



## ROLE OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND MANAGEMENT BY LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN CONTROL OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Lead Authors:

**Adebowale  
Ikuesowo-  
Akinbami**

Affiliation:  
Adekunle  
Ajasin  
University  
Akungba  
Akoko,  
Ondo State



### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the information dissemination strategies used by the Lagos State Ministry of Health to halt the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic; the reason for the adoption of the information dissemination and management strategy; and the perception of Lagos State residents on the state ministry of health's information dissemination and management strategy. Then the survey and in-depth interview research methods were applied. The study population comprised all of the 9,019,534 residents of Lagos State and the information staff of the Lagos State Ministry of Health. A sample size of 384 respondents was selected for the survey, while three information staff were selected for the in-depth interview using a multistage sampling procedure. The study was anchored on social cognitive theory. The study found out that the media the Lagos State Ministry of Health uses include radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the internet, and billboards and that the reason the Lagos State Ministry of Health chooses the information media is that they are accessible, easy to use, have more users and listeners, and cost-effective. The study also found out that the respondents perceived the COVID 19 Information Dissemination Strategies adopted by the Lagos State Government as informative, enlightening, raising awareness, educating, and advocating. The study concluded that the media has played an important role in spreading health information as it has a wide reach among the populace in Lagos state. It was therefore recommended that the mass



media should be seen as an integral part of governance in matters concerning health.

**Key Words:** Information Dissemination, Information Management, Role, COVID 19 Pandemic.

### **Co Authors**

**Adekunle Benson Ewaoyenikan** University of Uyo, Uyo Akwa Ibom State. **Felix OlajideTalabi** Department of Mass Communication Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Covid-19 is a novel virus identified on December 31, 2019, in Wuhan, Hubei city of China (WHO, 2020). The virus is highly contagious and has a death rate that is multiple times higher than the one of seasonal flu, fever, a dry cough, shortness of breath, and extreme tiredness. It is a global pandemic spread within a short time. The virus affected several states in Nigeria most especially Lagos State. As a reaction to this outbreak, WHO (2020) recommended social distancing, lockdown, and isolation or quarantine to fight the pandemic. Because of this sudden disaster, life changed drastically overnight (Ishtiaq, Sehar, and Shahid, 2020). In response to the crucial health situation, all educational institutes, schools, and universities were closed for six months from March 23 to October 12, 2020 (Ikenwe, Adegbilero-Iwari, and Adegbilero-Iwari, 2021). All activities of human life are hold-on because of human safety and benefits. During this lockdown, educational institutes all over the world are adapting distance learning methods and shifting towards online courses.

Information is very important in any society it is a veritable tool in the realization of individual, corporate and societal objectives or goals (Talabi, Oyedeji, Adelabu, Sanusi, Adaja, Talabi, Bello, Lamidi, and Alade, 2022). Goldfrab (2006) opined that information is a valuable resource required in any society; thus, acquiring and using information are critical and important activities. Users of information use it for different reasons. Some use it for health; others use it for advancement in knowledge, others for politics. Familusi and Owoeye (2014) opine that information is a vital resource that provides an impetus for national social, cultural, spiritual, political, economic, scientific, and technological advancement greater socio-political equity; efficient governance, power, and fellowship.



There is a need to disseminate information prevention of the virus to the residents of the state. Information is central to healthcare as it underpins modern health processes (Ugwuoke, Talabi, Adelabu, Sanusi, and Gever, 2021). Information dissemination is a key element in COVID 19 protocol implementation efforts. Disseminating health information can improve knowledge transfer from health professionals to the general population, and helps them to maintain and improve their health (WHO, 2020). The Lagos State Government and UNICEF through motorised campaigns raise awareness and dissemination of information about COVID-19 and promote hygienic behaviour to protect from the infection in 20 local government areas of the State. The campaigns worked alongside advocacy with influencers in the communities, interpersonal engagement, and mass awareness activities at major human interface locations such as markets and motor parks (Akinola-Akinwole, 2020). Akinola-Akinwole (2020) added that the team engaged the residents of the area by demonstrating proper hand washing, using face masks, and following COVID-19 preventive guidelines, they also encouraged them to become change champions within their communities to help spread information on proper techniques that can slow the spread of the disease.

