defines community media as those media that are developed and managed by people who share common values and aspirations in a small, geographically defined area and that promote access and participation for development.

Community media are essential to bridge the gaps in knowledge between literate and illiterate people, as well as the appreciable differences in learning in both urban and rural settings. Community media comprises rural community newspapers, community radios, and community viewing centers. Community media provide alternative channels through which people’s needs

and interests can be articulated. The use of rural community newspaper: We have international and national newspapers and magazines, yet there is a dire need for rural community newspapers.

Soola (2003) declares that “a rural /community newspaper is a regular publication which carries news stories, features, editorials, illustrations, and pictures, as well as advertisements for rural and urban people. It is put together and published by rural folks in their own place...” (p. 58). Rural community newspapers have a great potential for stimulating literacy and social development and for helping to integrate rural dwellers into national life. There are various rural newspapers in Nigeria published in the local languages of the people in their various communities.

Covid -19 issues can be published in the forms of news reports, articles, and editorials as they relate to rural circumstances to aid understanding, assimilation, and ultimately create the needed knowledge in the rural areas to aid the prevention of Covid -19. The use of rural community radio: According to Ememaku (2003), a community radio is “a system of radio broadcasting whereby a community establishes, operates and manages a radio station for the ultimate objective of meeting the communication needs of its members” (p.

126). The content of community radio programs originates from the local community people; it is community-specific and situation-relevant. In addition, indigenous radio dramas can be used to educate people about the nature, causes, and consequences of breast cancer in Nigeria. Community viewing centers: These are effective forums for explaining efforts of rural development to the rural populace. Onabanjo (2003) noted that the community viewing center is a controlled theater for imparting knowledge and also serves as a rallying point for people in rural areas to be adequately informed. Importantly, the effectiveness of the community viewing centers is in carefully selecting the materials to be viewed relative to the peculiar needs of a given local area. For example, the community viewing center can serve as a platform for showing documentary programs aimed at creating awareness of Covid -19. These documentary programs should be produced in the indigenous languages of the audiences.

## **2.2 The Concept of Health Communication**

According to Akinfeleye (1987), Health communication basically could be described as the form of communication disseminated by the mass media for adequate health care delivery office. Office of disease prevention and health

promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human services posits that health communication is the study and practice of communicating promotional health information, such as in public health campaigns, health education, and between doctor and patient. Hence, it will be right to assert that media health communication is the dissemination of health information by the media in order to influence peoples' health choice and improve their health literacy for sustainable health development. As a concept, media health communication seeks to:

- Increase audience knowledge and awareness of health issue.
- Influence behaviours and attitudes towards a health issue.
- Demonstrate healthy practices.
- Demonstrate the benefits of behaviour changes to public health outcomes.
- Advocate a position on a health issue or policy.
- Increase demand or support for health services.
- Argue against misconceptions about health.

One of the key objectives of health communication is to influence individuals and communities. The goal is admirable since health communication aims to improve health outcomes by sharing health-related information. In fact,

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define health communication as “the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health” (2001; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). The word influence is also included in the Healthy People 2010 definition of health communication as “the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 11-2).

Health communication interventions have been successfully used for many years by nonprofit organizations, the commercial sector, and others to advance public, corporate, or product-related goals in relation to health. As many authors have noted, health communication draws from numerous disciplines, including health education, mass and speech communication, marketing, social marketing, psychology, anthropology, and sociology (Bernhardt, 2004; Institute of Medicine, 2003; World Health Organization, 2003). It relies on different communication activities or action areas, including interpersonal communications, public relations, public advocacy, community mobilization, and professional communications (World Health Organization, 2003; Bernhardt, 2004).

Another important attribute of health communication should be “to support and sustain change.” In fact, key elements of successful health communication programs or campaigns always include long-term program sustainability, as well as the development of communication tools and steps that make it easy for individuals, communities, and other audiences to adopt or sustain a recommended behavior, practice, or policy change. Health communication is about improving health outcomes by encouraging behavior modification and social change. It is increasingly considered an integral part of most public health interventions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005; Bernhardt, 2004).

This entails achieving a complete wholeness in terms of an individual’s physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being through a well-structured and designed health program. It denotes the continuous maintenance of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

### **2.3 Media Health Communication Activities in Nigeria**

Mass media remain a key component and veritable tool in the campaign toward sustainable health development in Nigeria. This is so because through

adequate health communication and campaigns on issues of health such as drugs abuse, vaccines/immunizations, maternal health care, family planning programs, healthful living practices, prevention practices, cure eradication of diseases etc. The mass media have proven to be very concern about our health development. Therefore, an attempt will be made to highlight some media health communication activities in Nigeria. These will include:

- **Poliomyelitis Vaccine Controversy:** In 2003 and 2004, the fight against the eradication of poliomyelitis suffered a serious setback in the Northern part of Nigeria owing substantially to wide spread rumours and misconceptions among Muslims over the safety of the vaccine. The federal government had to engage the media in conjunction with the traditional rulers to alley these fears through health communication on the polio virus and the safety of the vaccine.
- **Family Planning Program:** The media in Nigeria were seriously engaged by the government on the issue of family planning. Through media health communication on the subject, the socio-economic consequences of an unplanned family were drummed into the consciousness of Nigerians. The media highlighted the health implications to the women who go on having children every year and the

economic consequence which reflects in untrained children, inability to access health facilities and other needs. The media health communications on this subject resulted in family planning consciousness amongst Nigerians.

- **Health Communication on Immunization:** In Nigeria, immunization sessions are organized and screened on the television on regular basis. In recent times, during these immunization sessions, health stakeholders address women on their vital roles as mothers of the Nigerian children. The radio too had been put to very effective use in broadcasting the program the masses, especially those that do not have access to the television programs. During these exercises, the print media such as newspapers and magazines, flyers and so on were not excluded.

From the above, it is quite obvious that media health communication on immunization have contributed immensely to immunization campaign successes in Nigeria. The media's contributions here hinging on their recognition of the importance of health towards national development (Abone, 2008).

- **Malaria Control:** Media health communications have aided in the fight and control of malaria. Through this means, the people have been sensitized, and educated on the causes and ways of checking the spread

and treatment for the disease. However, it is the area of checking or controlling malaria that the media, especially radio in Nigeria has played a significant role. This is because malaria seems to be endemic amongst the poor of the society who require being educated on the causes and intervention methods. Thus, radio talks, drama etc. are organized on regular basis in order to educate the poor masses on how to fight mosquitoes. Media communication on malaria program such as roll-back-malaria is carried daily emphasizing why we should sleep under nets and keep our environments clean.

- **Health Communication on HIV/AIDs Pandemic:** Since the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDs) came into Nigeria, media health communication on the disease has been immense. The people have been sensitized through NTA Network health programs; adverts and slogans on AIDs have been carried by mass media channel of Television and Radio. Newspapers and magazines also carry articles and cartoons on the scourge. Health providers from time to time take to the various media to inform, educate, encourage and direct the public on the way forward with HIV/AIDs. The media in Nigeria have fully taken up the

challenge posed by HIV/AIDs pandemic through effective communication on the disease to the people.

