
MEDIA STRATEGY AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PUBLIC AWARENESS IN EKITI STATE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

***Rasaki Ojo BAKARE Ph.D.**

****Tayo ISIJOLA**

****Lilian Eguriase BAKARE Ph.D.**

Abstract

The prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which allegedly stemmed from Wuhan, China, had imposed far-reaching consequences on human existence across the globe. After Nigeria recorded its first case in February 2020, the death toll rose with increased number of confirmed cases. Notably, as experts strove to understand, track, and contain the pandemic, the media kept pushing the frontiers of public awareness faster than the spread. However, the proliferation of disinformation had continued to contend with global responses to the pandemic. It stimulated undesired public behaviours, such as non adherence and public protest, as witnessed in most parts of Nigeria. This research is an empirical study that examines the media strategy responsible for the different behaviours observed in Ekiti state, where the public acceptance of Covid-19 guidelines seemed to have resulted in the considerable containment of the sickness' spread in the state. The study employs both the qualitative and quantitative research methods, and hinged on Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann's model (1973) of Powerful effect theory and the "Source credibility theory" of Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss (1951). The researchers observed that in spite of the independent mindedness that characterizes Ekiti people, which challenges most public mobilization endeavours, the populace demonstrated high degree of adherence and compliance to Covid-19 awareness mobilization. In the interest of communal well-being, they volunteered information on violator to the authorities. We discovered that individuals with reckonable public credibility were used as sources of information for the awareness message of Covid-19. Apart from source credibility strategy, geo-coding, which exploited the ethical

***Rasaki Ojo BAKARE Ph.D.** is of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti Nigeria
Email: dancerasaki@yahoo.com

****Tayo ISIJOLA** is of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti Nigeria

*****Lilian Eguriase BAKARE Ph.D.** is of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti Nigeria

cultural tenets of the Ekiti world-view was another effective media strategy employed. The researchers hereby recommend the findings of this study as viable and effective media strategies for public enlightenment in the event of future public health crisis in Nigeria.

Keywords: Covid-19, Disinformation, Ekiti, Geo-coding, Media strategy, Public behaviours.

Introduction

Globally, the response to Covid-19 disease had evoked unprecedented and awful human experiences with the imposition of stringent measures that affected living and livelihood, such as boarder closure, the shutdown of social, religious and business activities. The situation had occasioned stress, fatigue and helplessness of the global populace for prolonged and untold duration. However, as nations scaled up the apparatus for public health to combat the spread of the disease, the media engaged in rapid mobilization of public awareness and education for the containment of the disease. According to Willie (2013), the media possesses “considerable power to shape opinions and beliefs, to change habits of life and mould behaviour” (p.161). Thus, the media was employed to play the indispensable role of stemming the fast spreading and incurable diseases through public awareness, to engender desirable human habits and behaviours before the disease would assumes the phase of community spread. To this effect, the World Health Organization (WHO) had championed the course of public awareness; providing needful enlightenment on best-practice protocol, while issuing incessant warnings against noncompliance.

Jerving (2020) notes that when the confirmed cases of Covid-19 outside China had risen to 82 in January 30, 2020, Dr Tedros, Director-General of WHO, declares that the outbreak has become a “public health emergency of international concern”, but compliance by members of the international community to the early warnings was poor. Thus, Tedros declared on February 11, 2020 that “we have a window of opportunity now for the rest of the world; we see what’s happening in China in terms of the number of cases and fatalities... I will continue to remind until the world really takes this seriously (and) does it with a sense of urgency...” (cited in Jerving, 2020). The triviality gave room to undesirable human behaviours which challenged the early containment of the disease. Nonetheless, the WHO continued to provide periodic information and warnings about the swift spread of the disease across nations. According to Anjorin (2020), in March 11, 2020 the outbreak had spread to 114 countries, as a result WHO declared Covid-19 as a pandemic (p.199).

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the media became part of the non-pharmaceutical measures for combating the disease. Petty et al (2002) posit that the measure of success of a media campaign partly depends on “whether the transmitted communications are effective in changing the attitude of the recipients in the desired direction, and whether those modified attitude in turn influences the people’s behaviours” (p.156). Conversely, the media space also went agog with misinformation and controversies that resonated readily with the public, generating public doubt, fear, confusion and other behaviours that are disproportionate to the needed public response. The misinformation also resulted in disinformation. Both, which thrive on misrepresentation, are distinguished by their intent and effect on the target audience. While misinformation furnishes the truth with distortions or exaggeration, disinformation seems to refute the truth. In this light, the disinformation of media content came with false and unverifiable information that mislead some members of the public, and engendered counter responses towards the containment of the disease. Thus, Tedros describes such false information as the “the most contagious things” about the pandemic (cited in Depoux et al, 2000, p.1).

Disinformation in the media was potentially dangerous in the fight against the spread of the disease because it seemed to have enabled the swift flight of the pandemic. Nonetheless, it has been argued that the main stream media, which provided genuine information, has engaged more in public panic and exaggerations to stimulate a certain level of public response, and at the expense of human freedom. Depoux (2000) suggests this when he states that “the spatio-temporal variability of the discussion on social media, specifically Twitter, is often not in line with the spatio-temporal occurrence and intensity of the outbreak” (pp.1-2). Such misinformation in public space was capable of evoking counter response to the desired global goal that is being championed by the World Health Organization.

According to Franck (2020), President Trump had purportedly made statements that trivialized the ‘global response’ to Covid-19 disease while at a public speech in Feb 2020. He made a mismatching comparison of his impeachment bid pressure and the pressure for a desired response to Covid-19 pandemic, and referred to the desired response as the “new hoax’ of the Democrats. The misleading statement, which made rounds in the media, strengthened controversies, contradictions and disinformation on Covid-19, and seemed to have affected the spread of the virus in America and other nations, including developing countries like Nigeria. For instance, the Nigerian government only shut down academic institutions and the aviation industry in March, while the imposition of curfew at the certain

city centres (Lagos, the FCT and Ogun States) took effect from March 27. By then, 93 Nigerian had been confirmed infected with the disease (NCDC, 2020).

The response of the Nigerian government at the federal level had impelled a number of state governments to take similar initiative. For instance, Ekiti state, with only one confirmed case, had imposed a total lockdown on 30th March to contain the spread of the disease (Okwumbu, 2020). In spite of growing media awareness campaigns by government agencies and other non-government groups, at different levels, many Nigerians were not convinced about the facts of the pandemic. Hence, cases of civil unrest, gross display of undesirable behaviours and violent clashes with assigned law enforcement agents, were reported across Nigeria at the wake of the lockdown. Remarkably, none of these crisis situations ensued in Ekiti. Thus, this research examines the media strategy for public awareness on Covid-19-disease in Ekiti state during the total lockdown period. The study further seeks to evaluate how this strategy has galvanized desirable behaviours towards the containment of the disease in the state.

