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RESEARCH REPORT

ON

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC
ON NIGERIA MEDIA OPERATIONS AND SURVIVAL



Photo taken after a roundtable with media executives & newsroom managers on progressive spending on education in Nigeria

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria | Abuja, February 2020.

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Research is usually a stimulating activity that is helpful to those who are seeking a deeper knowledge of the world and its laws; it is an everyday activity in which we participate since the Stone Age. This research is based on the quest for better understanding and answers to the extent to which COVID-19 has affected media operations in Nigeria and how Civil Society Organisations and other relevant stakeholders can better support the media to stay afloat and perform its function as the Fourth Estate during a pandemic. This research became necessary following feedback from journalists on a silent financial crisis rocking the Nigeria media industry during the Humanitarian Crisis Reporting training organized by ActionAid Nigeria in June 2020.

Undoubtedly, the mass media is indispensable in a society seeking meaningful development. Over the years, the contributions of the mass media cannot be overemphasized in the growth phases of various societies, especially in Nigeria. Despite the difficulty and clampdown by the ruling class, the media has continued to rise above all odds to ensure that truths are uncovered, and information is disseminated at different strata of the society.

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Ene Obi
Country Director
ActionAid Nigeria

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mass media and journalism practice in Nigeria for the purpose of filling the yawning gap in existing literature and practice. It offers a rare peek into the ramifications of change the pandemic has brought to the practice of journalism in the country. In this context, the study contemplates the following questions: In what directions and to what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted journalism practice in Nigeria? What measures or strategies could be adopted and implemented to sustain media operations during and post COVID 19? The study is predicated on two theories, Social Responsibility theory and Structural Functionalism theory. A survey research design which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative instruments for data collection was used. A 21 item Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Journalism Practice Questionnaire (ICPJPO) was used to collect quantitative data, while In-depth Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Tables, charts (pie) and percentages were used to analyse quantitative data, while explanation building was used to analyse qualitative data. Based on strict social science tradition, an appropriate formula (Babbie, 2010) which recommends determination of sample size via percentages; a sample size of (119) respondents which represents 2 percent, was drawn from a population of 5,945 (media owners, editors, journalists, professional associations, advocacy and training groups). Five research questions were raised and addressed in this study. Some of the findings were as follows:

The pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria by hampering access to news sources. By hampering access to news sources, the pandemic changed the way reporters accessed information and introduced a new way of accessing information (new professional normal) – the use of digital technology to access sources or to gather information online from sources.

The pandemic has restricted information gathering to online news sources. Reporters now access information mainly via: WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom meetings, Twitter, YouTube and phone calls. This means that the newsroom has become virtual and reporters do not need to run to the office to file stories any longer.

To be effective as a journalist during and post COVID 19, reporters need to acquire online information gathering and verification skills.

The pandemic has changed the nature of journalism practice by changing the nature of news sources in the sense that digital literacy is required to function efficiently as news sources in the new journalism order.

With little resources, correspondents can report live from their locations and can conduct virtual interviews.

Some recommendations were made based on the findings

There is a need for the government to lower tariffs on media consumables which are largely imported, grant tax holiday, and above all, build a solid economy that guarantees growth and investment.

Since the operations of the media have now shifted largely to the virtual space, the high cost of data and the poor-quality service by telecommunications operators have

become major issues of concern for the survival of the industry. There is, therefore, an urgent need for stakeholders to devise ways of ensuring the media have access to data that is both affordable and strong in connectivity. Since the media fulfil social responsibility, it would not be too much to consider data subsidy and rebates on tariffs for the consumables used by the industry.

There is a serious need for training and retraining of journalists and media managers on the business side of their operations, that is, how to run profitably without compromising professional ethics and social responsibility.

It is absolutely important for media organisations to provide a broad spectrum of palliatives to motivate reporters and spur them on to greater productivity on the job during and post COVID-19.

It is important for the Nigerian society to give close attention to the issue of the sanity, mental and psychological health of journalists because a dislocation in this area of well-being in their lives would amount to a dislocation on the entire nation.

The federal government through the Central Bank of Nigeria should create a single digit loan package to support media organisations in the country.

With the significant reduction in the number of staff available for work in newsrooms and the advent of virtual reporting, there is serious need for a new policy framework to address the emerging trend.

As part of research outcomes, the researcher proposed the SCARS Intervention Model (SIM). SCARS is an acronym for Systems Reform, Capacity Building, Academia-Industry Linkages, Research and Development, and Sustainable Funding, as a panacea for the problems bedevilling the media in Nigeria and largely triggered by COVID-19.



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STOP
UNLAWFUL
CRIMES AGAINST
JOURNALISTS

#EndImpunity #KeepTruthAlive



JOURNALIST
JOURNALISTS AGAINST POVERTY
Community Voices for Social Justice

Photo taken during a one-day dialogue organized by Journalists Against Poverty (JAP) in collaboration with ActionAid Nigeria, in commemoration of International Day to End Impunity Against Journalists.
Photo: ActionAid Nigeria Abuja, November 2019.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis. It is in fact, a development problem, and must be seen in that context, as it affects every aspect of human life and all ramifications of human endeavour across different countries and indeed continents of the world. While the impact of the pandemic varies from country to country, it is certain that it will increase the level of poverty and inequality at a global scale.

Already, the lockdown imposed by governments around the world as part of measures to halt the spread of the pandemic has destroyed local, national and international economies. While several businesses have shut down and millions thrown out of jobs, there is a heightened level of helplessness across the world as there is no known cure in sight, at least at the moment for the virus.

Assessing the impacts of the crisis on businesses, societies, economies and vulnerable groups is, therefore, fundamental to developing a strategic response capable of driving a recovery that does not leave anyone behind. Without appropriate and urgent socio-economic responses, the United Nations said global suffering will escalate, jeopardising lives and livelihoods for many years to come.

The UN argues that immediate development responses to the crisis must be undertaken with an eye on the future, adding that development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by the choices made now and the nature of support provided.

Only very few economic sectors are faring well as the COVID-19 pandemic has shut down businesses, communities and cities across the world. As the pandemic unleashes its most contagious sting; killing hundreds of thousands and overstressing healthcare systems, the world looks up to the media to provide the critical information needed not only to cope with, but also to deal with the pandemic.

The UNDP in its March 24, 2020 report observes that, "As the outbreak intensifies, Nigeria's services, trade and financial sectors would suffer significant disruptions. Together, the three sectors contribute over 30 per cent to GDP."

The UNDP insists that contraction in these sectors would result in significant job losses both in the formal and informal job markets, adding that it could deal a severe blow and trigger instability as youth unemployment/underemployment which is already high at 55 percent would worsen or become more complex (<https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria>).

The media are strong components of Nigeria's service and trade sectors and contribute significantly to job creation and wealth-making. While the public more than ever before, relies on radio, television, print and online platforms for important information, education and entertainment in the midst of the crisis triggered by the pandemic, the business side of the media is almost comatose.

The advertising sector, which is inseparable from the economic model of the media, is operating at its lowest ebb due to the shutdown of businesses. The dwindling revenue earnings have, therefore, forced many media organisations to consider job cuts and new operational models where only few reporters are engaged with many working from their homes.

It is an established fact the media were in pretty bad shape before the coronavirus pandemic. However, the dislocations caused by the pandemic have further worsened the already bad situation. Besides, the full impact of COVID-19 on the media cannot, therefore, be established in empirical terms except if full-scale research is carried out using the right instruments and protocols.

Statement of the Problem

Journalists and communication researchers in Nigeria seem not to be giving attention to this all-important aspect of study, yet COVID-19 pandemic and its related health outcomes have continued to impact negatively on individuals, families, communities and indeed national development efforts over the past few months. As an investigative journalist and a researcher in media studies, I have been giving critical attention to the issues of news media coverage of the pandemic in terms of communication and outcomes. This study, which is an investigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the media and the practice of journalism in Nigeria, seeks to fill this void. In other words, the purpose of this study is to fill the yawning gap in existing literature and practice by determining the directions of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on journalism practice in Nigeria. It therefore, contemplates the following questions: In what directions and to what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the media and journalism practice in Nigeria? What measures or strategies could be adopted and implemented to sustain media operations during and post COVID 19?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected mass media organisations and journalism practice in Nigeria, and to figure out measures or strategies that could be used to address the situation. Specifically, the research objectives were:

1. To determine the extent to which the pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria
2. To find out the challenges that are confronting journalists and media organisations that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria
3. To find out measures that have been adopted by media organisations to survive COVID-19-related challenges in Nigeria.
4. To find out how the measures adopted by media organisations are affecting journalists and media operations in the country.
5. To determine the measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep Journalists and media organisations from going under during and post COVID -19

Research Questions

Five research questions were raised to reflect the research objectives stated above:

1. To what extent has the pandemic changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria?
2. What challenges confront journalists and media houses that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria?
3. What measures have been adopted by journalists and media organisations to survive COVID-19 related challenges in Nigeria?
4. How are the measures that journalists and media organisations are taking to stay in business affecting their operations and survival in the country?
5. What measures could be adopted and implemented to keep journalists and media organisations from going under during and post COVID-19?

Significance of the Study

This research was implemented to show how media organisations in Nigeria are operating under socio-economic dislocations caused by a virulent virus that the world is yet to find a cure for. It will, therefore, serve as a resource material for journalists, media managers, research institutions and sundry organisations requiring information on how COVID-19 has affected media operations and journalism practice in Nigeria. It has suggested new operational models and intervention measures that are capable of keeping media professionals in business during and post-COVID-19.

Further, the work opens new research frontiers on media business models, new skills required by journalists to function optimally in the ever-changing industry and the role of technology in journalism practice during and post-COVID-19.

Media professionals and policy makers will through this study identify new challenges to the profession, develop new approaches and policies to address lapses and strengthen practices for effective services delivery.

Limitations

This research was conducted within 25 working days and, therefore, it was impossible for the researcher to expand the population of the study to accommodate more samples.

Again, because of the need to comply strictly with the COVID-19 protocol, the researcher made use of digital tools including Google Forms, telephone interviews and a few live interviews to collect data for the study.

Given the highly bureaucratic nature of public media organisations, the restrictions on public speaking and the need to protect key respondents whose jobs could be affected if their identities are known, the names of respondents are not mentioned in this research except for their generic titles and their media organisations.

Expected Outputs

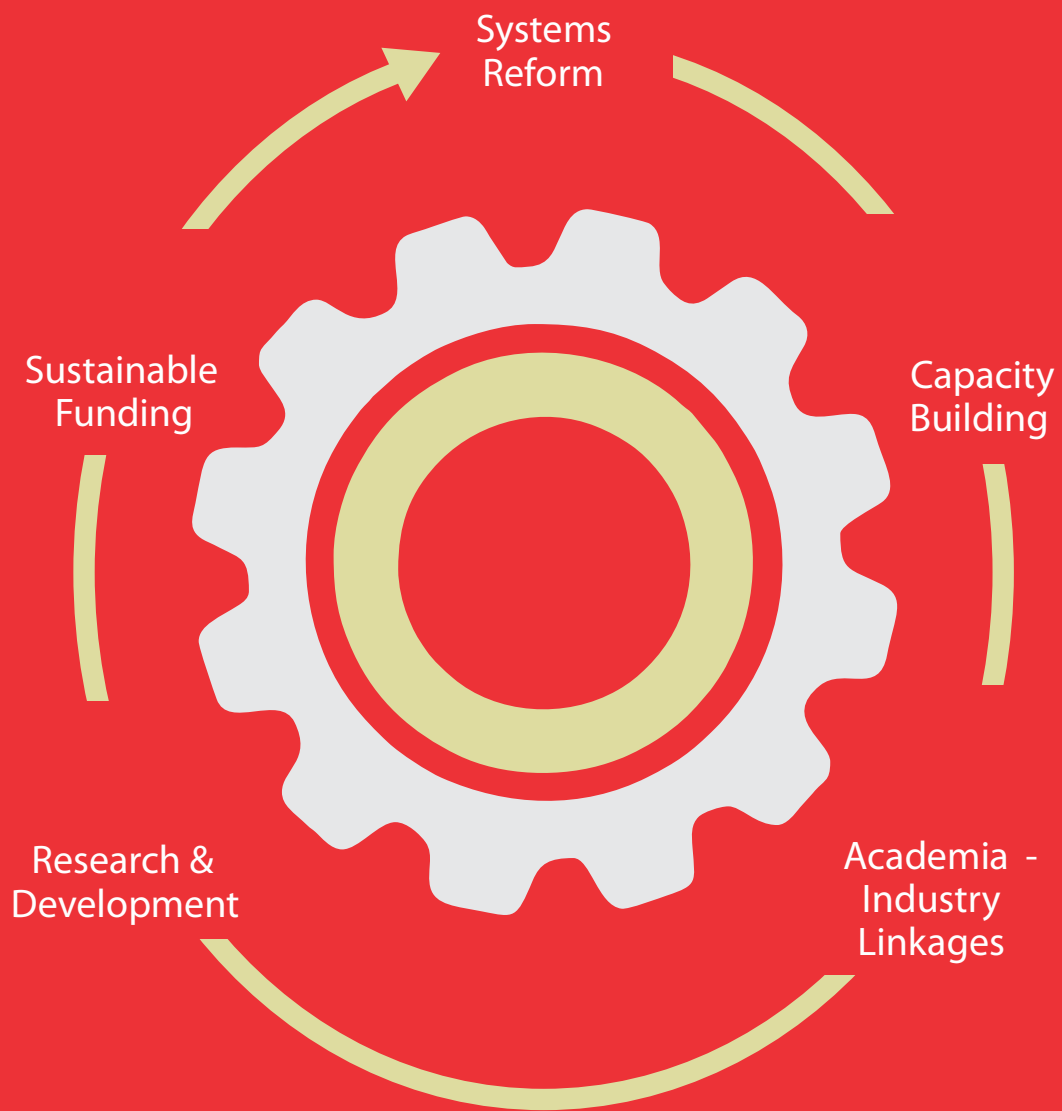
- S – Systems Reform: Media reforms that touch on the core building blocks of the industry including organisational structure, roles, people and resource management.

- C – Capacity Building: Well-designed programmes to strengthen the ability of media organisations and journalists to embrace the new normal, handle digital tools, create quality contents, operate profitably and remain relevant within a rapidly changing environment.

- A – Academia-Industry Linkages: A programme that promotes convergence and bridges the dichotomy between the classroom and the industry beyond the classic simulation models, so journalism and mass communication programmes are designed and structured to comply with academic goals while also adjusting to industry dynamics. This project would ensure tertiary institutions offering journalism, broadcasting and allied media programmes create transversal projects and paradigms that integrate both valid theoretical axioms and core competencies that could only be acquired through industry experience.

- R – Research & Development: Create R&D programmes and activities to study emerging trends, improve the capability of journalists and media managers to operate profitably during emergencies as well as stimulate innovative methods of production that improves quality of content and reduces production cost.

- S – Sustainable Funding: Create a framework that helps media owners and managers discover new sources of funding as well as access to grants, low interest facilities and longer-term investment opportunities.



SCARS Intervention Model (SIM)

Definition of Terms

COVID-19: A disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, it was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus.

Mass media: The means of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time, such as television, newspapers, magazines, radio and social media such as Facebook, Zoom, Instagram, Twitter etc.

Journalism: A balanced production and distribution of reports on current or past events based on facts and supported with proofs or evidences. The word journalism applies to the occupation, as well as citizen journalists who gather and publish unbiased information based on facts and supported with proofs or evidences.

Broadcasting: Broadcasting is the distribution of audio or video content to a dispersed audience through any electronic mass communications medium, but typically one using the electromagnetic spectrum, in a one-to-many model.

Social media: Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Newsroom: An office at a television or radio station or a newspaper where news is gathered and reports are prepared for broadcasting or publishing. It is a place where the stories are gathered, written, put together, edited and assembled for the news broadcast, telecast or newspaper.

Editor: A staff whose daily responsibility is to decide which news stories are to be printed in the paper or broadcast on radio or television. Long before the story is published or broadcast, the editor assigns reporters to cover the news, checks for accuracy and fairness and writes headlines.

Online newspaper: An online version of a newspaper, either as a stand-alone publication or as the online version of a printed periodical. Broadcast media, radio/television now have online presence and they compete with print journalism in presenting breaking news in a very timely manner.

Pandemic: An epidemic which occurs worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people.

Social distancing: Also called physical distancing; means keeping a safe space to prevent sick people from coming in contact with the healthy ones.

Advertising: A marketing communication that uses an an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service or idea. A large chunk of revenue accruable to the media comes from advertising.

Communication: The act of sharing or transferring information from one place, person or group to another.

Vulnerable groups: A population, individual or organization that is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of natural or manmade disasters or situations.

Correspondents: A journalist or commentator for a magazine, or an agent who contributes reports to a newspaper, or radio or television news, or another type of company, from a remote, often distant, location.

News reporter: A person who collects and analyses information of interest, including crime, government and breaking news, and broadcast it to the public through newspapers, television, radio and the Internet.



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- 1. Introduction to Feminist Journalism
- 2. The Role of Women in Peace Building
- 3. Counter Narratives for Peace Building

ActionAid Nigeria Country Director, Eno Obi hold a safe space session with female journalists during a 2-day media training on feminist journalism and counter narratives for peace building.

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria, Auta Baleffi, Nasarawa, November 2019.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: Mass media are the nucleus around which societies revolve; they are a fundamental sub-structure of the society that makes up the monolithic whole. As nucleus of society, they are expected to perform specific functions that would regulate those societies and ensure growth and sustainability. The mass media have played important roles in society and have served as fundamental resources for development and social transformation.

The Mass media and Society

The mass media have served as a tool for shaping and influencing public thoughts and opinions; controlling political and economic power, and as platforms for public debate and discussion (Holtz-Bacha & Stromback, 2012). The mass media are likened to court rooms where judgement is passed against social ills, and where issues of social discontent are treated and resolved. By performing their information, education, and entertainment functions, the mass media are functioning as agents of socialisation, in the sense that they are used to inculcate in the citizenry the norms and values of society (Oso & Pate, 2011).

A society is “an inter-dependent entity that is made up of different groups of people, cultures and institutions” (Iwokwagh & Ijwo, 2011, p. 2). According to Otite and Ogionwo (2001, p. 41), a society refers to “a unit consisting of institutions and culture which are exclusive to a group of people.” These definitions suggest that society is made up of three key elements: Groups of people, the relationship between them, institutions and culture.

McQuail (2005) offers what I would refer to as the systems perspective of society. According to him, “society is viewed as an on-going system of linked working parts or sub-systems, each making an essential contribution to continuity and order.” This definition highlights the fact that society is made up of interdependent parts called sub-systems, which perform vital functions to ensure its growth and continuous survival.

A cursory look at the foregoing definitions reveals that a society:

- i. Is an organised entity with well delineated units called sub-systems
- ii. Has a mechanism of social control, which defines and regulates the relationship between its interdependent parts
- iii. Defines roles and assigns specific functions to its inter-dependent parts to ensure order, and its continuous survival
- iv. Has common goals for which it exists, and for which continuity is sought

Mass media, according to McQuail (2005, p. 97) “can be seen as one of these systems.” As one of the sub-systems, he argues that “it is by responding to the demands of individuals and institutions in consistent ways that the media

achieve unintended benefits for the society as a whole.”This suggests that in addition to being an integral part of the social structure, it is expected that the mass media should be used, as a matter of responsibility, to respond to the demands of individuals, institutions, and other sub-systems to ensure growth and sustenance of society. UNESCO (1980) observes that, in its broadest sense, responding to the demands of the society would confer on the mass media the responsibility of addressing the concerns of its three-unit structure – Individuals, Institutions and Sub-systems by performing the functions of: Information, Socialisation, Motivation, Debate and discussion, Education, Cultural promotion, Entertainment and Integration.

This research examines application of the mass media within the context of the health sector, which is an integral part of the social sub-systems. In assessing the quality of value, the mass media have been used to add to the health sub-system, one question becomes pertinent: in what ways have the mass media been used to respond to the challenges bedevilling the Nigerian health sector generally, and those that are related to the COVID 19 pandemic specifically? This question would bring us to the point of examining the role(s) the mass media could be used to play in responding to the health issues of a country generally, and those that are related to the COVID 19 pandemic specifically.

Mass Media and the Challenges of Nigeria's Health Sector

That the mass media could be engaged as veritable tools in improving the general health outcomes of individuals and nations is not in doubt. Studies have shown that people in different countries of the world tend to seek, acquire and use health information obtained from the mass media for multifarious health conditions (Oso & Pate, 2011). Suggested in these studies is the position that the mass media do function as essential channels of communication through which individuals could acquire the information and knowledge that they would need and would have to apply to be able to improve their health conditions.