- **Health Communication on Ebola Virus:** Ebola virus disease (EVD) also known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever has been in existence for about four decades before its first case appeared in Nigeria on July 20, 2014. According to Hewlett B and Hewlett B (2007), Ebola virus disease was reported around the region of the River Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) formerly Congo Kinshasa and Zaire) in 1976. All these years, media health communication on this pandemic in Nigeria was simply unfounded but with the first recorded case of Ebola in Nigeria being found in Patrick Sawyer of Liberia, the Nigerian media suddenly was agog with health communication that informed the citizenry about all they need to know about the disease ranging from its origin, causal agents, symptoms signs and safety behaviours.

In handling the Ebola pandemic in Nigeria, health and government officials fully appreciated the importance of communication through the various media channels in reaching the citizenry. They rallied communities to support contain measures, house-to-house information campaigns and messages on local radio stations and television, in English and local dialects were used to explain the

level of risk, effective personal preventive measures and actions being taken for control. The seriousness with which media health communication on Ebola was undertaken underscores the seriousness of the pandemic and the enormous danger it poses to sustainable health development in Nigeria.

#### **2.4 The Role of Media Campaigns On Health Behaviour**

There is wide agreement that awareness leads to knowledge, and knowledge leads to behaviour modification (Rimal, 2000). Mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers. Exposure to such messages is, therefore, generally passive. Such campaigns are frequently competing with factors, such as pervasive product marketing, powerful social norms, and behaviours driven by addiction or habit. Mass media campaigns can produce positive changes or prevent negative changes in health-related behaviours across large populations.

Ikpeze (2007) opined that broadcast media has long been used in the promotion of good health practices and in the prevention of various social and health problems. In all its diversity, the broadcast media has been identified as constituting a primary source of information through which people learn about

the world around them during the outbreak of the Covid -19 pandemic in Nigeria. The term public communication campaigns tends to shape behaviours toward desirable social outcomes through literature and what experts variously submit to as civic information, public education, public awareness, or public rendezvous campaigns (Weiss & Tschirhart, 1994). The ultimate goals of public communication campaigns include healthier individuals, families, and communities. It features only communications through media channels (Dungan-Seaver, 1999; Rice & Atkin, 2009; Rogers & Storey, 1987).

Over the past few decades, media campaigns have been used in an attempt to affect various health behaviours in mass populations. . Typical campaigns have placed messages in media that reach large audiences, most frequently via television or radio, but also outdoor media, such as billboards and posters, and print media, such as magazines and newspapers. Exposure to such messages is generally passive, resulting from an incidental effect of routine use of media. Some campaigns incorporate new technologies (eg, the internet, mobile phones and personal digital assistants)

The mass media are intensively employed in public health. Vast sums are spent annually for materials and salaries that have gone into the production and distribution of booklets, pamphlets, exhibits, newspaper articles, and radio

and television programs. These media are employed at all levels of public health in the hope that three effects might occur: the learning of correct health information and knowledge, the changing of health attitudes and values and the establishment of new health behavior.

Mass media campaigns have long been a tool for promoting public health (Noar, 2006) being widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers. Communication campaigns involving diverse topics and target audiences have been conducted for decades. Some reasons why information campaigns fail' is an early landmark in the literature. Exposure to such messages is, therefore, generally passive (Wakefield, 2010). Such campaigns are frequently competing with factors, such as pervasive product marketing, powerful social norms, and behaviours driven by addiction or habit.

Mass media campaigns have generally aimed primarily to change knowledge, awareness and attitudes, contributing to the goal of changing behaviour. There has not normally been a high expectation that such campaigns on their own would change people's behaviour. Theory suggests that, as with other preventive health efforts, mass media campaigns are most likely to reduce unhealthy attitudes if their messages are reinforced by other efforts. Reinforcing

factors may include law enforcement efforts, grassroots activities, and other media messages. Mass media campaigns have usually been one element of broader health promotion programmes with mutually reinforcing components:

1. Mobilising and supporting local agencies and professionals who have direct access to individuals within the target population.
2. Bringing together partnerships of public, voluntary and private sector bodies and professional organisations.
3. Informing and educating the public, but also setting the agenda for public debate about the health topic, thereby modifying the climate of opinion surrounding it.
4. Encouraging local and national policy changes so as to create a supportive environment within which people are more able to change their behaviour.

Media campaigns can be of short duration or may extend over long periods. They may stand alone or be linked to other organize programme components, such as clinical or institutional outreach and easy access to newly available or existing products or services, or may complement policy changes.

Multiple methods of dissemination might be used if health campaigns are part of broader social marketing programmes, Kotler P, Lee NR (2008)

The great promise of mass media campaigns lies in their ability to disseminate well defined behaviourally focused messages to large audiences repeatedly over time in an incidental manner, and at a low cost per head. campaign messages can fall short and even backfire; exposure of audiences to the message might not meet expectations, hindered by inadequate funding, the increasingly fractured and cluttered media environment, use of inappropriate or poorly researched format (eg, boring factual messages or age-inappropriate content), or a combination of these features; homogeneous messages might not be persuasive to heterogeneous audiences; and campaigns might address behaviours that audiences lack the resources to change.

Mass media campaigns have proven to be effective in helping to increase immunization rates (Porter and others, 2000; Paunio and others, 1991), vaccination knowledge (McDivitt, Zimicki, and Hornik, 1997), cervical cancer screening among Hispanic women (Ramirez and others, 1999), awareness of the risks associated with smoking (Murray, Prokhorov, and Harty, 1994), and use of tobacco (Centers for Disease Control, 1994b). The list of media influence (positive or negative) on health beliefs and behaviour is enormous.

No one can dispute the increasing power of mass media. Part of this power stems from the media's influence on public opinion and everyday decisions. Often the general public view the mass media as an objective source of information. Another important factor is related to the media's relationships with important decision makers and stakeholders around the world, including governments and multilateral organizations as well as the nonprofit and business sectors. In addition to the entertainment appeal of the media, both of these factors have contributed to the increasing power of the mass media. Since mass media are the main channel of mass communication in Western society, competition for media coverage is quite fierce. People rely on the media as their main source of news and are increasingly conditioned in their health, political, or life choices by what they hear or read (Fog, 1999).

In public health, the media can influence people's perception of disease severity, their views about the potential risk of contracting the disease, or their feelings about the need for prevention or treatment. Media coverage can also affect what people eat or do in their leisure time. It can help reduce the stigma associated with many diseases or break the cycle of misinformation and silence about health conditions that are underdiagnosed, undertreated, or underreported. It can help convince policymakers to develop new prevention or treatment

policies. In summary, especially in the United States and most of Europe, where there is a widespread media culture, mass media can have an enormous impact on people's health behaviours. In fact, in the average U.S. home, "the time per day that TV is on is 7 hours and 40 minutes" (TV-Turnoff Network, 2005). People do not see their best friends that often, so the media may become more influential than actual people.

