

Media, Humans and COVID-19 in Africa: A Complex or Symbiotic Relationship?

Ngozi Okpara

*School of Media and Communication, Pan-Atlantic University,
Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos, Nigeria
E-mail: nokpara@pau.edu*

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ABSTRACT Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa had peculiar shared values engraved in cultural and traditional heritages. These values dictated the socio-political and economic ways of life and largely set a precedence for how they were harnessed. The outbreak of COVID-19 caused a paradigm shift in the ways humans in traditional African societies conducted their lives. Africans as well as other people across the globe were forced to conform to the “new normal”, with the media being at the centre of information dissemination and enforcer of values. Findings revealed that media dependence during the pandemic complicated how the human person reacted and managed health issues during the lockdown which was induced by the global health emergency. In view of this, it was recommended that media focuses on the provision of solutions and constructively drive public enlightenment through the effective and factual reportage of issues in the society.

INTRODUCTION

The sudden wave of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, COVID-19, struck the entire human race at the twilight of December 2019, leaving indelible impacts on life in general. The first recorded COVID-19 case was in Wuhan China and it spread all over the world within a few months. As at the 2nd of December 2020, there had been more than 63 million confirmed cases, including over a million deaths globally (WHO 2020b). The pandemic has been considered the worst threat mankind has ever encountered since World War II, and over \$9 trillion was allocated to combat it, with vaccines approved by late 2020 (Battersby et al. 2020). The severity of the pandemic on the African continent is evident in the figures recorded, with over 3.64 million cases, 93,751 deaths, 412,223 active cases and more than 3.14 million recoveries as at February 4, 2021 (Galal 2021). The worst hit African countries include South Africa, Morocco and Tunisia (Statista 2021). The reported figures do not, however, suffice in creating an accurate mental picture of its socio-

economic impacts. The rapid and continuous spread of the virus across the globe resulted in diverse coping measures instituted by different countries; these measures include total or partial lockdowns, social distancing as well as quarantining individuals infected or suspected to be. These measures put in place to combat the virus led to complex environmental, economic and social challenges to the human race. An instance is the closure of schools worldwide, leaving about 1.725 billion learners out of school (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation 2020). The global economic output also hit a decline owing to the closure of many organisations and other economic outlets such that the global economy was predicted to be on the verge of a 5.2 percent contraction if combative measures continue to be fixed without commercial considerations (World Bank 2020).

The immense effects of the pandemic are evident in all spheres of life, including different social domains and the media. Right from the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the media’s strategic and invaluable contributions continued to help the world comprehend and combat the menace. The media was the only source of reliable information and daily updates as the pandemic spread globally. It was with this wealth of information that countries, continents and the entire world understood the evolution of the virus and its adaptation, and introduced

Address all correspondence:

Ngozi Okpara, PhD
School of Media and Communication,
Pan-Atlantic University,
Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos, Nigeria
Contact: +2348023034916

precautionary measures and shared updates on potential vaccine or cure.

Clearly, the pandemic increased interest in news content as it was needed for survival. The upsurge in the demand for news information positioned the media as an important tool for the dissemination of relevant health information, beyond its usual educational and entertainment roles. However, the assumption of journalism by citizens using various social media platforms also led to the spread of fake news which caused huge disruptions in public health communication and provoked mass anxiety. A research model developed by Laato et al. (2020) to investigate why social media users shared fake news about COVID-19 revealed that trust in online information and perceived information overload made it possible for handlers to share unverified information on social media. This information had ripple effects, as individuals failed to affirm authenticity before further spreading. This resulted in the dissemination of fake news on medication and details of the virus, which adversely affected public health and the society at large.

With this outturn of events which placed a greater burden of responsibility on the media to be socially accountable and serve as an independent source of verified information, it is important to consider the significant variables directly impacted or whose roles were influenced by the pandemic. There is also a central debate about the extent to which humans adjusted to the new normal as well as how they struggled with the initial value systems COVID-19 advanced. It is thus imminent to evaluate the relationship between the media and the society during the COVID-19 pandemic. It raises questions around the return of the world to the “old normal”, the way of life before the virus struck, or if the world would remain with the “new normal”, a new way of living as induced by coronavirus.