Lagos State government has intensified support for surveillance and the risk communication pillar of the COVID-19 response to reach many communities and residents with information on the COVID-19 pandemic, nature of the disease, mode of transmission, risk assessment, vulnerability, hotlines for inquiry and assistance, and risk reduction behaviors (Bamidele and Daniel, 2020). Bamidele and Daniel (2020) added that the government sustains credible and timely information to the public through radio and television jingles, social media, health workers, traditional leaders, accredited non-governmental organizations, and other trusted outlets. The risk of undetected community transmission of COVID-19 in Lagos is high, necessitating compliance and enforcement of non-pharmaceutical preventive measures and other government guidelines and her agencies to control the pandemic and minimize the medical, economic, social, and personal losses. These necessitated the need for proper information dissemination and management.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Scientists and government officials have become increasingly concerned with the rate at which the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across the world with Lagos state inclusive (Holmes, 2020). Information access is crucial across many aspects to fight the pandemic. WHO (2020) explains that the world is currently experiencing an overload and overabundance of information, which is termed an *infodemic* by



the World Health Organization (2020) to highlight that there is an ongoing information pandemic next to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the role information play among the general population during the present COVID-19 pandemic.

A significant number of studies have reported on the effectiveness of information dissemination in promoting health and preventing diseases (Brener and Gowda, 2017; Duggan and Banwell, 2014; Robertson, 2008). However, little attention has been given to holistic, integrated information-based health promotion strategies in Lagos state. Studies that have been carried out tended to focus on disease specific health promotion strategies (Terry, Masvaure and Gavin, 2005). Therefore, there is certainly a need for a study that focuses on information dissemination and management by Lagos State Ministry of Health during the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### **Objective of the study**

The study aimed:

1. To establish the perception of Lagos State residents on the information dissemination and management strategy adopted by the state ministry of health.
2. To know the effectiveness of information disseminated by the Lagos State Ministry of health on Lagos state residents.
3. To determine the information dissemination strategies adopted by the Lagos State Ministry of Health to stop the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

##### **The Spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria**

The first Nigeria patient of coronavirus was reported on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in Lagos State, when an Italian citizen that works in Nigeria arrived Lagos from Italy tested positive and later spread to other persons in the country (Nigeria Center for Disease Control, 2020). A report by Oyekanmi (2020) state that President Muhammadu Buhari ordered a stop to all movements in Lagos and Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, in a move to combat the spread of coronavirus, for an initial period of 14 days, which took effect from 11 pm on Monday, March, 2020" (Oyekanmi, 2020). However, this movement curtailment was increased by another period of 2 weeks by the President of Nigeria, and to suppress the further expansion of the virus, the president declared a total lockdown across all states in Nigeria, and on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, He proclaimed curfew from 8 pm-6am all over the country (Ladan, Haruna, and Madu, 2020).



While it was partially opened up on May 4<sup>th</sup> for some businesses and organisations to commence activities. Businesses in Nigeria were affected and traveling venues plunged as state governments directed lockdown exempting basic service providers (Ladan, Haruna, and Madu, 2020).

The inter-State movement was banned in Nigeria on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 to curtail the virus's spread (Shaban, 2020). Shaban (2020) asserted that Nigeria as African's biggest economy, the Federal government has continually enforced regulations over the nation, even when most Governors have relaxed restrictions. Interestingly, there are new policies in Nigeria to contain the further spread of the virus. Anadolu (2020) opined that the new regulations bothers on number of people gathered, compulsory use of face masks and hand washing in public. However, the total statistics of COVID-19 pandemic as reported by NCDCon Monday 19 April, 2021 shows that Nigeria has confirmed cases of 164,233 out of which 7,840 are active, 154,32 recoveries and 2,061 deaths.