Mass media campaigns can work through direct and indirect pathways to change the behaviour of whole populations, Hornik R Yanovitzky I.(2003). Many campaigns aim to directly affect individual recipients by invoking cognitive or emotional responses. Such programmes are intended to affect decision-making processes at the individual level. Anticipated outcomes include the removal or lowering of obstacles to change, helping people to adopt healthy or recognize unhealthy social norms, and to associate valued emotions with achieving change, Fishbein M, Azjen I.(2010). These changes strengthen intentions to alter and increase the likelihood of achieving new behaviours. For instance, an antismoking campaign might emphasis risks of smoking and benefits of quitting, provide a telephone number for a support line, remind

smokers of positive social norms in relation to quitting, associate quitting with positive self-regard, or a combination of these features.

## **2.5 Covid- 19 Crisis Response Strategy**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a health crisis that has introduced fear, anxiety, uncertainties, and anger in many individuals across the world and in Nigeria. Alongside the deep distress and pains felt and exhibited by many citizens in the country, there is also a growing concern and confusion about the several myths and information associated with this virus: as such, the need for demystification with the various mass media channels.

Communication and awareness driven campaigns have been employed by different countries including Nigeria to ensure that certain Myths about the Novel Virus are demystified and the right information disseminated to large audiences in order to achieve behavioural changes towards positive and healthy health practices.

The news of Coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria introduced anxiety, panic attacks, and tension in citizens and made some citizens so vulnerable that they digested and swallowed every available information about COVID-19 hook line and sinker without verifying the veracity of these information, thereby,

indulging in actions that were more harmful than the virus itself. The rate of transmission and contagion of this virus also heightened the fear and anxiety expressed by citizens in the Country; as such, triggered an urgent need for rapid crisis communication, enlightenment, sensitization, and education among citizens of Nigeria by the Federal Government and concerned bodies through the various mass media channels including radio, television, film, internet among many others, to promote healthy practices.

### **2.5.1 Outbreak of Coronavirus In The World**

Corona virus (COVID19), is a pneumonia like virus that was detected in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan in China. On 31st December 2019, 27 cases of unknown etiology were identified in Wuhan city, Hubei Province in china (Lu et al. 2020). Wuhan is the most populous city in central China with a population exceeding eleven million (Sohrabi et al. 2020). The coronavirus belongs to a family of viruses that may cause various symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty, and lung infection (WMHC, 2020). This novel virus was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 30th of January 2020 as a Public health emergency of International Concern, with high devastating risks to different Countries and more detrimental to those with deplorable health systems.

Successful efforts in containing the COVID-19 virus in Asia resulted in WHO declaring Europe as the epicenter of the disease on March 13, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic had spread to more than 114 countries before it was officially declared as a pandemic by the World Health organization (WHO) on the 11 March 2020 (Anjorin, 2020). Regrettably, this pandemic has hit several countries including, United states of America, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Canada, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, Croatia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Argentina, Norway, France, Germany, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Greece, Sweden, Philippines, Singapore, Iran, Panama, Bolivia, Honduras, Cuba, Gabon, Turkey, Mongolia, Cyprus, Mata, Peru, Togo, Namibia, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, and many other countries.

### **2.5.2 Covid-19 In Nigeria**

On 27th February 2020, Nigeria reported its first case of Corona Virus in the state of Lagos, with an index case of a man who arrived in the country on 25 February from Milan, Italy. Ever since the index case was reported by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC), so many COVID-19 cases have been recorded and reported in almost all the states in the Country; with particular reference to Lagos and Abuja the Federal Capital Territory which

have recorded more cases of the novel virus due to their economic and administrative position to the Country, with both having major port of entry into the Country.

The total number of this pandemic has risen to one thousand, five hundred and thirty two (1,532) in the country as at 28th April 2020; and out of the 1532 cases in Nigeria, a total of two hundred and fifty five (255) persons have been discharged while a total number of forty four (44) persons have regrettably died as a result of the deadly pandemic. This deadly virus has plunged many countries into precarious situations and has created global health crisis, introducing fear, anxiety, unrests, and uncertainties among citizens of different countries, including Nigeria.

According to Abone (2008), “the wealth of any nation depends on the health of her citizens”; as such, must be prioritized. Crisis, as defined by Coombs (2012), is “an unpredictable event that presents real or potential negative outcomes such as financial loss, deaths and injuries, and reputation damage for organizations, their stakeholders, and their industries.” Similarly, Rouse (2013) says that crisis can occur because of an unpredictable event or as an unforeseeable consequence of some event that had been considered a potential risk.

The implication of these definitions is that crisis hits an individual, organization, countries and or nations unaware; and when they happen, they leave these individuals, organizations, countries vulnerable and in a precarious state. Crisis, due to its sudden and unpredictable characteristics requires immediate actions and responses to deal with. Organizations/ nations, however, must ensure that they are proactive in handling crisis of any sort to protect and maintain their reputation. This measure requires providing information to citizens utilizing all channels of communication both interpersonal, media and new media, and taking necessary actions during the different stages of crisis, which are pre crisis stage, on- the crisis stage and post crisis stage.

In the context of this paper, crises can be referred to as health challenges posed to individuals globally because of this pandemic. This health crisis has brought the socio-economic aspects of human existence to a pause, instilling fear, anxiety and creating information vacuum in the minds of individuals particularly Nigerian citizens. In the event of a crisis, crisis response strategies, health related communication and safety information are needed for health promotion and positive behavioural changes; and these can be actualized with the various mass media channels including television, radio, newspaper, films, internet among others.

## **2.6 Covid-19 Pandemic: The Indispensability of Mass Media In Crisis And Health Communication And Promotion**

The Mass Media perform important role in the society in informing, educating, enlightening citizens. Its major function can be seen and appreciated in any community and or nation during a crisis of high magnitude. The mass media refer to the type of media in which messages can be presented simultaneously to multiple audiences in different locations, and they include radio, television, film etc. (Abone, 2008). All these media are useful in any nation's development because they are used for communication campaigns desired during a crisis to promote behavioural change. .

The health, safety, emotional stability and welfare of a people of a nation should be paramount to leaders of a nation during a health crisis; as the absence of these would plunge a nation into a miserable state, thus, allowing diseases and plagues to ravage the country. During crisis, response and intervention strategies must be communicated to various stakeholders/ citizens of a nation, and this can only be made possible with proper and timely dissemination of health communication using all forms or mass media channels.

Considering the fact that health crisis does not only affect individuals physically, it also affects them psychologically and evokes some negative feelings; as such, there is need for proper sensitization and enlightenment of

the crisis situation and the preventive and corrective measures put in place by leaders to ensure safety of citizens which is the utmost priority required of any nation's leader.

Communication in its simplest form is the exchange and distribution of information, ideas, attitudes, and feelings from a sender to a receiver. It is central to the heart of any endeavour, therefore, cutting across all spheres of human activities (Umeri&Galadima, 2008). This implies that without effective communication especially in the wake of crisis like that of COVID-19, it will be a daunting task to achieve any meaningful and positive result and behaviours.