The foregoing suggests that the mass media have been used by stakeholders to respond to the health situations of individuals, groups and countries, in our case, the COVID-19 pandemic, in ways that are in line with functions that are delineated in available literature in the field of mass communication and media studies. These functions include among others, to: (i) provide information and education for behaviour change (ii) reduce barriers and promote advocacy (iii) create awareness and improve risk perception (iv) mobilise public opinion and galvanise social action.

How COVID-19 Impacts Newsrooms

Long before the outbreak of COVID-19, Nigeria had recorded a yearly increase in its unemployment rate based on a report by the World Bank and the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS). A survey conducted by the two bodies showed that more Nigerians in the lowest consumption quantiles have lost their jobs between April and May, 2020 (Pulitzer Centre, 2020).

The devastating effect of the pandemic has been felt in every newsroom, ranging from the big ones to the small online platforms. A report by Nairametrics on May 22, 2020, summarised the woes faced by media organisations as coronavirus ravaged every fabric of the local and international economy. While the media had successfully confronted dictatorial regimes and democratically-elected office holders who are averse to criticisms and survived, the coronavirus presented a new level of challenge to their survival and profitability.

The industry and practitioners are facing a different kind of torture. This time around,

not by any political office holder, but a looming recession that has befallen the industry. Though the industry has been battling with several hurdles before the advent of coronavirus, the pandemic is threatening its survival amid other uncertainties.

The sector, according to journalists and industry watchers, is currently grappling with several problems, ranging from COVID-19 pandemic, depleted funds due to the lockdown across major cities, loss of revenue due to lower ad sales, looming job loss and salaries slashed, among others.

The staff of most print news platforms are going through bad times. While a lot of them were informed of salary cuts from April 2020 till further notice, some have lost their jobs as their employers embarked on 'Operation Cut Cost at all Cost.' (Nairametrics, 2020)

The report by Nairametrics also indicated that the sack is an ongoing phenomenon, meaning that anyone who was not sacked at the heat of the pandemic should never be confident of retaining his or her job as media organisations were still rolling out dismissal letters and letters of salary cut.

For instance, while Nigeria was celebrating its 20 years of uninterrupted democratic governance on May 29, The Punch newspaper announced the termination of employment of some of its staff and a salary cut for many others.

In a report by OluObadofun funded by the Pulitzer Centre, the Punch newspaper's Managing Director, Ademola Osinubi is quoted to have informed staff of the company in an internal memo:

This pandemic has dealt with our business telling and severe blows. Our circulation and advertisement revenues dipped dangerously, compounding the operational and revenue challenges birthed by the migration of a majority of print newspaper readers and adverts to digital platforms.

I am not at liberty to disclose all of the measures that the management has taken so far. But the ones that could be made public include an immediate reduction in print pagination; staff furloughing to comply with government and expert advisories on social distancing; the temporary shutdown of the sports newspaper; and significant financial reengineering. All projections point at a bleak and uncertain future for the media industry and the economy.

Even before the memo was issued, a report by Nairametrics had indicated how The Punch management had reduced the pages of its newspaper from 48 to 32 pages because of a shrinking readership caused by the COVID-19 lockdown. The lockdown and other challenges brought about by the pandemic did not affect The Punch newspaper alone as many media houses in the country shared the experience.

According to Nairametrics, while the Nation newspaper sacked 100 out of its about 500 workers across the nation, other media outlets that resorted to job cut as a survival strategy included the New Telegraph, Daily Independence, AIM group (owners of Nigeria Info., Cool FM, Wazobia, and Arewa) and even entertainment outlets such as Iroko TV.

"Beyond the loss of jobs and slash in pay; furlough and closure of media outlets are also dangers recently permeating the media industry," the Nairametrics report stated.

However, in a feature article published by The Guardian newspaper of July 6, 2020, the Chairman of the Lagos State Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), QuasimAkinreti, in an interview confirmed that the media being a service industry are badly affected by the pandemic, and cited a drastic fall in income for journalists and newsrooms.

Mr. Akinreti, however, said government-owned media organisations were not seriously affected by the challenges posed by COVID-19, due largely to the fact that such media organisations receive public subventions. According to him, some organisations have resorted to salary cuts for employees (as low as 20-40% of actual salary) and/or sending staff on a three months compulsory leave. Going further, he made it known that organizations who have taken these measures are equally not happy, but the present financial crisis has necessitated such actions.

As part of measures to save the job of its (NUJ) members, Mr. Akinreti is quoted in the report as saying the union was negotiating with media organisations to develop a mutual fair plan for their employees. "This is important as the financial downtimes are beginning to affect the morale of journalists," the NUJ chairman is quoted to have said.

The Guardian also reported that the narrative is not different in the global space as the BBC News on May 27, 2020 reported the UK Financial Times print sales had fallen by 39% in April, though advertising has not. Similarly it reported that ITV's advertising revenue fell by 42% in April 2020, and FOX News in the US dropped by 50%. The report also cited a survey by the New York Times which showed that close to 36,000 media workers have been laid off, furloughed or had pay reduced (Pulitzer Centre, 2020).

What perhaps, underscored the dire situation faced by journalists during the pandemic is the admission by Mr. Osinubi of The Punch in a memo cited by Nairametrics that, "All projections point to a bleak and uncertain future for the media industry and the economy."

Quoting an inside source, Nairametrics stated:

Considering the fact on the ground and the body movement of the board, full salaries may not be paid in May and some people, especially in the newsroom, would be forced to resign.

The management has started with the Sports Desk and will soon move to the other desks. The idea is to concentrate more on the online version of the platform and start a significant financial re-engineering.

Other media organisations that got the rough edges of the pandemic included The Tribune, BusinessDay, New Telegraph as well as the AIM Group, owners of Nigeria Info, Wazobia, Cool FM and Arewa.

While The Tribune is reported to have reduced its pages from 46 to 32, and slashed salaries between 10 percent to 35 percent depending on the level of staff, BusinessDay reduced the pages of its Monday editions which is its major product from 65 to 32 and New Telegraph dropped pages from 48 to 32 among others (Nairametrics, 2020).

The Head, Human Resources of AIM Group, Oyinkan Adeniyi, in an internal memo to staff which was quoted by Nairametrics wrote:

The management of AIM Group has had to weigh a lot of options that can be taken during this trying times to minimise the negative impact of the pandemic has had

on our operations, ensure the majority of staff are retained while still meeting up with financial obligations to you our highly esteemed employees, suppliers and other stakeholders.

We have reached a very difficult situation of placing all staff who are currently at home, not working since the commencement and who will not be working now that skeletal services will be commencing on a Furlough (unpaid leave) until things normalize. This means that while staff who are home now and not working remain our staff, they will not be paid salaries for the period not worked and until they are recalled back to the office.

The implication is that many journalists will be out of their jobs for a long and their reabsorption depends mainly on when their media organisations get a rebound which is complicatedly tied to how the Nigerian economy survives the pandemic and the support the media can get from the government in terms of bailout, single digit loan facilities from the Central Bank of Nigeria and assistance from donor agencies and groups.

Theoretical Framework

In discharging their duties to society, the mass media have been guided by a plethora of theories. However, for the sake of time and space, this study is predicated on two theories: Structural Functionalism theory, and Social Responsibility theory, all rooted in Sociology.

Structural functionalism theory holds that institutions, relationships, roles, and norms that together constitute a society serve a purpose and each is indispensable for the continued existence of the others and of society as a whole (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/structural-functionalism>).

In structural functionalism, change is regarded as an adaptive response to some tension within the social system. When some part of an integrated social system changes, a tension between this and other parts of the system is created, and such tension can only be resolved by the adaptive change of the other parts.

This theory explains how the dislocations occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic had triggered changes on every sphere of human endeavour locally, nationally and globally.

In confronting a novel pandemic that is least understood and which had no known cure, individuals, institutions and governments at the local, national and international levels developed and adopted new methods, techniques, protocols and processes to overcome the challenges posed by the crisis.

The mass media in Nigeria were not left out in the battle to survive the pandemic. Media proprietors and managers not only adopted the protocols created by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), but took deliberate and proactive steps to ensure the survival of their businesses and the safety of their workers.

On their part, journalists took every measure to ensure they did not contract the virus, even when they work alongside other first responders to rein in the global contagion and keep the society and the people safe. The media carried out surveillance, provided the necessary information about the pandemic and educated the public on how to stay safe and what to do if infected, thereby helping the society deal with and manage the crisis.

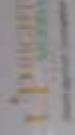
On its part, the Social Responsibility theory emphasises the responsibility of the mass media to society. The media, by the tenets of this theory are expected to use their powerful position to ensure appropriate delivery of information to audiences, and when they fall short of expectation, to be regulated for failing to carry out this responsibility.

In a pungent defence of the social responsibility theory, Nosa Owens-Ibie posits that the media should be acting as a nation's bulletin board for information and mirroring the society and its peoples' comments and criticism, thus exposing the heroes and the villains.

(<https://scholararticles.wordpress.com/2015/08/28/mg1/>)

This position aptly described the role the media played during the pandemic – bulletin for information and mirroring of the efforts of critical stakeholders in the prevention, treatment, mobilisation and sensitisation of the public.

Thus, the Nigerian media played more than a pivotal role in the processes and mechanisms relating to preparedness, detection and response to the outbreak of COVID-19, thereby fulfilling their social responsibility to the public.



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- 4. Support the work of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Centre (NACC) and the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).
- 5. Support the work of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Centre (NACC) and the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).

ActionAid Nigeria Project Manager, Newton Oisemaye facilitating a session on Growing Institutions for Justice and Anti-Corruption and the #Upright for Nigeria campaign, during a 2-day training for journalists on investigative journalism

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria | Lagos, September 2019

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was implemented using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Consequently, a survey research design which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative instruments for data collection was used. A 21 item Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Journalism Practices Questionnaire (ICPJQ) was used to collect quantitative data, while in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Journalism Practices Questionnaire (ICPJQ) was uploaded on Google Forms and mailed to respondents. However, the in-depth interview questions drawn directly from the five research questions set out for the study were compiled to incorporate a Statement Sheet and Consent Form and uploaded on Google Forms and mailed to respondents.

Tables, charts (pie) and percentages were used to analyse quantitative data, while explanation building was used to analyse qualitative data. Based on strict social science tradition, an appropriate formula (Babbie, 2010) was used to draw the sample size from the relevant population of study (media owners, editors, journalists, heads of professional associations, as well as advocacy and training groups).

According to the Nigerian Union of Journalists Compendium of Journalists, there are 5,945 registered members in Nigeria (nuj.org.ng/compendium). The sample size of the population was determined using Babbie's rule which suggests that percentages of the population could be drawn based on the circumstances under which the research was conducted. Applying this rule on the grounds that the researcher had only 25 days to conduct the research and to turn in the report, two percent of the population (5,945) representing a sample size of 118.9, approximately 119 respondents (who were made up of media owners, editors, journalists, professional associations, advocacy and training groups) was drawn and used in the study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was Nigerian newspapers, television and radio stations as well as online newspapers. There are so many print, broadcast and online media establishments in the country and they include national, regional and local.

Besides, in this digital age, it is not surprising to find that most media organisations in the country have moved their operations to the online platform while many function on both online and offline.

Nigerianfinder.com, lists 95 newspaper organisations in Nigeria most of which operate both online and offline. However, there are many radio and television stations in the country but only very few independent ones operate nation-wide networks.

Sampling Technique

Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Bernard 2002). It, therefore, becomes imperative that selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data

will be acquired be done with sound judgment, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data. The samples for this study were based on purposive technique.

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of respondents based to the qualities they possess. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of respondents. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002).

Sample size

To arrive at the sample, this research relied on the rating by Alexa, an Amazon subsidiary in its "Top 500 Sites on the Web." In Nigeria, the site rated the top five most read newspapers as The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian, Thisday and Sun News. Out of the five, The Vanguard, Guardian and the Sun were selected. However, since the five top newspapers are published in Southern Nigeria, DailyTrust and Leadership, which are rated by Alexa as the most-read newspapers from Northern Nigeria, were also selected for the study.

On the broadcast sector, one of the most watched independent television stations, TVC News and one public television network, the Nigerian Television Authority, Channel 12, Uyo were selected while Sliverbird Rhythm, Port Harcourt, a privately-owned radio network and the FRCN, Radio 1, owned by Nigeria's Federal Government were selected to represent radio.

PremiumTimes Newspaper, Africa's most respected online newspaper and Eagle Online, which is one of the earliest online newspapers in the country, were also selected to represent newspapers published online. Eagle Online was also selected because its publisher is the president of the Guild of Corporate Online Publishers, the umbrella body of online newspaper publishers in the country. A total of 99 journalists were sampled for the study using Google forms (to generate quantitative data) while a total of 20 respondents who were editors, media owners, chief executives of media advocacy and training organisations were sampled to generate qualitative data. See the table below for distribution of respondents in the editors and chief executives category and Appendix 5 for distribution of respondents in the category of journalists.

Media Organisations

S/N	Media Organisation	Category	Contact
1.	Vanguard Newspaper	Print	Regional Editor
2.	The Guardian	Print	Editor -in -Chief
3.	The Sun Newspaper	Print	Daily Editor
4.	The Trust Newspaper	Print	Daily Editor
5.	Leadership Newspaper Group	Print	Daily Editor
6.	Television Continental (TVC)	Broadcast TV (Private)	Editor
7.	Nigeria Television Authority (NTA)	Broadcast TV (Public)	General Manager
8.	Silverbird Rhythm FM	Radio (Private)	Station Manager
9.	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)	Radio (Public)	General Manager
10.	FRCN	Radio (Public)	Head of News
11.	Premium Times	Online Newspaper	Editor -in -Chief
12.	Eagle Online	Online Newspaper	Editor

Under professional media groups, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), the Nigerian Association of Newspaper Proprietors (NPAN) and the Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GCOP) were selected. Again, two well-respected media training and advocacy groups, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) and Media Career Development Network were selected.

Media Owners and Professional / Media Advocacy Groups

S/N	Name	Category	Contact
13.	Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ)	Professional union	National President
14.	Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE)	Professional union	National President
15.	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN)	Media owners	Founding Member
16.	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN)	Media owners	Executive member
17.	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Professional union	National President
18.	International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)	Advocacy/training centre	Executive Director
19.	Media Career Network	Advocacy/training centre	Executive Director
20.	Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ)	Professional union	Council Chairman



Moleed Alabi, Premium Times facilitating a session on Crafting data stories: How to find great stories in Data during a two-day media master class organised by ActionAid Nigeria for reporters covering humanitarian beats in Kogi and Nasarawa State

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria, Keffi, February, 2020.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This segment of the report presents data and discusses findings of the research from analysis of data collected from ninety-nine respondents (see Fig 1) based on the five research questions that were raised to guide the study.

However, other respondents totalling 20 (See Appendix for details) also participated in the study and these included media proprietors, editors and heads of media training and advocacy groups. The questions that guided this study were:

1. To what extent has the pandemic changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria?
2. What challenges confront journalists and media organisations that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria?
3. What measures have been adopted by journalists and media organisations to survive COVID-19 related challenges in Nigeria?
4. How are the measures that journalists and media organisations are taking to stay in business affecting their operations and survival in the country?
5. What measures could be adopted and implemented to keep journalists and media organisations from going under during and post COVID-19?

1. Gender 99 responses

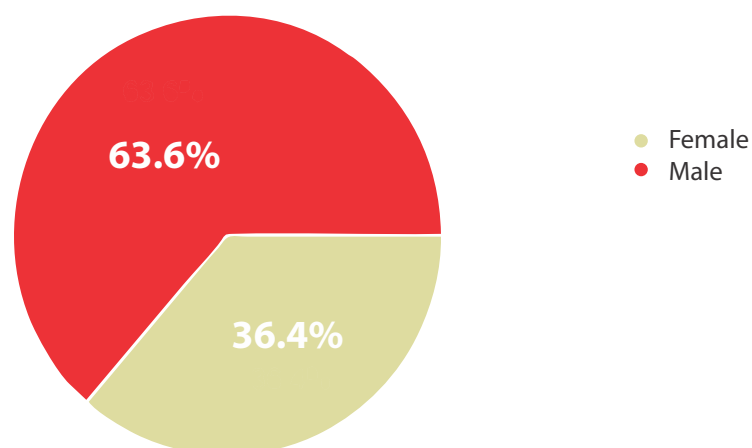


Figure 1: Gender Profile of Respondents

Data Presentation

The data in Table 1 is based on 95 responses, representing a (95%) response rate. The item sought to find out the different ways in which the pandemic has hampered journalists' access to news sources. A summary of the responses is presented in Table 1.

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	News sources are not accepting requests for interview
2	Many offices were locked down for fear of personal contact and contracting COVID 19
3	Limited interaction with and access to news sources
4	Restriction of movement by the Federal Government affected journalists
5	The lockdown made it difficult to access information from primary sources
6	High costs of transportation impeded movement
7	Physical interviews have significantly reduced
8	Harassment by security operatives despite official exemption and enlistment among personnel on essential duties frustrated journalists access to and reportage of news
9	Reduction in the number of government programmes and newsworthy events limited news coverage
10	Re-accreditation and selective processes limited the number of journalists that could access MDAs
11	The pandemic restricted information gathering to online news sources
12	Transition to online reportage and associated high costs of data reduced journalistic activities
13	Reduction in newsroom imprest affected editorial duties and operations
14	The pandemic changed the way I got information via face to face interviews. These days I have to rely on the Internet
15	I was unable to reach certain areas to source for information due to the restriction in movement. Authorities I needed to interview for more information claimed to be unavailable due to the lockdown
16	Getting to sources was like a camel passing through a needles eye
17	By resorting to virtual news sourcing, the benefit of reading news sources' body language to determine the credibility of stories was lost
18	Outright denial of journalists' access to CEOs and government officials
19	The pandemic increased the circulation of fake news
20	Newsmakers became inaccessible, some were sick, some offices were locked making essential documents inaccessible

The data in Table 2 is based on 97 responses, representing a (97%) response rate. The item sought to find out three sources from which journalists obtained information in the past six months (February-July, 2020). Selected responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses on the Sources from which Journalists obtained Information between February and July, 2020

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	Online sources, Phone Calls, Press Releases
2	Security Operatives
3	Twitter, Online Newspapers
4	Phone Conversations, WhatsApp Voice Notes
5	Phone Calls, Monitoring of International News
6	Phone Calls, Internet and TV News
7	Virtual Meetings, Phone Calls, Press Statements
8	Online, WhatsApp, Twitter
9	Print, Electronic and Online Media
10	Health Experts, Government Officials, Online Sources
11	YouTube, Google Search, and Social Media
12	Press Conference, Social Media Virtual Interviews
13	NCDC, Social Media, Local News
14	WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom
15	Zoom Meeting YouTube, and Television Programmes
16	Phone Calls, emails, Social Media
17	Online, Phone Interactions, Private Chats
18	State House of Assembly, Government House Press Releases, MDAs Statements
19	Credible Online Sources, Phone Calls, Text Messages
20	Zoom Meetings, Press Releases, Phone Calls

4. Have you ever gotten information from online sources?
98 responses

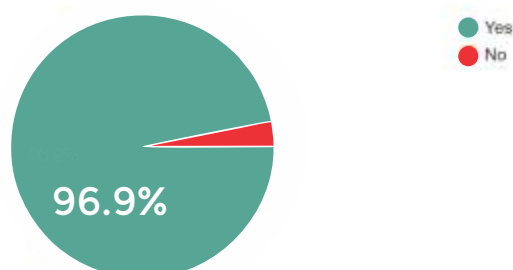


Figure 2: Use of Online Sources by Respondents to Access Information

5. If yes, do you believe all the information you obtain online?

99 responses

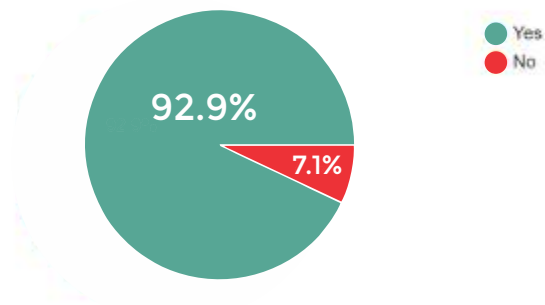


Figure 3: Respondents Believability of the Information obtained from Online Sources

