

Influence of Mass Media on Knowledge and Awareness of Covid-19 Pandemic and its Preventive Measures among Residents in Lagos Metropolis

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of mass media on knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 pandemic among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. Four research questions and four hypotheses were answered and tested respectively in this study. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents in the study. The study adopted the survey research design. The sample size for the study was 700 randomly selected educated residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. The main instrument used for collection of data from the respondents was a questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that: there is significant influence of television on the knowledge of COVID-19 among the residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State; radio has significant influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State; there is significance influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State, and there is significant influence of social media on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that residents should show positive attitudes towards compliance to preventive measures as the use of face masks in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the area, while government should continue with the use of mass media to create awareness.

Keywords: COVID-19, Awareness, Knowledge, Mass media, Preventive measures, Television

Introduction

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has been a major public health concern since December 2019 when it was first detected in Wuhan, China. The role of the mass media including television, radio, print, and in recent times has remained indispensable in eradicating pandemic. Information on possible public health practices such as social distancing, hand washing, respiratory hygiene and government policies in tackling outbreaks has often been disseminated via the mass media (Collinson, Khan, & Heffernan, 2015). World Health Organization (WHO) gave the disease an official name, COVID-19. In December 2019, reports of patients with viral pneumonia in China surfaced. The origin was related to Human Seafood's whole market. (WHO, 2019).

The disease most likely originated from bats, mutated to infect humans, and transmitted by droplet routes among humans. Since the origin occurred in a wet market, the media criticized the Chinese for consuming live animals like bats, snakes, and dogs. Many reported incidents of such racial slurs which exaggerated already existing prejudices among people. This happened in SARS 2003 in Toronto which caused xenophobic reaction, and similarly, was repeated with the coronavirus pandemic, it had a significant impact, leading the Chinese government to order the closure of all farmer's markets and a ban on eating live animals. This was an essential step in halting the spread of the virus (Shereen, 2020).

In Nigeria, the first case was an Italian national returning from Milan who was reported on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos. The case was not detected at the airport, as the patient did not show any symptoms upon landing. The diagnosis was confirmed at the virology lab at Lagos University Teaching Hospital. Since then over 167,331 cases have been confirmed and 2118 deaths reported (NCDC, 2021). To keep the public informed, the mass media just like health care officers have been working hard to ensure that COVID-

19 is combated. Journalists have also been on the frontline reporting the cases the death toll and the measures masses should take to avoid contracting the virus. From informing the people about the pandemic the mass media also strives to shape public opinion about the spread and the precautionary measures that can help to mitigate it (flatten the curve). Modes of spread range from droplets, airborne, or faeco-oral to contact spread. There is news of viruses staying viable on surfaces from a few hours to many days.

This heterogeneous spectrum of disease is concerning and one of the reasons for the increased fatality of the disease, this aspect creates a public worry and force the general public to seek help from the most accessible ways available to them. For most people it's the mass media, which includes Television, Radio, Internet, Print media. The internet is considered a worldwide media. In an epidemic or pandemic, controlling the spread of disease is a basic requirement. It requires early recognition of symptomatology, prompt diagnosis measures, effective home and hospice management, and appropriate preventive steps. The fundamental way through which media can educate the general public on COVID-19 issues is through coverage (Adebimpe, 2020).

This can take place through strategies like frequently reporting public health issues, recommending appropriate health behavior and suggesting policies that will assist in combating the virus. Educating the general public about health issues is like preparing for war, therefore where possible, this has to be done ahead of time not when the health issue becomes a pandemic. This is important so that it will prepare them to take proactive steps. What this means is that where possible, it is better to educate the general public about coronavirus pandemic well ahead of time before there is a confirmed case. Within the context of coronavirus (COVID-19), mass media do not need to wait until there is a confirmed case of the virus before educating the general public about its symptoms,

preventive measures and recommend action for the government to take.

The mass media in Nigeria should provide warning messages concerning COVID-19. This in turn, requires the role of varying departments ranging from government to healthcare, to the media, to the general public itself. Whenever a new virus or bacteria disease emerges, it goes through localized transmission, amplification in the spread, and finally, the remission with successful measures. They include anticipation about the likely widespread infection, early detection, effective containment, control and mitigation measures and lastly eradication, according to WHO it involves the coordination of responders, proper health information system, and managing communication risks. Mass media plays a crucial influence at each step (Babatunde, 2020).