Communication creates room for a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thoughts into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humble tasks of human survival to supreme manifestations of creativity or destruction (Umeri&Galadima, 2008). Effective and timely communication during crisis cannot be exaggerated because it promotes knowledge, awareness and it is also a good means of creating, understanding, and clearing the air against information overload and misinformation. Communication is a process through which needs, emotions, desires, goals, and sentiments are expressed among

human beings using codes, symbols, and language understood by several parties (Keghku, 2008).

Media is the mirror of society, as it reflects the society. These days massive effect of media is seen.

According to a survey there is 87% of increase in social media usage during lockdown. In the rouse of global pandemic COVID-19, in India, social media activity experiences a bounce of 50X. It has also been witnessed that there is a huge jump in the intensity of the social media when Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi addresses the nation related to lockdown. Here we can see the strength of media as they provide emotional support and community. They are never back behind in order to entertain us, each day we came to see different level of creativity, as I can think of many funny memes, to deal with lockdown.

Positive outlook of sudden increase in social media can be due to various awareness campaign shown on social media, with which people across the nation knew about the essentials as well as the precautionary measures that should be taken during lockdown. It also shows the stats, like the number of people being affected by virus at a particular area, it educates us of safety tips as well as the symptoms of COVID-19. There is an increase in number of I'd on social media.

Social media has become one of the best tact to spread news nowadays, even if we are alerting people about something serious, in posthaste. Although, social media platform such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, twitter, etc. gives a bundle of information each day, has led to increase in fake news and misinformation, which causes panic among people. People who read or see that misinformation interpret it as true fact. In order to distinguish between facts and false narrative, we need to crosscheck the information that we get from social media with at least two different credible sources. We can break the chain of false narrative by doing a little research before forwarding it next.

Apart from social media, Electronic media has also made a special effect on the public. Media is something that could create panic as well as provide relief from panic. As most of the part of India is in rural area so dependency on electronic media increases, because it is easily accessible. Even illiterate people of villages and town, could understand the presentation that is given on television screen. Nobody could ignore to repeated items of information and news by the speaker of television set. There is open discussion about what people hear or watch.

Media around the nation reaches our heart and brain at the same time. With news, documentaries and telefilms close to social issue increases

awareness in youth and children also make them responsible towards society. During this crucial time, electronic media such as television and radio could bring a change in attitude and belief of people by sharing the positivity, as it is most impactful on elders as well as youngsters. As per law, journalism should be practiced as ethical communication but private ownership diverted the self-governance of the press freedom and journalism. News which is broadcasted, struggles in the filter of conflict of interest.

During this pandemic outbreak many counter voice have picked up the genuine problem of social concern. Hardly four hours were given before the suddenly announced lockdown, created a panic among the nation and migrant, daily wages workers were most affected. No transportation and no food, forced them to end their journey on foot. Some were died on the way back to home. While some media houses shown their problem, other media projected them as the worst enemy by tagging their “irresponsible behavior” in the era of pandemic. As it was a sensational issue, so many media houses were compelled to display their story. As many fearless journalist are still there, so the mainstream media in journalism could survive. Doing ground reporting, two different English daily displayed the calamity with more compassion. Consequences were faced by others who tried to show the reality.

Print media is most badly affected. Due to lockdown, distribution of newspapers and magazine are adversely affected. Many people were posting on social sites about not getting newspaper, while others asked vendors to not circulate the newspaper. Due to fear of spreading disease, many people refused to take the newspaper and many vendors refused to circulate it. People are turning to online edition rather than risk their life to buy newspaper. Think of the consequences for the print that was already facing end in the era of digital media. Here Outlook, Mid-day and Times of India's Mumbai edition are various newspaper publication, they stopped their printing process till further notice. Coming to small screen, due to COVID-19, the engagement of television has sensed a high jump with 40% grown viewership in India. Talking about whole world, other countries like UK, Australia, Czech Republic and Australia has also grown the number of television audience.

Nowadays, everyone have a lot of time therefore, they can take in a lot of material. Also a number of old shows are re telecasted and also getting lot of engagement. Ramayana is bringing the same craze in viewers like it was before 33 years back. Small screen is not focusing on bringing new episode rather entertaining people, with old content only. Those youngsters who have only listened to the name of shows, too, could now watch them.

Film industry has been brutally impacted due to lockdown. Many shooting plans for film, web series, film releases were postponed. There were many daily wages workers, spot boy, who are waiting for film industry to reopen. The trouble with lockdown is people don't want to risk their life to watch the fresh telecast, instead they are happy watching old content. 183 billion film industry is facing this crisis phase because of lockdown caused due to COVID-19. Many films were forced to remove from theaters, other film's release date was postponed. Many of them have seen a few losses in its second week. The loss that film industry is facing is still being evaluated.

## **2.7 Covid-19 Symptoms and Modes Of Transmission**

Riou and Althaus (2020) pointed out signs and symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing, malaise, myalgia, headache, diarrhoea, fatigue and a small population of patients appeared gastrointestinal infection, shivering including body aches, diarrhoea, headache, sore throat and runny nose. Research has shown that symptoms such as itching throat, extreme dry throat, dry cough, high temperature, fever, shortness of breath etc., COVID-19 primarily spread from person to person via respiratory droplets, respiratory

secretions and direct contact with an infected person when cough or sneezes (Li, Guan, Wu, Wang, Zhou, Tong, et al., 2020).

Research has it that, people who develop these symptoms within 14 days after travel to countries where corona-virus is known to be circulating should seek medical care early and share information about their travel history with their healthcare providers. WHO (2020) asserted that, for most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness which will make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal especially in older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes are at risk for severe disease.

They further advanced that; a person who experienced any one of the following exposures may contact this disease through:

1. Face-to-face contact with a confirmed case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes.
2. Direct physical contact with a confirmed case.
3. Direct care for a patient with confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipments.
4. Other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.

COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person, touching of objects first touched by an infected person. Riou and Althaus (2020) maintained that COVID-19 is sustained through human-to-human transmission, along with many exported cases across the globe. Also, Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir and Siddique (2020) pointed out that, corona-virus disease 19 (COVID-19) is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona-virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which emerged in Wuhan, China and spread around the world. They further advanced that during the first 2 months of the current outbreak, Covid-19 spread rapidly throughout China and caused varying degrees of illness.

### **Preventative Measures of Covid-19**

Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir and Siddique (2020) advanced that, as corona-virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continue to increase, a number of countries and territories are adopting restrictive measures based on physical distancing, aimed at preventing human-to-human transmission and thereby limiting virus propagation, nationwide lockdowns, encompassing mass quarantine under stay-at-home ordinances, have already been proven effective to contain the COVID-19 outbreak in some countries. They further affirmed that, a prolonged home stay may also be associated with potential side effects, which

may jeopardize peoples' health. Some of the consequences of prolonged home stay are physical inactivity, weight gain, behavioural addiction disorders, insufficient sunlight exposure and social isolation. UNICEF (2020) concurred that:

1. **Use of masks:** Corona is a large virus with the diameter of 400-500 micros; therefore, the use of any type of mask can prevent entry into our bodies and does not necessarily need to use expensive masks.
2. **Touching of objects:** Corona virus does not float in air, but sticks to objects, so that transmission is not through the air. When attached to a metal surface, the corona virus can live for 12 hours.
3. **Washing hands with soap and water is enough:** frequent washing of hands with soap and flowing water for 20 seconds will prevent the spread of COVID -19.
4. **Washing clothes:** When attached to cloth, the corona virus can live for 9 hours, so washing clothes or drying it in the sun for 2 hours is enough to kill the virus.
5. **Use of alcohol-based sterilizer:** When attached to human hands, the corona virus can live for 10 minutes, so that use of alcohol-based

sterilizer to wash hands is enough to prevent its transmission from person to person.

