

## INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN ON MEDIA USAGE IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

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The COVID-19 pandemic global lockdown caused concerns about survival and made people turn to various communication media for information about the virus. This study therefore investigated the extent to which Nigerians used various media before and during the lockdown. The population of the study were resident Nigerians from which 1,250 respondents were selected by the random sampling. A 15-item Google Form was the research instrument. Findings showed that the respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines occasionally before the lockdown while most of them did not read newspapers and or magazines during the period. There were consistent uses of social media, the Internet and online newspapers and or magazines in the period. Finally, education, entertainment, information, motivation and socializing constituted the most frequent needs to which the respondents applied various media. The study therefore recommends that in media selection, advertisers should note the most popular among the respondents.

**Keywords:** Media usage, COVID-19, Coronavirus, Pandemic, Lockdown

### INTRODUCTION

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Global and local media had reported that the World Health Organisation (WHO) had on 30th January 2020 declared the COVID-19 disease, otherwise called the Coronavirus pandemic “a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)” which by extant WHO protocols is “an extraordinary event which is determined...to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of

disease; and to potentially require a coordinated international response” (WHO, 2020 a). The declaration heightened already trending debates, international speculations, and conspiracies theories about the origin and cause of the global plague. Notable among these is the rumour that it started in late 2019 from an infected animal in the Hunan seafood market in Wuhan, capital city of the Hubei Province of central China. Nevertheless, it is an irrefutable fact that the first human cases of the disease “were first reported by health officials in Wuhan City, China in December 2019” (WHO, 2020 b).

These speculations have culminated in unresolved controversies, despite which the virus has grown from a local problem to a global menace, afflicting all and sundry one way or the other physically, psychologically, physiologically, and economically. Millions of people have fallen sick and hundreds of thousands have died worldwide. Those that are alive and otherwise in good health are traumatised, either from caring for their sick loved ones, or from losing those that are dear to them to COVID-19. Their psychological pains were worsened by COVID-19 induced new but stringent regulations about burial rites for the dead. In some climes, people who were suffering from incommunicable but life threatening ailments died in droves because medical personnel refused to treat them out of fears of contracting COVID-19 disease from the sick and dying, thereby unwittingly but effectively criminalizing sickness and signing the death warrants of many who could have lived. Thus the rich and powerful nations and individual persons in the world, as well as the poor and downtrodden all have tales of COVID-19 related woes to tell such that as at 28th August 2020, there was a total of 24,257,975 confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections globally, causing 827,245 deaths. These figures include 53,021 confirmed cases of infections and 1,010 deaths in Nigeria (WHO, 2020 c).

However, debates and other activities have since shifted from the blame war to concerted multi-pronged quest for an end to the pandemic. Partial breakthroughs in that direction have been announced by a few countries and WHO has speculated that a COVID-19 vaccine could be available globally by 2022. The global lockdown, which is unprecedented in recent histories, culminated in the grounding of peoples and business for weeks, and in some places, months. Airports were shut down. Borders were closed. Banks were locked and businesses as well as other corporate entities jettisoned physical meetings for virtual assemblies. Schools were transferred online. Public gatherings for social and religious activities were suspended. Access to cinemas, bars, and other relaxation arenas was blocked. Work hours dissolved imperceptibly into perpetual holidays as the distinction between weekday and weekend activities became blurred and metamorphosed into wearisome and endless

monotony. Curfews were imposed, and wearing of mouth and nose masks became prerequisites where some forms of movements were allowed. Only peoples and businesses designated as essential, such as medical and foods distribution chain personnel were allowed to operate. Inmates of correctional institutions with minor offences, the old or sick among them, and those with short outstanding sentences to serve were released back into the society. COVID-19 patients, especially returnees from abroad were quarantined, treated, released or buried as their cases turned out. Contacts of those patients received similar treatments. The alarming health situation thus inadvertently led to a global lockdown and a new normal way of living.

Locally, Nigeria recorded its index case of COVID-19 disease on 27th February 2020 through an Italian citizen who had two days earlier flown from Milan, Italy into Nigeria through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos. His mission was to resume work at his duty post in Nigeria, but he fell ill a day after arrival and was transferred to a public health facility for isolation and testing. Subsequently on 9th March 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari constituted the ad hoc Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 (PTF) to coordinate a multi-stakeholder response to the pandemic and provide human, technical, and material supports to states in order to contain the pandemic (Nigeria Health Watch, 2020). The PTF, in extensive collaborations with the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) through the latter's national Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) emerged as the country's highest command centre for mobilization of resources to confront the pandemic head-on. Consequently, on the recommendation of the PTF, the federal and states governments in Nigeria joined other countries and provinces of the world to proclaim and enforce lockdown of societies, with attendant imposition of regularly reviewed and promptly updated social distancing protocols, policies, laws, and regulations, including strict curfews, all of which were steered by the PTF. Daily media briefings and advisories became a core communication component of PTF's comprehensive strategy to tackle the pandemic.