Covid-19: Facts and Controversies

Contradictions and controversies that exist between available information about Covid-19 pandemic abound, and for these that experts have continued to refer to the Covid-19 disease as “novel corona virus”. Therefore, Covid-19 is an unfolding phenomenon with quite some knowledge gap and grey areas. According to Anjorin (2020), the earliest mention of corona virus, which was being referred to as “avian infectious bronchitis virus”, was diagnosed in a patient that was taken into isolation by Fred Beaudette in 1937 (p.199). Of the Covid-19 pandemic, clinical analysis had established that Covid-19 belongs to the corona virus family, which gives it similarities with the SARS-CoV decaled in November 2002. According to Shareen et al. (2020), Chinese researchers had named this virus as the “2019 novel corona virus”, while the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) renamed the virus as SARS-CoV-2, and the disease as Covid-19 (p.92). This underscores its relatedness to SARS-CoV of 2002, which was responsible for the acute pneumonia epidemic that broke out from the Chinese province of Guangdong in November 2001, and had spread to 29 countries in 2003. The origin of SARS-CoV was traced to the movement of corona virus from a horse-shoe bat into a cat-like animal called civet, which served as reservoir, before infecting human (Readfearn, 2020).

This account shares similarities with the acclaimed origin of Covid-19. According to Shareen et al. (2020), the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak sprang from “human seafood market in Wuhan city of China,

and rapidly infected more than 50 people” (p.92). Notably, the acclaimed market in Wuhan is identified as a place for the regular sales of live animals, such as bats, frogs, snakes and birds, among others, and Virologists have established that bats are natural host of different viruses, including corona viruses (Hu, et al., 2020, p.1). Further, it has been suggested that the corona virus in bats requires an intermediate host or reservoir to enable a transmutation of the strain of corona virus that is adverse to human health, as typified in the outbreak of SARS-CoV (2002) and MERS-CoV (2014) (Decaro & Lorusso, 2020, pp.1-2).

Narratives on how Covid-19 was transmitted to human beings are at variance, and this has engendered deep-rooted controversies on the subject. For instance, a widely propagated claim on international media holds that Covid-19 outbreak sprang from an artificial source and political scientists and other scholars relate to such position in terms of conspiracy theory (Omoera & Ogoke, 2021). According to Hayes (2020), “one of the conspiracy theories that has plagued attempt to keep people informed during the pandemic is the idea that corona virus was created in a laboratory.” Therefore, Uscinski and Enders (2020) state that:

The virus was internationally disseminated by foreign powers such as China or Russia... Maybe China created or was working with the strain of the corona virus in a laboratory, and that the virus escaped by accident, or may be Gates and World Health Organization are at work on some nefarious plot to control and rule the world with vaccines. A particular disruptive version of the conspiracy theory connected the virus to 5g technology...

When Gate (2020) states that the pandemic “is like a world war, except in this case we’re all on the same side” (p.2), he contradicts the intent of the bio warfare thinkers. Hence, no one champions a battle to war against oneself. Gate’s remark defeats the assumption that the state is the originator of the pandemic. Sufficiently, scientists have proved that the virus evolved naturally, and crossed into humans from animal host(s) (Hayes, 2020). However, adequate information that addresses the public awareness needs about the nature, symptoms and cautionary steps for containing the spread of the virus is available in the mainstream media. The WHO (2020) informs that in an early communication that many people infected with Covid-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without

requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetics, chronic respiratory diseases, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illnesses.

Symptoms, such as fever, dry cough, tiredness, difficulty in breathing, loss of taste and smell, among others, are the notable experience of individuals who were confirmed to have been infected by the virus. Hence, there is no specific treatment, the WHO (2020) has continued to caution against misinformation, while they recommend the practices of simple hygiene, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing and self-isolation of infected person as measures to contain the spread.

Of the Covid-19 Spread and Media Awareness in Nigeria

Nigeria recorded its first case of the Covid-19 disease in Ogun State on 27 February 2020. After 11 days a new case was confirmed in Lagos State, and then another in Ekiti State in the month of March. Since then, the outbreak had continued to spread across the nation in varying degrees. According to the data visualization chart of NCDC (2020) titled "The Progression of Covid-19 cases in Nigeria", figures recorded across the southwest region states within the first 100 days of the outbreak in Nigeria are as follows: Ondo- 41, Ekiti- 27, Osun- 49, Oyo- 365, Lagos- 5750 and Ogun- 347). Thus, all the other states witnessed higher spread of the disease than Ekiti; notwithstanding that Ekiti was the 3rd state to confirm a Covid-19 patient in Nigeria. The NCDC (2020) informs by July ending that Ekiti is of the six states that experienced low spread of the disease and with just two mortality cases so far, going by the "confirmed cases by state".

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in Nigeria, Covid-19 has remained a vital preoccupation of the media and its multiple channels. The Presidential Task-Force on Covid-19 pandemic, which consists of members such as the Minister of Health, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Information, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Director General of NCDC, among others, sustained the provision of daily briefing through a wide media coverage in the period of the total lockdown and beyond. Thus, Alagboso and Abubakar (2020) state that:

The NCDC in collaboration with other organizations has produced and shared multimedia content, including videos, infographics, and audio jingles, in various languages, targeting different demographics... These efforts have largely leveraged on technology, including automated WhatsApp

messages, a dedicated website, and regular online live sessions.

This media approach stems from a national central coordination, which employs the use of all available media channels and platforms. However, the communication endeavour for Covid-19 pandemic is still fraught with the challenge of misinformation and disinformation (Omoera, Onyemuchara & Okwuowulu, 2020). According to WHO (2020), "the country (Nigeria) is one of the region's (Africa's) most active on social media, and rumours are easily spread". Misinformation remains a challenge for the Nigerian media practitioner to grapple with, apart from the fact that there are too many grey areas around the pandemic which also bugged the task of media awareness. Idowu (2020) posits that reporters, by training, need a clear understanding of whatever issue they are investigating, reporting, or interpreting before they can minister creditably to their audiences. With Covid-19, the first challenge facing the media is that of understanding the nature of the pandemic... All these are reflected in the Nigerian media and add to the confusion of how to frame the narrative of Covid-19 (n.p).