**6. Avoid cold environment and foods:** Avoid cold weather areas of 26-27°C, the corona-virus will die because it does not live in hot areas. In addition, drinking hot water, eating hot foods and basking in the sun is enough precaution.

**7. Gargling:** Gargling with warm water and salt will kill the corona virus.

## **2.8 Empirical Review**

A similar study carried out by Ekwutosi Sanita Nwakpu, Valentine Okwudilichukwu Ezema, and Jude Nwakpoke Ogbodo (2020), on the study of Nigeria media framing of coronavirus pandemic and audience response the researcher sought to find the audience response media messages during the corona virus pandemic.

The researcher employed a quantitative design (newspaper content analysis and questionnaire). The content analysis examines the nature of media coverage of coronavirus in Nigeria and China using four major national newspapers (The Sun, The Vanguard, The Guardian and The Punch). The period of study ranged from January 2020 to March 2020. A total of 1070

newspaper items on coronavirus outbreak were identified across the four newspapers and content-analyzed.

Results from the research work shows that the coverage of the pandemic was dominated by straight news reports accounting for 763 or (71.3%) of all analyzed items. This was followed by opinions 169(15.8%), features 120 (11.2%) and editorials 18 (1.7%) respectively. The Punch 309 (28.9%) reported the outbreak more frequently than The Sun 266 (24.9%), The Guardian 258 (24.1%), and Vanguard 237 (22.1%). Finding further suggests that the framing pattern adopted by the newspapers helped Nigerians to take precautionary measures.

From the research work it was covered that the continuous reportage of COVID-19 has proved effective in creating awareness about safety and preventive measures thereby helping to ‘flatten the curve’ and contain the spread of the virus. However, the newspapers should avoid creating fear/panic in reporting the pandemic.

## **2.9 Theoretical Framework**

The fulcrum of this novel study on COVID-19 pandemic which has so far 9,400,295 cases is anchored on what Borah (2016) refers to as “The media effects theories” postulating on how, “The media effect includes

theories that explain how the mass media influences the attitudes and perceptions of the audience members.” Operationally and functionally, there are about 15 family members of the media effect theories out of which our focus will be on the ‘Agenda-Setting Theory’ and the ‘Health Belief Theory.’

### **1) The Agenda-Setting Theory:**

The print, broadcast and social media news platforms coverage and reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic is simply a validation of the potency of the Agenda-Setting theory propounded by McCombs and Shaw (1973).

Basically, the Agenda-Setting theory which revolves around the awareness, priorities and salience models are founded on the three assumptions and principles as listed by Anaeto et al (2008). These assumptions and principles include; the mass media such as the press do not reflect social reality, because news is filtered, chosen and shaped by newsroom staff and broadcasters. People get their news from limited sources because people do not pay attention to all outlets, thus they rest on mass media. Few media agenda which were chosen by professional gatekeepers, lead people to perceive given issues as important.

The agenda-setting theory rests on two basic assumptions.

The first is that the media filters and shapes what we see rather than just reflecting stories to the audience. An example of this is seeing a sensational or scandalous story at the top of a broadcast as opposed to a story that happened more recently or one that affects more people, such as an approaching storm or legislative tax reform.

The second assumption is that the more attention the media gives to an issue, the more likely the public will consider that issue to be important. Another way to look at it: Mass media organizations aren't telling us what to think or how we should feel about a story or issue, but are giving us certain stories or issues that people should think more about.

## **2) The Health Belief Model:**

Health Belief Model (HBM) is another extensively researched model of health behavior (Hochbaum & Rosenstock, 1952). The HBM attempts to predict health-related behavior in terms of certain belief patterns. A person's motivation to undertake a health behavior can be divided into three categories: individual perceptions, modifying factors, and likelihood of action. Individual perceptions are factors that affect the perception of illness and with the importance of health to the individual, perceived susceptibility, and perceived

severity. Modifying factors include demographic variables, perceived threat, and cues to action. The likelihood of action is the perceived benefits minus the perceived barriers of taking the recommended health action. The combination of these factors causes a response that often manifests into the likelihood of that behavior occurring

The health belief model is a framework that helps indicate whether a person will adopt or not a recommended health behaviour. According to the model, an individual's decision to engage in a health behaviour is based on his perceptions. Therefore, by changing his perception, one can get him to adopt a new behaviour.

A person takes a health care decision based on the following six factors

**1. Perceived Susceptibility:** This refers to how vulnerable a person feels about getting afflicted by a disease. There are fears that one is more prone to an illness compared to others.

**2. Perceived Severity:** This refers to the serious repercussions that could follow as a result of not adopting a recommended health behaviour. This could range from becoming bedridden, dying, to even social consequences in terms of the extent to which it affects a family, inability to work, etc.

**3. Perceived Benefits:** The person evaluates the value of getting medical treatment by comparing the cost and side effects of the treatment with the expected consequences of being struck by an illness.

**4. Perceived Barriers:** This includes the cost of the treatment, complexity of adopting a new dietary/health regimen, lack of belief that one has the ability to change, side effects and length of treatment.

**5. Health Value:** This refers to the physical and emotional costs of undergoing treatment. One has to value his/her health to be motivated enough to make the necessary changes.

**6. Cues to Action:** These are signals that prompt the person to take the initiative to treat illness. These can range from being exposed to health reports and messages in the mass media, watching a friend or relative suffer from the disease, reading a health pamphlet to even the onset of symptoms in one's body.

The model, postulates that an individual get a treatment if he thinks that he is prone to a disease that has severe consequences. For the individual to make the decision, though, his evaluation of whether the benefits of taking up treatment will outweigh the difficulties that he will face in the process, is crucial.

In addition to the six factors that influence the making of a health care decision, various demographic factors like age, sex, race, social class, education,

employment status, knowledge and experience play a role in how a person perceives the urgency of taking proper action to deal with his health condition.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) posits that messages will achieve optimal behavior change if they successfully target perceived barriers, benefits, self-efficacy, and threat.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In conducting any research, the nature, research design and method adopted by the researcher is very important. The research aim is geared towards mass media as a tool of sensitizing the public on infectious pandemic. Survey method is the research design for this study. The reason for this is that whenever the major source of primary data for a study is the views of members of the public or any particular group, a survey is better called for.

The aim of survey is to provide empirical data collected from a population of respondents on which valid conclusions can be made. It is an empirical study that uses questionnaires or interviews to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006, p. 179), survey requires a very careful planning and execution.

The survey technique will help this research in collecting and analysing social data via highly structured and often very detailed interview and questionnaire in order to obtain information from large number of respondents, representing the population. This technique will be used to ensure accurate assessment of the characteristics of a whole population or people.