The Media and COVID-19

The media is the society’s information provider and unique outlet for news, public education, enlightenment and entertainment (Harper and Philo 2013). The media is also expected to source and disseminate objectively evaluated information through various conventional and new media channels including television, radio,

social media and the internet (Sambe 2005). Poepsel (2020) opined that the media as an institution is equipped with the capacity to influence and direct public opinion. This view is worthy of note in delicate matters such as health and wellbeing. It is also important to note that the media, in addition to its obvious and popular roles, serves as a crucial tool in the promotion of public health (Noar 2006). The dissemination of health messages to a large populace is made possible with the use of conventional outlets such as electronic and print media. It is indeed notable that the media, by providing accurate information, helps in educating the public on diseases outbreaks, prevention, control and treatment (Akarika 2019). The influence of the media has grown beyond the conventional scope of information dissemination to impact all aspects of human lives and society at large. This reiterates the implications of the media’s responsibility on governance, health, education and family life. It is safe to say that the media is a global actor that leads development and contributes immensely to the sustenance of democratic principles globally.

With the democratisation of information and the rise of citizen journalism, news media organisations have begun to pick content from social media and the news reporter is now a social participant in various online communities. Through blogging, vlogging, tweeting, storytelling on social platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and a host of others, content is generated and disseminated round-the-clock. Social media also provides information about health and other delicate matters, although the reliability of such information is relative (Akarika and Ekanem 2018).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic could be described as a distinctive crisis which involved unexpected events that divided opinions about an austere threat to humanity. Its unprecedented spread, daily increase in the number of cases and mortalities as well as a global shortage of protective equipment and other medical resources led to heightened panic and anxiety across the world (Liu and Liu 2020). Reports globally confirmed that the pandemic created a total change in composure and lifestyle of people. According to Wang et al. (2020), a survey revealed that 79.3 percent of Chinese cit-

izens were anxious in their reactions to the virus; almost 30 percent showed vivid fear and a few remained positive. The PEW Research Centre (2020) confirmed this total lifestyle change among Americans as well, in a survey in which majority (about 90%) of United States citizens admitted that their lives changed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The period of isolation created an opportunity for more people to come in contact with the media. The human race had to heavily depend on the media to deliver reliable information about the pandemic. It was estimated that between March 16 and 22 2020, the viewing of the four big broadcast networks in the United States increased by 19 percent when compared with the same week in the previous year. Cable News Network's (CNN) viewing increased by 73 percent; the number of weekly visitors to US News websites reached 630 million which is 68 percent higher than what was recorded from February 17 to 23, 2020 (Sarault 2020). The dynamics of the global crisis transformed the roles of media to include global developments thus making it more involved in conflict transformation and crisis mitigation processes. This is an indication that the relevance of media is more recognised in crisis through insightful coverage, reportage and analysis (Hoffman 2006). The media is also expected, in addition to reporting events, to analyse them in order to guide public opinion. These roles helped the media in contributing to global dialogue in a crisis situation and required them to be investigative, critical and analytical.

The foregoing, through the lens of media dependency theory, supports the assertion that a harsh social disruption will result in individuals having unusually high demand for information and looking up to the media as the best at meeting these demands (Lowrey 2004). This therefore implies that the public relies on the media to get information when a crisis situation is imminent (Mikkamala and Beck 2018). The reason for this is not far-fetched as people usually depend on information during crisis events to manage their anxiety as a result of uncertainty. This is the baseline purpose for irrefutable public quest for information from different sources to ease their feelings.

The global community was overwhelmed with highly developed media technologies such

that information available on COVID-19 was immensely beyond demand. However, the continuous exposure of people to these media contents was found to have had some traumatising effects on a number of them as well. This was evident in the reactions of people to the narratives of overwhelming pain by the trauma survivors. Sarbin-Farell and Turpin (2003) opined that the development of media technology would expose audiences to prodigious reports and vivid visual materials about trauma survivors' experiences from the different media sources.

Social media was one of the major sources of updated information on COVID-19. There were, however, concerns about misinformation that negatively influenced the thinking and subsequent attitude of people. Fake news and misinformation impeded the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic (Obokoh 2020). The actions of citizen journalists heightened the vulnerability of media platforms to the spread of fake news and misinformation about the virus. The World Health Organisation (WHO) had to intervene, to restrain people against rumours that gained grounds on social media and which led to panic, pain, anxiety, stigma and irrational behaviour (WHO 2020a). Thus, the world was not just fighting an epidemic but also an *infodemic*. The infodemic is not solely due to the actions of mainstream media but also citizen journalism which is mainly fuelled through social media, by individuals. The ease of information flow from one user to another on social media gravely impacted the age-long gatekeeper role of the media through which it ensured information was objectively evaluated before issuance. The coronavirus pandemic exposed the media as a tool to push selfish agendas, ignore the minority and exploit the ignorance of the audience. The resultant effects of unverified information and false claims in the media were confusion and misinterpretations about the pandemic among different groups.