However, the challenges of the new normal way of living, which the lockdown brought in its wake, will expectedly affect different people in different ways. People expectedly had more leisure time to themselves during the lockdown. Moreover, towards the quickest end to the lockdown and a return to the pre-lockdown normal way of living, unprecedented massive information and communication campaigns in all available media constitute a part of the strategies for combating the Coronavirus pandemic, both globally and locally. Consequently, there could be radical changes in peoples' daily routines, including duration and purposes of communication media usage, especially in the mega city of Lagos, the epicentre of the pandemic in Nigeria.

So, how did people cope with anxieties, boredom, and excessive leisure time during the pandemic lockdown? How did they use various communication media in the lockdown period compared to the pre-lockdown period?

Meanwhile, scholars of both classic and modern eras such as Asemah, 2011:36; Ogwezzy, 2008: 20; Sambe, 2005: 63; Hanson and Maxcy, 1999:3 have observed that mass media channels, which by inference include Internet based platforms, serve the society in the areas of correlation; cultural promotion; education; information; mobilization; motivation; socialization; watchdog or surveillance of the environment; status-conferral; enforcement of social norms; agenda setting; gate keeping; advertising; integration; employment creation; and campaign. Scholars also contend that media have dysfunctional dimensions to their roles in society, whether intended or unintended. For instance, Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) cited by Hanson and Maxcy (1999: 15) identified narcotisation as one of the dysfunctional roles of the mass media in society.

Therefore, apart from the quest for information about how to stay safe during the pandemic, people are likely to seek relief from lockdown boredom and anxieties about COVID-19, in line with the postulations of the uses and gratification theory, and new ways to play in the era of the new normal way of living, in line with the suppositions of the play theory. To what extent have people sought and used various media for the aforesaid roles of the media the during the lockdown? Did the media live up to the expectations of the people in the thick of the Coronavirus pandemic? Against this background, this study sought to determine whether there was any significant difference in the pattern of communication media usage among selected respondents in Nigeria.

### Research Questions

1. How often did the respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?
2. How often did the respondents listen to radio and or watch television before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?
3. How often did the respondents access social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?
4. To which needs did the respondents apply various media before and during

the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

5. To what extent did selected demographic factors of the respondents determine their use of various media during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

### Contextual and conceptual clarifications

Several terms are recurrent and pivotal in this study. They are therefore identified and defined as follows, beginning with COVID-19, which is used interchangeably with Coronavirus. This study adopted the definition of COVID-19 by WHO (2020 d) and it “is a disease caused by a new strain of Coronavirus. ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 nCoV.’ The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold”. Moreover, in this study, these researchers defined pandemic as the spread of the COVID-19 disease across international borders while lockdown refers to the restrictions of movement of human populations in different countries and communities across the world as strategy for arresting and containing the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

Moreover, media usage refers to the purposes and pattern of use of various media, especially newspapers, magazines, radio, television, social media, and online media among the respondents before and during the lockdown. This study also adopted the definition of hardcopy newspapers which according to Oketunmbi (2015: 171) “...refer to traditional newspapers obtainable on newsstands (while) on-line newspapers or newspapers on-line are electronic copies of traditional newspapers accessible on Internet websites”. However, social media are Internet and App based communication platforms such as, in alphabetical order, Ask.Fm, Badoo, Facebook, Flickr, Foursquare, Instagram, InterNations, Line, LinkedIn, Meetup, MySpace, Nextdoor, Pinterest, Reddit, Skype, Skyrock, Snapchat, Telegram, TikTok, Tinder, Tumblr, Twitter, Viber, WeChat, WhatsApp, and YouTube, et cetera.

### Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

This study is anchored in two theories: uses and gratification theory on the one hand, and the play theory on the other hand.