#### **Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID 19 pandemic has devastated virtually all sectors and left on cars in the social, economic, political, cultural and educational and religious on sectors. People are losing jobs. Businesses are crumbling. Schools and worship centres are closed. Ceremonies and social events are on hold and there is no way of knowing when normalcy will return. The Nigerian economy is not left out in the negative effect of the pandemic perhaps as a result of decline in consumption, investment, net export and increased government expenditure. Restriction of movement in the form of social distancing, lockdown, and border closure are the reasons for this decline. For example, restriction of movement has constrained consumers to spend only on goods and services that are essential. The crises have also resulted in a drastic collapse of stock prices with the Nigerian Stock Exchange recording its worst performance since the 2008 financial crises, leading to the erosion of investors' wealth (Onyekwena and Ekeruche, 2020).

Ozili (2020) explains that the health sector is the most hit by the COVID19 pandemic, especially in Africa where most of the health facilities have deteriorated. Despite all measures adopted to minimize the spread of the diseases cases keep rising significantly. Isolation centres and public hospitals are filled up and overwhelmed while private hospitals are afraid to admit infected patients, leading to the death of many (Ozili,2020). Furthermore, the pandemic has affected religion in different ways. Services of different faith were cancelled, including pilgrimages to holy lands. The yearly Easter celebration



services for Christians could not hold in year 2020, courtesy of the pandemic. The element of worship participation has significantly been religions as most religion have quickly adopted to the situation by live streaming their services, using the media such as ,television, radio and social media.

The spheres of education and learning is also seriously affected by the COVID 19 pandemic leading to closure of schools. School closure is an important backbone of social distancing tool that is used to curb the spread of the pandemic. Some school facilities were even used as makeshift hospitals and isolation centres. This, inadvertently will cause lengthier disruption of education services, making the buildings unavailable for education purpose. This made schools all over the world (including Nigeria) to adapt to online modalities for teaching during the pandemic era (Ajifowoke, 2020).

Due to the pandemic, most private schools and universities had to resort to online/remote form of learning so that students can continue to learn. The government also made provision for public school students using the mass media, specifically the radio and television. However, the problem with this online/remote teaching is that the vulnerable children were not considered since most of them may not have access to Social Media or even television and radio. Not only that, it is only children whose parents have smart phones that can have access to online teaching and some children are not living with their parents, perhaps with their grandparents who may not even know how smart phone not to talk of owning one. Another key issue is that most parents may not be able to devote their time to remote learning neither do they possess the cognitive skills to access the best online materials. The difficulty of helping children learn what their parents do not understand is a big issue. Therefore, from all indication, the COVID 19 interruption has affected learning because there is no way school children and University students will not miss out too much all through. It is therefore obvious that even though home/online schooling will produce some inspirational moments, some fun moments and even some frustrating moments, there is no way it can replace the learning lost from school (Burgess and Sievertsen, 2020). Having said much about the negative impact of COVID 19 pandemic, there seems to be some noticeable positive impact from the ongoing pandemic:

1. **Enhanced Hygiene:** Naturally, constant washing of hands is not a regular hygiene practice that most people are used to. However, the pandemic has necessitated this practice as part of the safety measure to contain the spread of this deadly virus. Consequently, this habit will most likely remain as



part of people's health etiquette even after the pandemic is over, thereby ensuring that their well-being is well maintained.

2. **A Cleaner World:** The lockdown down that took place in almost all the countries affected by the pandemic have resulted into a significant drop in greenhouse gas emission., definitely because factories were closed, transportation brought to a standstill and social movement restricted. Carbon footprint has drastically reduced, bringing about an improvement in air quality due to the reduction in the burning of fossil fuels.
3. **A Stimulant for Digital Metamorphosis:** The COVID 19 pandemic also necessitated a digital transformation in all sectors. The disruption in the normal way of living brought about a 'new normal'. Since businesses and transactions need to thrive, school children and students need to continue learning and people must progress in life despite the lockdown, there was no choice than to adopt digital tools and platforms for communication and transaction. The truth is that this 'new normal' may remain as our normal means of communication, transaction and interaction even after the pandemic (Ajifowoke, 2020).