6. If no, do you have the skill to authenticate the information you obtain online? Yes/No

97 responses

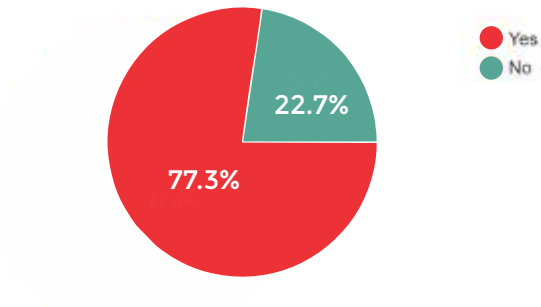


Figure 4: Online Information Authentication Skills of Respondents

The data in Table 3 is based on 80 responses, representing a (80%) response rate. The item sought to find out how journalists verified or authenticated the information that they obtained from online sources. Responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Information Verification / Fact Checking Skills of Nigerian Journalists

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	I call concerned sources to verify
2	I call reporters in certain areas to verify the information. I also examine the security of the online platforms as well as other contents
3	Professional Assessment of content
4	Verify twitter handles of big sources, official websites
5	I conduct research/interview in online and offline environments when necessary
6	I use fact-checking platforms from Facebook, Google, I also put calls across to the subject, security or any agency responsible to address or react to the issue (s)
7	I rely on eyewitnesses accounts and trustworthy media firms
8	I verify using my wide media contact base
9	By cross checking and confirming from other websites, especially from authoritative sources like the BBC, the Washington Post, New York Times
10	The five Ws
11	I usually research the information on other platforms
12	Reverse search on Google
13	I fact check
14	Nothing special, I just check long established newspapers online
15	Make phone calls to authentic sources
16	None of the above
17	No
18	Nil
19	None
20	I rely on my instincts and basic fact checking skills
21	Investigation
22	I call and do personal visits to witnesses involved

The data in Table 4 is based on 90 responses, representing a (90%) response rate. The item sought to find out how COVID-19 has transformed the newsroom culture in Nigeria. Selected responses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 COVID 19 and the Transformation of Newsroom Culture in Nigeria

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	The newsroom culture in Nigeria has not really changed much except that the news contents are always laced with issues of the pandemic. But I hear that a good number of journalists are losing their jobs as a result of the overall economic fallout of the pandemic
2	It encourages reporters to sometimes work outside the newsroom (work remotely)
3	More innovation and ICTs have been adopted to tackle the unprecedented challenge
4	Social distancing has affected the level of interaction in a typical newsroom culture
5	There is drastic reduction of physical convergence in the newsroom
6	The usual gathering at afternoon or evening hours to file news reports has automatically disappeared. Everyone is now encouraged to work from home, thanks to technological advancements
7	It has brought about less physical closeness between newsroom staff and has necessitated greater use of digital resources and the digital space
8	The pandemic has changed the newsroom culture in terms of team work and access to sources
9	It has changed the typical newsroom culture from the normal physical presence to online work. And this, to me is boring
10	Technology is adapted to replace the usual newsroom physical activities
11	There are fewer reporters on duty per time
12	Downsizing of staff, reduction in production of print materials
13	You have to source for news remotely now
14	Our newsroom is now done on an online platform. Physical meetings are limited unless necessary
15	The pandemic has changed the typical newsroom culture by making news reporters to be more creative in their reportage and be conscious of their safety
16	Ideas sharing and camaraderie of the newsroom has been adversely affected
17	The newsroom has become more efficient. With little resources correspondents can report live from their locations and one can conduct virtual interviews. News is served fresher than ever.
18	The newsroom culture has changed immensely due to COVID19 because of the need to adhere to social distancing. Communication between reporters and editors has been restricted to emails and chat rooms. In some cases, journalists are advised to stay back at home
19	Many newsrooms are now like ghost yards with very few or no reporters at all
20	No meetings. Every meeting has turned virtual due to observance of COVID 19

	protocol
21	A lot of newsrooms are working from home due to the social distancing rule. It is now a skeletal system they run
22	Scanty people, scanty ideas occasioned by lockdown and social/physical distancing
23	The beehive nature of the newsroom has been altered; many people are forced to work from home. The spirit of teamwork is affected in the process
24	Most reporters work from home, this hinders the normal function of the newsroom, gatekeeping and more. There is overdependence on online stories
25	The newsroom has become a cold room because most people work from home, the digital platform has been our main source of communication

Table 5a: COVID 19 and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Print Media (Offline and Online Newspapers)

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
<p>It has and very significantly</p>	<p>To a large extent it has</p>	<p>It has changed everything about journalism in Nigeria in the sense that like other sectors, it has affected the way we report, the way we present stories, our revenue profile and our psychology. What am I saying, between January and February, the situation had degenerated to the extent that we had to ask over 75 percent of our workers consisting of reporters, production staff, advert canvassers, those in the printing press and those in the administration department were asked to stay at home. We were forced to close many of our offices and it got to the extent we had to reduce the number of copies we produced. These were all because of the lockdown</p>	<p>It has changed in so many ways. In the first instance, it has limited access to information because we have to depend on electronic sources. When we want to talk to sources or interview people, you have to send questionnaires to people who have not been writing before to answer. Conducting normal interviews has become very difficult. And you can't reach out freely to people and most of the people who have information that are reasonable are old people who do not want to meet with young reporters. The pandemic has limited the quality of information available for publication everywhere, we couldn't reach sources</p>	<p>In fact, media practice generally has started changing and the full impact of the pandemic has not been felt yet. We are still moving towards it but all of us know that copy sales have dropped significantly</p>	<p>It has severely impacted the practice of journalism. As you know, journalism in Nigeria and in other Third World countries has been a person-to-person or face-to-face transactional business until the advent of the pandemic which has seriously restricted movement, locked people out of jobs, locked others inside their homes and made it impossible for people to move around. People can no longer gather in large numbers. Therefore, most journalists have been shut out of their comfort zones. Many have lost their jobs. Many establishments have been shut and the little revenue that could be used for their operations has since dried up. The owners have no option than to shut down</p>

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>The pandemic has affected our revenue in the sense that advertisements were not forthcoming. But we fared better than most of our competitors</p>	<p>The most devastating effect is the reduction in revenue generation. In the print media where we operate, it has been very difficult to circulate newspapers and you know that our economy is based on circulation. If you produce a good newspaper and you circulate it, it opens the door for advertising support. Advertising support in Nigeria comes mainly from the public sector and you know the public sector people have been crying that they don't have money, oil revenue has dropped, the exchange rate for the dollar has gone up and the Central Bank of Nigeria has been complaining too</p>	<p>What is happening now it that if people don't see value in what the media is offering, they won't buy. That is simply what it is now. Media is now real time and if you are still practicing the way you did ten years ago, it means you are not serious and don't know what is happening</p> <p>In this post - COVID - 19 economy, everything has been disrupted including the media. The tourism industry has been disrupted as well as so many other sectors. I cannot say clearly what the situation would be but for the media, advertisement will reduce. Bigger online platforms like Google get most of the adverts but draw most of their contents from the conventional media. But we media owners hire reporters and pay them while the bigger companies take our contents and get all the advertisement. They don't pay reporters. I know something will change. Something must give. I see us going towards selling our contents and if you have to sell content, it must have value</p>	

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>We did not only reduce the number of copies we produced but also the pagination. The least number of pages we used to produce was 32 pages instead of 80 to 90 pages we were producing before the crisis. We had to close our printing press in Maiduguri and Kano leaving us with Lagos and Abuja</p>	<p>All the consumables for the newspaper production and even for the television and radio production have gone up because they are all imported. We have to get foreign exchange to import newsprint at very expensive price</p>		
		<p>Distributing the paper was also a problem because of the lockdown. It was still very difficult to move around even when we have the permission to do so. When we succeeded in getting the papers to different places, people were home and that made patronage very low. People in the circulation can tell you what our sells were at the time. But I know for sure that circulation dropped drastically. It was a trying time for all of us in the media industry</p>	<p>While the cost of production has been very high, revenue has been reducing and it has also become very difficult to get money to pay salaries of workers. You should have heard that many of our competitors have reduced their workforce. You cannot help but downsize and right-size</p>		
			<p>Know that the advent of the social media had started its own trouble for print media generally. So, digital journalism has affected our operations, our income and the way we always operated and COVID-19 has just compounded the woes, especially for the print media</p>		

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
			<p>In a way, this pandemic is at the heart of how we do business. The demand for information hasn't dropped but the demand for newspapers has dropped. Revenue mobilization has also been affected and the morale of everyone has dropped too</p>		
			<p>What is happening is very devastating to the media industry but specifically speaking for the print media, we belong here, and many of our competitors have not been able to pay salaries for up to six months. However, at The Guardian, we have been managing and we have not sacked anybody. We have not downsized our workforce</p>		

Table 5b: COVID 19 and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Broadcast Media (Radio & Television)

Radio Nigeria/FRCN	Silver Bird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority/NTA	Television Continental/TV
<p>To a large extent, it has changed the journalism practice as social distancing prevents information sourcing. Broadcast newsrooms throughout the period of the lockdown was virtual</p>	<p>So much has changed and journalism has been affected. The pandemic has taught that we could be remote but do a whole lot of things. Many of our correspondents were working from home and couldn't come to the studio. Many were conducting virtual interviews and we had to use the telephone for interviews, Skype, Zoom and many of our contents were done virtually and that is being sustained now</p>	<p>What has changed in journalism in Nigeria from the pandemic is the way we engage with resource persons and respondents as well as the logistics towards preparing for a story. We now conduct more interviews on skype and other virtual platforms. Our microphone stands and holders are longer now than they used to be. Safety and consciousness are part of what we talk about now on almost all topics.</p>	<p>To a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism. Before, journalists could interview news sources personally but now that is not possible as people want to be interviewed online. The quality of stories has dropped significantly. The number of stories done has reduced. For instance, TV needs clean pictures and audio. But these are difficult to get now because personal interactions have reduced in the place of social and physical distancing</p>
<p>It has really made work to be done electronically as against the manual ways of doing things before COVID19</p>	<p>We realised that rather than bring in guests to the studio or interviewing them live on radio, we were doing that virtually. We could also place calls to people or conduct interviews using virtual appliances The psyche of journalists now makes them think more globally. When they saw what was happening in other countries of the world and emulated them. That also changed the dynamics of the practice</p>		<p>Because of social distancing, a lot of staff where not allowed into the offices while only a few persons covered up for all those who could not be around. That way, a few persons were doing the job that so many others could have done. The staff on duty were overburdened. For instance, the drivers were overworked as they had to pick every staff that has something to do and drop them so they don't use public transport</p>

Table 5c: COVID 19 and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Professional Associations, Advocacy and Training Groups

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<p>I work for a broadcast station. The COVID -19 pandemic has changed the way we practice journalism in my station. We now interview most of our guests on our live programmes via Zoom or Skype. Our Correspondents send their materials online in order to limit the number of staff physically present in the office. Our Correspondent and Cameraman at Presidential Villa, Abuja were temporarily dropped following a reduction in the number of accredited journalists there in line with COVID -19 protocols. We now source materials from the general pool</p>	<p>To a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism. It has forced media houses to adopt remote working options. Many journalists now resort to online engagements to limit human contact</p>	<p>To a great extent it has. Perhaps, not as much as it has impacted the media in other places but the pandemic has affected the way we report now - we rely more on virtual tools and communication - the way we disseminate news and even the business and finances of media houses. Many media houses have gone under or barely survive</p>	<p>To a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism</p>	<p>To a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism. The idea of having to avoid the use of technology in the practice of the profession is almost no longer possible. Now newsmen are using Zoom, WhatsApp, smart phones with voice recording technology during calls. Use of these technologies is no longer escapable. The idea of having to always gather newsmen will almost go into extinction even when the pandemic is over.</p>	<p>This rampaging pandemic, Coronavirus has done a huge damage to media practice in Nigeria and I know it is likely going to be the same all over the globe. In our own case and from the health perspective, a good number of journalists contracted the virus and we also lost some. We lost three in the process</p>

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
				<p>And the newsroom, which is what The Eagle Online has always preached and practiced, has become virtual. Reporters don't need to run to the office to file stories any longer. It is sometimes strange when I tell people that those who upload stories for us are in faraway places like Yola in Adamawa State and Port Harcourt in Rivers State</p>	<p>From the economic perspective, the pandemic has affected us in two major areas, health and economy. The impact of the pandemic is such that one cannot quantify because a good number of journalists have been laid off from their places of work. Most of the media organisations rely on patronage from government, advertisement from organisations, individuals and all that. But in the course of the lockdown caused by the pandemic, most of the media platforms were almost grounded and they could not sustain their workforce. As a result of these, most of our colleagues suffered for it as some of them were placed on half salary. Some were simply asked to go until when the situation improves and you know the implication of this</p>
					<p>The industry has lost a whole lot of good and experienced hands and these are things you cannot buy from the market. It is a huge problem. We have reached to media organisations to see how the problem could be handled but the fact still remains that for whoever is running a media platform, the major interest is to make profit. That is what they have in mind. Yes, we our own social expectation and commitment and constitutional responsibility no doubt. But you would agree that the media are business concerns</p>

The data in Table 6 is based on 99 responses, representing a (99%) response rate. The item sought to find out whether media organisations provided insurance cover and personal protection equipment for reporters who were covering the pandemic. The responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Provision of Insurance Cover and Personal Protection Equipment to Reporters

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	No Insurance. Only masks were provided
2	No
3	Nothing like that
4	Face masks, sanitisers were provided, salary cut but no insurance or allowances
5	No. It is left to the worker here
6	Insurance cover, no. PPE's partially
7	No, not at all
8	Not aware of any for those of us outside the headquarters
9	My organisation provided few face masks and hand sanitisers but did not make any provision for insurance cover
10	No insurance cover but hand sanitisers as well as flowing water and soap is being provided
11	Absolutely nothing . . . Capital No
12	No such provision was made for outstation correspondents
13	No. Those are luxury items
14	No
15	No
16	No
17	No
18	No
19	No
20	No
21	No

10. Has any protocol been developed for journalists to use in the course of their duties during the pandemic?

100 responses

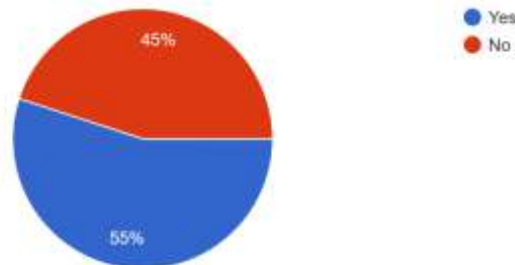


Figure 5: Availability of Protocol for Reportage during the Pandemic

11. If yes, has your organisation adopted and implemented it?

82 responses

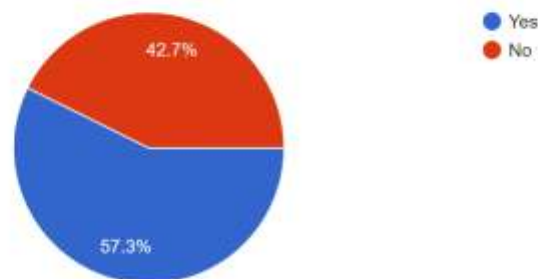


Figure 6: Adoption and Implementation of Protocol by Media Organisations

12. Does your organisation provide the equipment and materials required for your daily operations?

100 responses

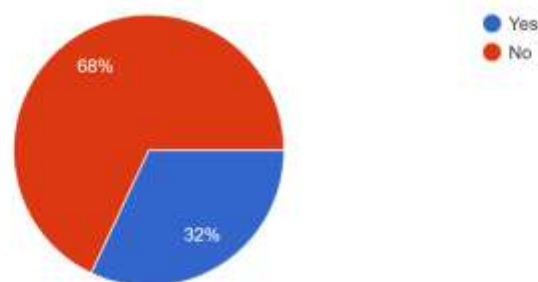


Figure 7: Provision of Equipment and Materials required for Journalists' daily Operations during the Pandemic by Media Organisations

The data in Table 7 is based on 94 responses, representing a (94%) response rate. The item sought to find out the nature or types of digital technologies that reporters used in discharging their duties during the pandemic. The responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Digital Technologies deployed for Newsgathering and Reportage during the Pandemic

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	Phone calls, email, and social media
2	Recorder, Handset
3	Recorder, Telephone
4	Laptop, Smartphone
5	Audio recording equipment and software, camera, and video editing software
6	Camera, Internet, Computer, Phone
7	Internet facilities
8	Laptop, Phone, Camera, and others
9	Mobile Phones, Computer, Midgets/Recorders, Cameras
10	Online meetings, and sending questions via email and social media sources
11	No idea
12	None
13	Not much, just managing to go digital in Kogi State
14	Use of digital media
15	Laptop
16	Mainly telephone interviews, then I film activities with the phone and email to the editor
17	I depend on Zoom meetings and performances. I also conduct interviews on WhatsApp
18	Digital. Recording in a physical meeting and transcribing later. Then I use social media platforms for news dissemination and forward same to office platform for use
19	I mostly do lots of virtual interviews using the station's social media handles to go live. We also get sound bites using WhatsApp
20	We basically communicate via emails
21	Information Technology
22	I use mostly the telecommunications

The data presented in Table 8 is based on 94 responses, representing a (94%) response rate. The item sought to find out the nature of palliatives media organisations provided to motivate reporters on the job during the pandemic. The responses are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Provision of Palliatives and Motivation of Reporters

S/NO	RESPONSES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Face Mask & Testing	1	1.06
2	Consistent Salary	1	1.06
3	Face Mask	4	4.25
4	Cash	2	2.13
5	Salary	6	6.38
6	Food Items	7	7.44
7	Salary Cut	1	1.06
8	No Palliative	71	75.53
9	Monthly Data Subscription	1	1.06

Table 9a: Challenges Confronting Journalists and Media Houses that are Covering the COVID -19 Pandemic in Nigeria

Print Media (Offline and Online Newspapers)

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
<p>Low revenue caused by low sales and low advert intake. Yet production costs remain static. Newspapers had to cut down pagination and print run to mitigate the adverse situation</p>	<p>Huge revenue cut, inaccessibility of news sources and venues, security agencies brutality towards journalists as they enforce lockdown, some journalists were infected by Covid -19, higher costs of goods and services, inability to attract high quality talents</p>	<p>Media business is capital intensive. Running a media house especially in Nigeria is challenging because all the things we use are imported like the newsprint, the ink, the machines and the printing plates. Apart from the fact that circulation was seriously affected, we were mindful of what we had in the store. We had to reduce the copies we produced so we do not run out of newsprint which may not come during the lockdown. And then you see the nature of forex and the fact it almost got to N500 per dollar</p>	<p>One of the major challenges has been movement even within cities. Though the authorities allow media people to move around when they have their identification cards, getting to circulate products is a problem. When drivers get to the points of circulation, you find out that the readers are no longer available. And because we haven't been able to sell to readers, our revenue has seriously been affected. Circulation and the visibility of the newspapers which attract advert support have really suffered</p>	<p>The lockdown greatly affected the media. For instance, there was nobody to buy the newspapers and since the online contents have not reached the level people could buy. So, by definition, the lockdown also shut down the media business to some extent. If you think that the TV houses were doing better, you must understand that they needed adverts from businesses that were shutdown. The lockdown meant that the media were also on lockdown.</p>	<p>The challenges are enormous. If one does not have virtual or digital facilities, he or she cannot carry on with journalism under what we now call the "new normal" which means that all of our operations now should be done virtually. Now we use such platforms like Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype and all of that. If you cannot afford that and you don't have a strong internet provider and if you don't have the money to subscribe and stay in active connection like others, it would be a problem</p>

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>Psychologically, we were affected. We were afraid of the unknown. Of course, we had asked most of our reporters to be sending stories from home, we asked them to source for stories online by conducting interviews with their phones and all that. For some of us that don't miss coming to the office, every night, you had this fear, am I taking this virus home? You know we have wives and children and relations at home and when you come out in the morning, you realise its only you on the highway and when you get to the office, you discover there are only a few supporting staff around. So, it really affected our psychology</p>	<p>Advertisers will tell you they don't have the funds to advertise at this time. They complain of dwindling income, especially the organised private sector. Currently, members of the Manufacturing Association of Nigeria have been lamenting. We have heard and written a lot about grants, support and stimulus packages from the government but you don't get to see any beneficiary. It becomes a mystery and even when we ask questions, nobody answers</p>	<p>Ironically, that was when we were expected to play one of the most pivotal services of the time. We were expected to give correct information especially because we saw how fake news took over the space and it became very dangerous. The media is both business and public service, meaning that we just have to be around</p>	<p>Our colleagues in Europe, America and other First World countries have overcome the problem of internet connectivity. Here, we are still grappling with it. Therefore, the quality of information you receive is limited. Sometimes one does not have the money to subscribe. For instance, if one wants to use Zoom, the first 30 minutes will be free, but after that, one would have to pay but may not have m oney to do so. It is a challenge</p>