#### (a) Uses and Gratification Theory

The uses and gratification theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory posits that media audience are active in the

selection of media contents they use to gratify their communication needs and that media consumers have the freewill to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them. Commenting on the uses and gratification theory, Denise McQuail (1987) cited by Oketunmbi (2015) had observed that the audience is not passive. Rather, the audience "makes a conscious and motivated choice among channels and contents on offer". In other words, "the uses and gratification theory is a postulation that an individual would select and use a particular communication medium rather than others due to imagined or established higher satisfaction potentials of that medium relative to other media (Oketunmbi 2015). Moreover, in their review of the theory, Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008) averred that it has shifted the focus from media production and transmission functions to the media consumption function. This is because the audience selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain the media messages on the basis of their needs. Another scholar, Okunna (1999) regarded the theory as a functional one and observed that the functional use of mass communication is what the theory explains.

The relevance of the uses and gratification theory to this research rests in the theory's assumption that the audience deliberately selects specific media and particular media contents to satisfy precise communication needs. Therefore, the theory is expected to provide insights to why and how the respondents in this study used various media before and during the COVID-19 the pandemic lockdown.

### **(b) The Play Theory**

Either explicitly or implicitly, literature is in unanimous consensus that William Stephenson propounded the play theory in 1967 (for instance Akinjogbin and Kayode, 2011; Anaeto, Onabajo, and Osifeso, 2008; and Carey, 2008). The basic assumptions of the theory, according to Anaeto, Onabajo, and Osifeso (2008: 150) is that "...people use mass communication more as play than work, more for pleasure and entertainment than for information and improvement." Stephenson proposed that the most important job of mass communication is to encourage subjective play, provide pleasure to people as a break from the pressing matters of the time. He also viewed mass communication as serving the two key functions of play and work.

Similarly, Akinjogbin and Kayode (2011: 111) in their review of the play theory declared as follows.

*The first step in understanding Play Theory is to understand Stephenson's notion of play. Extending Freud's position, Stephenson grounds his theory along a continuum with pain placed on one side and pleasure on the other. ...Work leans toward*

*pain, while play leans toward pleasure. Stephenson argues that work is anything to do "with reality, with earning a living, [and] with production", while play is a "time for recreation, hobbies, or self-cultivation" that is "largely unproductive except for the self-satisfaction it provides". Stephenson next places the functions of the mass media on his continuum of pain and pleasure. He notes that the media can be associated with both pain, through its capacity to support work, and pleasure, through its capacity to entertain.*

Given its work-play dichotomy, the relevance of the play theory to this study is that, deprived of their regular work routines, the respondents are most likely to turn to play to fill the vacuum created by the excessive leisure time attendant to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In other words, the media consumption pattern of the respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown is more likely to tilt towards media facilitated play than towards work across demographic profiles.

### **Review of Research Reports on Pre COVID-19 Pandemics**

There are different scholarly research reports on media use during pre-COVID-19 pandemics such as Ebola, Zika, and HIV/AIDs. For instance, Tai and Sun (2007) investigated media dependency among Chinese individuals during the SARs epidemic of 2003. In particular, the research explored how the Chinese people responded to a major public health crisis by utilizing various alternative communication resources in a rapidly-changing information environment spearheaded by the Internet and other new communication technologies when crucial information was not available from the mainstream media. The study revealed that online media became more stable and diversified source of information for Chinese citizens during this period. The authors stated that the Internet became a specially empowering tool for individuals to create communication channels of their own. The media usage among the Chinese during that SARs epidemic was mostly the internet.

Similarly, Hossain, Kam, Wigand and Bossomaier (2016) studied social media use during the Ebola pandemic. They found out that there was positive usage of social media during this epidemic. Still on Ebola, Househ (2016) studied communicating Ebola through social media and electronic news media outlets. The study investigated the use of Twitter and electronic news outlets in communicating Ebola virus information. A cross-sectional survey of Twitter data and Google News trend data was conducted between 30 September and 29 October 2014. The study revealed a relationship between electronic news media publishing and Twitter activity around significant event such as Ebola.

In their study on the effectiveness of media use in health education: evaluation of an HIV/AIDS radio campaign in Ethiopia: Farr, Wittie, Jarato and Menard (2005) found very high listenership, storyline recall, liking of the programme, and strong desire to change behaviour. Also on HIV/AIDS, Keating, Meekers and Adewuyi did a study titled assessing effects of a media campaign on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in Nigeria. The study investigated VISION project that was aimed at mass-media campaigns. The result of the findings revealed that exposure to the VISION mass media campaign was relatively high across the various media such as radio, printed advertisement, or television programme and radio had the highest percentage.