### **Sources and Channels of Information Dissemination During COVID-19**

Information is a vital element in disease prevention; hence the media must be ready to take up the responsibility of keeping the populace properly informed in an understandable, clear yet forceful manner. The populace not being properly informed about preventive and protective measures during and emergence of an epidemic or pandemic as the case may be can have serious repercussions (Mejia *et al*, 2020). Access to quality information during a pandemic like COVID 19 is germane. It is the foundation for knowledge. Access to information gives room to freedom of expression, making it meaningful and helpful to the society. Confirmable and authentic information like those published in scientific and professional journals is the pointer to building a 'knowledge society'. The internet is presently the major dissemination tool for information. It reinforces the transmission process, enabling the flow of messages. The internet helps guarantee high speed digital connectivity, helping people cope with the pandemic by allowing them to learn, work and socialise with friends from home during the shutdown. Also, through the internet, government is able to give direct public health information to the populace. Journalists are also able to reach larger audience about the pandemic (Possetti and Bonticheva, 2020).



With the aid of Information Communication Technology (ICT), awareness about infectious disease is much easier in this dispensation. People are informed about the disease through different avenues like Television news, mouth to mouth communication, print media, radio and house to house sensitization. The level of awareness of an individual about the outbreak will determine how he/she reacts to the disease transmission. Those who are aware about the disease outbreak will easily take preventive measures so as not to be infected. Collinson, Khan and Hefferson (2015) also corroborated this point by asserting that the media's report on an epidemic or pandemic outbreak can help inform the public and in turn induce positive healthy behaviour practices like hand washing, social distancing, coughing into bent elbow, etc. This will go a long way in reducing the probability of contacting the disease. The following are:

**Mobile Phone:** Mobile phones are transforming the lives of many users in developing countries and are widely recognized as the current and the future technology platforms for developing nations. Masukietal citing Lehr (2007) is of the view that mobile phones are considered important for development because they offer benefits such as mobility and security to owners. Mobile phones are flexible and only require basic literacy thereby accessible to large portion of the population. During the COVID 19 spread, the Lagos state ministry of health and Nigeria Centre for disease control alongside other stakeholder use the mobile phone to text the people especially the Lagos resident messages about the preventive measure to take to avoid COVID 19.

**Television:** Television over the years is known for educating and informative roles and is majorly been applied to disseminate different types of information ranging from health, political, religion, socio-cultural and often been used to facilitate teaching and learning. Saglik and Ozturk (2001) opined that television is an effective tool in expressing abstract concepts or ideas. Abstract concepts are usually produced and conveyed with words. Besides this, in making an abstract concept concrete, the role of animation and visual experimentation is very important. The limitation here is how to combine the text, which is involving information, with moving views, animation, concrete ideas, utterance and objects like pictures. Television plays significant in role in creating awareness and knowledge about the COVID 19 information among Lagos residents (Mahmood and Sheikh, 2005). Media are one the best source of spreading information about the preventive measure and the need to stay at home during the lockdown. Television messages about COVID 19 can be in form of soap operas or drama series, jingles,

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campaigns, talk shows and magazine format (Atakitiand Ojomo, 2015).

**Newspaper:** Over the years, health communication researchers across the world have focused their attention on newspapers, examining newspaper coverage of health issues, the extent to which they (newspapers) disseminate information and portray various health problems in society. For instance, Rachul, Ries and Caulfield (2011) found newspaper coverage of the A/H1N1 vaccination program in Canada was largely supportive and effective as serious risks associated with contracting the A/H1N1 virus were frequently discussed in the print media. The Lagos State ministry of health use newspapers such as *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Telegraphs*, among others to disseminate information about COVID 19. They display advertisements as well as enjoying coverage over their interest in overcoming the situation.