This was studied in H1N1 Influenza epidemic in the Shaanxi province of china in 2009. In the study published in 2016, Yan, Tang, Gabriele & Wu showed how people response can change with mass media reports and hence, can affect emerging disease control. The implausible claim of the virus affecting the geriatric population made the young vulnerable, ultimately resulted in a large number of young affected by the virus. This unscientific and unproven fact spread like wildfire in the media and made the elderly go through many psychological and physical terrors. There were many reports of old people being removed from family homes, and increased emotional abuse

cases among them. This changed the public's awareness of the elderly population and caused increase depression among them based on society's prompt reactions. In contrast, the millennial, college students, and high scholars made their way to beaches to party in anticipation of their annual spring break weekend, which later proved hazardous (Susan, 2020).

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted in carrying out this study. This design enabled the researcher to investigate the influence of mass media on knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 pandemic among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher to the respondents with the help of two trained research assistants. The questionnaire was distributed and collected on the spot to prevent loss of the questionnaire. Responses from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage. Inferential statistics of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses set at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant influence of television on the knowledge of COVID-19 among the resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Table 1: ANOVA on the influence of television on the knowledge of COVID-19 among the resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State
Knowledge of COVID-19 among the residents

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	244.243	3	81.414	6.182	.001
Within Groups	8501.005	645	13.179		
Total	8745.249	648			

Table 1 showed that the calculated value of F (6.182) has a p-value of 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Based on these results, the null hypothesis which stated that; “There will be no significant influence of television on the knowledge of COVID-19 among the residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State” is rejected. Thus, there is significant influence of television on the

knowledge of COVID-19 among the residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2: Radio will not have significant influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Table 2: ANOVA on the influence of Radio on the awareness of COVID -19 protocols among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State
Awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	267.123	3	89.041	6.601	.003
Within Groups	8701.005	645	13.490		
Total	8968.128	648			

Table 2 showed that the calculated value of “F” (6.601) has a p-value of 0.003 which is less than 0.05. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that “Radio will not have significant influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents of Yaba

Community Area of Lagos State” is rejected. Thus, radio will have significant influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Table 3: ANOVA on the influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State
Compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among residents

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	402.113	3	134.038	10.390	.000
Within Groups	8321.105	645	12.901		
Total	8723.218	648			

Table 3 showed that the calculated value of “F” (10.390) has a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that “There will be no significance influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State” is rejected. Thus, there will be significance influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines

among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant influence of social media on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State

Table 4: ANOVA on the influence of social media on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos state
Preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among residents

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	286.343	2	143.172	10.287	.025
Within Groups	8991.015	646	13.918		
Total	9277.358	648			

Table 4 showed that the calculated value of “F” (10.287) has a p-value of 0.025 which is less than 0.05. In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that “There will be no significant influence of social media on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State” is rejected. Thus, there will be significant influence of social media on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

that newspaper has significance influence on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. Supporting this finding, Collinson, Khan and Heffernan (2015) reported that information on possible public health practices such as social distancing, hand washing, respiratory hygiene and government policies in tackling outbreaks has often been disseminated via the mass media. Similarly, World Health Organization (2020) reported that media such as newspaper helped in reporting cases of coronavirus disease on daily basis as well as providing measures to ensure compliance to COVID-19 preventives guidelines throughout the world. This is in line with the view of Adebimpe (2020) who asserted that the fundamental way through which media can educate the general public on COVID-19 issues is through coverage. Hence, there is significance influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

In China. This Tele-briefing created aware this finding, World Health Organization (2020) reported that the measures taking to prevent the spread of COVID 19 included several lockdown policies and preventive measures across the country offering a model of COVID-19 pandemic control to other countries and regions. Yulan, Lin, et al. (2020) carried out study on the knowledge and awareness of the COVID-19 outbreak as well as its impacts on them. They reported that extraordinary measures are being adopted to combat the formidable spread of the ongoing outbreak under this conditions and people's adherence to preventive measures is greatly affected by their awareness of the disease. Hence, the use of radio has influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Conclusion

This study found that television has significant influence on the knowledge of COVID-19 among the residents; radio has significant influence on the awareness of COVID-19 protocols among residents; newspaper has significant influence on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among residents; and social media has significant influence on the preventive measure practices of COVID-19 among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. It can therefore

The test of hypothesis three revealed that there will be significance influence of newspaper on the compliance to COVID-19 guidelines among resident of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State. This implies

be concluded based on these findings that mass media have significant influence on knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 pandemic among residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

This study, therefore recommends that; any resident with suspecting infection with COVID-19, should visit the physician for early treatment. This will prevent complications and possibly death from COVID 19 infections among the residents.

Residents should show positive attitudes towards compliance to preventive measures as the use of face masks in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the area. This is recommended as about 33% of the residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State were of the opinion that they do not use face masks at all for preventing their contract of COVID-19.

Residents of Yaba Community Area of Lagos State should pay more attention to their personal health. This is because engaging in personal hygiene practices such as frequent hands washing has been proven to be one of the most effective measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus.

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