In 2019, Unekwu conducted a study titled audience perception and adoption of broadcast media campaigns against Lassa fever in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to investigate Ekiti people's level of exposure, perception, and level of adoption of the broadcast media campaign messages against Lassa fever. The challenges in adopting the broadcast media campaigns on Lassa fever prevention and control were part of the objectives of the study. The findings indicated that Ekiti people were exposed to broadcast media campaigns on Lassa fever prevention and control and that there was a significant level of adoption of the campaign messages transmitted.

Adenubi, Adebowale, Oloye, Bankole, Ayoajayi, and Akinloye, (2020) conducted a study on University community-based survey on the knowledge, attitude and perception about COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria in the study. The study assessed the knowledge, attitude and perception (KAP) about COVID-19 among members of staff of a university community in southwest, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey using an anonymous, self-designed, online KAP questionnaire was conducted from April 18 to May 31, 2020. It also identified the mass media (television, radio) and social media as the major sources of information about COVID-19. This indicated that a significant proportion of respondents are largely influenced by media information. Respondents complied with the use of nose/face masks, stay at home policy, social distancing and regular hand hygiene as 84.6 % and 89.4 % used hand sanitizers, and washed with soap and water respectively.

### **Media Use before COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown in Nigeria**

Literature abounds on the various uses of the media in Nigeria before the Covid-19 pandemic. The body of literature on the uses of the media after Covid-19 pandemic



lockdown is expanding daily following researchers' efforts at investigating the subject just like this study. It is important to affirm that uses of the media are not one-directional. Literature shows that media consumers use the media depending on their immediate needs per time for information, education and entertainment. Studies abound on the use of media for health-related information needs, news, political information, sports information, and for educational purposes, among others. This study therefore reviewed some specific areas of media usage across print media, electronic, media, and new media.

In their study, Ohila and Arthur (2014: 99) found that the respondents seemed to have lost the societal value of reading products of the print media (for instance hardcopy newspapers and magazines) as this traditional form of reading has been substituted for online versions on the Internet. In the same vein, Apuke and Omar (2020: 16) identified poor readership among students. In their study, students indicated that they read hardcopy newspapers occasionally. This finding overthrew the conjecture of Babalola (2002: 407) that hardcopy newspapers are perhaps the most sought after print documents used by the largest population of people of all age groups.

Meanwhile, Aririguzoh, Sobowale, and Usaini (2016: 16) examined the pattern of media usage among students in higher institutions in Nigeria. Their findings showed that students in privately owned universities in south-west Nigeria are media conscious and literate. They additionally found that students are able to competently use and navigate the various media platforms for easy and unhindered consumption of media contents. Of all the studied mediums, the internet is the most easily accessed medium for students

On the attributes of radio Yahaya (2008: 170) had noted that:

*Radio has been recognised for its outstanding qualities in mass communication. Apart from being an excellent medium for mobilization, motivation and its capability to draw the attention of its diverse audience to new ideas coupled with techniques and latest information requiring urgent public attention, it also has wide coverage, relatively available to both urban and rural populace.*

Radio in the same vein has been noted as a powerful source of information across a large spectrum of listeners especially in Nigeria. Studies abound which evidences the role that radio continues to play in determining the political decision making choices

of people. In Abdollahyan and Machika (2017: 70) for instance, respondents indicated that they were exposed to political campaign messages on radio and were heavily influenced by them to the point that it influenced the voting decision. Also, Aderibigbe and Akinwande (2015:261) found that radio stood out as an important medium for involving women in development programmes and opportunities. This was because rural women depended heavily on radio for information sourcing on a wide range of issues.

### Summary of Literature

The paper is anchored in two communication theories namely, uses and gratification theory as propounded by Elihu Katz and the play theory propounded by William Stephenson. The justification for use of the uses and gratification theory is to provide insights to why and how the respondents used various media before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The use of the play theory is hypothetical – in that, deprived of their regular work routines, the respondents are most likely to turn to play to fill the vacuum created by the excessive leisure time afforded by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

The review traced scholastic reports back to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic periods, during which the world experienced afflictions such as Ebola, Zika, and HIV/AIDS. The limitation here is that none of the aforementioned pandemics warranted a lockdown. However, these periods were incomparably significant for analysis of media usage within the pandemic periods.