**Social network sites:** In recent times, as the pandemic encroaches on and emasculates world activities, social media platforms have been utilized as an information outlet to citizens. Its significance has gained more recognition owing especially to the fact that the government implemented a lockdown policy to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Thus, it has become an active tool for engagement and communication for the dissemination of plausible information as well as incredulous (mis)information. According to Baruah (2012), the usage of the social media has some inherent advantages which include among others: (a) it is an excellent platform for the sharing of ideas (b) it functions as a communication tool and thereby bridging communication gap (c) it serves as a source of information (d) it is an important marketing tool and (e) it is an important customer interaction and crisis communication tool. Baruah opined that all these advantages are embedded in the fact that social media are a cost-effective and a time-effective management media for the academia, health practitioners and business professionals for vital information propagation. Statista (2020) reported that the five most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2020, ranked by number of active users in descending order are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Weixin/WeChat. WhatsApp, created in 2009 by two former Yahoo employees (Brian Acton and Jan Koum) has been used in communicating messages by various people of all professions.

### **Roles of Information in COVID 19 Education**

The health-related outcomes of ultimate interest at the individual level are health behaviors, physical indicators, and health status. The



outcomes of intermediate interest are those antecedent to health behavior. These include awareness, knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, and skills for behavior change.

**Awareness:** Although awareness of a health problem is the most basic individual level outcome for health promotion, and a necessary step for educational persuasion to occur, it is not well developed as a health concept. Individuals can be differentially aware of health problems and of solutions to those problems, and they can be aware of the health problems of people in general without showing awareness of their own health problems. Furthermore, awareness can vary in its relation to particular actions. For instance, in the Stanford FCP, we found that most smokers were aware that smoking is related to cancer, many fewer were aware that smoking is related to cardiovascular disease, and still fewer knew of cessation programs offered in the community. The ability to generate awareness among large numbers of people is considered one of the strengths of mass media, although many media-based interventions have failed in this regard. For audience awareness to occur, the audience must be exposed to information (i.e. the intervention), they must attend to it, and they must remember it. Campaigns that fail to raise awareness generally do not achieve the necessary preconditions, that is, messages are not aired or distributed so that the target audience is exposed adequately, or messages are not constructed to capture attention and present information clearly. In general, attention to audience targeting, message placement, and message design based on formative research and audience interest can help ensure the generation of awareness.

**Knowledge:** Conveying simple information to large numbers of individuals is another strength of the mass media. Knowledge gain is an important outcome to the extent that it leads to desirable attitudes or that it is a necessary condition for subsequent health behaviors. Both of these conditions are known to be true in certain circumstances. Communication-persuasion models posit that attitude change is contingent on knowledge gain (Tomba, 2002). Knowledge, however, is not a single domain. There are a variety of cognitive and affective components to knowledge (Tomba, 2002), and different types of learning may differentially effect subsequent change. Additionally, the type of information presented and the situation in which the information is presented each influence what people learn and how they apply it. Audience involvement is also an important factor. Knowledge can influence the attitudes and behaviors of people that are highly involved with a health issue but may fail to affect people with low issue involvement (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). To summarize, level of knowledge (recall, comprehension, analysis, and



synthesis), audience information needs, and audience involvement are clearly important to the knowledge definition process.

**Attitudes:** Because of low overall correlations between attitudes and behaviors, many feel that attitudes may not play an important role in achieving health behavior change. Appropriate attitudes may not be sufficient to achieve behavior change because of non-attitudinal barriers to healthful action. For example, even with positive attitudes toward contraceptive use, teenagers may not use contraceptives if they are costly, if clinics are not easily accessible, if treatment is not in confidence, or if they are lacking in behavioral skills with which to negotiate condom use. Health attitudes can influence both health information seeking and health behavior; however, behavior-specific attitudes are more predictive of health behaviors than general health attitudes. The media can be effective in changing health attitudes, especially when supplemented by face-to-face instruction (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). For highly involved audiences, attitude change can result from learning about health threats, and this can lead to corresponding health behavior changes. Attitudes can also be learned observationally through media portrayals; new attitudes will be adopted if their salient attributes are seen as preferable to previously held attitudes. Although attitudes may not be sufficient to change behavior because of other obstacles to healthful actions, they are pliable and do contribute to behavior change (Dutta-Bergman, 2004).