The national centrally coordinated media awareness was complemented with media efforts at the state and community levels. However, the scope of this study is on the media strategy employed in Ekiti state, which engendered the observable containment of the Covid-19 disease spread in the period of the total lockdown.

Conceptualizing the Ethical-Cultural Tenets of Ekiti Worldview

Ekiti is an intrinsically homogeneous Nigerian sub-ethnic group of the Yoruba extraction. Soetan (2006) corroborates this when he states that Ekiti is "historically homogeneous, culturally identical, geographically contiguous and rigorously similar" (p.1). The state was created from the old Ondo state on October 1st 1996, alongside five other Nigerian states. It is situated within the tropics, covering a total land area of 5887.890sq.km, with a population estimate of 3,270,800 inhabitants as at 2016 (Brinkhoff, 2020). Geographically, the state lies "south of Kwara and Kogi states, east of Osun state and bounded by Ondo state in the east and in the South" (Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room, 2014). Notably, Ekiti has been famed as the most conservative state in the southwest region of Nigeria, and comparatively so in the nation. This is richly evident in the ambiance of the state and the characteristic behaviour of its populace; including migrant residents.

Ekiti people are modest in their moderations. They are characterized by a sense of self-determinism, and hence, have been

purportedly described as the most stubborn Nigerian sub-ethnic group. It is in this light that Bamgboye (2015) remarks that "Ekiti people have always been fiercely independent, proud, stubborn, single-minded and protective". These qualities seem to be responsible for the difficulty that comes with the mass mobilization in Ekiti state. By inference, the combination of the values of conservatism and self-determinism has presented the Ekiti people as being stubborn. However, these values have further enabled the average Ekiti person to keep, and sustain the cardinal virtues of *Omoluabi*, as established in the Yoruba worldview. The concept of *Omoluabi* consists in a set of ethical and cultural tenets, such as honour, morality, humility, inner-strength, wisdom, self-respect and respect for others, which describes the qualities of well-nurtured and well-behaved individual. Fayemi (2009) provides a suffix analysis of the one-word phrase, *Omoluabi*, accordingly:

Omo + ti = Olu + iwa + bi. Literarily translated and spate, *omo* means child,, to means that of which, *olu-iwa* means chief or master of *iwa* (character), *bi* means born. When combined, *omoluabi* translates as "the baby begotten by the chief of *iwa*." Such a child is thought of as a paragon of excellence in character. (p.164)

Thus, the *Omoluabi* sustains what is right irrespective of the level of exposure and indoctrination to alien cultures, and the demonstration of the good characters is paramount to an *Omoluabi*. Further, an *Omoluabi* holds the obligation to influence others towards good virtues, which makes the characteristic values readily transferrable to others. This is noticeable among immigrant residents in Ekiti state. In spite of the debilitating effects of globalization on subgroup cultures and worldviews, the values of *Omoluabi* have remained in high esteem amongst the Ekiti people, and they also rise collectively in the defense of these values. The ethical-cultural tenets of the Ekiti worldview, which consist in the values of the concept of *Omoluabi* includes, the virtues of honour, inner strength, morality, wisdom, self respect and respect for others. It also takes into account self protection and the protection of others.

Theoretical Underpinnings

(i) Powerful-Effect Model

This theory was propounded in 1973 by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1916-2010) as a reformulation of the earliest media effect theory; the "Magic Bullet Theory". According to Anaeto et al (2008),

the Magic Bullet Theory, also known as the Hypodermic Needle theory, prescribes the media as a dangerous means of communication due to its enormous impact on the public (p.98). Subsequently, the advent of more interactive media forms had engendered debates that questioned the strength and impact of such media effects on the public. In 1950, Joseph Klapper postulated the "Limited Effect Model", which claims that the media only has conditional influence on the public (Willie, 2013, p.164). However, in 1973, Neolle-Neumann rose to the debate with her "Powerful Effect Model", and argues that the media should not be dismissed as having minimal influence. The theory reinforces that media has a pungent and collective impact on the public if appropriately applied. It postulates that "under certain circumstances", the media will have very significant effect on a large number of people (Anaeto et al, 2008, p.87). Further experiments on Neolle-Neumann's model by Mendel Sohan explains that the condition which premises "Powerful effect" of a media campaign on recipients include- defining and focusing on target audience, and ensuring that the campaign strategy overwhelms possible indifference and apathy of audience members. She explains that the later condition can be achieved if the communication employs themes and motifs that relates keenly to the audience (cited in Anaeto et al, 2008, p.88).

(ii) Source Credibility Theory

The Source Credibility theory was propounded as a media persuasion model in 1951 by Carl Hovland (1912-1961) and Walter Weiss (1925-2010). It propounds that the effects of media persuasion is strong on the attitude of the recipients of the communication, and founded on the credibility of the source of communication. The source, in this regard, refers to the human anchor and face of the media persuasion endeavour, who the recipients esteem for the values of professionalism and trustworthiness (Hovland & Weiss, cited in Anaeto et al, 2008, p.76). Thus, the Source Credibility theory postulates that the degree of professionalism and trustworthiness attached to the human anchor of a media message by the target recipient will determine the level of persuasion which the media message will avail on recipients, for the desired change of attitude (Anaeto et al, 2008, p.76).

Established that the powerful-effect model assumes that that the impact of media campaign can be robust if the communication is tailored towards a defined recipient, rather than across all-people's borderless ends. Thus, the process of defining the borders of recipients will consider the appropriate themes and motifs that resonate with the target audience, to energize the media message for optimal effect. On the other hand, the source credibility theory assumes that, professionalism and trustworthiness of the anchor point are needful

considerations as source credibility values for winning the confidence of recipients, and draw them unto positive responses. Therefore, this research finds the assigned theories useful because of their relatedness, and direct applications to media campaign in the light of the study.

Research Methods

The primary sources of data for this cross-sectional research include the researchers' observation by participation, interview with key stake holders, and survey of a representative subset of Ekiti state through the use of a questionnaire instrument titled "QICPAE". Hence, the researchers employed a combination of the qualitative and quantitative research methods of data analysis. All data were collected within the first two weeks of the ease of lockdown in Ekiti state. The population of the study for this research is 1,117 participants, and all from Ado-Ekiti (the state capital) and the following neighbouring towns: Ikere-Ekiti, Ifaki-Ekiti, Iyin-Ekiti, Ijan Ekiti and Afoa-Ekiti. We made use of five research assistants who are students of Federal University Oye-Ekiti that were resident in Ado-Ekiti during the period of the research.