Literature indicates a number of findings around the uses of media within a pandemic period. Studies conducted outside of Nigeria gave an indication of a significant rise in the patronage of online media. Studies in China revealed that use of online media became more stable and diversified source of information for the Chinese people during the SARs epidemic of 2003. On similar level, studies from the United States found a relationship between electronic news media publishing and Twitter activity during a plague such as Ebola. For studies done within Nigeria, the electronic media were found to be the most significant sources of information, with radio topping the chart followed by television.

### METHOD OF STUDY

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The study is a quasi-national survey conducted along the principles of descriptive survey. Population of the study consisted of Nigerians resident in the country before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the estimate of which, as at 12th September 2020 “is 207,110,363...based on Worldometer (2020) elaboration of the

latest United Nations data.” From this population, a sample size of 1,250 respondents was drawn using the random sampling technique. The justification for the sample size is that there is no consensus in literature on the appropriate sample size for a study. For instance, Patten (2000: 47) had advised that, “Sample size is an important but secondary consideration.... Strive first to obtain an unbiased sample and then seek a reasonably large number of participants.” Similarly, Onabajo (2011: 130) noted that, “No single sample size formula is available for every research method”. Moreover, Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo and Okpanachi (2012: 156) examined the issue of sample size from another perspective and declared that, “The size of the sample depends on the researcher’s ability to estimate the variables in a population....”

Nevertheless, there is a consensus that samples should be large enough to represent all the variables in a population in order to enhance valid generalisations to that population. Most scholars also argued that the most important point to note in sampling is that bias of any type should be avoided. For instance, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 92) “The most important part of any sampling procedure is to avoid bias of any kind – each respondent should have an equal chance of being selected...”

Earlier, Simon and Burstein (1985: 413) had noted that the typical sample sizes for studies of human and institutional populations should be between 1000 and 1500 respondents. In a corroborative but more recent stance, Patten (2000: 47) observed that “...even the most important and prestigious national surveys are often conducted with only about 1500 participants.” Thus, Comrey and Lee (1992) cited by Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 103) described a sample size of 1000 respondents as “excellent” for multivariate studies. Therefore, and since this study is a quasi-national survey, the researchers took the average of the figures found in literature (1000 and 1500) to arrive at a sample size of 1,250 respondents.

The research instrument was a 15-item Google Form questionnaire which the researchers constructed and validated using face-validity and peer-review techniques. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered by the researchers, with the support of numerous research assistants located in various states of the federation, to the respondents online, through a combination of four Internet/Apps based social media platforms namely, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The reason for administering the instrument online was because the administration was done immediately after the proclamation of the end of the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria. This however

precludes those without Internet and or social media from participating in the study. Moreover, human memory is often inaccurate in the recollection of long past events, not least those involving comparisons of two social realities, such as the type in which the study was rooted. Therefore, this justifies the decision to administer the questionnaire immediately after the lockdown when respondents can relate more with the situation for easy recall.

The response rate was 100% because all 1,250 respondents fully and dully completed the questionnaire. The researchers achieved this by making all items in the questionnaire compulsory. Therefore, none of the respondents would have been able to submit the forms until he or she must have answered all questions in it. Data gathering spanned eleven days and analysis was done through simple percentages and cross-tabulations. However, the strategy of administering the research instrument through the Internet and Apps based social media platforms constitute a likely limitation to the study because only respondents with access to Internet and social media participated in the survey. The findings of the study would probably have been different if Nigerians without access to Internet and social media were not precluded from the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Research question 1:** How often did the respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Respondents' Frequencies of Reading Hardcopy Newspapers and or Magazines before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

Period	Reading of Newspapers and or Magazines						Total
	Never	Daily	Weekly	Weekends	Monthly	Occasionally	
<b>Before Lockdown</b>	23.4% (n=293)	14.5% (n=181)	5.8% (n=72)	3.7% (n=46)	0.7% (n=9)	51.9% (n=649)	<b>100% (N=1,250)</b>
<b>During Lockdown</b>	41.0% (n=512)	17.5% (n=219)	6.1% (n=76)	2.7% (n=34)	0.8% (n=10)	31.9% (n=399)	

Table 1 shows that before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, slightly more than half of the respondents 51.9% (n=649) read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines

occasionally while 23.4% (n=293) never did. The remaining respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines daily (14.5%, n=181), weekly (5.8%, n=72), weekends (3.7%, n=46) and monthly (0.7%, n=9) respectively before the lockdown. This means that more than three-quarters of the respondents (76.6%, n=957) read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while only 23.4% (n=293) did not.