**Self-Efficacy:** A person's belief in his/her ability to enact a behavior successfully, termed self-efficacy, is an important mitigating influence on the initiation and maintenance of health behavior (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). Kreps (2005) demonstrated that self-efficacy is also an important outcome for health information campaigns. Exposure to the health campaign was shown significantly to increase self-efficacy, and self-efficacy was shown significantly to increase enactment of the targeted health behaviors. Behavior changes were an indirect result of the campaign but a direct result of campaign related self-efficacy enhancement. The media can be used to stimulate the development of self-efficacy in a number of ways. These include modeling the behaviors of interest, teaching the skills necessary for enacting health behaviors, encouraging simple interim behaviors such as trial or low-level behaviors, and reducing dysfunctional arousal associated with the enactment of a health behavior. Self-efficacy is under-utilized as an intermediary behavior change goal.

**Skills:** The successful enactment of many desirable health behaviors requires a complex set of cognitive, social, and behavioral skills. For example, dietary modification requires cognitive skills to identify foods or ingredients that should not be eaten, social skills to diffuse peer or

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family pressure to eat unhealthy foods, and behavioral skills for healthful food preparation. Social learning theory has been influential in promoting explicit skills training in the behavior change process (Kreps, 2005). Although such skills training is usually conducted interpersonally in clinical or educational settings, training research has demonstrated that complex skills can be acquired through media portrayals. Although relatively untested, television has been used successfully to teach smoking cessation and other health behavior skills. The most effective role of media in skills acquisition and change, however, may be as a complement to face-to-face intensive instruction (Dutta-Bergman, 2004).

**Behavior:** Behavior change is generally thought to be both the outcome of ultimate interest at the individual level and the result of a long series of antecedent changes. Social learning theory advocates the use of modeling, skills training, active involvement, reinforcement and on-going feedback to create lasting behavior change. Behavior change becomes more likely as interventions foster the antecedents to behavior, such as goal setting, proximal goals, and self-efficacy (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). As currently employed, the mass media alone may be limited in the degree to which they meaningfully facilitate some of the antecedents of behavior, for example, feedback and active involvement in the learning process. However, creative uses of the mass media have been successfully devised to influence other behavioral antecedents. As discussed above, the Stanford TCS is an example of the successful use of the media. To bring about behavior change. Both media alone and supplemented media resulted in behavior changes. The TCS further illustrated that media alone are best able to stimulate change in simpler behaviors, whereas more complex or habit-driven behaviors are more effectively influenced with the combination of media and face-to-face intervention. Dutta-Bergman (2004) review of televised smoking cessation efforts supports this view. Our ability to influence health behavior through the media is currently limited by three factors: our understanding of how to change health behavior; our understanding of how to translate known behavioral principles into media campaigns; and our limited use and understanding of intervention at higher level audience organizations. By targeting behavioral antecedents as well as health behaviors, campaign planners enhance their ability to produce behavioral change.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is embedded on the Social Cognitive theory. Social Cognitive theory was propounded by Philip and Ziller (1992). The theory has been observed to have a similar mode of orientation and behavior which relates people in the same social cognitive to such

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phenomena as Mass Communication and media similar ways. In contribution, Agbo et al (2000, p. 151) stressed that "member of a particular social category will select more or less similar Communication content and will respond to it roughly equal way". This theory holds the assumption that people learn through observation especially through television when applied to mass media. Social cognitive theory argues that people model (copy) the behaviour they see and this occurs in two ways: through imitation and identification. Baran, (2009) sees it as imitation- the direct replication of an observed behaviour.