UNESCO (2020) reported that the falsehood associated with the COVID-19 information contributed to the rapid and wide spread of the pandemic, just as it was also responsible for public response. For instance, there was an initial myth surrounding the virus which averred that blacks were immune to it. This information could be considered responsible for the initial unrecep-

tive response of most African countries to the pandemic, leaving them exposed to its dangers. As pointed by Depoux et al. (2020), confusion and panic are the results of misinformation in a crisis. False information became a major problem across social media, and got so popular that Facebook published an update to warn its users if they came across incorrect information. The update was however faulted on many occasions as well (Ahmed et al. 2020). A typical instance of misinformation on Facebook was the use of certain medications like hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, which stirred several persons to buy it without prescription. This situation led to insufficiency of the medication for patients who needed them. Caution must, therefore, be applied when using these platforms, to prevent rumours and misinformation.

Kouzy et al. (2020) also reported that verified healthcare Twitter accounts shared a lot of false and unverifiable information. Some researchers are of the opinion that humour effect through which some users joined Twitter conversations to ridicule conspiracy theories drew involuntary attention to them, thus exposing the misinformation therein (Ahmed and Lugovic 2019). As long as misinformation continues to spread on social media, it is necessary to create awareness and adequate preventive measures to ensure public safety.

The Nigerian media space is not exempted from this unpleasant trend, as news circulated on old and new media platforms caused tension and panic in public (Ladan et al. 2020). The media was accused of disseminating unverified news about the spread of two million infected face masks from China to Africa. There were also unconfirmed media reports of persons who were said to be COVID-19 positive. An example was the case of a woman from Benue state that was reported as COVID-19 positive because she had just returned from London. She later refuted the claim after some days that she was never confirmed positive to the virus.

Further, media reports of the pandemic have been found to focus on case statistics such as the number of new infections, deaths and recoveries (Obi 2020). Obi (2020) discovered that only 6000 of the 26.1 million articles published globally on COVID-19 focused on investigating possible vaccines in combating the pandemic.

This reflects the focus of the media on reporting and not adequately covering or investigating efforts aimed at arriving at a solution.

In another context, the media can be seen as a tool for spreading propaganda and conspiracy by the political class. Ngige et al. (2016) claimed that the media can be used by the elite to maximise profit and gain public acceptance by manipulating the audience. A remarkable instance was the actions of the Dokpesi family using AIT in discrediting the stance of the Nigerian government with regards to the spread and treatment of COVID-19 in the country. The media was used as a tool to attack the government on the validity of treatment procedures for infected patients at isolation centres. Ladan et al. (2020) claimed that this kind of media action could have ended up confusing the public and sabotaging government efforts.

Impact of COVID-19 on Humans

The harsh effect of the global pandemic impelled government actions such as enforcing movement restrictions, ban on social gatherings, wearing of protective clothing, among others. These protocols received several reactions from citizens around the world. The reason for this was not far-fetched as the impact of these restrictions on people in underdeveloped regions of the world such as Africa was significant. It was reported that the economic and social rights of at least 2.2 billion people were worst affected by the pandemic globally (UN 2020). This is a major setback to the realisation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) of reducing global poverty levels. It thus raised questions about whether enforcing restrictive measures was beneficial as it put the livelihoods of many persons at risk worldwide.

Furthermore, the pandemic placed significant strain on patterns of human relationships. A holistic consideration of human relationship shows that such relationships extend beyond the family unit into work, religion, social sphere, among others. The effect of the pandemic touched on all dimensions of human relationship. Hassan (2020) opined that the family unit was diversely and adversely affected. A typical example is the case of families that lost their breadwinners to the ailment or whose breadwin-

ners became jobless due to the pandemic. COVID-19 also had negative impacts on parent-child relationships (Strawn 2020). This stemmed from the panic and heightened fear among children while adjusting from their usual patterns to a new way of life. Strawn (2020) asserted that parents found it difficult communicating basic government regulations of stay-at-home and social distancing to their adolescent children who typically love to express their freedom.