Comparably, during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, 31.9% (n=399) of the respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines occasionally while 41.0% (n=512) never did. The remaining respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines daily (17.5%, n=219), weekly (6.1%, n=76), weekends (2.7%, n=34) and monthly (0.8%, n=10) respectively during the lockdown. This means that slightly more than half of the respondents (59.0%, n=738) read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines during the lockdown while the remaining 41.0% (n=512) did not.

Therefore, in answer to research question 1, most of the respondents (51.9%, n=649) read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines occasionally before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown while most of them (41.0%, n=512) did not read newspapers and or magazines during the lockdown.

**Research question 2:** How often did the respondents listen to radio and or watch television before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Respondents' Frequencies of Listening to Radio and or Watching Television before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

Period	Listening to Radio and or Watching Television						Total
	Never	Daily	Weekly	Weekends	Monthly	Occasionally	
<b>Before Lockdown</b>	2.6% (n=32)	58.6% (n=733)	7.8 % (n=98)	6.2% (n=77)	0.6% (n=8)	24.2% (n=302)	<b>100% (N=1,250)</b>
<b>During Lockdown</b>	3.0% (n=37)	75.5 % (n=944)	5.3% (n=66)	1.9% (n=24)	0.9% (n=11)	13.4% (n=168)	

Table 2 reveals that before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, 2.6% (n=32) of the respondents did not listen to radio and or watch television. The remaining respondents listened to radio and or watched television daily (58.65%, n=733), weekly (7.8 %, n=98), weekends (6.2%, n=77), monthly (0.6%, n=8), and occasionally (24.2%, n=302) respectively before the lockdown. This means that almost all the

respondents (97.4%, n=1,218) listened to radio and or watched television before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while only 2.6% (n=32) did not.

Comparably, during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, 3.0% (n=37) of the respondents did not listen to radio and or watch television. The remaining respondents listened to radio and or watched television daily (75.5 %, n=944), weekly (5.3%, n=66), weekends (1.9%, n=24), monthly (0.9%, n=11), and occasionally (13.4%, n=168) respectively during the lockdown. This means that almost all the respondents (97.0%, n=1,213) listened to radio and or watched television before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while only 3.0% (n=37) did not.

Therefore, in answer to research question 2, almost all the respondents (97.4%, n=1,218 and 97.0%, n=1,213) listened to radio and or watched television before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown respectively.

**Research question 3:** How often did the respondents access social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Respondents' Frequencies of Accessing Social Media, the Internet, and On-Line Newspapers and or Magazines before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

Period	Accessing Social Media, the Internet, and On-Line Media						Total
	Never	Daily	Weekly	Weekends	Monthly	Occasionally	
<b>Before Lockdown</b>	0.2% (n=3)	91.3% (n=1,141)	3.1% (n=39)	0.9% (n=11)	0.5% (n=6)	4.0% (n=50)	<b>100% (N=1,250)</b>
<b>During Lockdown</b>	0.2% (n=2)	95.3% (n=1,191)	1.5% (n=19)	0.3% (n=4)	0.2% (n=3)	2.5% (n=31)	

Table 3 indicates that before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, 0.2% (n=3) of the respondents did not access social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines. The remaining respondents accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines daily (91.3%, n=1,141), weekly (3.1%, n=39), weekends (0.9%, n=11), monthly (0.5%, n=6), and occasionally (4.0%, n=50) respectively before the lockdown. This means that almost all the respondents (99.8%, n=1,248) accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or

magazines before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while only 0.2% (n=3) did not.

Comparably, during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, 0.2% (n=2) of the respondents did not access social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines. The remaining respondents accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines daily (95.3%, n=1,191), weekly (1.5%, n=19), weekends (0.3%, n=4), monthly (0.2%, n=3), and occasionally (2.5%, n=31) respectively during the lockdown. This means that almost all the respondents 99.8% (n=1,248) accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while only 0.2% (n=2) did not.

Therefore, in answer to research question 3, almost all the respondents (99.8%, n=1,248) and (99.8%, n=1,248) accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown respectively.