The theory was therefore useful in the evaluation of information dissemination and management by Lagos State Ministry of Health during the COVID 19 pandemic. The theory shows that information strategies of the ministry of health play a huge role in communicating health changes in the society as their audience will eventually replicate what they heard, see, and read. Therefore, it is pertinent that information officer of the ministry to project positive values, beliefs, norms and culture that their audience may eventually replicate these positive actions. This theory also proved useful for developing the proposed health information dissemination framework. The theory proposed the need for health promoters to shape the environment to encourage behaviour change; therefore, these recommendations were incorporated in the information dissemination framework.

### **Research Method**

The method adopted for the study was survey method. Survey is most suitable because it is being used by behavioural scientist to gather opinions and view of a large number of subjects. The population of this study comprises all the 9,019,534 residents of Lagos State (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009) and all the information staff of the Lagos State Ministry of Health. Lagos residents were selected for the study because they were exposed to Lagos State Ministry of Health information on COVID 19 and they are the immediate audience of the media outlets in Lagos state. Hence, Philip Meyer sampling guide was used to determine 384 Lagos residents and three information staff of the Lagos State Ministry of Health that was sampled for the study. The questionnaire and interview guide were used to gather data for the study. Data gathered were analyzed descriptively. Percentages and frequency distribution were among statistical tools used.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Table 1: Media Respondents use to get COVID 19 pandemic information**

Item	Yes		No		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Percentage
Radio	218	69	97	31	315 (100%)
Television	244	77	71	23	315 (100%)
Newspaper	178	57	137	43	315 (100%)
Internet	305	97	10	3	315 (100%)
Mobile Phone Messages	193	61	122	39	315 (100%)

The data in the table above show that majority of the respondents 69%, 77%, 57%, 97% and 61% respectively get exposed to information about COVID 19 pandemic on radio, television, newspaper, internet, and mobile phone messages.

**Table 2: Perception about the COVID 19 Information Dissemination Strategies adopted by Lagos State Government**

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The strategy is informative	62	21	11	4	3	315 (100%)
It is enlightening	64	23	2	6	4	315 (100%)
It raises awareness	59	28	3	7	3	315 (100%)
The strategy is educating	66	20	6	6	2	315 (100%)
The media strategy can be used for the purpose of advocacy	55	23	8	9	5	315 (100%)

The data shows that 62%, 64%, 59%, 66% and 55% of the respondents respectively believe that the COVID 19 Information Dissemination Strategies adopted by Lagos State Government is informative, enlightening, help in raising awareness, educating, and can be used for the purpose of advocacy.

**Table 3: Effectiveness of COVID 19 Information Disseminated**

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Due to exposure to information on COVID 19, I	53	24	5	8	9	315 (100)

believe the existence of the virus						315 (100%)
The strategy gives me the courage to stay at home to prevent the virus	57	22	7	9	4	315 (100%)
Following my exposure to the information strategy, I followed all the preventive measure such as washing of hand, using of face mask, and application of hand sanitizer	55	26	10	5	4	315 (100%)
Through media strategy, I stop spreading false information related to COVID 19 Pandemic	50	29	9	11	2	315 (100%)
Through media strategy, I developed the courage to call the NCDC in case I have some unusual feelings	62	27	9	2	1	315 (100%)
I have always maintaining social distance since I got exposed to the information	52	23	12	5	8	315 (100%)

The data showed that 53%, 57%, 55%, 50%, 62% and 52% of the respondents respectively admitted that exposure to information on COVID 19 has influenced their believe of the existence of the virus, gives them courage to stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus, allow them to follow all the preventive measures such as washing of hand, using of face mask, and application of hand sanitizer, helped them stop the spread of false information related to COVID 19 pandemic, allow them to develop the courage to call the NCDC in case they have some unusual feelings, and help them to always maintain social distance

### Discussion of Findings

The outcome shows that majority of the respondents get COVID 19 preventive information on radio, television newspaper, internet, and mobile phone messages. Also, the respondents perceived the COVID 19 Information Dissemination Strategies adopted by Lagos State Government as informative, enlightening, raising awareness, educating, and advocacy. This align with Tompa (2002) result that Campaigns that fail to raise awareness generally do not achieve the necessary preconditions, that is, messages are not aired or distributed so that the target audience is exposed adequately, or messages are



not constructed to capture attention and present information clearly. In general, attention to audience targeting, message placement, and message design based on formative research and audience interest can help ensure the generation of awareness.