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>The company had to take some measures including cutting down salaries and allowances of workers which invariably multiplied the problem faced by our reporters, considering the increasing prices of goods and the dwindling income. Putting all this together affected the psychology, the preparedness and willingness to give their best in the job</p>			<p>Somebody may talk to you on phone and you don't know the person but you have to rely on the information so that you keep up with the competition. But it may lead to a situation where you are sued because you will publish what you heard without being able to verify, unlike a face-to-face interaction. You may be sued because the person you believed was the one speaking might turn out to be the opposite. And that can happen when you are dealing with a person you have not seen. It can even be a scammer who was talking to you. Because you have no way of verifying, you can deal with them as if they are the real people</p>
					<p>Another challenge is that the industry is forced to lose its key personnel, some to death and others to sickness</p>

Table 9b: Challenges Confronting Journalists and Media Houses that are Covering the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria
Broadcast Media (Radio & Television)

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silverbird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
<p>Journalists were not provided with safety kits and thus exposed to the virus if not careful enough. There was also restriction of movement therefore impeding the sourcing of news. Also, the poor equipment in some media organizations made it difficult to optimise ICT equipment.</p>	<p>One of the major challenges' journalists had covering COVID -19 was absence of personal protective equipment. Only very few stations could actually provide their staff with the needed protective equipment. Many of the radio, TV and even newspaper houses didn't ensure their staff observe social distancing. For instance, you are going out with a camera and you need to talk to people. They were no adequate tools to allow journalists to work without getting close to their sources</p>	<p>Since most interviews are now done online, journalists are at the mercy of clear internet services. Many times, we don't have clean feeds as video which affects the picture quality of story output</p>	<p>The major challenge is the issue of safety of journalists. Reporters are afraid to go out because they were not given proper kits to use while in the field. There was fear on the part of reporters but the situation has reduced as two of our reporters have visited and reported from the isolation centres. Movement was impeded even when the media was permitted to work around; security agents on the road were still stopping them from going about their duties. There was a time we tried recording one of our major programmes virtually but the result was so poor it wasn't used at the end of the day</p>

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silverbird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
<p>Many workers have to rely on their private data for office work without being reimbursed especially Civil servants while those working in print were owed salary for months</p>	<p>Many journalists had to buy PPEs with their money even when they were on official assignment. Again, during the lockdown, security agencies did not understand the essential services journalists were providing and many journalists were harassed and it was difficult for them to get to their points of assignments. Paucity of information coming from news sources also made the job of the journalists very difficult and so some kinds of information that were expected to come out was not forthcoming. That made it difficult for journalists to report accurately about the pandemic</p>		

Table 9c: Challenges Confronting Journalists and Media Houses that are Covering the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

Professional Associations, Advocacy and Training Groups

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<p>The pandemic limited interactions with our news sources. Many offices were shut. Confirming stories was difficult. The adverts and sponsorship of programmes the broadcast stations rely on for survival dwindled significantly. Some had to resort to reducing their staff strength, while those left were owed salaries</p>	<p>Journalists were affected by the lockdown. Revenue that had been down further reduced. Staff were sent on forced leave and some sacked</p>	<p>First, movement. Even with their exemption as essential workers, journalists had difficulty moving around to cover stories. Secondly, related to this was the security challenge. Security operatives flexed muscles with journalists, harassed, detained and even assaulted them in the course of doing their jobs. Some journalists who did critical reporting on government response to the pandemic were also harassed and detained, many on the orders of state governors.</p>	<p>To a large extent</p>	<p>Lack of adequate data on the virus, vehicles for essential staff to move around (that is for example those covering the isolation centres and other critical stories that require physical presence), bad service from telecommunications service providers, inability of some staff to work from home because they lack good phones and laptops, irregular or no power supply, especially in the homes of those working outside the office, lack of expertise on the part of newsmen covering the health beat</p>	<p>The challenges confronting our colleagues covering this pandemic are the same challenges faced by those involved in medical practice. For instance, during the lockdown, journalists were working. They were going to the newsroom; they were going to offices and most of them that are not mobile were using public transport and these were the primary areas where one can contract the virus. So, our colleagues were exposed on the face value to contract the virus and that is the truth. For instance, in Nigeria, we had the Presidential Task Force (PTF) that was addressing journalists every day. You can see that the restriction of movement did not apply to us. That was how our colleagues were exposed to the virus. We cannot shutdown unlike other professionals</p>

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
		<p>Also, it affected reporting as many government and corporate offices were closed. So, they could not report on many issues.</p>			
		<p>For media houses, the challenge was how to stay afloat, run operations, pay salaries and report stories even while not earning much. Adverts dried up and sales plummeted</p>			

**Table 10a: Measures adopted by Media Organisations to Survive COVID -19 related Challenges in Nigeria
Print Media (Offline and Online Newspapers)**

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
We have Reduced Workforce	Working/Reporting Remotely	Here we cut the salary based on percentage especially for the senior staff	We have resorted to prudence. To survive, we had to cut some allowances and a part of the salary.	Almost all of us newspaper owners rationalized the workforce and there was no meeting to take that decision. It was clearly dictated by the market. That leaves less people doing more work. I have already told you we cut down the number of staff and reduced the number of pages too	We heard that some staff were retrenched by some of our competition and some reduced salaries drastically. But thankfully, the board and management of The Vanguard did not sack anybody or cut down salary. The board and management of the company do not feel that staff who have been squeezed by the adverse effect of the pandemic should further be exposed to more suffering. Job cut was never an option and that is why we are all intact
Pruned Down Pageation and Print Run	Retrenchment of Staff Members	Senior staff forfeited 50 percent of their salaries while those below Level 13 forfeited 30 percent	We took time to explain to staff the need to understand that to be able to keep everyone on the payroll we needed to reduce a little percentage of the salary and allowances between ten to twenty percent.	Professionalism became the yardstick for retaining the job. People have to do their jobs if they must be retained. When there is crisis, those who retain their jobs are those who can cope with the effects of the crisis	

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
	Cut in Salaries and Allowances	This was for some time because after three months, the company reviewed it and restored 25 percent to the senior staff and so on	But in August, we were able to pay full salary to all our staff	It was the time we made our e -paper very strong. We deliberately made it so. The e -paper is the replica of the real paper. You can flip through our online paper page by page and you find exactly the same thing with the printed paper. We are doing very well with the e -paper but we decided not to charge our readers for it. We don't know whether we will charge in the future. We know some people are trying to charge but we want many more readers to see it. I think we are doing well in the e -paper	
	Reduction in Publication Frequencies				
	Suspension of Expansion Projects/Plans				
	Suspension of Expensive Reporting Projects				
	Shutdown of Operations				
	Making more Concessions to Advertisers				
	Exploration of Alternative Revenue Sources				

Table 10b: Measures adopted by Media Organisations to Survive COVID - 19 related Challenges in Nigeria

Broadcast Media (Radio & Television)

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silver Bird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
<p>In Radio Nigeria, for instance, apart from observing the COVID 19 protocols, we ensure that only operational staff are consistent in coming to office while others are encouraged to work from home</p> <p>As we know, it is still gradual ease of lockdown as many still work from home, but COVID 19 has made many look inward for plan B</p>	<p>One of the measures we adopted as an organisation was that a high percentage of our coverage was done virtually. Rather than go on the streets, we had to look inwards to see how we can use Zoom and other means to carry out tasks. But there were some assignments that you must go out to physically cover</p> <p>Another thing we did was to give journalists some allowances and also provided them with personal protection kits. We also provided proper identification. By that I mean providing them with official means of transportation and that curtailed cases of harassment</p>	<p>First, my organisation carries out constant reorientation to remind staff about the realities of COVID 19</p> <p>Secondly, there are rules on the compulsory usage of face masks by staff</p>	<p>The company has not sacked any staff but the staff agreed on a pay cut. Safety kits were provided and COVID Marshals were appointed to ensure compliance with safety protocols within the office space</p> <p>Palliatives were given to all the staff that were on duty on a weekly basis but that has reduced but free food is being given to all staff twice in the month. And these are done in our Abuja and Lagos offices</p>

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silverbird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
		<p>There are hand sanitizer points by the entrance of all buildings and staff are advised to have their own bottles too</p> <p>Staff are broken into working teams and the teams are meant to run shifts to prevent everyone from being in the office at same time as a way of ensuring social distancing. The alternate teams who are not on the office, work from home</p>	<p>Outstation reporters were advised to work from home as much as possible. Pregnant staff were advised to work from home, no matter their duties</p>

Table 10c: Measures adopted by Journalists and Media Organisations to Survive COVID -19 related Challenges in Nigeria

Media Owners, Professional Associations, Advocacy and Training Groups

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
There has been reduction of number of staff,	Print media organisations have cut down pagination	First, many have cut down on the size of their newsrooms.	There has been reduction of pagination and print run of newspapers and magazines	We have embarked on training and retraining of journalists	We understand that the first step to safety is self -protection. You must do everything possible to live. If a bigger animal is after a fish in the sea, the fish tries to swim away from that animal. That is exactly what we were doing as practitioners and as professionals
Adoption and use of Zoom and Skype for interviews	Electronic media have reduced broadcast time and reduced staff on duty	In big media houses hundreds of journalists have been sacked.	Concentration on online editions	acquisition of gadgets such as phones and laptops for journalists	If the government has not provided you with safety kits, you are not just going to stand idly and watch yourself die. You will take personal precautionary measures to protect yourself from contracting the virus.
Rotation of duties to reduce staff physically present in the office		Some media houses reduced salaries between 30 percent to 50 percent.	Reduction of staff strength and or salaries	purchase or rental of pool cars for mobility.	And that is how most of our colleagues survived in the course of this pandemic. If you are looking at your employers, you will be affected because most companies were nonchalant about it

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
		Some media houses operate skeletal services to cut operational costs	Lifting of unverified content from foreign news organisations		They would tell you they don't have money and that they are looking for how to pay salary. Most of what happened were individual efforts
		Many have joined the bandwagon of not paying salaries but leaving their reporters to earn a living from their beats			
		Many more media houses are exploring seeking donor funding for their operations.			
		Yet others are exploring other revenue streams - publishing, digital television			

Table 11a: Effects of Measures adopted by Media Organisations to Survive COVID -19 on Journalists and Media Operations

Print Media (Offline and Online Newspapers)

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
<p>The measures that we have adopted have affected our operations very prominently. We have been compelled to make do with few hands, the robustness of stories is sometimes affected</p>	<p>Reduction in contents quality, fewer contents, more reliance on press releases and user-generated contents, waning ability to hold individuals, corporations and governments accountable, making media organizations less and less independent</p>	<p>People were not happy that we were going through a trying moment and at the same time, their pay was cut. The management was able to keep the system running and to a greater extent, all went well because we are still doing big stories and readers still patronise Daily Trust. Even when they get stories from elsewhere, they still make reference to Daily Trust because we gave them additional value in our content</p>	<p>Definitely, it has affected morale but this is a time when superior management skills come to play. You need to carry your associates and members of staff along. You need to explain processes to them and if it is necessary, you need to open the books for them to see the cost of operations and the overheads</p>	<p>Some of the measures have led to low morale among journalists. For instance, the reduction of salaries and non-payment of salaries have put severe strain on the journalists who now find it difficult to take care of their families. Media organisations are managing to survive. The quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations</p>	<p>We needed to adhere strictly to the protocol put in place by the Presidential Task Force and the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Vanguard as a responsible corporate citizen deliberately scaled down operations. Any staff who had no strategic role to play was asked to stay at home. We asked them to send their reports online, and to speak to sources on phone. Our operations were seriously scaled down. If you look at our paper now, we reduced it from 92 pages to 72. And then to 56 pages we scaled down to 32 pages all in a bid to survive. After all, sales have fallen seriously and not many people now stand on the road to ask for papers from the vendors. Those who own smartphones now read newspapers online. But no so much of a problem because we have a strong presence online as far as Nigeria and Africa is concerned. We make good use of the online platform while scaling down the printed copies and the pagination</p>

Table 11b: Effects of Measures adopted by Media Organisations to Survive COVID -19 on Journalists and Media Operations

Broadcast Media (Radio & Television)

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silver Bird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
<p>Media offices have now become deserted as only critical workers who have direct contact with equipment come to office. Advertisements have drastically reduced as a result of the pandemic because the economy suffered a serious downturn due to the lockdown</p> <p>It is financially draining as media workers earn meagre salary</p>	<p>There was reduction in the workforce while some percentage of the workforce were asked to work from home. At a point, we had to reduce transmission time so we will be able to cope because revenue wasn't coming in as it should but we were at some point running with diesel and that put strain on the revenue</p>	<p>These measures are making journalists become more conscious of safety. It's the new normal and it seems it has come to stay</p>	<p>What we are experiencing is a new normal and many of our staff are going into depression because they are not used to working from home and alone, especially the newsroom staff. The admin staff were overworked because they were always around to make sure everything went on well. Many drivers slept at the work place and some were picked at their homes</p>

Table 11c: Effects of Measures adopted by Media Organisations to Survive COVID -19 on Journalists and Media Operations

Professional Associations, Advocacy and Training Groups

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<p>Some of the measures taken have led to low morale among journalists. For instance, the reduction of salaries and non-payment of salaries has put severe strain on the journalists who now find it difficult to take care of their families. Media organisations are managing to survive. The quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations</p>	<p>Fewer staff to do jobs meant for more staff.</p> <p>Quality control limited</p>		<p>They reduce staff morale; they reduce product quality; they put a question mark on their professionalism and ethical values; they reduce the ability of those media organisations to meet their obligations to their staff and society</p>	<p>It is impacting positively for those who are able to finance operations</p>	

The data in Table 12 is based on 90 responses, representing a (90%) response rate. The item sought to find out what measures could be adopted and implemented to sustain media operations during and post COVID 19. The responses are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Measures to Adopt and Implement to Sustain Media Operations during and post COVID 19

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	Grants to media organisations will be very helpful
2	Organise periodic digital skills training for journalists
3	Adequate and prompt payment of staff salaries and stipends in addition to providing journalists with PPEs
4	Provision of health insurance cover for news staff
5	Bailout funds to support media stations
6	Adoption of virtual technology and improvement of it. Journalists should be provided with gadgets to improve their jobs and reduce risk of personal contact
7	Provide insurance, PPEs, and other incentives. Journalists should be trained on how to report the pandemic
8	Make provisional funds available for media professionals, especially privately owned media houses
9	Insurance, allowances, and bonuses for overtime, and occupational hazards
10	Higher reliance on ICTs and NCDC recommended health protocol
11	Government intervention and bailout funds
12	Redesign shift arrangements in a way that accommodates only a few reporters on duty per shift
13	Provide palliatives for journalists and bailout fund for media houses
14	Journalists should be trained to work from remote locations
15	Improve funding of media houses
16	Reduction of staff and salary
17	Media managers to think of and adopt measures that will decongest news rooms
18	Media professionals should be adequately equipped and mobilised to perform at peak efficiency
19	Provision of palliatives and specialised training
20	Media organisations to adopt measures to reduce production costs
21	Use of new media tools and technologies that encourage remote operations

16. Would you recommend specialised training for journalists during and post COVID-19.
99 responses



Figure 8: Recommendation for Specialised Training for Journalists

Table 13 is based on 93 responses, representing a (93%) response rate. The item sought to find out what specialised training reporters would need for reporting COVID 19 pandemic. The responses are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Specific Specialised Training Needed for Reporting COVID 19 Pandemic

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	Training on virtual news gathering techniques
2	Training on the use of digital technology in news reporting
3	Training on Multimedia journalism
4	Training on Safety of journalists online
5	Training on electronic data gathering and framing of media content
6	Training on data Journalism
7	Training on remote data gathering and information verification
8	Health and Safety Training
9	Training on new media technology and challenges of adoption
10	Training on digital, graphics and editing skills
11	Training on humanitarian crises reporting
12	Training on investigative journalism
13	Training on health and safety reporting skills
14	Training on how to identify and debunk fake news
15	Training on fact checking to enable us ascertain wrong and correct information
16	Training on how to report in the post COVID 19 era
17	Training on skills/techniques needed for safe reporting in the COVID 19 era
18	Training on health reporting and reporting transnational crises
19	Training on how to safeguard mental health in the COVID 19 era
20	Training on how to cover stories during pandemics

Table 14 is based on 89 responses, representing a (89%) response rate. The item sought to find out the alternative sources of funding media organisations would need, aside from advertising to stay afloat during and post COVID 19. The responses were as presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Alternative Sources of Funding needed by the Media to Stay Afloat during and post COVID 19

S/NO	RESPONSES
1	Grants and Donations from Philanthropists
2	Grants and Counterpart Funding
3	Online News Subscription
4	Special Intervention and Tax Holiday
5	Provision of Social Services such as Shopping Malls, and Event Centres
6	Enlistment on Stock Market and Sales of Shares
7	Community Funding, Assistance from Cooperatives and Foundations
8	Funds from Venture Capital and Hedge Funds
9	Government Bailout, Assistance and Stability Fund
10	Invest Part of Gains in other Sectors
11	Crowdsourcing, Grants and Investment Funding
12	Provision of Consultancy Services
13	Developing Content in Creative Industry
14	Aid from International Donors
15	Seek for Grants and Investors
16	Multi -stakeholder Collaboration and Partnership
17	Soft Loans and Subsidies
18	Providing Public Relations and Consultancy Services
19	Fund Raising and Special Projects
20	Providing Commercial Services (Printing, Binding)

19. Is there need for an intervention fund for the media during and post COVID-19?

98 responses

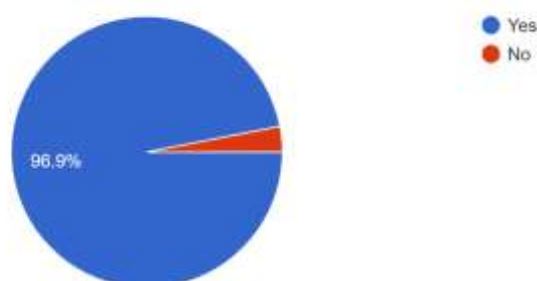


Figure 9: Need for Intervention Fund for the Media during and post COVID 19

20. Will forging partnerships among media organisations and other institutions in society help improve media performance and sustainability during and post-COVID-19?

99 responses

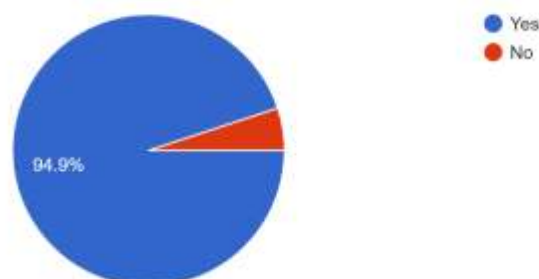


Figure 10: Formation of Partnerships between Media Organisations and other Institutions for Improved Media Performance and Sustainability

Table 15 is based on 87 responses, representing a (87%) response rate. The item sought to find out how the productivity of media organisations will be monitored and evaluated during and post COVID 19. The responses were as presented in Table 15.