Overview of Media Strategy

The core media outfits in Ekiti state were engaged in the media campaign for Covid-19 awareness during the total lockdown period. The Broadcasting Services of Ekiti State (BSES); a government organization, with widest reach across the length and breadth of the state consists of a radio station (Ekiti FM 91.5) and a television station (EKTU UHF 25). The stations served as service points for the Covid-19 awareness message. Other five private stations that engaged the media drive includes Voice (89.9 FM), Ayoba (95.1 FM), Our People's (104.1 FM), Progress (100.5 FM) and New Cruise FM (92.7 FM). Covid-19 messages dominated both the programmes and news presentations of all media stations in Ekiti state. The interview session with the Head of Stations reveal that the state government coordinated the awareness messages and provided minimal funding, but the media outfits engaged intensive communication services for Covid-19 awareness during the lockdown.

According to the General Manager of one of the private stations, "we initially developed a few jingles, which we didn't use for too long because the state government came in with their own. We held meetings and agreed that it was better to coordinate the information, so the ones we had developed initially were dropped because they didn't contain all the information then" (Wale Ojo, Personal Conversation July 14, 2020). Apart from broadcasting the state

Governor's addresses, the stations explored the strategy of source-credibility by regularly engaging traditional rulers, union leaders, and other public influencers in interview-phone-in programmes through the total lockdown periods. There was also the extensive use of an array of songs and jingles that communicated the awareness message on all the stations. Further, government engaged the social media with the awareness message, targeting the Ekiti social media users, and harnessing the useful feedbacks for enhanced communication.

Source Credibility and Awareness Messages of Selected Media Content

1. Addresses by the State Governor

The Executive Governor of Ekiti state, Dr J.K. Fayemi, was a journalist, scholar and a member of the academia before joining politics to serve the people of Ekiti state. He was trained both in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, and through his academic career has lectured in reputable tertiary institutions in Nigeria, Europe, America and Asia. It is against this background that he secures a high level esteem and integrity that counts for professionalism and trustworthiness in Ekiti state, and albeit in Nigeria. This among other things seemed to have earned a great measure of credibility that is deserving of a source, whose communication should be taken seriously. Thus, he cuts the image of one with accepted public credibility and trust and not a regular frivolous politician. Notably, Governor Fayemi could have saddled this duty on any of his Commissioners, or the Director General of Covid-19 Task force in the state, but he took responsibility to be the image behind the addresses, and his place as the number one citizen of the state, gave the deserving weight of persuasion to the message.

He addressed the residents at three instances while the total lockdown lasted. The addresses were broadcasted live on radio and television, and the text was available on the social media. As the media outlets continued to reinforce the message, health and social workers, alongside other community mobilizers served to take the message to the grassroots, while public compliance was being monitored by the State's task force. The first address introduced the curfew, which was to last for 14 days. It's major highlight includes the 12-hour dusk-to-dawn curfew, and residents instructed that "every person shall be confined to the place where he or she ordinarily resides in Ekiti-state" (Governor Kayode Fayemi, Live Broadcast on BSCS, Sunday, 29 March, 2020). It also hinted on government's efforts to cushion the effects of the lockdown on residents by ensuring the prompt payment of salaries to government workers, re-opening of the food bank and the provision of palliatives.

Further, the address cautioned the Ekiti residents against the consumption of herbal-mix, concoction, and to be wary of imbibing unauthorized medical tips made rounds on the social media. In the second address, the Governor announced the extension of the curfew by another 14 days- till 04 May 2020, and all conditions were to remain enforced. In a later address, the Governor's provided information on the easing of the lockdown at its first phase, for which workplaces and business activities were allowed to open for only three days in a week, and within limited hours. It also instructed that business owners must abide by certain health protocols for operations, such as social distancing, hand-washing, use of sanitizer and nose mask, among others.

2. Songs Created by the State Commissioner, Ministry of Arts Culture and Tourism

Rasaki Ojo Bakare is a professor in the department of Theatre and Media Arts before accepting to serve as Commissioner, Ministry for Arts Culture and Tourism. He is famed by his artistic credibility as choreographer, dancer, director, actor and music maker, among other performing arts skills. Apart from being an artiste intellectual, he is also a cultural icon in Nigeria, having established quite a number of active Nigerian carnivals and served as the artistic director of the national carnival for two terms. Thus, apart from his perceived high level of professionalism as a member of the academia, he had grown for himself a huge fan-base fame from his artistic works in print, on stage and screen, and at carnivals. All these present him with a level of trustworthiness that makes the message readily acceptable by the Ekiti audience. In his capacity as Commissioner in the Ministry, he wrote, and produced two songs titled "Corona Virus" and "Cheer-up", which were also made in video.

a) **"Corona Virus"** – A two-verse Yoruba language song that was performed by the choral troupe of the Ekiti State Council for Arts and Culture. The verses made use of cultural imageries to underscore the awareness message, the chorus served as warnings to listeners, while the refrains highlighted the key points of the message. Its language explores cultural motifs that readily resonate in the consciousness of the average listeners within the geo-setting, through the use of proverbs, adages and sayings. The following excerpts from the song and interpretation give a hint on the language geo-coding strategy:

- i. *Aisoan kan be, aye e teti egbo o*
(There is an outbreak in town, lend me your ear)

- ii. *O'mbo o'mbo, awon la 'npade re*
(Preparedness is a remedy for impending danger)
- iii. *Imototo lo b'oro arun mole*
(Good hygiene subsidies illness)
- iv. *Igboroan san ju ebo lo, e ba je ka'a gbo'ran*
(Obedience is better than sacrifice, better obey)
- v. *Baye ba ja, se mo pe ko se so?*
(Knowing that a lost life is irrecoverable?)

Lines ii, iii, iv and v above are all cultural sayings and proverbs, which the average residents can connect to, and thus to the message. The video version of the production reinforces the message with shots of situation enactments and Informative footages, as shown below:



(b) **“Cheer up”** – A song of hope rendered in English language, which also communicates specific instruction on the non-pharmaceutical provisions of the spread of the virus. It opens with a 46-second drama skit, which features two casts- the Commissioner (Prof Bakare), and his Permanent Secretary of the Ministry (Alhaji Ganiyu). This intentionality in casting underscores the strategy of Source credibility in the communication.



