

Review of: "Interrogating the Role of Opinion Leaders in Media's COVID-19 Awareness Campaign to Mass Audience"

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The paper titled "Interrogating the Role of Opinion Leaders in Media's COVID-19 Awareness Campaign to Mass Audience" deals with scientifically and socially relevant issue of communication in a public domain in the context of recent covid-19 pandemics and refers to the case of Nigerian society. It is well written in terms of the quality of language communication. However, the taken approach is primarily one-sided as in the spotlight is efficacy of transmission of information (mostly official decisions and taken measures) from government to citizens, i.e. to which extent received information lead towards implementation of imposed safety protocols. Within such path of information, also mediation of mass media and possible distortion of information has taken into account. While this is solid basis for conducting analysis, the employed inquiry exhibits shortcomings at both: conceptual and empirical level. Namely, there is no a detailed explanation on who opinion leaders are, and which groups of stakeholders within this category is viewed as more or less reliable, but are rather treated homogenously. The same remark holds also for mass media: could it be conceived as a monolithic entity or there is a wider scope of different actors promoting different types of discourses? Besides, the question is how distortion of information by mass media could be measured: is it respondents' belief that information has been distorted or? Instead of grasping dynamics of different social stakeholders taking diverse positions and promoting discourses within pandemic context and relate their viewpoints to various media stakeholders, the analysis rather remains at the superficial level, and not get deep under the surface.

The empirical component of research is also somewhat vague: it is not clear relation between secondary data (cases of infections, recoveries, and fatalities in Nigeria, p. 8) and data derived from the survey. A further info on the structure of a sample (N=548) in terms of socio-demographic attributes would be advisable, as well as more comprehensive depiction of sampling technique. Presentation of findings is very tiny as we only got very basic descriptive statistic on responses on 3 questions from questionnaires which are identified here as research questions. Regarding the first one, the question might appear why social media and Internet are treated separately? Generally, the research design is pretty weak and therefore it does not imply particularly far reaching findings. At the end, it is contentious which specific novel empirical insights and theoretical contributions this paper generates? Though it promised "critically" examination (p. 3) of this highly relevant issue, it is far from being critical, but it remained on a very descriptive level instead. It should be extensively rewritten by anchoring it properly at the theoretical level, as well as a much higher dose of methodological scrutiny is required, and connecting two levels adequately, indeed. The authors are encouraged to rework this paper which indisputably possesses certain merits.