Table15: Monitoring and Evaluating Productivity of Media Organisations during and post COVID 19

S/No	Responses
1	Audience Polls, Surveys, Research
2	Quality of Stories
3	Evaluation of Sales and Patronage
4	Impact of Reportage on Society
5	Periodic Assessment or Evaluation of Media activities by Independent bodies
6	Assessment of the Quality and Quantity of News Output
7	Evaluation of media activities by Regulatory bodies, like NBC, NPC
8	Assessment of media impact via Virtual Town hall Meetings
9	Funded Studies and Inquiries
10	Membership of Audit Bureau for Circulation
11	Media Mapping
12	Productivity Audit using Technological tool
13	Evaluation through Key Performance Indicators
14	News Output, Content Focus and Tracking of traditional/Online Reach/Traffic
15	Monitoring and Evaluating Mechanisms by the Nigeria Union of Journalists
16	Self-Regulation Mechanisms by Media Houses
17	Annual Productivity Reports
18	Sales and Circulation Reports/Figures
19	Monitoring and Evaluation by Civil Society Organisations
20	Feedback from the Public

Table 16a: Measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep Journalists and Media Organisations from going under during and post COVID -19

Print Media (Offline and Online Newspapers)

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
<p>Government must come to the aid of media houses by subsidising newsprints and giving generous bailout funds to the media</p>	<p>There should be more discussions around media sustainability, grants and low-interest bailout funds for media organisations. Tax concessions for media (since media is largely a social service), and training for media chiefs on management</p>	<p>I suggest a bailout fund for the media and a kind of stimulus for reporters. It won't be bad if donor agencies would find a way of supporting reporters through financial packages, specialised training or other incentives. If reporters get such support, I am sure they will continue to give their best to the society</p>	<p>The authorities should see information consumption as an essential process and if they understand what we do, they should provide a stimulus package to media houses. They should also lower tariffs on the consumables that we use because all media organisations, whether electronic or print, have to import a lot of what is needed for their operations. To maintain plants, we need to import parts, if it is for newsprints, plates and all the printing consumables, you need to import them. There should be a stimulus package from the federal government apart from ensuring that tariffs are reduced from the ports where things are brought in. They should see what the media is doing as essential services like education and health be seriously reduced in favour of the news media and they do it in many parts of the world where VAT, taxes and charges are reduced for the media. In Nigeria, we haven't seen such reduction</p>	<p>We met with the current CBN governor and we made it clear to him our challenges. What the media owners agreed with him in a Zoom meeting at the heat of the lockdown was the provision of an intervention fund at five percent interest rate and I think that is better. At five percent, you can't compare that to what the commercial banks are doing. The interest rate with them is 25+ percent. The money is not a gift because we will pay back and so, there is no question of the piper dictating the tune. It is a stimulus that is being done all over the world. By providing the facility, the CBN is just doing the right thing</p>	<p>One of the ways I think this can be done is for us to think of how we can create a stronger virtual presence that what we have been doing so that we can do more business online than ever before. Another way is that journalists should be taught so they can operate beyond the physical job space. They should be able to learn new methods of carrying out their duties and making money so we are less dependent on the government. With that we can call the bluff. The pandemic has come to wake us up from our slumber and make us think, look and shine better. Since we have survived now, we should carry on the battle from this point and excel no matter how adverse the situation may be in future. I do not think getting a stimulus package or intervention from the government is necessary. Getting the money is good but I know that any money given by the government to any private media organisation will be like bait, even if it is a loan or stimulus</p>

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>If you look critically, people in other sectors of the economy have gotten such support. For instance, health workers, members of the National Assembly, transport workers and even farmers. All these people received some support in one way or the other but I am an editor and I can tell you I did not see any coming our way. Nothing was given to us as palliative</p>	<p>We are talking of incentives through instruments created by the Central Bank, reduction of tariffs on imports and other charges in order to cushion the effect of the pandemic on the news media generally</p>	<p>We have no choice than to change the way we operate and embrace new systems and technologies. It's either we do it or we become extinct. We can't continue doing things the way we were doing. It is no longer possible. The market has moved. If you don't know it has moved, then you're dead. The disruption brought by COVID - 19 to some sectors is clear but even to such sectors, for instance, education, entrepreneurs in the sector are still studying it but they have a clear direction of where they are going. They are trying to understand the mix of their operations like online lectures. The media has to go beyond this traditional operation but I am not sure the traditional media will die completely</p>	<p>If the government wants to help the media industry to succeed, they should ensure interest rates charged by commercial banks are reduced so that loans can be taken</p> <p>Another excellent way of helping the media is to reduce tax and grant waivers on imports by the media. It is part of good governance. If the government was far sighted, it should have since reduced taxes and tariffs</p>

Daily Sun	Premium Times	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Leadership	Vanguard
		<p>The reporters are at the end and yet they are the most reporters deserve support be it financial, manpower development and all that</p>		<p>We are not working with the idea that traditional media will disappear. Traditional media to have more credibility and because social media has messed themselves up with fake news, so people don't believe what they read on social media unless they read them on conventional media platforms. We must be a part of that shift or decide the direction of the shift the media would likely take. The media do not require a distinct COVID -19 protocol for their operations. We live in the same society and if we observe social distancing, wash our hands and use facemasks, I think we will be okay. But we must take the existing protocol more seriously because we move around a lot and mix more with people</p>	

Table 16b: Measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep Journalists and Media Organisations from going under during and post COVID19

- Broadcast Media (Radio & Television)

Radio Nigeria FRCN	Silverbird Rhythm Radio	Nigerian Television Authority NTA	Television Continental TVC
<p>There is a need for journalists to develop themselves in ICT skills both to source and file their stories. It is also important for practicing journalists to think out of the box in terms of marketing their media outfits as only profitable media houses can pay salaries</p> <p>Media House owners should prioritise the welfare of their staff and pay salaries as and when due</p>	<p>I think that the media is a very critical stakeholder and a whole lot of things concerning COVID -19 have to do with proper information dissemination. When people are properly informed and educated, they would be able to take care of themselves. Government should come to the aid of media organisations. It should provide waivers for the levies and taxes paid by media organisations</p> <p>There should have been some form of palliative. I know that at some stage, the National Broadcasting Commission came up with something but it was not that effective. One would have expected that the government would give the media a tax holiday as a result of the COVID -19 and say, one -year non -payment of your license fee, tax rebates and some other things that were done overseas. This would have enabled media organisations to continue to sustain their workforce and continue to provide their service s</p>	<p>Government needs to bail out media stations to prevent them from collapsing. Many media organisations can't pay salaries or keep up with operational obligations due to the pandemic. Media stations must also cut down on some of their expenses to keep afloat. Media stations also need to cut down on their commercial rates to attract more adverts to enable them sustain</p>	<p>One thing media organisations in Nigeria don't have is access to cheap funds and grants. Intervention fund should be made available to media houses and such funds should come with a single digit interest rate. The media must be provided with the needed atmosphere to operate and to hold the government accountable to the people. The pandemic has created new situations that require investment in new technologies and equipment and that can only be achieved with the availability of cheap funds</p>

Table 16c: Measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep Journalists and Media Organisations from going under during and post COVID -19

Professional Associations, Advocacy and Training Groups

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<p>To save the sector from collapse and save jobs, we need financial bailouts in the form of loans with low interest. The Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Nigeria Union of Journalists have sent a joint proposal to the Central Bank of Nigeria in this regard</p>	<p>There is a need for critical review of the existing work and business models. Jobs have to be redefined to cover new relevant issues. Media houses have to master the multimedia options of operating. They may need additional businesses to survive</p>	<p>Many people have spoken about government bailout. Many media practitioners and scholars advocate a bailout for the media. In our environment, unfortunately, that might mean the media has sold its soul to the government. Rather than the government providing a bailout, corporate Nigeria can as well do it. So, corporate organisations can contribute to a Media Fund, as they did earlier to save the economy in response to the corona V irus outbreak.</p>	<p>A bailout in cash and or kind; tax holiday; reduced tariff on media inputs; group insurance; training on survival during emergencies such as this</p>	<p>Raise the bar in technology acquisition; provide more incentives for journalists and for those who require moving around, PPEs</p>	<p>In developed climes and particularly in US and Australia, for instance, media organisations were provided interventions and or assistance in cushioning the effect of the pandemic. That is what we have initiated here in Nigeria. At the Level of the Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO) which is made up of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN)</p>

Nigerian Guild of Editors	Media Career Development Network	International Centre for Investigative Reporting	Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers	Nigeria Union of Journalists
<p>The media organisations have to restructure. The time is now for us to take seriously media convergence</p>		<p>Media houses can also tap into several global media bailout initiatives - Google, Facebook and others. There is also donor/foundation funding. Many foundations are devoting a lot of money around the world to support critical media to continue to hold governments accountable and sustain democracy</p>			<p>The three -organisations coalesced into one to form the NPO. We have reached out to the government. We cannot afford not to go to the government. We have appealed to them that they ought to assist the media to survive. This pandemic has plunged the media into serious crises and there is need to stabilise the industry.</p> <p>We have interfaced with the Minister of Information; Lai Mohammed and we have also met with the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory who is also a member of the Federal Executive Council. We have also reached out some of our people in the government so the Federal Government will find a way of assisting the media. Some of the media organisations that cannot pay salaries need funds probably via the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). We have made that appeal already. We are asking for a stimulus package for the media</p>

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section analyses the presented data and discusses findings in line with the five research questions that were raised for this study

Research Question 1

To What Extent has the Pandemic Changed the Practice of Journalism in Nigeria? The data in Table 1, 2, 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 5c, and Figure 2, 3, 4, were used to answer this research question. The data in Table 1, 2, 3, 4, were generated from the responses of reporters, while those in Table 5a, 5b, and 5c were generated from the responses of editors in print and broadcast media organisations, and from media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Common to the responses that were elicited from the five categories of respondents (reporters, editors in print media, editors in broadcast media, media owners and stakeholders in professional associations, advocacy and training groups) in the context of this research question are five thematic issues, namely: Issues of access to information, issues related to the availability or accessibility of news sources, issues related to deployment of technology, issues of skills acquisition and issues of transformation of newsroom culture.

Responses in Table 1 specifically show how the pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria by hampering access to news sources. Some of the responses are instructive: News sources are not accepting requests for interviews, the lockdown made it difficult to access information from primary sources, physical interviews have significantly reduced, re-creditation and selection processes limited the number of journalists that could access MDAs, newsmakers became inaccessible, some were sick, some offices were locked making essential documents inaccessible. In other words, by hampering access to news sources, the pandemic changed the way reporters accessed information by introducing a new way of accessing information – use of digital technology to access sources or to gather information online from sources. For example, one of the reporters said: 'The pandemic changed the way I got information via face to face interviews.' Another said: 'These days I have to rely on the Internet.' Yet, another said: 'The pandemic restricted information gathering to online news sources.'

The data in Table 2 shows sources from which reporters obtained information during the lockdown. The responses clearly show preponderance for online sources accessed via digital technologies. For example, reporters accessed information via: WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom meetings, Twitter, YouTube, phone calls, press releases, security operatives, television programmes, international news, health experts, government officials, NCDC, virtual interviews, etc.

Figure 2, shows that (96.9%) of the respondents (reporters) used online sources to access information during the pandemic. Figure 3, however shows that only (7.1%) of the respondents believed the information they obtained from online sources. Figure 4 shows that only (77.3%) of the respondents have competencies in online information acquisition skills. This gives a significant (22.7%) respondents who do not have the skills to authenticate the information they accessed from online sources.

Responses in Table 3 indicate online information acquisition skills of the (77.3%) respondents who admitted having competences in verification of online information. These skills include: Calling concerned sources to verify the facts of a story, using Twitter handles and official websites of sources, using fact-checking platforms from Facebook, Google, and checking of security features of sources of online information. Others include reverse search on Google,

cross checking and confirming from other websites, especially authoritative sources like the BBC, the Washington Post, New York Times. These responses, however, reveal that some of the respondents who claimed to have competencies in online information acquisition and verification skills could not mention or identify those skills, when they were asked to indicate them. A consideration of some of the responses will drive home this point: 'The five W's, professional assessment of content, investigation, none of the above, no, nil, none, I rely on eyewitnesses' accounts and trustworthy media firms.' These responses smack of deep-seated ignorance and poor verification or poor fact-checking skills of Nigerian journalists.

Table 4 discusses responses on how COVID 19 has transformed the newsroom culture in Nigeria. The responses show inter alia that: It has brought about less physical closeness between newsroom staff and has necessitated greater use of digital resources and the digital space, it has changed the typical newsroom culture from the normal physical presence to online work, the pandemic has changed the newsroom culture in terms of team work and access to sources. Other responses show that newsrooms have moved online and physical meetings are limited unless necessary. In this regard, the usual gathering at afternoon or evening hours to file news reports has automatically disappeared because everyone is now encouraged to work from home. A stunning finding reveals that the newsroom has become more efficient in the COVID 19 era. This appears to be the case because with little resources, correspondents can report live from their locations and conduct virtual interviews. As a result, news is served fresher than ever. Another finding shows in clear terms, how immensely COVID 19 has changed the newsroom culture because of the need to adhere to social distancing. A lot of newsrooms are working from home due to the social distancing rule. In response to this new trend, one of the respondents said 'the newsroom has become a cold room because most people work from home.' It is also significant that the pandemic has changed the pattern of communication across newsrooms. In the new order, communication between reporters and editors has been restricted to emails and chat rooms as digital platforms have become the main source of communication.

Table 5a discusses responses on COVID 19 and the transformation of journalism practice in Nigeria from the perspective of editors of the print media (offline and online newspapers). According to the editor of Daily Trust, 'it has affected the way we report, the way we present stories, our revenue profile and our psychology. A similar response was given by the editor-in-chief of the Guardian, who said: 'it has limited access to information because we have to depend on electronic sources. When we want to talk to sources or interview people, you have to send questionnaires to people who have not been writing before to answer, you can't reach out freely to people and most of the people who have information are reasonably old people who do not want to meet with young reporters. The pandemic has limited the quality of information available for publication everywhere, we couldn't reach sources.' This response raises the concern of having news sources acquire digital skills to be able to function effectively during and post COVID-19 era as effective news sources. In other words, the pandemic has changed the nature of journalism practice by changing the nature of news sources in the sense that digital literacy is required to function efficiently as new sources in the new journalism order.

According to the Chairman of the Leadership Group, copy sales have dropped significantly. Going further, he argues that:

What is happening now is that if people don't see value in what the media is offering, they won't buy. That is simply what it is now. Media is now real time. I cannot say clearly what the situation would be but for the media, advertisement will reduce. Bigger online platforms like Google get most of the adverts but draw most of their contents from the conventional media.

This response raises three significant issues. First is the issue of relevance of the media to the Nigerian society. The fact that copy sales have dropped implies that less people are reading newspapers, yet among the functions of media in society are information, education, surveillance and entertainment. That fewer people are having access to newspapers means that the watchdog (surveillance) function of the media is being compromised. It also means that the effect of the media on the society as enunciated in the Lasswellian model of communication is being eliminated. The second issue implies that purchase of newspapers during and post COVID-19 eras will hinge exclusively on the quality of value that the contents will deliver. The third relates to anticipation of new advertising models in the print media during and post COVID-19 eras. In these regards, the pandemic has changed journalism practice in Nigeria 'very significantly,' as the editor of the Daily Sun affirmed, and 'to a large extent.' as the editor-in-chief of the Premium Times corroborates.

In respect of the transformation of journalism practice in the broadcast media (radio and television), Table 5b discusses opinions of editors of government and privately owned broadcast stations (radio and television). According to a general manager of Radio Nigeria 'to a large extent, it has changed journalism practice as social distancing prevents information sourcing. Broadcast newsrooms throughout the period of the lockdown were virtual.' The story was not different from that of a privately owned radio station, Silverbird Rhythm FM, where the Port Harcourt station manager revealed that 'many of our correspondents were working from home and couldn't come to the studio. Many were conducting virtual interviews and we had to use the telephone for interviews, Skype, Zoom and many of our contents were done virtually and that is being sustained now.' Furthermore, he insisted that the pandemic 'has also changed the dynamics of practice by changing the psyche of journalists.'

With reference to television, a general manager of the Nigerian Television Authority avers that:

What has changed in journalism in Nigeria from the pandemic is the way we engage with resource persons and respondents as well as the logistics towards preparing for a story. We now conduct more interviews on Skype and other virtual platforms. Our microphone stands and holders are longer now than they used to be. Safety and consciousness are part of what we talk about now.

The response was not significantly different from that of a privately owned television station. According to a senior editor with Television Continental (TVC) Lagos:

To a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism. Before, journalists could interview news sources personally but now that is not possible as people want to be interviewed online. The quality of such recordings and the quantity of stories has dropped significantly. The number of stories done has reduced. For instance, TV needs clean pictures and audio. But these are difficult to get now because personal interactions have reduced in the place of social and physical distancing. Because of social distancing, a lot of staff were not allowed into the offices while only a few persons covered up for all those who could not be around. That way, a few people were doing the job that so many others could have done.

The data in Table 5c discusses the transformation of journalism practice in Nigeria occasioned by the pandemic from the perspective of critical stakeholders in related professional associations, media owners, advocacy and training groups. According to the President, Nigerian Guild of Editors, 'The COVID -19 pandemic has changed the way we practice journalism in my station. We now interview most of our guests on our live programmes via Zoom or Skype. Our Correspondents send their materials online in order to limit the number of staff physically present in the office.' Going further, he said 'our correspondent and cameraman

at Presidential Villa, Abuja were temporarily dropped following a reduction in the number of accredited journalists there in line with COVID-19 protocols. We now source materials from the general pool.'

In the words of the executive director, Media Career Development Network, 'to a large extent it has changed the way we practice journalism. It has forced media houses to adopt remote working options. Many journalists now resort to online engagements to limit human contact.' The president of the Guild of Corporate Online Publishers, on his part says, 'the newsroom has become virtual. Reporters don't need to run to the office to file stories any longer.'

In summary, Research Question 1 discusses the extent to which the pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria. Five thematic issues, namely: Issues of access to information, issues related to the availability or accessibility of news sources, issues related to deployment of technology, issues of skills acquisition and issues of transformation of newsroom culture were identified as issues of common ground to the five categories of respondents (reporters, editors in print media, editors in broadcast media, media owners and stakeholders in professional associations, advocacy and training groups) who participated in the research. Key findings and emerging issues in respect of this research questions are as summarised:

Key Findings

The pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria by hampering access to news sources. By hampering access to news sources, the pandemic changed the way reporters accessed information and introduced a new way of accessing information (new professional normal) – the use of digital technology to access sources or to gather information online from sources.

The pandemic has restricted information gathering to online news sources. Reporters now access information mainly via: WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom meetings, Twitter, YouTube and phone calls. This means that the newsroom has become virtual, so reporters don't need to run to the office to file stories any longer.

To be effective as a journalist during and post COVID-19, reporters need to acquire online information gathering and verification skills. But, the findings from this study smack of deep-seated ignorance and poor information gathering and verification as well as poor fact-checking skills of Nigerian journalists.

A stunning finding reveals that the newsroom has become more efficient in the COVID 19 era. This appears to be the case because with little resources, correspondents can report live from their locations and conduct virtual interviews. As a result, news is served fresher than ever.

Another finding shows in clear terms, how immensely COVID-19 has changed the newsroom culture because of the need to adhere to social distancing. A lot of reporters are working from home due to the social distancing rule. In response to this new trend, one of the respondents said 'the newsroom has become a cold room because most people work from home.'

It is also significant that the pandemic has changed the pattern of communication across newsrooms. In the new order, communication between reporters and editors has been restricted to emails and chat rooms as digital platforms have become the main source of communication.

To a large extent, it has changed journalism practice as social distancing prevents information sourcing through fact-to-face interaction. It has forced media houses to adopt remote working options as many journalists now resort to online engagements to limit human contact.

What is happening now is that if people don't see value in what the print media is offering, they won't buy. That is simply what it is now.

Media is now real time

What has changed in broadcast journalism in Nigeria from the pandemic is the way the media engage with news sources as well as the logistics towards preparing for a story. The broadcast media now conduct more interviews on Skype and other virtual platforms. Microphones are covered and the stands and holders are longer now than they used to be.

To a large extent it has changed the way journalism is practiced. Before, journalists could interview news sources personally but now that is not possible as people want to be interviewed online. The quality of such recordings and the quantity of stories has dropped significantly and the number of stories done has reduced.

It has also significantly changed the dynamics of practice by changing the psyche of journalists.

- The number of stories done has reduced drastically, in both print and broadcast media. For example, Daily Trust has not only reduced the number of copies produced but also the pagination. According to the editor, the least number of pages the company produced was 32 pages instead of 80 to 90 pages it was producing before the crisis. The story was the same for Vanguard which has cut pagination from 92 to 72, and from 72 to 56, then from 56 to 32 pages and also significantly reduced the print run. In the broadcast media, transmission time was reduced.

Emerging Issues

The demand for information hasn't dropped but the demand for newspapers has dropped. The question is, to what extent are the print media serving as the watchdogs of society in executing their surveillance role?

The pandemic has affected revenue in the sense that advertisements are not forthcoming, what funding mechanisms would ensure sustainability of media organisations during and post COVID-19?

Who should be responsible for training of media sources in digital literacy skills to be more effective sources of information during and post COVID-19 eras?

There is a need for media organisations to own their own means of transportation to aid the mobility of reporters in order to shield them from the risk of contracting the virus through patronage of the public transportation system.

To be effective during and post COVID-19, news sources would need to have not only digital media tools, but also digital literacy skills

Emerging Issues

To be effective during and post COVID-19, news sources would need to have not only digital media tools, but also digital literacy skills

What measures could be taken to maintain sanity and ensure that mental health and psyche of journalists are in top functional states during and post COVID-19 eras?

Engagement and retention of journalism jobs during and post COVID-19 eras would be based purely on productivity and the quality of value that journalists are bringing to their news organisations.

The pandemic marks the beginning of a new era in the practice of journalism in Nigeria where a few persons would be responsible for doing the jobs that so many others could have done.

There is a critical information security challenge in using Zoom to report cases that are sensitive in nature and have security implications. This is because the free version of Zoom that is widely used for meetings does not guarantee end-to-end encryption of data. The version that guarantees that is subject to subscription, however, almost all the media organisations are using the free version yet, transmitting sensitive information. This situation needs urgent attention and resolution.

Research Question 2

What Challenges confront Journalists and Media Organisations that are covering the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria?