In addition, the pandemic affected interpersonal relationships at the workplace. The conventional workplace tradition is structured to encourage interpersonal relationships through face-to-face contacts. However, the adjustments necessitated by the pandemic pushed away these structures. Virtual communication through technological devices replaced face-to-face interactions. Network inaccessibility was a major deterrent to virtual communication as Nigeria's poor connectivity truncated communication, affected the quality of work and hindered individual job performance and relational satisfaction (Mody and Jeruchimowitz 2020). In addition to this, working from home totally eradicated the limits set for work time as it often encroached into personal time. A study by Shareena and Shahid (2020) revealed that employees had to commit additional hours daily to their jobs. The resultant effect of this reflected in early burnout among many employees. Also, the remote working tradition increased the burden of parenting as many parents struggled to maintain work-life balance (Kang 2020). On the other hand, the pandemic encouraged some indoor jobs and talents such as writing, blogging, software development and arts (Gabriel 2020). These kinds of work opportunities became expedient since the demand for updates and information about the pandemic continued to increase. There was also a need to recruit more personnel that could work remotely.

Human Society and COVID-19

The introduction of such measures as social distancing, self-isolation, quarantine, movement control, curfew, travel restrictions and lockdowns to encourage reduction in physical human interaction affected social behaviour. These precautionary measures sparked unpleasant

social behaviours such as protests, non-compliance with government orders, theft, burglary and domestic violence, further leading to increased anxiety, uncertainty and fear. However, these adjustments also encouraged positive social behaviours such as improved family time and social skills acquisition. The pandemic redirected attention to the importance of relating with people around us.

Movement restrictions caused families to stay together and in the same place at the same time, thus restoring intimacy and strengthening blood ties. It forced them to spend time together doing family activities, ensuring they are visibly present in one another's lives. While there are speculations that several pregnancies resulted from this, working from home also gave children more access to their parents and afforded some parents better sleeping hours which should translate to better work efficiency and productivity. The stress of commuting from one place to another was removed, saving fuel, reducing air pollution and accident rates (Chakraborty and Prasenjit 2020).

The rate of migration from one country to another plummeted due to the pandemic as countries shut their borders to incoming or outgoing travellers. This is because migration had a great potential for the increase in infection rate within a short time. The migration freeze also affected migrant workers in developed countries who lost their jobs or faced income decline. Some migrant workers got trapped in developed countries and were unable to send support to their families back home in developing countries (HDP 2020). Several persons also experienced a stoppage in their income flow as many companies relieved their workers of their duties, to avoid paying wages for as long as the pandemic lasted. Paying companies, however, devised means of cutting wages by up to 50 percent.

This pandemic also affected the educational system as it led to the total closure of schools, colleges, polytechnics, universities and other such institutions. The lockdown interrupted academic calendar, especially of primary and secondary school students. With potential long-term consequences on the quality of education, most students in Nigeria were completely cut off academic interactions with their teachers. UNESCO recommended the use of distant learn-

ing means like e-learning, sharing reading materials through emails and other educational platforms that teachers can explore to reach their students. These afforded students with access to the internet the opportunity to learn and research more online to improve their knowledge. E-Learning was only helpful for matured students because they could easily access the educational platforms online through their phones and computer. In e-education, students cannot gain practical experience of laboratory works like handling of apparatus and instruments especially for science students.

Also, the impact was felt on the agricultural environment, as insect pollinators appeared in abundance on crops indicating good ecological balance. This is largely due to the lockdown which meant a reduction in the exploitation of natural resources since humans had to stay indoors to save themselves from the pandemic. The environment was cleaner due to reduced activity which also meant a reduction in pollution of natural resources. In other words, the lockdown served as a healing dose for environmental concerns such as climate change and ozone depletion, which could negatively affect human health (Bremer et al. 2019).

As no one was sacred from contracting or dying from coronavirus, many people became paranoid despite diverse advice on the recommendation of non-pharmaceutical methods for prevention. Especially endangered were the homeless, those who live in crowded houses that hinder social distancing or those who lack access to clean water to wash hands repeatedly. It is thus clear that the poor and vulnerable citizens of the society were at greater risk of contracting the virus. The situation leaves one to wonder how social distancing measures could be maintained among detainees in detention facilities.

Differently, the digital economy on its side experienced growth as a result of the pandemic. The lockdown served as a good means to improve the digital economy which resulted from people's resolve to connect online to get work done. Various services that cover internet connectivity, voice calls, virtual meeting and conferencing, digital payments, ecommerce, e-fundraising, among others were among the biggest gainers of the pandemic because more and more people turned online due to partial or total lockdowns in certain places.