In the drama skit, Man (Prof Bakare), who checks in on the frustrated Ajayi (Alhaji Ganiyu), brings him a message of hope. The hardship imposed by the lockdown, puts Ajayi down, and cheers him up, leaving him with the confidence that the disease will soon be over. This sets tune for the fast-paced music whose chorus bears the message of hope. Further, the song issues advice on adherence to non pharmaceutical health protocol such as; avoid hugging; avoid hand-shake, use of hand-wash, hand-glove, sanitizer, soap and water. The images below, were captured from the video version of the song.



3. Remix Song by Ekiti Bass “We are the Cure” by Ekiti Bass

Ekiti Bass is a performing music artiste, who hails from Calabar in Cross Rivers state, but reside in Abuja; Nigeria’s Federal capital Territory. His name does not necessarily resonate in Ekiti state, but his Remix performance which employed snap chat filter effect presents him in the resemblance of a certain Goroso Ekiti who had fast become popular among social media users in Ekiti state. As an undergraduate student of Ekiti State University, Goroso Ekiti is a comedian who had become a comic social media sensation artiste with a unique appearance that employs the snap chat filter effects. His art, which is expressed in the Ekiti dialect, is best described as ranting. Goroso Ekiti rants at social anomalies and human foibles with the aim of promoting indigenous language, culture, people, religion and institutions. His social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram have huge followership of Ekiti people at home and in the Diaspora, He enjoys the patronage of the general public, government and private institutions in Ekiti state. Thus, his work enjoys a level of public trustworthiness. The media strategists for Covid-19 online awareness in Ekiti state engaged Ekiti Bass’ remixed song for Covid-19, to draw social media fans of Goroso Ekiti, and more. Thus, Ekiti Bass’ remix

song video enjoyed huge patronage among Ekiti people because of his close resemblance with Goroso Ekiti's.

The song by Ekiti Bass- "We are the Cure" is a 2-minutes 27-second music video in English language, which underscores the awareness message of Covid-19. It is a remix performance of Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson's charity song titled "We are the World". It opens by hinting on the respiratory disease which inflicts the world, and stresses on the need to avoid crowded places so as to avoid contracting it. The song recommends hand washing, and isolation as the known preventions of the spread. Though it shares the religious predisposition of the average Nigerian, who puts trust in God as means for coping when solution is not in view, it equally stresses that we humans have a vital role to play. The chorus, which draws some lines from the original song, ironically exonerates God and stresses on the human role and responsibility to a cure, thus:

We are the cure.

We are the treatment.

We are the cure if we stay at home and do not spread it.

'There is choice we making, we are saving our own lives',
so please isolate yourself from you and me.

The video made rounds on social media during the lockdown, and it became particularly famous amongst Ekiti social media users because of the rising popularity of an indigenous social media user named Goroso Ekiti, who employs snap-chat filter for the comic art of rants in Ekiti dialect.



4. “Corona...” by Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey

Ebenezer Obey is a legendary Nigerian *Juju* musician with age-long impact and global recognition. His popularity as a global icon in *Juju* music dates over five decades, and he had remained relevant through the ages. His music cuts across the upper and mid classes, with content that ranges from social commentaries to a dose of the Christian religious messages. His kind of music endeared him to a vast audience, hence the fame and popularity. Apart from his music, his philanthropic and good-natured person made him earn the love and trust of Nigerian masses. It is for such reasons for credibility and trust among his vast enthusiasts that his awareness song for Covid-19 was made popular in Ekiti during the total lockdown. Obey’s music video titled “Corona...”, among others was popularized on social media in Ekiti. The 4-minute 32-second video was also popular on the television and radio stations, as well as the social media platforms in Ekiti state. Though Obey had become elderly and he seemed weighed by health condition, as he sat during the performance, the characteristic voice texture and performance style resonated effectively to endear his numerous fan-listeners to the message of the song. The chorus of the music establishes that corona is a deadly pandemic which is rendering nations helpless. It draws on the religious sensibility of Nigerians, in the acknowledgment that God is the solution to the global crisis. It further suggests that our human transgressions to God would have been responsible for the disease, and thus pleading for the forgiveness of sins. However, the verses were quite instructional, enough to educate listeners on their responsibilities to the regular use of mask, washing of hands and social distancing. It concludes by making supplications, and bidding an end to corona, in the call-and-response style, that characterizes African folk songs.



5 “Koro” by Jubal Music

Jubal music is a Yoruba musical icon that has gained broad acceptability with a huge fan base in Ekiti state. The popularity of his songs and music presented him as a professional and trustworthy source of information, and as such a credible source for the communication of Covid-19 awareness. Koro was a Covid-19 awareness music video that went viral in Ekiti state, albeit Nigeria, during the Covid-19 total lockdown period. The production was rendered predominantly in Yoruba language, and with English subtitles. It employs the African folk performance style of the call-and-response to highlight the awareness message. The song opens by soliciting answers to questions that bordered on perceived anomalies, viz. - the powerlessness of the mighty, systemic shutdown, social distancing, and the seizure of religious gathering, among others, and the responses remains constant, “Corona is the cause”. Further it advocates for public compliance to regulations, with specific references to sit-at-home, avoiding handshake and crowded places, and regular hand washing. The last segment touches on the African religious considerations, praying to God for timely intervention. At the end, a refrain session which employs language code-switching and code mixing ensues, combining the other Nigerian major regional languages; Igbo and Hausa, with Yoruba language. Images from the video are available below:



6 “Ojojo 'ikorona” by Erugale

Erugale is a famous on-air personality (OAP), an event compere, actor and filmmaker in Ekiti state, whose words are taken with trust. This presents him as a credible personality for the Covid-19 awareness message; he released a 39-second enchantment video that was made in Ekiti dialect for the Covid-19 awareness message. In the personae

of a native priest, he summons “*Osonyi*”, a deity to expedite the eviction of the corona virus from the society. The charge evokes allegories of strong cultural imports to establish the basis for expelling the incurable disease, as though a spell. Such cultural allegories include:

Sokotiro, the forest being never inhabit town,
Olobombom, the buzzing fly says no farewell
before taking an exit,
The flood from rainfall flows out of town in
fury the same way if flowed in,
Therefore, enough is enough of Corona in
the human society....