The data in Table 6, 7, 8, 9a, 9b, 9c, and Figure 5, 6, 7, were used to answer this research question. The data in Table 6, 7, 8, were generated from the responses of reporters, while those in Table 9a, 9b, and 9c were generated from the responses of editors in print and broadcast media organisations, and from media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Common to the responses that were elicited from the five categories of respondents (reporters, editors in print media, editors in broadcast media, media owners and stakeholders in professional associations, advocacy and training groups) in the context of this research question were six thematic issues, namely: Insurance and personal protective equipment, protocol for reportage of the pandemic, adoption and implementation of the protocol, equipment and materials for daily operations, technology deployment and issues of palliatives among others.

The data in Table 6 is directed towards finding out whether media organisations provided insurance cover and personal protective equipment for reporters who were covering the pandemic. Responses show that only a few media organisations provided facemask and hand sanitisers for reporters who were covering the COVID-19 pandemic. An overwhelming majority of media organisations provided nothing for their reporters in terms of personal protective equipment, neither did they do so for palliatives. No media organisation, for instance, provided insurance cover for reporters who were covering the pandemic, thereby exposing them to absolute risk and danger.

Figure 5 shows data on availability of protocol for reportage during the pandemic. Accordingly,

(55%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that a protocol has been developed for use by journalists covering the pandemic, while a significant (45%) affirmed the contrary. The data in Figure 6 indicates that (32%) of respondents opined that media organisations in Nigeria adopted and implemented protocol for reporting the pandemic, while (68%) of respondents said media organisations did not. Further, (32%) of respondents said their media organisations provided equipment and materials required for daily operations, while (68%) said theirs did not in Figure 7.

Table 7 shows responses to an item that sought to find out the nature or types of digital technologies that reporters deployed for newsgathering and reporting during the pandemic. A summary of the responses shows that phone calls, emails, smartphones, laptops, Internet, midgets, recorders, cameras, etc were used for newsgathering and reporting. However, it is significant to note that some respondents gave such interesting responses as: No idea, Information Technology, telecommunications, none, not much, just managing to go digital in Kogi State. These responses are indicative of the fact that a significant number of Nigeria's practicing journalists are digital illiterates and not technology savvy.

The data in Table 8 discusses the nature of palliatives that media organisations provided to motivate reporters on the job during the pandemic. Responses show that (71%) of the respondents were given no palliatives by their media organisations. Food items constituted the highest form of palliative with (7.44%) respondents benefiting from the intervention. Full salaries were paid to (6.38%) of respondents, (4.25) were given facemasks, (2.13%) were given cash, while (1.06%) were given facemask and tested for the virus, paid salaries consistently, and had their salaries slashed respectively.

Table 9a discusses challenges confronting journalists that are covering the COVID 19 pandemic in Nigeria. A plethora of challenges that have been identified by editors of the leading Nigerian newspapers in this regard include: inaccessibility of news sources and venues, security agencies brutality towards journalists as they enforce lockdown, and some journalists were infected by Covid-19. Circulation was seriously affected, and because these print media organisations were not able to sell to readers, their revenue bases were seriously affected. Circulation and the visibility of newspapers which attracted advert support really suffered.

There is also the challenge of Internet subscription and connectivity and related costs. COVID-19 has disrupted media operations and has forced online migration of news and production studios. Now media organisations (print and broadcast) use such platforms like Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype and all of that for their operations. So, a media organisation that cannot afford that or the one that does not have a strong internet provider or the one that does not have the money to subscribe and stay in active connection like others, would crash out of business in no time.

Psychologically, editors and management of print media organisations were affected and afraid of the unknown. Of course, they had asked reporters to be sending stories from home, and to be sourcing for stories online by conducting interviews with their phones and all that, yet an air of uncertainty and a modicum of anxiety pervaded their psyche. According to the editor of Daily Trust:

For some of us that don't miss coming to the office, every night, you had this fear, am I taking this virus home? You know we have wives and children and relations at

home and when you come out in the morning, you realise it's only you on the highway and when you get to the office, you discover there are only a few supporting staff around. So, it really affected our psychology.

One of the biggest challenges confronting journalists and media houses that are covering the COVID 19 pandemic in Nigeria is an information security rooted challenge of authentication and verification of news sources. This point has been made by the Northern Regional Editor of Vanguard newspaper. According to him:

Somebody may talk to you on the phone and you don't know the person but you have to rely on the information so that you keep up with the competition. But it may lead to a situation where you are sued because you will publish what you heard without being able to verify, unlike a face-to-face interaction. You may be sued because the person you believed was the one speaking might turn out to be the opposite. And that can happen when you are dealing with a person you have not seen. It can even be a scammer who was talking to you. Because you have no way of verifying, you can deal with them as if they are the real people.

Another challenge is that the industry is forced to lose its key personnel, some to death and others to sickness and many others to job cuts.

Table 9b chronicles the challenges confronting journalists who are covering the pandemic from the perspective of management and editors in the broadcast media (radio and television). In line with the foregoing, an executive of Radio Nigeria, a government owned radio station noted that 'Journalists were not provided with safety kits and thus exposed to the virus if they are not careful enough. There was also restriction of movement, therefore, impeding the sourcing of news. Also, the poor equipment in some media organisations made it difficult to optimise ICT equipment.' Similarly, the general manager of Silverbird Rhythm FM, Port Harcourt observed that:

One of the major challenges' journalists had covering COVID-19 was absence of personal protective equipment. Only a very few stations could actually provide their staff with the needed protective equipment. Many of the radio, TV and even newspaper houses didn't ensure their staff observed social distancing. For instance, you are going out with a camera and you need to talk to people. There were no adequate tools to allow journalists to work without getting close to their sources.

The situation is not significantly different in television stations. In the words of a general manager of Nigerian Television Authority, 'since most interviews are now done online, journalists are at the mercy of internet service providers. Many times, we don't have clean feeds as video, which in turn affects the quality of our production.'

The response from the senior editor of Television Continental, a privately-owned television station syncs with that of the general manager Nigerian Television Authority. He observes that:

The major challenge is the issue of safety of journalists. Reporters are afraid to go out because they were not given proper kits to use while in the field. There was fear on the part of reporters but the situation has reduced as two of our reporters have

visited and reported from the isolation centres. Movement was impeded even when the media was permitted to work around; security agents on the road were still stopping them from going about their duties. There was a time we tried recording one of our major programmes virtually but the result was so poor it wasn't used at the end of the day.

It is thus significant that in both government-owned and privately-owned radio and television stations, journalists lacked PPEs, were exposed to the risk of contracting the virus, lacked resilient internet connectivity which affected picture quality and delivered poor results at the end of the day.

It was also found that many workers have had to rely on their private data for office work without being reimbursed, and that many journalists have had to buy PPEs with their money even when they were on official assignments.

At the level of media owners, professional associations, advocacy and training groups, Table 9c discusses the challenges confronting journalists and media organisations that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Findings reveal that the pandemic limited interactions with news sources because many offices were shut. This made confirming the stories difficult. Findings have also indicated that some journalists who did critical reporting on government response to the pandemic were harassed and detained, many on the orders of state governors. According to the National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists:

During the lockdown, journalists were working. They were going to the newsroom; they were going to offices and most of them that are not mobile were using public transport and these were the primary areas where one can contract the virus. So, our colleagues were exposed on the face value to contract the virus.

In summary, Research Question 2 investigated the challenges that confronted journalists and media organisations that were covering the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected from five categories of respondents (reporters, editors in print media, editors in broadcast media, media owners and stakeholders in professional associations, advocacy and training groups). Six thematic issues, namely: Insurance and personal protective equipment, protocol for reportage of the pandemic, adoption and implementation of the protocol, equipment and materials for daily operations, technology deployment and issues of palliatives were analysed and discussed. A summary of the key finding and emerging issues are as follows:

Key Findings

Only a few media organisations provided facemasks and hand sanitisers for reporters who were covering the COVID 19 pandemic. An overwhelming majority of media organisations provided nothing for their reporters in terms of personal protective equipment. No media organisation, for instance, provided insurance cover for reporters who were covering the pandemic, thereby exposing them to absolute risk and danger.

A significant number of Nigeria's practicing journalists are digital illiterates and not technology savvy.

A staggering (71%) of the respondents were given no palliatives by their media organisations. Food items constituted the highest form of palliatives with (7.44%) respondents benefiting from the intervention.

There is also the challenge of Internet subscription and connectivity and related costs. COVID-19 has disrupted media operations and has forced online migration of news and production studios. Now, media organisations (print and broadcast) use such platforms like Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype and all of that for operations. So, a media organisation that cannot afford these or the one that does not have a strong internet provider or the one that does not have the money to subscribe and stay in active connection like others, would crash out of business in no time.

Psychologically, editors and management of print media organisations are affected and afraid of the unknown. Of course, they had asked reporters to be sending stories from home, and to be sourcing for stories online by conducting interviews with their phones and all that, yet an air of uncertainty and a modicum of anxiety pervaded their psyche.

One of the biggest challenges confronting journalists and media houses that are covering the COVID 19 pandemic in Nigeria is an information security rooted challenge of authentication and verification of news sources.

Another challenge is that the industry is forced to lose its key personnel, some to death and others to sickness and yet many others to retrenchment.

One of the major challenges journalists had covering COVID-19 is the absence of personal protective equipment (PPE). Only very few media organisations could actually provide their staff with the needed protective gear.

Since most interviews are now done online, journalists are at the mercy of Internet and telecommunications service providers. Many times, they don't have clean feeds and this affects the quality of visuals available for production.

In both government-owned and privately-owned radio and television stations, journalists lacked PPEs, were exposed to the risk of contracting the virus, lacked resilient internet connectivity, had poor picture quality, and delivered poor results at the end of the day.

Both government-owned radio and television stations had obsolete equipment which made it difficult to optimise ICT equipment

It was also found that many workers have had to rely on their private data for office work without being reimbursed, and that many journalists have had to buy PPEs with their money even when they were on official assignments.

Emerging Issues

The media were expected to play one of the most pivotal services during the lockdown. They were expected to give correct information especially because fake news took over the space and it became very dangerous.

The media are into both business and public service, meaning that they just have to be around to discharge their information, education, socialisation and entertainment role. But the question is, with the rising costs of production and dwindling revenues

caused by low sales and low advert intake, what becomes of their social responsibility mandate which is constitutionally guaranteed by S. 22, of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution?

Journalists in Europe, America and other First World countries have overcome the problem of internet connectivity, while their counterparts here in Nigeria are still grappling with it. As a result, the quality of information they are able to access is limited. Sometimes they do not even have the money to subscribe. In a country such as Nigeria that is rapidly undergoing digital transformation, what can the government and entrepreneurs do to leapfrog rollout of broadband in order to galvanise provision of sustainable, resilient and robust information technology services and infrastructure?

Some journalists who did critical reporting on the government's response to the pandemic were harassed and detained; many on the orders of state governors. What measures could be taken to protect the fundamental human rights of journalists and guarantee their freedom of expression which is enshrined in S. 39 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria?

It is absolutely important for media organisations to provide a broad spectrum of palliatives to motivate reporters and spur them on to greater productivity on the job during and after the pandemic.

It is important for the Nigerian society to give close attention to the issue of the sanity, mental and psychological health of editors and their reporters because a dislocation in this area of wellbeing in their lives would amount to a dislocation of the entire nation.

If there is an information blackout occasioned by the negative effects of the pandemic on the media and journalists, the Nigerian society will be thrown into a quagmire of avoidable crisis.

Research Question 3

What Measures have been adopted by Journalists and Media Organisations to survive COVID-19 related Challenges in Nigeria?

The data in Table 10a, 10b, and 10c, were used to answer this research question. The data were generated from the responses of editors in print and broadcast media organisations, and from media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Five thematic issues were common to the responses. These were the issues of retrenchment of workers, reduction in salary, reduction in pagination and print run, social distancing and virtual reporting, and adoption and use of digital media technologies for interviews.

Data analysis and discussion of findings, however, raised a number of key approaches and measures that were not addressed by the respondents. It is our considered opinion that these measures or approaches would have gone a long way in ameliorating the situation. These measures include formulation of a national media policy and strategy on COVID-19, capacity building, provision of adequate information technology infrastructure and effective deployment of relevant digital technology, mechanisms for collaborations and partnerships, provision of adequate working tools (digital devices, data and PPEs), comprehensive insurance cover, media literacy training for members of society to enable them function more efficiently as sources of information in an increasingly digitised society, and the evolution of new business models for media organisations. The discussion that follows is limited to the responses that

were generated from the field. Our discussion, however, will address the issues that were raised here in the segment on emerging issues. Table 10a discusses responses from the respondents who were editors of print media organisations. The responses chronicle a number of strategies that their respective print media organisations adopted to survive COVID 19 related challenges. Daily Sun reduced workforce, and pruned down pagination and print run. Premium Times adopted the working or reporting from home approach but noted that the industry resorted to retrenchment of staff members, reduction in publication frequencies, suspension of expansion projects/plans, suspension of expensive reporting projects, shutdown of operations, making more concessions to advertisers, and exploration of alternative revenue sources. The Guardian resorted to prudence. To survive, it had to cut some allowances and a part of the salary. Professionalism became the yardstick for retaining the job at Leadership. It also made its E-paper very strong. In the words of the chairman, Leadership Group 'We deliberately made it so.'

Table 10b considers the responses of management and editors in government and privately owned radio and television stations. Consequently, Radio Nigeria, ensured that only operational staff were consistent in coming to office while others were encouraged to work from home. Silverbird Rhythm FM, provided proper identification for staff by providing staff with official means of transportation. That decision curtailed cases of harassment from security operatives. For television stations, the Nigerian Television Authority provided constant reorientation to remind staff about the realities of COVID-19, and at the same time, provided rules on the compulsory use of face masks by staff. Television Continental gave palliatives to all the staff that were on duty on a weekly basis and free food to all staff twice in a month, and these are done in Abuja and Lagos offices. Management also negotiated pay cuts with staff, provided safety kits and appointed COVID Marshals to ensure compliance with safety protocols within the office space.

Table 10c considers the responses of media owners, professional associations, and advocacy and training groups. Responses from the Nigerian Guild of Editors show: reduction in the of number of staff, adoption and use of digital media platforms (Zoom and Skype) for interviews, rotation of duties to reduce staff physically present in the office as some of the measures that media organisation (print and broadcast) in Nigeria adopted to survive COVID-19 related challenges. Media Career Development Network observed that print media organisations have cut down pagination, while electronic media have reduced broadcast time and the number of staff on duty. On its part, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting observed that many media houses have cut on the size of their newsrooms, sacked hundreds of journalists, cut between 30 -50 percent of salaries, operate skeletal services to cut operational costs, sought donor funding for operations, and explored other streams of revenue (publishing, digital television). From the perspective of the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, print media organisations have responded to the pandemic by reduction of pagination and print run of newspapers and magazines, concentration on online editions, reduction of staff strength and salaries and lifting of unverified content from foreign news organisations. The Guild of Corporate Online Publishers embarked on training and re-training of journalists, and recommended that media organisations purchased or rented cars from a pool of cars to ease mobility for reporters. It also recommended acquisition of gadgets such as phones and laptops for journalists. On its part, the Nigeria Union of Journalists said the measures journalists adopted to survive COVID 19 related challenges in the field were safety and self-protection related.

In summary, Research Question Three addresses the measures Journalists and media organisations adopted to survive COVID 19 related challenges in Nigeria. The data were collected from editors in print and broadcast media organisations, and from media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups.

Five thematic issues were common to the responses. These were issues of retrenchment of workers, reduction in salary, reduction in pagination and print run, social distancing and virtual reporting, and adoption and use of digital media technologies for interviews. Measures or approaches that would have gone a long way in ameliorating the situation were raised and slated for mention in the segment on emerging issues. A summary of the key findings is presented below:

Key Findings

In carrying out their operations, print and broadcast media organisations adopted a number of strategies to survive COVID-19 related challenges. Some of these strategies included reduction in the workforce, pruning down of pagination and print run. Others were, working or reporting from home, reduction in publication frequencies, suspension of expansion projects/plans, suspension of expensive reporting projects, shutdown of operations, making more concessions to advertisers, and exploration of alternative revenue sources. Prudence, cutting some allowances and a part of the salary, professionalism and adoption and use of digital platforms were all part of the measures that media organisations used to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Responses of management and editors in government and privately owned radio and television stations indicated that only operational staff were consistent in coming to office while others were encouraged to work from home. Staff were provided with official means of transportation, an action which curtailed cases of harassment from security operatives. In addition, constant reorientation was provided to remind staff about the realities of COVID 19, and at the same time, rules were made on compulsory use of facemasks by staff. Palliatives were also given to staff that were on duty in some broadcast media organisations on a weekly basis and free food twice in a month. In some broadcast media organisations, management negotiated with staff for pay cut, in others, safety kits were provided, while in others COVID Marshals were appointed to ensure compliance with safety protocols within the office space

Responses of media owners, professional associations as well as advocacy and training groups showed that reduction in number of staff, adoption and use of digital media platforms (Zoom and Skype) for interviews, rotation of duties to reduce staff physically present in the office were some of the measures media organisations adopted to survive COVID-19 related challenges. Print media organisations have had to cut down pagination, while electronic media have had to reduce broadcast time and the number of staff on duty.

Many media houses have cut the size of their newsrooms, sacked hundreds of journalists, cut between 30 -50 percent of salaries, operate skeletal services to cut operational costs, sought donor funding for operations, and explored other streams of revenue (publishing, digital television). Other strategies include reduction of pagination and print run of newspapers and magazines, concentration on online editions, reduction of staff strength and salaries, and lifting of unverified content from foreign news organisations. The Guild of Corporate Online Publishers embarked on training and re-training of journalists, and recommended that media organisations purchased or rented cars from a pool of cars to ease mobility of reporters. It also recommended acquisition of gadgets such as phones and laptops for journalists, while the National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists said journalists adopted safety and self-preservation measures to survive COVID-19 related challenges in the course of discharging their duties to society.

Emerging Issues

1. None of the media entrepreneurs and or editors considered issues of collaboration, mergers and acquisition which have been adopted in other sectors of the economy to survive industry-related crises.
2. Media owners and managers were oblivious of the seeming ignorance of their reporters in the use of digital technology and the social media in news gathering and fact-checking. This is because while (77.3%) of reporters claimed they have the skill to confirm the information they get online; their responses betrayed their gaping ignorance.
3. Media entrepreneurs and editors seem to be comfortable with the low skills set of their reporters in handling digital technological tools that have become the new normal and indispensable for the practice of journalism.
4. The study showed that neither the government through the PTF or the media through their various platforms and professional bodies considered the need for the adoption of a distinct protocol for the operations of the media.
5. Journalists, like medical workers, served as first responders during the entire period the pandemic raged, with medical workers providing care to the infected and journalists carrying out surveillance, providing information and educating the public on how to prevent and or survive the pandemic.
6. While there was a clear protocol for medical workers, none was conceived for journalists who also operated on the frontline.
7. For the broadcast media, there has been an emerging need for the use of long microphone sticks, microphone covers and body covers for camera operators who venture into places with high possibility of infection.
8. There is also an urgent need to formulate and implement a National Media Policy and Strategy on COVID-19

Research Question 4

How are the Measures that Journalists and Media Organisations are taking to stay in Business affecting their Operations and Survival in the Country?

The data in Table 11a, 11b, and 11c were used in answering this Research Question. The data were generated from the responses of editors in print and broadcast media organisations, and from media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Three thematic issues were common to the responses. These were issues of providing journalists, media managers, research institutions and policymakers with the knowledge and understanding of journalism practice during and after a pandemic. Then those of evolving new approaches and policies to address lapses, strengthen practice, and foster sustainability of Nigeria's media organisation's during and post-COVID. Then too, the issue of enhancing capacities and building competencies required for the development and sustainability of new-normal journalism practice and mechanisms in Nigeria.

Table 11a showcases the responses of editors in print media organisations and their opinions on the effects of the measures that journalists and print media organisations are taking to stay afloat in their operations during the pandemic. According to the editor of the Daily Sun, 'the measures that we have adopted have affected our operations very prominently. We have been compelled to make do with few hands, and the robustness of stories is sometimes affected.' This argument has been pushed further by the editor-in-chief of Premium Times who says 'reduction in the quality of contents, fewer contents, more reliance on press releases and user-generated contents, waning ability to hold individuals, corporations and governments accountable, are making media organisations less and less independent.' To the editor-in-chief of the Guardian, the measures adopted affected morale but ushered a period when 'superior management skills would come to play.' The chairman of the Leadership group expressed similar views, when he observed that some of the measures taken have led to 'low morale among journalists,' while 'the quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations.'