Media Reportage of COVID-19 in African Countries

The first recorded case of COVID-19 in Africa was in Egypt on February 14, 2020, after which all other African countries reported cases. At first, the pandemic was limited to capital cities but it later spread to more cities and provinces. The African countries with the highest number of infections included South Africa, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (WHO 2020b).

Ofori-Birikorang (2010) opined that the information provided by the media could influence public opinion as in the Nigerian situation. Constant and continuous framing of stories by the media about a specific issue can direct and incline the public to what the media is setting agenda on. A study by Msugther and Philips (2020) on the influence of media framing on people's perception of COVID-19 in Nigeria revealed that the people's psyche got accustomed to viewing the pandemic economically and politically. It was also reported that many Nigerians did not believe the virus existed, for economic reasons. The study concluded that the Nigerian media presented the COVID-19 pandemic in economic and political frames rather than highlighting health and safety concerns. This depicts that the media can and does present issues in perspectives that suit their interests over that of the public.

A survey conducted in Egypt by Abdelhafiz et al. (2020) reported that novel channels such as social media and the internet stood out as the most important sources of information even at the expense of the conventional media. The authors also reported the positive attitude of the citizens towards preventive measures, and they attributed this attitude to knowledge gained through the media, especially social media. It was however discovered that the level of knowledge was lower among older, rural, less educated and lower income groups.

In South Africa, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA 2020) evaluated the trends in the media coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The study focused on coverage, gender and race representation as well as the number of media articles released on the subject. This helped in understanding how the media reported the pandemic in South Africa to keep the citizens in-

formed. MMA identified relevant stories on the pandemic and found that the number of stories increased with the virus spread. The result further showed that most of the published articles were focused on themes such as labour and the economy, lockdown regulations and socio-economic relief initiatives by government to citizens. In addition, it was identified that information sources on the COVID-19 virus were from high-ranking government officials and a few was heard from experts and affected citizens during the lockdown period.

Objectives

- The main objectives of this paper were to:
- ◆ discuss the role media and humans played during the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa;
 - ◆ analyse the nature of the relationship between the media and humans in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa;
 - ◆ establish whether the media complicated the issues surrounding COVID-19 through misinformation, disinformation and outright falsification of information which presented an image of a complex relationship or whether there was a symbiotic relationship between the media and humans in Africa; and
 - ◆ identify whether media depended on humans for information or whether humans depended on media for information during COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study (qualitative study). Being a theoretical review, the researcher depended solely on secondary sources of data to arrive at the conclusions made in this paper. This work was borne out of consultations of both empirical and theoretical studies carried out by scholars in this field of study. Data and conclusions reached were drawn from readings, publications and articles covering COVID-19 in Africa.

RESULTS

Based on the fact that this study is a descriptive, that is, qualitative study and being a theoretical review, the researcher reviewed many secondary sources of that and based on the reviews the following results were gathered.

From the theoretical reviews done by the researcher, media played a very significant role during the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. Media was a go to place where humans sort clarifications on the mirage of inform available during COVID-19 in Africa.

The nature of the relationship between the media and humans during COVID-19 in Africa was complex and at the same time symbiotic. For certain reasons such as poor research, lack of knowledge and education, lack of information, confusion and politics based on different stakeholders opinion, humans were not able to get the sort after information they required from the media and this affected the relationship they had with the media.

The media particularly online citizen media outlets through misinformation, disinformation, and at times outright falsification of information presented a complicated relationship between humans and the media although humans and the media at times had a symbiotic relationship. This symbiotic relationship occurred where the humans got the sort of information they needed from the media and where the media also got information from humans who provided their ideas, understanding experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic to the media.

It is evident that the media played a significant role in disseminating information that shaped public attitude towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the media humans got information about the virus given that the understanding of how the virus spreads, treatment and effects on the society were not clearly understood. The media played a major role in the transmission of information regarding the aforementioned issues. In fact the media was the major platform through which major stakeholders (WHO, United Nations, pharmaceutical companies, religious bodies, governments, etc.) aired their views as the pandemic unravelled. It is important to note that media is made of traditional and new media. New media with its characteristics included citizen journalists, blogs, online mainstream media and social media which also served as news outlets. Based on this, however, some media platforms particularly citizen journalists and other new media platforms should be blamed for inadequacies in playing corrective roles towards ending the pandemic. Thus,

the information contribution of the media has been met by an unusual *infodemic* that is marked by the high rate of misinformation and false content. Many humans depended on the media for information and also provided information to the media through their social media handles.

