

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I would like to commend the efforts of the authors in opening a new vista in the conversations regarding COVID-19, the government, mass media, and the mass audience. However, the following observations, comments, and suggestions may be apposite to the improvement of the quality of the paper:

## Abstract

- This section contains elements of grammatical issues that need to be resolved. For instance, this statement: "... while **pandemics are** not new in human history, **their impact** has altered the social structure of the world because **they posed** a serious threat to public health and the overall stability of systems in society."

## Introduction

- If the locale of this research work is Nigeria, perhaps it may be apposite to further interrogate the issue of the information concerning **the lack of honesty or doctoring of the information by government officials**. This is because the way and manner things went on during the pandemic partly showed that the government was not sincere in both words and actions.
- One of the fundamental questions that requires an answer is whether the media doctored the information or the government officials did it before it got to the people through the media. A critical interrogation of the extant literature would help in this area.
- I believe this is not a novel work on the issue of COVID-19 and the doctoring of information about the pandemic; the authors are therefore advised to interrogate this issue in the light of the plethora of information on the medley of works that are related to this work. The background is filled with literature that examined the pandemic as it occurred in another setting. Meanwhile, it is significant to note that there seemed to be a semblance of peculiarities that characterised the reactions, the treatments, as well as the spread of misinformation and fake news in Nigeria during the period of the pandemic. So, it is advisable to localize the literature.
- Various pieces of literature need to be interrogated at this background level to depict the reality of what transpired in Nigeria during the period of COVID-19. Also, how true is the information regarding the doctoring of messages or information by the media? And more importantly, is there any time that the government had to influence the media to present the opposite of the reality of what happened during the pandemic?

## Methodology

- The study adopts a quantitative methodology with a descriptive design on the COVID-19 experience in Nigeria – there is more to this methodology than merely mentioning it. I think the authors need to take a second look at this. For instance, justification of this methodology is required. Also, what this methodology entails needs to be included in the work.
- **Study Area and Population of Study** –The population of the study covers the whole of Nigeria. What about the sample, that is, the study area? There is a need to ensure clarity in this section of the work.
- **Data Presentation and Analysis** - The authors are expected to show how the data gathered are analysed as well as how they are presented. Information or data on the population and sample for the study ought to have been systematically presented under the population, sample, and sampling technique. Also, there is a need for brief but logical explanations as well as justifications for the sample chosen and the techniques involved in the choice of the sample. All these are to be attended to under the population, sample, and sampling technique.
- **....using purposive and random sampling techniques**– specifically, which of the random sampling techniques? Also, what is the basis for the use of the purposive sampling technique? This requires justification. Is there any peculiarity that warrants that those respondents should be purposively sampled? This indeed requires clarification and justification.

#### RQ 1 and 2

- It will be appropriate if the literature used to support the discussions of the findings is either in support or against them. However, any literature that discusses the issue out of context or not in tandem with the findings of the study is not supposed to be used in the discussion of the findings. So, the authors should take a second look at this.
- It is equally important to interrogate the issue of the lack of trust between the government and the populace. In other words, do the people attach any credence to the message of the government during the period of the pandemic? If not, why?

#### RQ 3

- This aspect needs to be explained *vis a vis* the related literature instead of a mere chronicling of the results of the findings.

#### Further Discussions on the Adoption of COVID-19 Safety Precautions

- The work of this nature would be highly appreciated if the authors could season the introduction and discussions with the relevant literature that treats the issue of COVID-19 from local perspectives. This will go a long way in identifying the gaps in the study, and, more importantly, it will show the local dimension of the peculiarities of the approach to addressing the issue of the pandemic compared to what happened in other countries globally. Also, the lumping of recommendations into the body of discussions of the findings is not too appropriate. Some semblances of recommendations that feature under the discussions should be put under the section of recommendations