Table 11b discusses responses of management and editors of the broadcast media. On his part, a general manager of Radio Nigeria observed that the effect on broadcast media organisations is that 'media offices have now become deserted as only critical workers who have direct contact with equipment come to office.' Going further, he said, this situation was 'financially draining' for the individual journalist as media workers were earning 'meagre salaries.' Similarly, the station manager of Silverbird Rhythm FM, Port Harcourt in assessing the effects of the measures adopted by broadcast media organisations to survive the pandemic on the operations of individual journalists and media organisations, said, 'at a point, we had to reduce transmission time so we will be able to cope because revenue wasn't coming in as it should but we were at some point running with diesel and that put strain on the revenue.' In respect of individual journalists, he said 'there was reduction in the workforce while some percentage of the workforce were asked to work from home.' In the perspective of a general manager of NTA 'these measures are making journalists become more conscious of safety.' At Television Continental, the senior editor revealed that 'many of our staff are going into depression because they are not used to working from home and alone, especially the newsroom staff. The admin staff were overworked because they were always around to make sure everything went on well. Many drivers slept at the workplace and some were picked at their homes.'

Table 11c discusses responses of media owners, professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Responses from the Nigerian Guild of Editors indicate that 'the measures taken have led to low morale among journalists. Reduction of salaries and non-payment of salaries have put severe strain on the journalists who now find it difficult to take care of their families.' At the level of media organisations, the president said 'media organisations are managing to survive. The quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations.' To the executive director, Media Career Development Network, the effect on journalists is that 'fewer staff do jobs meant for more staff' while at the corporate level, 'quality control is limited' and compromised. To the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, these measures 'reduce staff morale; they reduce product quality; they put a question mark on their professionalism and ethical values; they reduce the ability of those media organisations to meet their obligations to their staff and society.' To the National President, Guild of Corporate publishers, 'it is impacting positively for those who are able to finance operations.'

In summary, Research Question 4 examined the effects of measures adopted by media organisations to survive the pandemic on journalists and media organisations. Analysis was based on three thematic issues, namely: issues of providing journalists, media managers,

research institutions and policymakers with the knowledge and understanding of journalism practice during and after a pandemic. Then those of evolving approaches and policies to address lapses, strengthen practices, and foster sustainability of Nigeria's media organisations during and post-COVID-19. Then too, the issue of enhancing capacities and building competencies required for the development and sustainability of new-normal journalism practices and mechanisms in Nigeria. The key findings and emerging issues are presented hereunder:

Key Findings

The measures that have been adopted to keep media organisations afloat during the pandemic have affected operations of journalists and media organisations very prominently.

Because media organisations have been compelled to make do with few hands, the robustness of stories is sometimes affected. These measures have also led to reduction in quality of contents and fewer contents.

More reliance on press releases and user-generated contents, is waning ability of the media to hold individuals, corporations and governments accountable, and is making media organisations less and less independent.

Further, the measures have affected morale but ushered a period when superior management skills would come to play. Some of the measures taken have led to low morale among journalists, while the quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations.

Many journalists are going into depression because they are not used to working from home and in isolation, especially the newsroom staff. This behavioural manifestation is an outcome of the decision of media organisations to allow only critical workers who have direct contact with equipment come to office. Although these measures are making journalists become more conscious of safety, on the flip side, they are financially draining as media workers are earning meagre salaries.

The measures taken have led to low morale among journalists. For example, reduction of salaries and non-payment of salaries have put severe strain on the journalists who now find it difficult to take care of their families. Journalists also feel frustrated because they are overworked in the sense that fewer staff do jobs meant for more staff.

Media organisations, on the flip side, are managing to survive. The quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations. Quality control is limited and compromised.

In essence, the measures have reduced staff morale; they have reduced product quality; they have put a question mark on professionalism and ethical values; they have reduced the ability of media organisations to meet their obligations to their staff and society. However, they are impacting positively on those who are able to finance operations.

Emerging Issues

With the significant reduction in the number of staff available for work in newsrooms and the advent of virtual reporting, there is serious need for a new policy framework to address the emerging trend.

There is also need to develop a new remuneration template that takes cognisance of the new skills sets and usage of specialised digital tools needed to produce and deliver content capable of attracting and sustaining public patronage.

Since the operations of the media have now shifted largely to the virtual space, the high cost of data and the poor-quality of service by telecommunications operators have become major issues of concern for the survival of the industry. There is, therefore, an urgent need for stakeholders to devise ways of ensuring the media have access to data that is both affordable and strong in connectivity. Since the media fulfil social responsibility, it would not be too much to consider data subsidy, tax holiday and rebates on tariffs for the consumables used by the industry.

There is a serious need for training and retraining of journalists and media managers on the business side of their operations, that is, how to run profitably without compromising professional ethics and social responsibility.

The quests for advert and sponsorships have been found to seriously affect editorial independence of media organisations.

Research Question 5

What Measures could be Adopted and Implemented to keep Journalists and Media Organisations from going under during and post COVID-19?

The data in Table 12, 13, 14, 15 and Figure 8, 9, 10, were used to answer Research Question 5. The data in Table 12, 13, 14, and 15 were generated from the responses of reporters, while those in Table 16a, 16b, and 16c were generated from the responses of editors in print and broadcast media organisations, media owners and critical stakeholders in related professional associations, advocacy and training groups. Common to the responses that were elicited from the five categories of respondents (reporters, editors in print media, editors in broadcast media, media owners and stakeholders in professional associations, advocacy and training groups) in the context of this research question were six thematic issues, namely: Issues of measures of sustainability, specialised training, improved funding, collaborations and partnerships, monitoring and evaluation and productivity.

The data in Table 12 sought to find out the measures that could be adopted and implemented to sustain media operations during and post COVID-19. Results show palliatives for journalists and bailout funds for media houses, provision of health insurance cover for news staff, use of new media tools and technologies that encourage remote operations, improved funding of media houses, and periodic digital skills training for journalists among others.

Figure 8 indicates that (97%) of respondents would recommend specialised training for journalists covering the pandemic.

Table 13 provides data on the specific specialised training reporters would need for reporting the COVID-19 pandemic. Results show training on virtual news gathering techniques, training on electronic data gathering and framing of media content, training on remote data gathering

and information verification, training on multimedia journalism, and training on safety of journalists online, among others.

Table 14 presents data on alternative sources of funding needed by the media to stay afloat during and after the pandemic. Consequently, grants and donations from philanthropists, government bailout, assistance and stability funds, crowd sourcing and investment funding, funds from venture capital and hedge funds, community funding, assistance from cooperatives and foundations among others were identified.

Figure 9 shows that (96.9%) of respondents affirm the need for an intervention fund for media organisation during and after the pandemic. Figure 10 shows that (94.9%) of the respondents were in favour of forging partnerships between media organisations and other institutions in society in order to improve media performance and sustainability during and post COVID-19.

Table 15 shows responses that suggest how the productivity of media organisations would be monitored and evaluated during and post COVID-19. Some of the strategies mentioned included: audience polls, surveys and research, periodic assessment or evaluation of media activities by independent bodies, evaluation of media activities by regulatory bodies like NBC, NPC, productivity audit using technological tools, self-regulation mechanisms by media houses, and feedback from the public among others.

In the data presented in Table 16a, generated from editors in the print media, the Daily Sun editor called on the government to subsidise newsprints and offer generous bailout funds to the media. The editor-in-chief, Premium Times called for increased conversation around media sustainability, grants and low-interest bailout funds for media organisations. Just like the senior editor of TVC, he also called for tax concessions for the media (since media is largely a social service) as well as training for media chiefs on management.

Editor-in-chief, Guardian, noted that the authorities should see the media as offering essential services and because of that provide a stimulus package for the industry players. 'They should also lower tariffs on the consumables that we use because all media organisations, whether electronic or print, have to import a lot of what are needed for their operations. Apart from reducing tariffs, he called on the government to remove VAT, taxes and sundry charges for the media. He said, 'such a discussion should be opened with the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria, the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria and some of the other media-based organisations.' He argued, 'if the Federal Government is considering a package for its own NTA and FRCN which have been receiving budgetary allocations, then something more should be done for the private sector side of the media.'

Continuing, he said, 'the government should not think they will have relief if our businesses disappear. People need information for democracy to grow. It is only an informed people that can make for a great democracy.' He argued that people need information to make informed decisions, wondering what would happen if Nigerians wake up one day and cannot find Channels TV, they can't find TVC, they can't find all the FM stations and they can't see newspapers on the streets. 'You know that would be chaotic because people do not trust social media. The government should pay attention to how the news media can survive this pandemic because we are operating within the same economy,' he said.

Supporting other colleagues, he said the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) can package a single digit facility to support media organisations but strongly kicked against financial handouts from the government. 'Nobody is asking for a gift to media organisations. The one that they gave before when the military seized some newspapers under President Goodluck Jonathan became a problem.' The Northern Regional Editor of Vanguard, however, kicked against any

form of bailout for the media and instead rooted for lowering of tariffs, granting tax holiday and building a solid economy that guarantees growth and investment opportunities.

The media thrive well when the economy and the financial systems are strong. To that extent, I believe that the Nigerian economy also propels the strength or otherwise of the media industry,' he said. While urging private media organisations to begin to think outside the box, he maintained that the pandemic can both be a learning curve and a time to devise new strategies to survive in the business.

According to him, 'One of the ways this can be done is for us to think of how we can create a stronger virtual presence than what we have been doing so we can do more business online than ever before.' Corroborating the position of other editors, he called for journalists to be trained so they can operate beyond the physical job space. 'They should learn new methods of carrying out their duties and making money so we are less dependent on the government. With that we can call the bluff. 'The pandemic has come to wake us up from our slumber and make us think, look and shine better. Since we have survived now, we should carry on the battle from this point and excel no matter how adverse the situation may be in future.'

The Daily Trust editor threw his weight behind government bailout funds to media organisations, giving stimulus packages to journalists and offering them specialised training in addition to other incentives to enable them function effectively within the new normal environment. 'If reporters get such support, I am sure they will continue to give their best to society. If you look critically, people in other sectors of the economy have gotten such support,' he argued. On the ongoing talks between the CBN and the Nigerian Press Organisation, the editor advised that the envisaged package should go beyond supporting media owners and create a separate package to support reporters.

'We are talking about the real practitioners who put their boots on the ground. The reporters are at the receiving end and yet they are the least paid and the most endangered. The reporters deserve all forms of support be it financial, manpower development and all that,' he said. Chairman, Leadership Group agreed NPO was having talks with the CBN on the possibility for a single-digit intervention fund for the media. 'What media owners agreed with him (CBN governor) in a Zoom meeting at the heat of the lockdown was the provision of an intervention fund at five percent interest rate,' he said. 'The money is not a gift because we will pay back and so, there is no question of the piper dictates the tune. It is a stimulus that is being done all over the world. 'By providing the facility, the CBN is just doing the right thing. I know when someone is doing the right thing and it appears to be so good, it is because nobody was doing it before,' he argued. To him, the media have no choice than to change the way they operate and embrace new systems and technologies. 'It's either we do it or we become extinct. We can't continue doing things the way we were doing. The market has moved. If you don't know it has moved, then you're dead,' the media entrepreneur said.

In summary, Research Question 5 discusses five thematic issues, namely: Issues of measures of sustainability, specialised training, improved funding, collaborations and partnerships, monitoring and evaluation and productivity. The segment that follows summarises the key findings and raises emerging issues.

Key Findings

Some of the measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep journalists and media houses afloat during and after the pandemic include palliatives for journalists and bailout funds for media houses. Others would include provision of health insurance cover for news staff, use of new media tools and technologies that

would encourage remote operations, improved funding of media houses, and periodic digital skills training for journalists.

Journalists covering the pandemic would require specialised training to be productive and function at maximum efficiency. This view has been expressed by (97%) of the respondents of this study.

Training on virtual news gathering techniques, training on electronic data gathering and framing of media content, training on remote data gathering and information verification, training on multimedia journalism, training on safety of journalists online, among others are some of the specific specialised trainings that journalists would need in order to acquire the skill sets that are needed to practice in the increasingly digitised COVID-19 and post COVID-19 media environment.

Grants and donations from philanthropists, government bailout, assistance and stability fund, crowdsourcing, grants and investment funding, funds from venture capital and hedge funds, community funding, assistance from cooperatives and foundations are some of the funding options media organisations will need to explore in a COVID-19 and post COVID-19 economy to keep afloat.

Findings (96.9%) affirm the need for an intervention fund for media organisations during and after the pandemic, while (94.9%) favour forging of partnerships between media organisations and other institutions in society in order to improve media performance and sustainability during and post COVID-19.

Audience polls, surveys and research, periodic assessment or evaluation of media activities by independent bodies, evaluation of media activities by regulatory bodies like NBC, NPC, productivity audit using technological tools, self-regulation mechanisms by media houses, feedback from the public are some of the measures that could be adopted and implemented to measure the performance of media organisations during and after the pandemic.

The federal government through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should create a single digit loan package to support media organisations in the country.

All the editors who participated in this study kicked against all forms of financial handouts from government to media organisations as they argued that such funds could serve as avenues for control.

There is a need for the government to lower tariffs on media consumables which are largely imported, grant tax holiday, and above all, build a solid economy that guarantees growth and investment.

Media organisations should think of creating stronger virtual presence than they do now. In that way, they can attract more hits online, sell their content and equally attract more advertisements.

Government and entrepreneurs should invest more in information technology infrastructure that would create an enabling environment for robust media practice.

Emerging Issues

None of the media entrepreneurs and editors gave thought to partnerships and collaborations in content developments which are being embraced by not only multinational media organisations but also local and national media platforms in developed economies.

There is a growing possibility of marketing content instead of depending solely on advertising revenue that is drying and government patronage which could lead to choking control.

High level of suspicion and distrust of the government by editors and heads of media advocacy groups who strongly believe that bailout and stimulus funds could be used by the government to exact control on the industry.

The media owners and editors have not forgiven President Muhammadu Buhari's government for humiliating and forcing them to refund the compensation voluntarily paid to them by ex-President Goodluck Jonathan following the seizure and destruction of newspapers by the Nigerian military shortly before the 2019 general election.

- Many of the media managers who are against the government arranged bailout fund insist they may be humiliated and forced to refund whatever they are given without recourse to the law and due process.

Key Findings and Emerging Issues

This segment aggregates the key findings and emerging issues discussed in this report. Emerging issues, however, are concerns arising from the research that have implications for the future of journalism practice in the COVID-19 dispensation but that are not visible at the present. It is a peep into the future by identifying potential problems before they become manifest.

a. Key Findings

The pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria by hampering access to news sources. By hampering access to news sources, the pandemic changed the way reporters accessed information and introduced a new way of accessing information (new professional normal) – the use of digital technology to access sources or to gather information online from sources.

The pandemic has restricted information gathering to online news sources. Reporters now access information mainly via: WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom meetings, Twitter, YouTube and phone calls. This means that the newsroom has become virtual, so reporters don't need to run to the office to file stories any longer.

To be effective as a journalist during and post COVID 19, reporters need to acquire online information gathering and verification skills. But, the findings from this study smack of deep-seated ignorance and poor information gathering and verification as well as poor fact-checking skills of Nigerian journalists.

A stunning finding reveals that the newsroom has become more efficient in the COVID 19 era. This appears to be the case because with little resources, correspondents can report live from their locations and conduct virtual interviews. As a result, news is served fresher than ever.

Another finding shows in clear terms, how immensely COVID 19 has changed the newsroom culture because of the need to adhere to social distancing. A lot of newsrooms are working from home due to the social distancing rule. In response to this new trend, one of the respondents said 'the newsroom has become a cold room because most people work from home.'

It is also significant that the pandemic has changed the pattern of communication across newsrooms. In the new order, communication between reporters and editors has been restricted to emails and chat rooms as digital platforms have become the main source of communication.

To a large extent, it has changed journalism practice as social distancing prevents information sourcing through fact-to-face interaction. It has forced media houses to adopt remote working options as many journalists now resort to online engagements to limit human contact.

What is happening now is that if people don't see value in what the print media is offering, they won't buy. That is simply what it is now.

Media is now real time

What has changed in broadcast journalism in Nigeria from the pandemic is the way the media engage with news sources as well as the logistics towards preparing for a story. The broadcast media now conduct more interviews on Skype and other virtual platforms. Microphone stands and holders are longer now than they used to be and microphones are covered always.

To a large extent it has changed the way journalism is practiced. Before, journalists could interview news sources personally but now that is not possible as people want to be interviewed online. The quality of such recordings and the quantity of stories have dropped significantly and the number of stories done has reduced.

It has also significantly changed the dynamics of practice by changing the psyche of journalists.

The number of stories done has reduced drastically, in both print and broadcast media. For example, Daily Trust not only reduced the number of copies produced but also the pagination. According to the editor, the least number of pages the company produced was 32 pages instead of 80 to 90 pages it was producing before the crisis. The story was the same for Vanguard which has cut pagination from 92 to 72, and from 72 to 56, then from 56 to 32 pages and also significantly reduced the print run. In the broadcast media, transmission time was reduced. Leadership and Guardian newspapers also confirmed they reduced pages and print run.

Only a few media organisations provided facemasks and hand sanitisers for reporters who were covering the COVID-19 pandemic. An overwhelming majority of media organisations provided nothing for their reporters in terms of personal protective equipment. No media organisation, for instance, provided insurance cover for reporters who were covering the pandemic, thereby exposing them to absolute risk and danger.

A significant number of Nigeria's practicing journalists are digital illiterates and not technology savvy.

A staggering (71%) of the respondents were given no palliatives by their media organisations. Food items constituted the highest form of palliatives with (7.44%) respondents benefiting from the intervention

There is also the challenge of Internet subscription and connectivity and related costs. COVID-19 has disrupted media operations and has forced online migration of news and production studios. Now media organisations (print and broadcast) use such platforms like Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype and all of that for operations. So, a media organisation that cannot afford that or the one that does not have a strong internet provider or the one that does not have the money to subscribe and stay in active connection like others, would crash out of business in no time.

Psychologically, editors and management of print media organisations are affected and afraid of the unknown. Of course, they had asked reporters to be sending stories from home, and to be sourcing for stories online by conducting interviews with their phones and all that, yet an air of uncertainty and a modicum of anxiety pervaded their psyche.

One of the biggest challenges confronting journalists and media houses that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is an information security rooted challenge of authentication and verification of news sources.

Another challenge is that the industry is forced to lose its key personnel, some to death and others to sickness and yet many others to retrenchment.

One of the major challenges' journalists had covering COVID-19 is the absence of personal protective equipment (PPE). Only very few media organisations could actually provide their staff with the needed protective gear.

Since most interviews are now done online, journalists are at the mercy of Internet and telecommunications service providers. Many times, they don't have clean feeds and this affects the quality of visuals available for production.

In both government-owned and privately-owned radio and television stations, journalists lacked PPEs, were exposed to the risk of contracting the virus, lacked resilient internet connectivity, had poor picture quality, and delivered poor results at the end of the day.

Both government-owned radio and television stations had obsolete equipment which made it difficult to optimise ICT equipment.

It was also found that many workers have had to rely on their private data for office work without being reimbursed, and that many journalists have had to buy PPEs with their money even when they were on official assignments.

In carrying out their operations, print and broadcast print media organisations adopted a number of strategies to survive COVID-19 related challenges. Some of these strategies included reduction in the workforce, pruning down of pagination and print run. Working or reporting from home, reduction in publication frequencies, suspension of expansion projects/plans, suspension of expensive reporting projects, shutdown of operations, making more concessions to advertisers, and exploration of alternative revenue sources. Prudence, cutting some allowances and a part of the salary, professionalism and adoption and use of digital platforms were all part of the measures that media organisations used to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Responses of management and editors in government and privately owned radio and television stations indicated that only operational staff were consistent in coming to office while others were encouraged to work from home. Staff were provided with official means of transportation, an action which curtailed cases of harassment from security operatives. In addition, constant reorientation was provided to remind staff about the realities of COVID-19, and at the same time, rules were made on compulsory use of facemasks by staff. Palliatives were also given to staff that were on duty in some broadcast media organisations on a weekly basis and free food twice in a month. In some broadcast media organisations, management negotiated with staff for pay cut, in others, safety kits were provided, while in others COVID Marshals were appointed to ensure compliance with safety protocols within the office space.