**Research question 4:** To which needs did the respondents apply various media before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

**Table 4:** Respondents' Application of Various Media before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

Period	Application of Various Media					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
<b>Before Lockdown</b>	9.7% (n=121)	9.8% (n=123)	41.8% (n=523)	1.4% (n=18)	37.2% (n=465)	<b>100% (N=1,250)</b>
<b>During Lockdown</b>	13.1% (n=164)	7.9% (n=99)	38.6% (n=482)	3.6% (n=45)	36.8% (n=460)	

**Keys to Tables 4 to 7**

A: Education and information

B: Entertainment, motivation, and socializing

C: Education, entertainment, information, motivation, socializing

D: Advertising and or working

E: All of the above

Table 4 shows that before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria, 9.7% (n=121) of the respondents used various media for "education and information" needs only, while an almost equal number of respondents (9.8%, n=123) used various media for

“entertainment, motivation, and socializing”. Over one-third of the respondents (41.8%, n=523) used various media to satisfy the needs for “education, entertainment, information, motivation, and socializing” while a minority of 1.4% (n=18) used various media for “advertising and or working” or work needs. The remaining 37.2% (n=465) used various media for “all of the above” mentioned needs.

Comparably, Table 4 also specifies that during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown in Nigeria, 13.1% (n=164) of the respondents used various media for “education and information” needs only, while 7.9% (n=99) of them used various media for “entertainment, motivation, and socializing”. Moreover, 38.6% (n=482) of the respondents used various media to satisfy the needs for “education, entertainment, information, motivation, and socializing” while a minority of 3.6% (n=45) used various media for “advertising and or working” or work needs. The remaining 36.8% (n=460) used various media for “all of the above” mentioned needs. This means that the respondents’ pattern of media usage before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria is basically the same.

Therefore, in answer to research question 4, the study finds that “education, entertainment, information, motivation, and socializing” constituted the most frequent needs to which the respondents apply various media before (41.8%, n=523) and during (38.6%, n=482) the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria respectively.

**Research question 5:** To what extent did selected demographic factors of the respondents determine their use of various media during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria?

**Table 5:** Cross-Tabulation of Respondents’ Sexes and Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic the Lockdown

Sexes	Media Usage <i>during</i> the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
<b>Female</b>	4.0% (n=50)	3.8% (n=48)	20.3% (n=254)	2.2% (n=28)	21.8% (n=272)	52.2% (n=652)
<b>Male</b>	7.4% (n=93)	1.0% (n=13)	21.8% (n=272)	0.6% (n=7)	17.0% (n=213)	47.8% (n=598)
<b>Others</b>	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)
<b>Total</b>	11.4% (n=143)	4.8% (n=61)	42.1% (n=526)	2.8% (n=35)	38.8% (n=485)	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=1,250)</b>

Table 5 displays that all the respondents perceived themselves either as male (47.8%,



n=598) or female (52.2%, n=652) only. Coincidentally, purpose C (education, entertainment, information, motivation, socializing) constitute the highest application of various media between the sexes with frequencies of 21.8% (n=272) and 20.3% (n=254) for males and females respectively. Comparably, slightly more females (21.8%, n=272) than males (17.0%, n=213) applied various media to all purposes. The patterns of application of various media for other specific purposes are basically the same because there are no significant differences between the male and female responses frequencies. For instance, for purpose A (education and information) males polled 7.4% (n=93) while females recorded 4.0% (n=50).

Therefore, the researchers inferred that gender is not a significant determinant of the purposes to which the respondents applied various communication media during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

**Table 6:** Cross-Tabulation of Respondents' Age Groups and Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic the Lockdown

Age Groups	Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
Teenagers	0.4% (n=5)	0.4% (n=5)	1.3% (n=16)	0.2% (n=2)	2.9% (n=36)	5.2% (n=64)
20-29	4.0% (n=50)	2.6% (n=33)	13.4% (n=168)	1.0% (n=12)	19.4% (n=243)	40.4% (n=506)
30-39	3.0% (n=38)	1.7% (n=21)	12.5% (n=156)	0.3% (n=4)	11.3% (n=141)	28.8% (n=360)
40-49	1.8% (n=22)	0.3% (n=4)	6.5% (n=81)	0.4% (n=5)	5.4% (n=68)	14.4% (n=180)
50-59	1.8% (n=22)	0.6% (n=8)	3.3% (n=41)	0.1% (n=1)	2.4% (n=30)	8.2% (n=102)
60-69	0.4% (n=5)	0.1% (n=1)	1.6% (n=20)	0.1% (n=1)	0.5% (n=6)	2.6% (n=33)
70-Plus	0.1% (n=1)	0.0% (n=0)	0.3% (n=4)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	0.4% (n=5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5%</b> <b>(n=143)</b>	<b>5.7%</b> <b>(n=72)</b>	<b>38.9%</b> <b>(n=486)</b>	<b>2.0%</b> <b>(n=25)</b>	<b>41.9%</b> <b>(n=524)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=1,250)</b>