This short video went viral in Ekiti state; perhaps because it was released towards the latter days of the extended lockdown period, as residents longed for the easing of the lockdown. It was perceived as a potent religious rite because it heralded the easing of the lockdown. Images from the short video are as made available below:



Analysis of QICPAE (Questionnaire on impact of Covid-19 public awareness in Ekiti-state)

1.1 Responses of a cross-section Ekiti residents

Section 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

S/N	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY (n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Age		
	20 – 29	301	26.9
	30 – 39	423	37.9
	40- 49	286	25.6
	50- above	107	9.6
	Total	1117	100
2	Gender		
	Male	502	44.9
	Female	615	55.1
	Total	1117	100
3	Location		
	Ado-Ekiti	343	30.8
	Ikere-Ekiti	200	17.9
	Ifaki-Ekiti	134	12.1
	Iyin-Ekiti	172	15.4
	Ijan-Ekiti	145	12.8
	Afao-Ekiti	123	11
	Total	1117	100

Section 1 number 1 informs that younger adults constituted a majority of 724 (64.8%) of the respondents, while the middle-age persons between ages 40 and 49 amounted to 286 (25.6%), and 107 (9.6%) of the respondents were between the age bracket of 50 and above. Number 2 shows that 502 (49.9%) of the respondents were males, while 615 (55.1%) were females. Number 3 presents the number of respondents according to their location: Ado-Ekiti, Ikere-Ekiti, Ifaki-Ekiti, Iyin-Ekiti, Ijan-Ekiti and Afao-Ekiti at 343 (30.8%), 200 (17.9%), 134 (12.1%), 172 (15.4%), 145 (12.8%) and 123 (11%) respectively.

Section II: Access to Covid-19 Awareness Messages

S/N	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY (n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Ekiti residents (The people) listened to radio stations more during the Covid-19 total lockdown		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	565	50.5
	Agree (A)	270	24.2
	Disagree (D)	157	14.1
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	125	11.2
	Total	1117	100
2	The people watched the EKTU station during the Covid-19 total lockdown		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	252	22.6
	Agree (A)	169	15.1
	Disagree (D)	474	42.4
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	222	19.9
	Total	1117	100
3	The people got useful information on Covid-19 more from the social media during lockdown		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	594	53.2
	Agree (A)	285	25.5
	Disagree (D)	136	12.2
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	102	9.1
	Total	1117	100
4	The people listened/watched/read Mr Governor's addresses during the lockdown		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	541	48.4
	Agree (A)	258	23.1
	Disagree (D)	181	16.2
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	137	12.3
	Total	1117	100
5	The people had access to the music videos on Covid-19 media awareness on Social media		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	191	17.1
	Agree (A)	524	46.9
	Disagree (D)	208	18.6
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	194	17.4
	Total	1117	100
Section III: COMPLIANCE TO COVID-19 REGULATIONS			
6	There was no protest against Covid-19 regulation in Ekiti state during the lockdown:		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	528	47.3
	Agree (A)	401	35.9
	Disagree (D)	130	11.6
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	58	5.2
	Total	1117	100
7	The media information on Covid-19 from government guided the people during the total lockdown:		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	368	32.9
	Agree (A)	538	48.2
	Disagree (D)	137	12.3
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	74	6.6
	Total	1117	100

8	The people complied with the curfew imposition during the Covid-19 total lockdown:		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	325	29.1
	Agree (A)	550	49.2
	Disagree (D)	180	16.1
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	62	5.6
Total		1117	100
9	Prior to lockdown, residents believed that only God can protect residence from Covid-19 sickness.		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	509	45.6
	Agree (A)	426	38.1
	Disagree (D)	121	10.8
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	61	5.5
Total		1117	100
10	When the lockdown was eased Ekiti residents recognized their roles in protecting themselves from Covid-19		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	345	30.9
	Agree (A)	561	50.3
	Disagree (D)	163	14.6
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	47	4.2
Total		1117	100
11	The people complied with the use of nose mask, hand sanitizer hand washing, and elbow greeting:		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	353	31.6
	Agree (A)	481	43.1
	Disagree (D)	182	16.3
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	101	9.0
Total		1117	100
12	The people gave information on individuals who flaunted Covid-19 regulations to authorities		
	Strongly Agree (SA)	294	26.3
	Agree (A)	355	31.8
	Disagree (D)	261	23.4
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	207	18.5
Total		1117	100

Section II investigates the residents' access to available Covid-19 awareness message. Number 1 informs that a majority of respondents [SA: 566 (50.5%) and A: 270 (24.2%)] remarked that residents accessed the radio for useful information on Covid-19. Number 2 shows that a majority of respondents [D: 474 (42.4%) and SD: 222 (19.9%)] did refute the position that residents accessed the state-owned television station (EKTV) for useful information on Covid-19. The responses of respondents in number 3 [SA: 594 (53.2%) and A: 285 (25.5%)] indicate that more residents accessed the social media for more information on Covid-19 during the lockdown. In number 4, a majority of respondents [SA: 541 (48.4%) and A: 258 (23.1%)] indicated

that residents had access to Mr Governor's addresses on Covid-19 during the lockdown. From the number 5 item, majority of the respondents [SA: 191 (17.1%) and A: 525 (46.9%)] showed that residents had access to the musical video campaign on Covid-19 on social media during the lockdown.

Section III examines the compliance of residents to Covid-19 regulations in Ekiti state. A majority of respondents [SA: 528 (47.3%) and A: 401 (35.9%)] indicated in number 6 that there was no protest against the imposition of covid-19 regulations during the lockdown. In number 7, a majority of the respondents [SA: 368 (32.9%) and A: 538 (48.2%)] showed that the information provided by Government was useful during the lockdown. Number 8 indicates a majority of respondents [SA: 325 (29.1%) and A: 550 (49.2%)] established that residents complied with the curfew imposition during the lockdown. In number 9, majority of the respondents [SA: 509 (45.6%) and A: 426 (38.1%)] agreed that resident held the notion that only God can protect and take the Covid-19 sickness away, ab initio. Number 10 informs that a majority of respondents [S.A: 345 (30.9%) and A: 561 (50.3%)] agreed that residents recognized their roles and duty to containing the virus after the lockdown. In number 11, a larger number of respondents [S.A: 355 (31.6%) and A: 481 (43.1%)] noted that residents abided by the hygiene protocol for covid-19. Number 12 informs that a majority of respondents [SA: 294 (26.3%) and A: 355 (31.8%)] noted that residents provided information on errant individuals who flaunt the lockdown regulations to covid-19 authority.