The analysis also shows that exposure to information on COVID 19 has influenced respondents believe of the existence of the virus, it has given them courage to stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus, it spurred them to follow all the preventive measures such as washing of hand, using of face mask, and application of hand sanitizer, allowed them to stopped the spread of false information related to COVID 19 pandemic, through media strategy, they developed the courage to call the NCDC in case they have some unusual feelings, and they have always maintaining social distance since they got exposed to the information.

The interview conducted with the information staff of ministry of health, Lagos state was used to answer this research question. The outcome of the study indicates that the Lagos state ministry of health uses all the media available to communicate to the people. These media include radio, television, newspaper, magazine, internet, and billboards. The outcome also shows that the media they prefer to use for the dissemination of the pandemic prevention messages are radio and internet. According to them, they radio because it is accessible while internet has more users. This outcome relate to Isibor and Whong (2014) findings that mobile phone, radio, television and other media have impacted heavily on access to information relating to health because this information can easily be accessed. Also, broadcast media health messages can be in form of soap operas or drama series, jingles, campaigns, talk shows and magazine format (Atakitiani Ojomo, 2015).

The outcome of the analysis on the research question indicate that the reason the Lagos State Ministry of Health chooses the information media is because they are accessible, easy to use, more users and listeners, and cost effective. This relate to Tompa (2002) who explained that knowledge gain is an important outcome to the extent that it leads to desirable attitudes or that it is a necessary condition for subsequent health behaviors. Both of these conditions are known to be true in certain circumstances. Communication-persuasion models posit that attitude change is contingent on knowledge gain. Also, Krep (2005) adds that the media can be used to stimulate the development of self-efficacy in a number of ways. These include modeling the behaviors of interest, teaching the skills necessary for enacting health behaviors, encouraging simple interim behaviors such as trial or low-level behaviors, and reducing dysfunctional arousal

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associated with the enactment of a health behavior. Self-efficacy is under-utilized as an intermediary behavior change goal.

### **Conclusion**

Health is an important aspect of one's personality. Media play an important role in spreading health dissemination as it has a wide reach among the populace in Lagos state. Lagos State ministry of health believe that media strategy is still the most effective strategy for health communication. The role of mass media in combating health promotion for sustainable health development throughout the world remains vital. Without the mass media, it might be difficult for health promoters and stakeholders to communicate health information, monitor and co-ordinate health activities in various countries of the world. This study has highlighted media strategies adopted by the ministry of health Lagos state to combat Corona Virus Disease. It was shown that the media has ensured successes to health programs through their communications and sensitization of the citizenry.

Results indicates that radio, television, newspaper, magazine, internet, and billboards. This means that radio has to be more accessible with regards to language and dissemination of maternal health messages. The study also concluded that the reason the Lagos State Ministry of Health chooses the information media is because they are accessible, easy to use, more users and listeners, and cost effective. The study also concluded that the people perceived the COVID 19 Information Dissemination Strategies adopted by Lagos State Government as informative, enlightening, raising awareness, educating, and advocacy.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The mass media should be seen as an integral part of governance in matters concerning health.
2. Civil societies, the private sectors, parliaments, external agencies etc should render supports to the media in the area of health communication.
3. Media practitioners should Endeavour to inject health communication or message in their programs as this will make for a greater reach.
4. Mass Media should always assess themselves to ascertain if a program is actually achieving its intent. This can be done through evaluation during the course of a program or at a given period.

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5. Government should sponsor enlightenment programs through local government announcements, drama, and phone-in programs that will encourage community participation in issues that touch them
6. Community radio should be established in LGAs so that these messages can be brought closer home. This will give members of the community a sense of belonging. The health messages will also be more personal as the radio will air in their local dialect.

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