### **3.2 Population of Study**

A population is the universe or events from which a sample is drawn. A population then, consists of all elements which are of importance, which may include groups of individuals taken from a general population who share common characteristics such as age, gender, profession, educational status etc. It is therefore important to identify the target audience in carrying out this research.

The population of this study comprises of men and women in Benin City, Edo state. Benin City being the capital of Edo state has a total population of 1,495,800, these Statistic figures of 2016 population census.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2005: 96), the size of a sample required for a study depends on at least one of the following seven factors:

- Project type
- Project purpose
- Project complexity
- Time constraints
- Amount of error tolerated
- Financial constraints
- Previous research in the area

The sample size for the study will be deduced using the Taro Yamane sample size formula

According to Asemah et al (2017), Taro Yamane's formula goes thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = sample size, N = population size, e = sampling error (.05 acceptable error)

$$n = \frac{1,495,800}{1+1,495,800(.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,495,800}{1+1,495,800(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,495,800}{3740.5}$$

$$n = 400$$

Therefore, the sample size for this research work is 400.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

Sampling is the selection of some members or element from the population for actual Investigation or study.

The sampling technique for this research work is the purposive sampling.

Purposive

Sampling is a non- probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. This sampling technique become

useful in this research because the researcher will directly choose it respondent for the questions that will provide the appropriate answers.

For the purpose of the research, a purposive simple random sampling technique will be used to administer a self-structured questionnaire.

### **3.5 Instrument of Data Collection**

Asemah et al (2012) explained that a questionnaire is a set of questions designed to investigate a given subject matter. It is a data gathering instrument, which provides informed questions to be answered by respondents in a written form.

Questionnaire will be used as the instrument for data collection. This is because questionnaire standardizes and organizes the collection and processing of information in a better and concise manner.

Interview has to do with the researcher having a face to face conversation with an interviewee Or Carrying out the conversation through telephone.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument**

Validity is defined as the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it sets out to measure, Wimmer and Dominick (2003: 159).

To ensure validity, the researcher subjected the instrument to content validity through the scrutiny of the instrument in the with the research objectives. The research supervisor validated it and considered it useful for data collection.

A study is reliable when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusion, Wimmer and Dominick (2003; 156).

The questionnaire will be pre- tested before the actual distribution to the respondent the specific questionnaire was served. This is to ensure that the questionnaire is quite understood and interpreted in the same way by various prospective.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The methodology of presentation comprises of simple percentage and tabulation of the data from the questionnaire, the analysis of each question and table and the use of percentage to show the proportional relationship for easy interpretation and comprehension. Data gathering from the interview scheduled

questions were descriptively analysed and used to complement data from the questionnaire.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA AND PRESENTATION ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on presentation, analysis of data and discussion of findings for the study. It is divided into three main sections, Section A with the demographics data, Section B deals with research questions while Section C deals with discussion of findings. A total number of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents

#### 4.2 Presentation of Analysis Based on Bio Data

**Table 1: Gender distribution of respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	235	58%
Female	165	41%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents the 58% were male and 41% were female

**Table 2: Age distribution of respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20 years	100	25%
21-25 years	157	39%
26-30 years	77	19%
31- above	66	17%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

The table 2 above shows that out of a total number of 400 respondents 100 respondents representing 25% of the total respondents are within the ages 16-20 years in age. Also 157 respondents representing 39% are within the age range of 21-25 years, then 77 respondents being 1119% of the total respondents are within the range of 26- 30 years, while 66 respondents representing 17% of the total response falls within the age 31- above. It can therefore be implied that the majority of respondents are within the age range 21 -25 years

**Table 3: Marital status of respondents**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	215	54%
Married	145	36%
Separated	30	8%
Divorce	10	2%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 3 indicates that 54% of the respondents in the study are single. And 36% of the respondents are married. While 8% of the respondents in the study are separated and 2% of the respondents in the study are divorce.

**Table 4: Religion of Respondents**

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christainity	200	50%
Islam	180	45%
Non believers	5	1%
Traditional	15	4%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 4 shows that majority 50% of the respondents in the study are Christians, Muslims are 45%, traditional are 1% and 4% are non-believers of the sample.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by qualification**

Level	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	87	22%
Bsc	263	66%
Msc	35	8%
Phd	15	4%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

The table 5 above shows that 22% of the respondents are SSCE, 66% of the respondents are BSc/ BA holder, 8% of the respondents are MSc holder, and 4% of the respondents are PhD holder.

### **4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data Based on Other Items in the Questionnaire.**

#### **Question 6: Are you aware of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	400	100%
No	0	0%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 6 above shows that 100% of the respondents are aware of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

The implication of this is that the publics are aware of the Covid-19 pandemic

**Question 7: To what extent were you aware on the covid-19 pandemic?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very large	300	75%
Large	99	24%
Few	1	1%
Very few	0	0%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 7 above shows that ‘very large’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 75% , ‘large’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 24% , ‘few’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 1% , ‘very few’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 0%.

The implication of this is that a large percentage of the publics are fully aware of the Covid-19 pandemic

**Table 8: How often do you see covid 19 message on the media?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	250	63%
Often	145	36%
Rarely	5	1%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 8 above shows 63% of the respondent see covid – 19 messages on the media very often, 36% of the respondent see covid – 19 messages on the media often, 1% of the respondent see covid – 19 messages on the media rarely.

The implication of this is that the publics see covid 19 message on the media very often

**Table 9: Did the media help in increasing your knowledge on Covid-19?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	395	98%
No	5	1%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 9 above shows that 98% of the respondent affirmed that the media helped in increasing their knowledge on Covid – 19, while 1% of the respondent negated that the media helped in increasing their knowledge on Covid – 19.

The implication of this is that the public knowledge of the Covid-19 pandemic was increased by the media.

**Table 10: Does Covid-19 affect the health of people?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	350	88%
No	50	12%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

This table above shows that 88% of the respondent affirmed that Covid – 19 affect the health of people, while 12% of the respondent negated that Covid – 19 affect the health of the people.

The implication of this is that the publics health were hurt by the covid 19 pandemic

**Question 11: Through what media did you get sensitized on Covid – 19?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Television	70	18%
Radio	100	25%
Newspaper	40	10%
Social media	190	47%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

The table above shows that 18% of the respondent are sensitized on Covid -19 through the television, 25% of the respondent are sensitized on Covid- 19 through the radio, 10% of the respondent are sensitized on Covid -19 through the newspaper, 47% of the respondent are sensitized on Covid -19 through the social media.

The implication of this is that the publics were more sensitized on Covid-19 pandemic through the social media.

**Question 12: Did the media in your locality focus on the health effect of Covid-19?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	395	99%
NO	5	1%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 12 shows that 99% of the respondent affirmed that the media in their locality focus on the health effect of Covid – 19, while 1% of the respondent negated that the media in their locality focus on the health effect of Covid – 19.