Discussion

The Nigerian media space has become an instrument of perversion through the bombardment of fake news and rumors, which engenders disinformation. Documented claims are available about the spread of false information in Nigeria, and especially as it concerned Covid-19 among other burning issues. This generally challenged media communication during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the findings of this study reveals that the Ekiti state government took direct responsibility of strategizing media communication on Covid-19 awareness campaign, in order to provide a harmonized and efficient work plan that may achieve set result. The media channels employed include the state-owned television station (EKTV) and radio station (EKITI FM), other four private radio stations that operate in the state, and social media platforms. In the survey of sampled Ekiti residents, 74.7% of the respondents acceded that radio provided access to Covid-19 awareness message in Ekiti state, 62.3% noted that residents gained access to the awareness message via the television, while

78.7% stated that the Covid-19 awareness message reach residents in Ekiti through social media.

Notably, the study reveals a commendable level of public compliance to the Covid-19 media awareness message in Ekiti, as evident in the behaviour of Ekiti residents. 82% of respondents attest that there was no protest in Ekiti state against the imposition of lockdown. This is observably so, because the awareness message resonated with the people due to the media strategy employed. This reflects in the survey result as 81% of respondents agree that the Covid-awareness message provided useful information that enabled residents to survive the total lockdown with minimal casualties as witnessed in neighbouring states. Thus, a total of 78.3% of respondent admitted that residents complied with the curfew, for 72.7% of the respondent Ekiti residents applied themselves to the hygiene protocol of the use of nose mask, washing of hands with soap and water, and the use of hand sanitizer. Further, 68.1% of respondents established that Ekiti residents provided information on errant individuals, as became whistle blowers against errant individuals, for no other reward that communal and self protect. The news of the Father who handed his son that arrives Ekiti from neighbouring state to the Covid-19 task force (Vanguardngr.com, 2020) which made the rounds during the total lockdown, is one of the instances where Ekiti residents volunteered useful information to the task force.

This study reveals the following were strategy for Covid-19 media awareness, which worked for public compliance in Ekiti state during the total lockdown.

(i) Media Space Bombardment

This strategy saw to it that all activities in the media outlets, both private and public, were engaged overwhelmingly in the dissemination of the Covid-19 awareness messages. Firstly, all media outlets, including choice on-line news platform targeted at Ekiti residents, were employed to disseminate the Governor's live addresses, and to reprocess them into digestible bits for the public via news features, special interviews, and other formats. The media outlets aired an array of jingles that communicate same message of Covid-19 awareness, as well as music campaign materials that gear towards the same purpose. Ekiti state, being a lowly populated state, became overwhelmed with the abundance of information on all possible media channels- radio, television and the social media platforms. More so, since residents were huddled behind doors, due to the imposition of lockdown, they are restrained to paying attention to the radio, television and social media devices.

(ii) Unity of Information and Message Coherence

The study reveals that the Ekiti state government took charge of harnessing and harmonizing the useful information that should constitute Covid-19 media awareness message, amidst the abundance of disinformation in the media space. The task force, which consists of experts from the State's Ministry of Health, Information, Justice, security apparatus, an civil society groups, among others, coordinated the useful information on Covid-19, and regulated what was being communicated in the formal media space. Thus, in spite of fake news, the overwhelming machinery, which was put in place to provide awareness for Ekiti residents, served its essence. This strategy underscores the fact that an array of media bombardments will always have enormous effect on the public behaviour, particularly when the diverse contents are communicating the same things over a period of time.

(iii) Credibility of the Source of Information

The strategy of Source Credibility was carefully administered in the communication of Covid-19 awareness. It was observed that residents look forward to, and prepare for, the Governor's address, each time it was to come up. Accordingly, 75.1% of the survey respondents attested that Ekiti residents had access to all three addresses given by the state governor during the total lockdown. The communication by the number one citizen of the state, which was targeted at the awareness message bears utmost source credibility, and readily gains acceptance. The messages were instructional, cheering and factual, with such convincing details that convicts against false news. Further, the special interviews on television and radio stations, which invited kings, market women leaders, chairman of road transport workers, celebrities, socialites and other community influencers were apt deployment of the source credibility strategy. This endeared people within their circle of influence to the message, and to re-disseminate same within their individual circles with a good measure of trust. Hence, the message got to the grassroots. The music campaigns; audio and video, which were promoted for Covid-19 awareness, also made use of credible sources in the status of individual that are famous or and respectable in the society. The selected music for this study featured entertainment celebrities, cultural icons, comic entertainers, a Professor and Commissioner, and a senior civil servant in the calibre of a permanent secretary, among others. This strategy readily makes the awareness message acceptable and trusted.

(iv) Geo-Coding in Presentation

This was mostly put to use in the artistic production of the songs, capturing the cultural context of the message in order to win the interest of listeners and attention to receive the Covid-19 information. Almost all the songs selected for this study did reflect the religious sensibilities of the typical Ekiti, and indeed Yoruba of Nigerian extraction. They believe that an ill-fate should not be accepted in despair, as God is capable of changing fate. They also assume that ill-fate results from our human transgressions and misdeeds, for which God can be appeased. Thus, the songs draw attention to God, calling for forgiveness and help, before pointing out our human responsibilities to survival. Further, most of the songs were rendered in Yoruba and with English subtitles for the non-Yoruba audience. They explored cultural allegory that readily resonates and connects to the message of the song. Some of the songs also engaged code-switching and code-mixing for multicultural appeal. Most songs exhibited the call and response folk style, which makes it entertaining and engaging for listeners. Ultimately, the geo-coding strategy helped to draw listeners to the familiar cultural context, and thereupon hand them the meat of the communication.

(v) Highlight of Vitals in the Awareness Message

This strategy addresses the concern of presentation, as this can mar the intent of the campaign. Considering that the presentation of such a new, developing and novel course should not get across as propaganda, the Covid-19 media awareness messages shared the common highlights of warning, factuality, solution-seeking, instructions, and hope. These highlight were combinations that characterized the communication materials that were promoted for Covid-19 awareness message in Ekiti. While warning against embracing fake news and self medication, it provided details on symptoms, prevention, and solution steps. Essentially, it gave hope amidst the panic and fear in the air. The presentation highlight of the awareness messages for Covid-19 is a strategy that enhanced acceptability, because it made a complex concern acceptable and digestible.

Conclusion

First, the messages passed to the public on Covid19 were expertly designed by the office of the Special Adviser Communication to the Governor of the State. These messages were made simple, and had no obscurity. There was unity in the content and context of the message, which enabled coherence in message delivery, in spite of controversy and seeming contradictions around. Further, geo-coding was employed for effective communication, as the ethical, cultural and religious worldviews of the populace were captured to drive the essence of the messages. Some

of the messages were passed in the local language that residents understood, while language translation subtitles from and to the local language were available for the video format messages. The diverse information and messages on the pandemic and the behaviour of the virus were even designed for smaller units of the society, i.e., messages and information were designed for the different demographics of the society. Sometimes, there pieces were of information that were specifically designed for farmers and other professionals. Thus, these messages trickled down to the target demographics and it made learning and compliance easy. Notably, information and messages were also designed on the different aspects of the pandemic, and how members of the public were expected to apply themselves. This aided deep understanding and also helped the public to engender the needed positive response.