DISCUSSION

Media played a vital role in disseminating information to humans who depended on the media on how to stay safe and adjust to the prevailing circumstance regarding COVID-19 (Harper and Philo 2013, Surico and Galeotti 2020). Due to social media, many people also shared information which influenced media reportage of the pandemic as it affected humans in the society (Laato et al. 2020; Abdelhafiz et al. 2020). Also, many interpretations and accounts of issues related to COVID-19 from the main stream media and social media result in the emergence of complex relationship between media and humans. Laato et al. (2020), observed that this complex relationship produced a divide among humans in the society and by implication the relationships between humans and the media. Some humans believed what the media put out to the public while others questioned the validity and reliability of information that came from the media. It is believed that this occurred because of the half-truths, fabrications, misinformation and disinformation that came from the media (Msughter and Philips 2020). This gave rise to selective consumption of media content by people who are media literate enough to understand the intrigues of media processes. Consequently, many people resorted to dependence on media while media also depended on good sources for their media content thereby enabling a symbiotic relation between some humans and the media in Africa. The effect of this on humans is the compulsion to use their rationality while consuming media contents relating to COVID-19. One of the implications of this is that, while depending on the media for information, humans as rational beings, must make use of the human and moral agency while consuming media content.

Literacy in media consumption and production has become paramount to humans in Africa in order to live well in their different domains especially now that it obvious that the presence

of the COVID-19 is a reality that came with many changes in the society (World Bank Global Economic Outlook 2020). Africans, in this regard, must find ways of sustaining a life style and government intervention processes and practices that will provide an enabling environment for future development and fulfilment for Africans. The media is the best platform that will enhance these needs by providing information which humans need there playing a significant role in the life of humans and society at large.

The consequences of the pandemic continued to affect the economic and socio-cultural wellbeing of societies in Africa. These consequences range from effects on human behaviour to the diverse systems and components of the society including public health, migration, education, family and employment (WHO 2020b; World Bank Global Economic Outlook 2020). It became clear from the present reality and observations from literature that the pandemic redirected human minds to brace up and create more alternative methods of survival in any situation in Africa obviously because of the seemingly poor economic, material and human resources management of most African economies.

COVID-19 adversely portended a lot for various sectors of African economy. This is because a closer look at Africa's combined needs for industrial machinery, manufacturing and transport equipment revealed the continent relied on imports for about 50 percent of its demands. Over 50 percent of its total imports come from Europe and Asia. No doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic had an undeniable impact on all systems on the African continent (World Bank Global Economic Outlook 2020). This is as the position of China in the origination and spread of the Coronavirus translated into factory closures, disruptions for multinational companies as well as reduced and delayed orders all of which is causing a lot of havoc in most African countries' economic development.

CONCLUSION

During COVID-pandemic it was difficult for the media to provide accurate information because of avalanche of information that circulate in African media sphere. Social media was not exempted and it provided the platform form all manner of humans to provide information that

are questionable. This resulted in a kind of dual relationship between media and humans. The implication was there were complex as well as symbiotic relationship that existed between media and humans in Africa during COVID-19 pandemic. Media and humans need each other in the society. While media depend on humans for information and patronage which they do through surveillance of the environment, interpretation of issues encountered by humans in the society, transmission of cultural heritage, mobilisation and entertainment, humans depend on the media for information, education, entertainment and the push to tackle many human and environmental challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusion, it is recommended that media institutions collaborate more with researchers in the search for accurate information on the vaccines to end the COVID-19 scourge and other global health emergencies. Similarly, humans are rational beings and so should show responsibility in posting information that will not uphold human dignity. Media literacy is very important in the era of COVID-in Africa so as to avoid being victims of misinformation, fake news and disinformation. Also, lockdowns and other combative measures are reviewed for similar instances and to allow greater flexibility, to protect the livelihood of persons who live on a daily income schedule. This is especially in many countries across Africa where government was unable to provide incentives and palliatives to help citizen economically survive the restrictive measures. To avert a number of adverse implications, parents should create alternative communication channels to cater for the psychosocial needs of their adolescents, even beyond COVID-19. Finally, using the COVID-19 experience as a template, the media must focus on the provision of solutions and constructively drive enlightenment as opposed to merely sharing updates and disseminating information.

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