The research shows that the media in various locality focus on the health effect of Covid -19

**Question 13: what media functions effectively in your locality?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Television	50	13%
Radio	85	21%
Newspaper	30	8%
Social media	185	46%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

The table above shows that 13% of the respondent agree that television function effectively in their locality, 21% of the respondent agree that radio function effectively in their locality, that 8% of the respondent agree that newspaper function effectively in their locality, 185% of the respondent agree that social media function effectively in their locality.

The implication of this is that social media functioned well in the locality of the public in ensuring that they are well informed about the C0vid -19 pandemic.

**Question 14: To what extent did the media campaign increase your interest on Covid-19?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very large	200	50%
Large	185	46%
Few	13	3%
Very few	2	0.5%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

The table above shows that very large of the respondent's interest on Covig -19 was increase by media campaign representing 50%, large of the respondent's interest on Covig -19 was increase by media campaign representing 46%, few of the respondent's interest on Covig -19 was increase by media campaign representing 3%, very few of the respondent's interest on Covig -19 was increase by media campaign representing 0.5%.

The implication of this is that the publics interest on the Covid-19 campaign was increased very largely.

**Question 15: Do you perceive the media campaign as effective?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	378	95%
No	22	5%
Total	400	100%

**Source: field survey, 2021**

Table 15 shows that 99% of the respondent affirmed that the media campaign was effective, while 5% of the respondent negated that the media campaign was effective.

The implication of this is that the public perceive the media campaign as effective.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

Data gathered and analyzed will be used to provide answers for the research questions posed in this study in line with the study objectives.

##### **Research Question One: What is the extent of public awareness on Covid - 19 campaigns in Nigeria?**

The data in table 6 shows that 100% of the respondents are aware of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. This implies that a large number of the public were aware of the covid -19 campaign. This was obviously seen from the reactions of the respondents.

Data from table 14 shows that 50% of the respondent indicate that the extent to which their interest on covid -19 increased through media campaigns was 'very large', 46% of the respondent indicate that the extent to which their interest on covid -19 increased through media campaigns was 'large', 3% of the respondent indicate that the extent to which their interest on covid -19 increased through media campaigns was 'few', 0.5% of the respondent indicate that the extent to which their interest on covid -19 increased through media campaigns was 'very few'. Based on the result from this table it can be deduced that through media campaigns the public were fully aware of the covid -19 pandemic.

Studies (e.g. Brug, Aro, Oenema, de Zwart, Richardus & Bishop, 2004; Choi & Yang, 2010; Hussain, Hussain & Hussain 2012) revealed that individuals' level of knowledge about an infectious disease can make them behave in ways that may prevent infection. Consequently, individuals may need to be informed about the potential risks of infections in order to adopt the right precautionary measures (Brug, Aro & Richardus, 2009).

According to Dreier and Martin (2010) agenda setting effects proposed that news media had the ability to decide what should be in the news and so it sets the agenda. When news media treated some issue prominently it made that issue more noticeable for the public. The media decide what the public think about. It is an obvious fact that media play a very vital role in creating awareness.

**Research question two: What is the knowledge level of Covid –19 created by the media campaign?**

For individuals to survive in the era of pandemic, adequate knowledge of the disease that caused the pandemic is required. Such knowledge can help to contain the pandemic by adopting right precautionary measures, which will invariably boost both the physical and mental health of the individuals.

From the survey carried out a lot of respondent could actually say something about the Covid – 19 pandemic even if they had different opinion.

Based on the data gathered in table 7 it shows that ‘very large’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 75%, ‘large’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 24%, ‘few’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 1%, ‘very few’ of the respondent were aware of the Covid – 19 pandemic representing 0%. Findings from this study indicated that a large proportion of the study participants are aware and knowledgeable about the COVID-19 and its presence in Nigeria.

Results obtained from the research questions regarding knowledge of COVID-19 in terms of respondents’ knowledge of the source of COVID-19, transmission of COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, preventive behaviour toward COVID-19, fatality rate of the COVID-19 and what the major sources of information about COVID-19 among Nigerians are, were significantly high.

**Research question Three: To what extent is the influence of Covid -19 media campaign on health behaviour in Nigeria?**

In view of this question table 9 and 10 will be examine. Table 9 shows that 98% of the respondent affirmed that the media helped in increasing their knowledge on Covid – 19, while 1% of the respondent negated that the media helped in increasing their knowledge on Covid – 19. To further explain this

table ten shows that 88% of the respondent affirmed that Covid – 19 hurt the health of people, while 12% of the respondent negated that Covid – 19 hurt the health of the people. This implies that through the media, media campaigns greatly influenced the health behavior of the public.

The findings also identified the mass media as the major sources of information about COVID -19 which is similar to a study conducted during the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong (Lau, Yang, Tsui, & Kim, 2003). Likewise Varti et al (2009) and Voeten et al (2009) confirmed that the traditional media provide vital information during outbreaks. However, it contradicted Rolison and Hanoch (2015) which revealed that the internet is the premier source of knowledge during an outbreak. The media should be intensively used by governmental and non-governmental agencies to provide regular enlightenment on proper social distancing, correct personal hygiene and usage of personal protective equipment to ensure compliance with the WHO approved strategies for curbing the pandemic.

**Research question Four: How did the public perceive Covid -19 media campaign?**

Table 15 explains that 99% of the respondent affirmed that the media campaign was effective, while 5% of the respondent negated that the media

campaign was effective. This implies that the media was vital tool in insuring the sensitization on Covid -19 pandemic. Mass media campaign is an important step in raising awareness about physical activity and health in the general community. Health related mass media campaigns are organized and purposive efforts to communicate to, persuade and influence a population to consider, adopt or change to more health enhancing practices (Atkin & Wallack, 1990).

There is wide agreement that awareness leads to knowledge, and knowledge leads to behaviour modification (Rimal, 2000). Mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The highlight of this research is presented by a way of summary from which a conclusion is drawn in addition, a preferential package of recommendations was given based on the findings revealed in the study as well as suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The research aim is geared towards mass media as a tool of sensitizing the public on infectious pandemic using Edo state as a case study.

This study is due to the researcher's observation that sensitization and awareness campaign were to sensitize the populace on the cause of coronavirus, its symptoms, consequences, and prevention methods. The media (particularly social media, radio and television) was used as a veritable instrument for creating the needed awareness and coronavirus health education, although some scholars argue that the use of social media is an exclusive reserve of the educated.

Researcher proved that the pandemic was able to be contained by the use of the various media outlet in sensitizing the public.

This study makes use of the Agenda-Setting Theory' and the 'Health Belief Theory. This theory was found relevant to the study because it explain how the mass media influences the attitudes and perceptions of the audience members.

The researcher adopts Survey research method. The questionnaire is being used as a research instruments for data collection

The sampling techniques adopted for this study was simple Random sampling. The sample size was derived by using Taro yamane formular. Hence 342 copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study was significant because it studied knowledge about COVID-19 in Nigeria. The knowledge areas include source, transmission, symptoms, sources of information and preventive behaviour toward COVID-19. The findings affirm that Nigerians are highly knowledgeable about COVID-19 and their premier sources of information about the pandemic is the social media. It is therefore recommended that all stake holders should intensify their effort in sensitizing the general public to understand and comply with all precautionary measures to curb COVID-19.