Another media strategy deployed was the source credibility device, whereby the personalities used to anchor the information and awareness for Covid-19 pandemic were credible individuals. Some of them include very credible traditional rulers, opinion molders who have high rate of acceptability and followership among the people. They were either heroes to the Ekiti populace or popular celebrity artistes. Thus, the populace trusts their professionalism and trustworthiness to accept and apply themselves to the message being communicated. This is connected directly to the credibility theory as explored in this study. The positive media space bombardment was also a strategy. Members of the public within the state were not given any breathing space. Information, messages of hope, enlightenment and other directives about the pandemic and the behaviour of the virus were in circulation in all the radio and television stations round the clock. In that way, and giving the circumstance of a lockdown, the people had no choice but to hear, digest and comply.

Recommendations

We hereby recommend all the distinct media strategy which this study has evaluated as effective approaches to public mobilization, especially when the society is in dire need of desirable human behaviours, such as the incidences of possible future sickness outbreak. Even in a society that refuses government's provision due to the deficit of mistrust, each of the media strategies discovered in the study, especially the source credibility strategy, can help any society to adhere and apply themselves to the government provisions

References

- Alagboso, C. & Abubakar, B. (2020). How has Nigeria responded to the Covid-19 outbreak. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@nigeriahealthwatch/the-first-90-days-how-has-nigeria-responded-to-the-covid-19-outbreak-covid19naijaresponse-a0974493efa6>
- Anjorin, A. A. (2020). The corona virus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic: A review and an update on cases in Africa. *Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine*, 13(5), 199-203. doi:10.4103/1995-7645.281612
- Bambgoye, V. (2015). Ekiti: The loss of innocence. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://m.guardian.ng/opinion/ekiti-the-loss-of-innocence/>
- Brinkhoff, T. (2020). Ekiti State in Nigeria: *City population- statistics, snaps and chats* Retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeriaadmin.php?admin1_id=NGA123
- Decaro, N. & Lorusso, A. (2020). Novel human corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) - A lesson from animal. *Veterinary Microbiology*, 244, 1-18. Retrieved from www.elsevier.com/locate/vetmic
- Depoux, A. et al. (2020). The pandemic of social media panic travels faster than Covid-10 outbreak. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/jtm/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jtm/taaa031/5775501>
- Fayemi, A. K. (2009). Human personality and the Yoruba worldview: An ethico-sociological interpretation. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2(9), 167-176. Retrieved https://www.jpnafrican.org/doc/vol2no9/2.9-Hunam_Personality_and_the_Yoruba-Worldview.pdf
- Franck, T. (2020). CNBC: Politics, Trump says the corona virus is the democrats' 'new hoax. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/02/28/trump-says-the-coronavirus-is-the-democrats-new-hoax.html>
- Gates, B. (2020). The first modern pandemic. April 23, 2020 Retrieved from www.gatesnotes.com/health/pandemic-innovation
- Hayes, P. (2020). Here's how scientists know the corona virus came from bats and wasn't made in lab. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation-com-cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/theconversation.com/amp/heres-how-scientists-know-the-coronavirus-came-from-bats-and-wasnt-mad-in-a-lab-141850>
- Hu, B. et al. (2015). Review: Bat origin of human corona viruses. *Virology Journal*, 12, 1-10. Retrieved from <https://virologyj.biomedcentral.com/pdf> DOI 10.1186/s12985-015-0422-1
- Idowu, L. (2020). Deepening the media's coverage of Covid-19. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/opinion/deepening-the-medias-coverage-of-covid-19/>

- Jerving, S. (2020). Early warnings from WHO on the dangers of Covid-19. Retrieved from <http://www.devex.com/news/early-warnings-from-who-on-the-dangers-of-covid-199704> 14April2020
- NCDC. (2020). Covid-19 Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/report/>
- . “Progression of Covid-19 cases in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/progression/>
- Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (2014). Overview of Ekiti State. Retrieved from <https://www.situationroomng.org/overview-of-ekitistate-2/>
- Okwumbu, R. (2020). Ekiti state government imposes curfew, full lockdown. *Nairametrics* Retrieved from <https://nairametrics.com/2020/03/29/ekii-state-government-imposes-curfew-full-lockdown/>
- Omoera, O.S. & Ogoke, C. (2021). An Examination of denials and conspiracy theories on covid-19 in the Nigerian media ecosystem. *Journal of Development Communication*, 32(1), 145-151. <http://jdc.journals.unisel.edu.my/ojs/index.php/jdc/article/view/196>
- Omoera, O. S., Onyemuchara, C. E. & Okwuowulu, C. (2020). Nigerian rural communities and media marginalization on covid-19: Perspectives on participatory video. *The Journal of Society and Media*, 4(2), 385-405. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v4n2.p385-405>
- Petty, R. E., Priester, J. R. & Brinol, P. (2002). Mass media attitude change: Implications of elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. *Media effects advances in theory and research*. J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Readfearn, G. (2020). How did corona virus start and where did it come from? Was it really Wuhan’s animal market. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020.apr/28/how-did-coronavirus-start-and-where-did-it-come-from-how-did-it-spread-humans-was-it-really-bats-pangolins-wuhan-animal-market>
- Soetan, S.O. (2006). *Ekiti; Studies in Ekiti history (part 1)*. Ilorin: MAJAB Publishers.
- Shareen, A., Muhammed, K. S., Kazmi, A., Bashir, N., & Siddique, R. (2020). Covid-19 infection: Origin, transmission and characteristics of human corona viruses. *Journal of Advanced Research*, 24, 91-98. DOI: [org/10.1016/j.jare.2020.03.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jare.2020.03.005)
- Uscinski, J. & Enders, A. (2020). The corona virus conspiracy boom. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/>

archive/2020/04/what-can-coronavirus-tell-us-about-conspiracy-theories/610894/

- Willie, E. E. (2013). Effect of communication. *Introduction to basic communication*. K. Agber & O. G. Ejue (Eds.), Makurdi: Bookmakers.
- WHO. (2020). Supporting media to bust harmful myths on corona virus disease. *WHO- Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.afro.who.int/news/supporting-media-bust-harmful-myths-coronavirus-disease>