Table 6 indicates that the 20-29 age group had the highest frequency among the respondents (40.4%, n=506) while 70-Plus group had the least (0.4%, n=5). The 30-39 and 40-49 age groups had the second (28.8%, n=360) and third (14.4%, n=180) highest frequency among the respondents respectively. The 20-29 age group also had the highest frequency of application of various media to all purposes (19.4%, n=243). Comparably, all the age groups, except 40-49, recorded similar pattern of media

usage. For instance, purpose D (advertising and or working) was the least application of various media among the respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Similarly, response option E (application of media to all purposes) is the highest frequency for teenagers and the 20-29 age groups, while for the remaining groups it is purpose C (education, entertainment, information, motivation, socializing).

Therefore, considering that “advertising and or working” are the only elements of media usage in purpose E that are not in purpose C, the researchers inferred that age group is not a significant determinant of the purposes to which the respondents applied various communication media during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

**Table 7:** Cross-Tabulation of Respondents’ Employment Statuses and Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic the Lockdown

Lockdown Statuses	Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
Essential worker	4.7% (n=59)	2.2% (n=28)	14.0% (n=174)	1.1% (n=14)	14.1% (n=176)	36.1% (n=451)
NEW/Unemployed*	6.9% (n=86)	3.7% (n=46)	27.0% (n=338)	0.9% (n=11)	25.4% (n=318)	63.9% (n=799)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.6%</b> <b>(n=145)</b>	<b>5.9%</b> <b>(n=74)</b>	<b>41.0%</b> <b>(n=512)</b>	<b>2.0%</b> <b>(n=25)</b>	<b>39.5%</b> <b>(n=494)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=1,250)</b>

Table 7 specifies that most of the respondents (63.9%, n=799) were either unemployed or non-essential workers while the remaining 36.1% (n=451) were essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Moreover, the patterns of purposes of media usage within the two groups are the same. For instance, purposes C (education, entertainment, information, motivation, socializing) and E (all of the above) constitute either the first or second highest frequencies within the two groups while purpose D (advertising and or working) constituted the least.

Therefore, the researchers inferred that employment statuses do not constitute a significant determinant of the purposes to which the respondents applied various communication media during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

Finally in answer to research question 5, the study finds that selected demographic factors of the respondents did not determine their use of various media during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The study corroborated the core assumptions of the uses and gratification theory as well as the play theory in which the study was anchored because, in line with the uses and gratification theory, this study found that the respondents deliberately selected specific media to satisfy precise communication needs. Also, in consonance with the play theory, the media consumption pattern of the respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown tilted towards media facilitated activities than towards work across demographic profiles.

Moreover, findings on research question 1 show that most of the respondents read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines occasionally before the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown while most of them did not read newspapers and or magazines during the lockdown. Therefore, the researchers conclude that the lockdown was a barrier to respondents' access to hardcopy newspapers and or magazines during the lockdown since one can only read hardcopy newspapers and or magazines to which one has access. However, since data on research question 2 indicate that almost all the respondents listened to radio and or watched television before and during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, the researchers conclude that the lockdown did not affect respondents' use of the broadcast media. This is logical because of technology enhanced current state of media convergence in which radio and television contents are readily available in Nigeria through diverse devices.

On research question 3 which findings reveal that almost all the respondents accessed social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers and or magazines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown respectively, the researchers conclude that the lockdown did not affect respondents' access and use of online media. This is not unexpected because of the proliferation of portable devices such as smartphones, tablets, and notebooks and the available of easy access to the Internet through those aforementioned devices. Based on findings on research question 4, the study concludes that "advertising and or work" constituted the least needs to which the respondents apply various media before (1.4%, n=18) and during (3.6%, n=45) the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown in Nigeria respectively. Finally in answer to research question 5, the study finds that selected demographic factors of the respondents did not determine their use of various media during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown in Nigeria.

The study therefore recommends that advertisers and marketers should second-guess the probability that social media, the Internet, and on-line newspapers

and or magazines constitute the most cost efficient means of advertising. For future research efforts, the researchers recommend that administration of research instrument should be by a combination of paper and paperless means. By so doing, the limitation to this study, namely that research instrument administration was conducted online and thus precluded offline Nigerians from the study would have been addressed and perhaps the findings would be different.

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