As earlier established Mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers.

Gathering from this research, Mass media campaigns have generally aimed primarily to change knowledge, awareness and attitudes, contributing to the goal of changing behaviour. There has not normally been a high expectation that such campaigns on their own would change people's behaviour. From this research it is very evident that mass media campaign is very effective in sensitizing the public.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based this research, it is clear that the media is a very vital tool sensitizing the public about infectious pandemic.

- The mass media should be seen as an integral part of governance in matters concerning health. To ensure more effectiveness in the behavioural change in the public the government should pay more attention to the media and sponsor media campaigns.
- Civil societies, the private sectors, parliaments, external agencies etc should render supports to the media in the area of health communication.

- Media practitioners should Endeavour to inject health communication or message in their programs as this will make for a greater reach.
- There is need for further research to build the evidence base for the study of COVID-19 knowledge and precautionary measures.

0

## REFERENCE

### BOOKS

- Abone C. (2008) “Mass Media: Effective Instrument for Promoting Health Programmes in Africa” in Nwosu et al., (ed) *Communication and Sustainable Development in Nigeria*.
- Asamah E. (2011) *Selected Media Themes*. Jos: Great Future Press
- Coombs W.T. (2012). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, managing, and responding* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Fishbein M, Azjen I. (2010), *Predicting and changing behaviour: the reasoned action approach*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Keghku T. (2008). *Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) and HIV/AIDS Campaigns in Nigeria*. Communication for Health and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Enugu: RHYCE KEREX PUBLISHERS.
- Ndolo I. (2005) *Mass Media System and the Society*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers. Okunna C. (1999) *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Enugu: Abic Publishers.
- Philo, G. (1990). *Seeing and believing: The influence of television*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Rajagopal A. (2001). *Politics after television: Hindu nationalism and the reshaping of the public in India*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Umueri A. & Galadima J. (2008). *Role of Communication in Promoting Health Care Deliver*. Communication for Health and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Enugu: RHYCE KEREX PUBLISHERS

## **JOURNAL**

- Abone C. (2008). Mass media: Effective instrument for promoting health programmes in Africa. *Communication for health and sustainable development in Nigeria*, 174-180.
- Farquhar JW. The community-based model of life style intervention trials. *Am J Epidemiol.* 1978; 108:103–11.
- Fortmann SP, Haskell WL, Williams PT, Varady AN, Hulley SB, Farquhar JW. Community surveillance of cardiovascular diseases in the Stanford Five-City Project. Methods and initial experience. *Am J Epidemiol.* 1986; 123: 656–69.
- Hornik R, Jacobsohn L, Orwin R, Piesse A, Kalton G. Effects of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign on youths. *Am J Public Health.* 2008; 98: 2229–36.
- Hornik R. Evaluation design for public health communication programs. In: Hornik RC, editor. *Public Health Communication*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 2002. pp. 385–408.
- Hornik R, Yanovitzky I. Using theory to design evaluations of communication campaigns: the case of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. *Commun Theory.* 2003; 13:204–24.
- Kotler P, Lee NR. *Social Marketing: influencing behaviors for good*. 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2008.
- Kapata, N., Ihekweazu, C., Ntoumi, F., Raji, T., Chanda-Kapata, P., Mwaba, P. & Mfinanga, S. (2020). Is Africa prepared for tackling the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic. Lessons from past outbreaks, ongoing pan-African public health efforts, and implications for the future. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 93, 233-236.
- Khalid Mehraj, Hakim, Akhtar Neyaz Bhat and Hakeem Rameez Mehraj. "Impacts OF Media on Society: A Sociological Perspective."

International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (2014).

Lu, H., Stratton, C. W., & Tang, Y. W. Outbreak of Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology in Wuhan China: The Mystery and the Miracle. *Journal of Medical Virology*. (2020, p.25678)

Sohrabi, C., Alsafi, Z., O'Neill, N., Khan, M., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A., ... & Agha, R. (2020). World Health Organization declares global emergency: A review of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). *International Journal of Surgery*

### ONLINE

Anjorin A. A. (2020). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic: A review and an update on cases in Africa. *Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine*, 13. World Health Organisation Media briefing on COVID-19. <https://www.pscp.tv/w/1LyxBNIZOAYxN> Date: March 13, 2020 Date accessed: March 22, 2020

Guan, X., Wu, P., Wang, X., Zhou, L., Tong, Y., et al. (2020). Early transmission dynamics in Wuhan, China, of novel coronavirus-infected pneumonia. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(13):1199-1207. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2001316>. On 8th /4/2020. On 8th /4/2020.

Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (April 9, 2020). *COVID-19 case update*.32 <https://twitter.com/NCDCgov/> (accessed 9 April 2020).

World Health Organization, (WHO), *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19—11 March 2020*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2020. <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s27opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19—11-march-2020>, 2020. (accessed 24 March 2020).

Worldometers, *Coronavirus* *Update*  
(Live).<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>,30 2020. (accessed 9 April 2020).

Riou, J. & Althaus C.L. (2020). Pattern of early human-to-human transmission of Wuhan 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), December 2019 to January 2020. *Eurosurveillance*, 25(4): 56-58. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.4.2000058>. On 21st /3/2020.

**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Mass Communication  
Faculty of Arts,  
University of Benin,  
Benin City,  
Nigeria.

June, 2021

Dear Respondent,

**REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am an undergraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, conducting a research on "**The perception of mass media as tools for sensitizing the public about infectious pandemic: a case study of corona virus in Benin City, Nigeria.**"

You have been carefully selected to help complete the items in this questionnaire. The responses you provide would be used purely for academic purpose. Your anonymity is protected in accordance with research ethics.

Thank you for your kind assistance, cooperation and understanding.

Yours Sincerely,

-----  
Okpogan P. Tamaralayefa  
**Researcher**

**SECTION A: Demographic Data**

1. Gender (A) Male (B) Female
2. Age (A) 16-20 (B) 21-25 (c)26-30 (d)31-above
3. Qualification (A) SSCE (B)Bsc (c)Msc (D) Phd
4. Religion (A) Christian (B)Muslim (C) Traditional (D) Non-believers
5. Marital Status (A) Single (B) Married (C) Separated (D) Divorced

**SECTION B: Psychographic Data**

6. Are you aware of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria (A) Yes (B)No
7. To what extent were you aware on the covid-19 pandemic A. Very Large B. Large C. Few D. Very few
8. How often do you see covid 19 message on the media. A. Often. B. Very often. C. Rarely. D. Rarely
9. Did the media help in increasing your knowledge on Covid-19 (A)Yes (B) No
10. Does Covid-19 hurt the health of people? (A)Yes (B) No
11. Through what media did you get sensitized on Covid – 19 A Television B Radio C Newspaper. D. Social media
12. Did the media in your locality focus on the health effect of Covid-19? (A)Yes ( B) No
13. From 6 above what media functions effectively in your locality Specify here

**14.** To what extent did the media campaign increase your interest in Covid-19? A. Very Large B. Large C. Few D. Very few

**15.** Do you perceive the media campaign as effective? A. Yes B.No