- Responses of media owners, professional associations, advocacy and training groups showed that reduction in number of staff, adoption and use of digital media platforms (zoom and skype) for interviews, rotation of duties to reduce staff physically present in the office were some of the measures that media organisations adopted to survive COVID-19 related challenges. Print media organisations have had to cut down pagination, while electronic media have had to reduce broadcast time and the number of staff on duty. Many media houses cut down on the size of their newsrooms, sacked hundreds of journalists, cut between 30 -50 percent of salaries, operated skeletal services to cut operational costs, sought donor funding for operations, and explored other streams of revenue (publishing, digital television). Other strategies include reduction of pagination and print run of newspapers and magazines, concentration on online editions, reduction of staff strength and salaries, and lifting of unverified contents from foreign news organisations. The Guild of Corporate Online Publishers embarked on training and re-training of journalists, and recommended that media organisations purchased or rented cars from a pool of cars to ease mobility of reporters. It also recommended acquisition of gadgets such as phones and laptops for journalists, while the National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists said journalists adopted safety and self-preservation measures to survive COVID-19 related challenges in the course of discharging their duties to society.
- The measures that were adopted to keep media organisations afloat during the pandemic affected operations of journalists and media organisations very prominently. Because media organisations were compelled to make do with few hands, the robustness of stories was sometimes affected. These measures have also led to reduction in content quality, fewer contents. More reliance on press releases and user-generated contents, is waning ability of the media to hold individuals, corporations and governments accountable, and is making media organisations less and less

independent. Further, the measures have affected morale but ushered a period when superior management skills would come to play. Some of the measures taken have led to low morale among journalists, while the quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations.

- Many journalists are going into depression because they are not used to working from home and in isolation, especially the newsroom staff. This behavioural manifestation is an outcome of the decision of media organisations to allow only critical workers who have direct contact with equipment come to office. Although these measures are making journalists more conscious of safety, on the flip side, they are financially draining as media workers are earning meagre salaries.

The measures taken have led to low morale among journalists. For example, reduction of salaries and non-payment of salaries have put severe strain on the journalists who now find it difficult to take care of their families. Journalists also feel frustrated because they are overworked in the sense that fewer staff do jobs meant for more staff. Media organisations, on the flip side, are managing to survive. The quest for adverts and sponsorship has in some cases affected the editorial independence of media organisations. Quality control is limited and compromised. In essence, the measures have reduced staff morale; they have reduced product quality; they have put a question mark on professionalism and ethical values; they have reduced the ability of media organisations to meet their obligations to their staff and society. However, they are impacting positively on those who are able to finance operations.

Some of the measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep journalists and media houses afloat during and after the pandemic include palliatives for journalists and bailout fund for media houses. Others would include provision of health insurance cover for news staff, use of new media tools and technologies that would encourage remote operations, improved funding of media houses, and periodic digital skills training for journalists.

Journalists covering the pandemic would require specialised training to be productive and function at maximum efficiency. This view has been expressed by (97%) of the respondents of this study.

Training on virtual news gathering techniques, training on electronic data gathering and framing of media content, training on remote data gathering and information verification, training on multimedia journalism, training on safety of journalists online, among others are some of the specific specialised trainings that journalists would need in order to acquire the skill sets that are needed to practice in the increasingly digitised COVID-19 and post COVID-19 media environment.

Grants and donations from philanthropists, government bailout, assistance and stability fund, crowdsourcing, grants and investment funding, funds from venture capital and hedge funds, community funding, assistance from cooperatives and foundations are some of the funding options media organisations will need to explore in a COVID-19 and post COVID 19 economy to keep afloat.

Findings (96.9%) affirm the need for an intervention fund for media organisations during and after the pandemic, while (94.9%) favour forging of partnerships between media organisations and other institutions in society in order to improve media performance and sustainability during and post COVID-19.

Audience polls, surveys and research, periodic assessment or evaluation of media activities by independent bodies, evaluation of media activities by regulatory bodies like NBC, NPC, productivity audit using technological tools, self-regulation mechanisms by media houses, feedback from the public are some of the measures that could be adopted and implemented monitor and evaluate the performance of media organisations during and after the pandemic.

The federal government through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should create a single digit loan package to support media organisations in the country.

All the editors who participated in this study kicked against all forms of financial handouts from government to media organisations as they argued that such funds could serve as avenues for control.

There is a need for the government to lower tariffs on media consumables which are largely imported, grant tax holiday, and above all, build a solid economy that guarantees growth and investment.

Media organisations should think of creating stronger virtual presence than they do now. In that way, they can attract more hits online, sell their content and equally attract more advertisements.

Government and entrepreneurs should invest more in information technology infrastructure that would create an enabling environment for robust media practice.

b. Emerging Issues

The demand for information hasn't dropped but the demand for newspapers has dropped. The question is, to what extent are the print media serving as the watchdogs of society in executing their surveillance role?

The pandemic has affected revenue in the sense that advertisements are not forthcoming, what funding mechanisms would ensure sustainability of media organisations during and post COVID 19?

Who should be responsible for training of media sources in digital literacy skills to be more effective sources of information during and post COVID-19 eras?

There is a need for media organisations to own their own means of transportation to aid the mobility of reporters in order to shield them from the risk of contracting the virus through patronage of the public transportation system.

To be effective in the COVID-19 and post COVID-19, news sources would need to have not only digital media tools, but also digital literacy skills

What measures could be taken to maintain the sanity and ensure that mental health and psyche of journalists are in top functional states during and post COVID-19?

Engagement and retention of journalism jobs during and post COVID-19 would be based purely on productivity, the quality and the value journalists are bringing to their news organisations.

The pandemic marks the beginning of a new era in the practice of journalism in Nigeria where a few persons would be responsible for doing the jobs that so many others could have done.

There is a critical information security challenge in using Zoom to report cases that are sensitive in nature and have security implications. This is because the free version of Zoom that is widely used for meetings does not guarantee end-to-end encryption of data. The version that guarantees that is subject to subscription. However, almost all the media organisations are using the free version yet, transmitting sensitive information. This situation needs urgent attention and resolution.

The media were expected to play one of the most pivotal services during the lockdown. They were expected to give correct information especially because fake news took over the space and it became very dangerous. The media are into both business and public service, meaning that they just have to be around to discharge their information, education, socialisation and entertainment roles. But the question is, with the rising costs of production and dwindling revenue caused by low sales and low advert intake, what becomes of their social responsibility mandate which is constitutionally guaranteed by S. 22, of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution?

Journalists in Europe, America and other First World countries have overcome the problem of internet connectivity, while their counterparts in Nigeria are still grappling with it. As a result, the quality of information they are able to access is limited. Sometimes they do not even have the money to subscribe. In a country that is rapidly undergoing digital transformation, what can the government and entrepreneurs do to leapfrog rollout of broadband in order to galvanise provision of sustainable, resilient and robust information technology services and infrastructure?

Some journalists who did critical reporting on the government's response to the pandemic were harassed and detained and many on the orders of state governors. What measures could be taken to protect the fundamental human rights of journalists and guarantee their freedom of expression which is enshrined in S. 39 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria?

It is absolutely important for media organisations to provide a broad spectrum of palliatives to motivate reporters and spur them on to greater productivity on the job during and after the pandemic.

It is important for the Nigerian society to give close attention to the issue of the sanity, mental and psychological well being of journalists because a dislocation in this area of their lives would amount to a dislocation on the entire nation.

If there is an information blackout occasioned by the negative effects of the pandemic on journalists, the Nigerian society will be thrown into a quagmire of avoidable crisis.

None of the media entrepreneurs and or editors considered issues of collaboration, mergers and acquisition which have been adopted in other sectors of the economy to survive industry-related crises.

Media owners and managers were oblivious of the seeming ignorance of their reporters in the use of digital technology and the social media in news gathering and fact-checking. This is because while (77.3%) of reporters claimed they have the skill to

confirm the information they get online; their responses betrayed their gaping ignorance.

Media entrepreneurs and editors seem to be comfortable with the low skills set of their reporters in handling digital technological tools that have become the new normal and indispensable for the practice of journalism.

The study showed that neither the government through the PTF or the media through their various platforms and professional bodies considered the need for the adoption of a distinct protocol for the operations of the media.

Journalists, like medical workers, served as first responders during the entire period the pandemic raged, with medical workers providing care to the infected and journalists carrying out surveillance, providing information and educating the public on how to prevent and or survive the pandemic.

While there was a clear protocol for medical workers, none was conceived for journalists who also operated on the frontline.

For the broadcast media, there has been an emerging need for the use of long microphone sticks, microphone covers and body covers for camera operators who venture into places with high possibility of infection.

There is also an urgent need to formulate and implement a National Media Policy and Strategy on COVID-19

With the significant reduction in the number of staff available for work in newsrooms and the advent of virtual reporting, there is serious need for a new policy framework to address the emerging trend.

There is also need to develop a new remuneration template that takes cognisance of the new skills sets and usage of specialised digital tools needed to produce and deliver content capable of attracting and sustaining public patronage.

Since the operations of the media have now shifted largely to the virtual space, the high cost of data and the poor-quality of service by telecommunications operators have become major issues of concern for the survival of the industry. There is, therefore, an urgent need for stakeholders to devise ways of ensuring the media have access to data that is both affordable and strong in connectivity. Since the media fulfil social responsibility, it would not be too much to consider data subsidy and rebates on tariffs for the consumables used by the industry.

There is a serious need for training and retraining of journalists and media managers on the business side of their operations, that is, how to run profitably without compromising professional ethics and social responsibility.

The quests for advert and sponsorships have been found to seriously affect editorial independence of media organisations.

While reporters advocated partnerships and collaborations in content development, none of the media entrepreneurs and editors gave thought to the idea which is being embraced by not only multinational media organisations but also local and national media platforms in developed economies.

There is a growing possibility of marketing content instead of depending solely on advertising revenue that is drying and government patronage which could lead to choking control.

High level of suspicion and distrust of the government by editors and heads of media advocacy groups who strongly believe that bailout and stimulus funds could be used by the government to exact control on the industry.

The media owners and editors have not forgiven President Muhammadu Buhari's government for humiliating and forcing them to refund the compensation voluntarily paid to them by ex-President Goodluck Jonathan following the seizure and destruction of newspapers by the Nigerian military shortly before the 2019 general election.

Many of the media managers who are against the government arranged bailout fund insist they may be humiliated and forced to refund whatever they are given without recourse to the law and due process.



JAP
JOURNALIST
AGAINST
POVERTY

to a two day training

The Corruption and Social Justice

Stand Again.

UPRICE
FOR NIGERIA

Members of Journalists Against Poverty (JAP) during a two-day retreat and training on investigative reporting organized by ActionAid Nigeria.

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria Luyo, October 2018.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic affected mass media organisations and journalism practice in Nigeria, and to figure out measures or strategies that could be used to address the situation. Specifically, the research was guided by five main objectives:

1. To determine the extent to which the pandemic has changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria
2. To find out the challenges that are confronting journalists and media organisations that are covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria
3. To find out measures adopted by media organisations to survive COVID-19 related challenges in Nigeria.
4. To find out how the measures adopted by media organisations are affecting journalists and media operations in the country.
5. To determine the measures that could be adopted and implemented to keep Journalists and media organisations from going under during and post COVID-19

This research was implemented to show how media organisations in Nigeria were operating under socio-economic dislocations that were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This report will, therefore, serve as a resource material to journalists, media managers, research institutions and sundry organisations requiring information on how COVID-19 has affected media operations and journalism practice in Nigeria. It has suggested new operational models and intervention measures that are capable of keeping media professionals in business during and post-COVID.

Further, findings from this research have opened new research frontiers on media business models, and the new skills that are required by journalists to function optimally in the increasingly digitised media industry occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media professionals and policy makers will through this study; identify new challenges to the profession, develop new approaches and policies to address lapses and strengthen practices for effective service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and emerging issues from this research, some recommendations were made to keep journalists and media organisations in Nigeria afloat during and post COVID-19.

With the significant reduction in the number of staff available for work in

newsrooms and the advent of virtual reporting, there is serious need for a new policy framework to address the emerging trend.

The federal government through the Central Bank of Nigeria should create a single digit loan package to support media organisations in the country.

There is a need for the government to lower tariffs on media consumables which are largely imported, grant tax holiday, and above all, build a solid economy that guarantees growth and investment.

Media organisations should think of creating stronger virtual presence than they do now. In that way, they can attract more hits online, sell their contents and equally attract more advertisements.

Low revenue caused by low sales and low advert intake. Yet the cost of production is on the rise because most of the consumables are imported like the newsprint, the ink, the machines and the printing plates. There is, therefore, an urgent need for intervention to reduce costs and to enable the media to stay afloat because they offer essential social services to the society.

Government and entrepreneurs should invest more in information technology infrastructure that would create an enabling environment for robust media practice.

There is a need for media organisations to own their own means of transportation to aid the mobility of reporters in order to shield them from the risk of contracting the virus through patronage of the public transportation system.

There is also need to develop a new remuneration template that takes cognisance of the new skills set and usage of specialised digital tools needed to produce and deliver content capable of attracting and sustaining public patronage.

Since the operations of the media have now shifted largely to the virtual space, the high cost of data and the poor-quality service by telecommunications operators have become major issues of concern for the survival of the industry. There is, therefore, an urgent need for stakeholders to devise ways of ensuring the media have access to data that is both affordable and strong in connectivity. Since the media fulfil social responsibility, it would not be too much to consider data subsidy and rebates on tariffs for the consumables used by the industry.

There is a serious need for training and retraining of journalists and media managers on the business side of their operations, that is, how to run profitably without compromising professional ethics and social responsibility.

It is absolutely important for media organisations to provide a broad spectrum of palliatives to motivate reporters and spur them on to greater productivity on the job during the pandemic.

It is important for the Nigerian society to give close attention to the issue of the sanity, mental and psychological health of journalists because a dislocation in this area of well-being in their lives would amount to a dislocation on the entire nation.

Stakeholders to prevail on the government to pay its indebtedness to the media. Alternatively, the debts be converted to license and other fees owed the government.

Stakeholders to think out an effective social safety net for journalists and allied media workers.

CBN and donor agencies to provide financial and other support to journalists but such intervention should go directly to the beneficiaries and should not be routed through media owners.

The media should carry out consistent risk analysis of their operational environment and take proactive measures to ensure the profitability and sustainability.

There is urgent need for niche media which cater for specific groups of people with a particular set of interests. Instead of producing for mass audience, some media organisations can try to gain maximum relevance within targeted audience or market.

The recommendations made pursuant to this study could be implemented on the platform of the proposed SCARS Intervention Model (SIM) discussed in the segment on Research Outcomes.



Reporters from Nasarawa and Kogi pose for a group photograph after a 2-day Media Masterclass on preventing violent extremism through news reportage. The training was organised by ActionAid Nigeria and funded by Global Engagement and Community Resilience Fund (G-CERF).
Photo: ActionAid Nigeria, Keffi, February, 2020.

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ActionAid Nigeria Communications Coordinator, Olay Ayanda, presents hand sanitizers to DAAI Communications. In response to COVID-19, ActionAid reached 30 media houses and 102 journalists in the country with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Photo: ActionAid Nigeria/ Abuja, July 2020.

Appendix 1

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON NIGERIAN MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE (ICPNJQ)

Dear Respondent,

I am a Research Fellow and Managing Editor with Next Edition Newspaper in Lagos, Nigeria. I am conducting a research on: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Operations of the Mass Media in Nigeria.

Kindly respond to the questions below. Be assured that the information you would supply will be used solely for the purpose of the research, and will be held in strict confidence.

Thank you.

Ibanga Isine
Researcher

SECTION A

Please tick the appropriate option from the alternatives below

1. Gender (a) Male (b) Female

SECTION B

Please answer the questions /tick the appropriate option below

2. In what ways has the pandemic hampered your access to information and news sources?.....
.....
3. List the three sources from which you obtained information in the past six months?
.....
.....
.....
.....
4. Have you ever gotten information from online sources? Yes/No
5. If yes, do you believe all the information you obtain online? Yes/No
6. If no, do you have the skill to authenticate the information you obtain online? Yes/No
7. If yes, what do you use?
8. How has the pandemic changed the typical newsroom culture in Nigeria?
.....
9. Does your organisation provide insurance cover and personal protection equipment required to work during the pandemic?

10. Has any protocol been developed for journalists to use in the course of their duties during the pandemic? Yes/No
11. If yes, has your organisation adopted and implemented it? Yes/No
12. Does your organisation provide the equipment and materials required for your daily operations? Yes/No
13. What technology do you deploy in news gathering and reportage?
.....
.....
14. What palliatives has your organisation provided to motivate you on the job?
.....
.....
15. What measures should be adopted to sustain media operations during and post COVID-19.....
16. Would you recommend specialised training for journalists during and post COVID-19. Yes/No
17. If yes, what specific specialised training?
18. Aside advertising, what other sources of funding should the media explore to stay afloat?
19. Is there need for an intervention fund for the media during and post COVID-19? Yes/No
20. Will forging partnerships among media organisations and other institutions in society help improve media performance and sustainability during and post-COVID-19? Yes/No
21. How can the productivity of media organisations be monitored and evaluated during and post-COVID-19?

Appendix 2

.....
.....
.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

INFORMATION SHEET

I am a Research Fellow and Managing Editor with Next Edition Newspaper in Lagos, Nigeria. I am conducting research on: The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Nigerian Media Operations and Survival, in collaboration with ACTIONAID NIGERIA.

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis. It is a development problem, and must be seen in this context, as it affects every aspect of human life and all ramifications of human endeavour across different countries and continents of the world.

While the impact of the pandemic varies from country to country, it is certain that it will increase the level of poverty and inequality at a global scale.

Assessing the impacts of the crisis on businesses, societies, economies and vulnerable groups is, therefore, fundamental to developing a strategic response capable of driving a recovery that does not leave anyone behind.

Without appropriate and urgent socio-economic responses, the United Nations said global suffering will escalate, jeopardising lives and livelihoods for many years to come.

As the pandemic unleashes its most contagious sting; killing hundreds of thousands and overstressing healthcare systems, the world looks up to the media to provide the critical information needed not only to cope with, but also to deal with the pandemic.

The UNDP in its March 24, 2020 report observes that, "As the outbreak intensifies, Nigeria's services, trade and financial sectors would suffer significant disruptions. Together, the three sectors contribute over 30 per cent to GDP."

The UNDP insists that the contraction in these sectors would result in significant job losses both in the formal and informal sectors, adding that it could deal a severe blow and trigger instability as youth unemployment/underemployment which is already high at 55 percent would worsen or become more complex.

The media are strong components of Nigeria's service and trade sectors and contribute significantly to job creation and wealth-making. While the public more than ever before, relies on radio, television, print and online newspapers for information, education and entertainment in the midst of the crisis triggered by the pandemic, the business side of the media is almost comatose.

The advertising sector, which is inseparable from the economic model of the media, is operating at its lowest ebb due to the shutdown of businesses. The dwindling revenue earnings have, therefore, forced many media organisations to consider job cuts and new

operational models where only few reporters are engaged with many working from their homes.

It is an established fact the media were in pretty bad shape before the coronavirus pandemic. However, the dislocations caused by the pandemic have further worsened the already bad situation. Besides, the full impact of COVID-19 on the media cannot, therefore, be established in empirical terms except if full-scale research is carried out using the right instruments and protocols.

On the next part are five questions that underscore my research direction. Kindly fill the CONSENT FORM and respond to the questions accordingly. However, be assured that the information you would supply will be used solely for the purpose of the research and ancillary activities as spelt out in the Consent From.

The answers, which should be as terse as possible, should not exceed three typed-written pages or five minutes of recording time as the case may be.

PART TWO

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent has the pandemic changed the practice of journalism in Nigeria?
2. What challenges confront journalists/media houses during COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria?
3. What measures have been adopted by media organisations to survive COVID-19 related challenges in Nigeria?
4. How are such measures affecting journalists/media organisations in the country?
5. What measures could be adopted and implemented to keep the media and journalists in their job and save the sector from collapse?

Best regards,
Ibanga Isine

Appendix 3

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NIGERIAN MEDIA OPERATIONS AND SURVIVAL

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Thank you for reading the Information Sheet about the research interview. If you are happy to participate then please complete and sign the form below. Please initial the boxes below to confirm that you agree with each statement:

**Please
Initial box:**

I confirm that I have read and understood the content of the Information Sheet.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

I understand that my responses may not be confidential. I understand that my name may be linked with the research materials, and my opinion may be used or identifiable in the report or reports that will result from this research.

I agree for this interview to be recorded. I understand that the recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis and that extracts from the interview, from which I may be personally identified, may be used in any conference presentation, report or journal article developed as a result of the research.

I agree that my anonymised information will be accepted as such and could be used for the purpose of this research as well as publications related to this study after the completion of the study.

I agree to take part in this interview.

.....
Name of Participant

.....
Date

.....
Signature

Appendix 5

Journalists and their Media Organisations

S/N	Media Organisation	Number Polled	Responses Received
1.	Vanguard Newspaper	10	10
2.	The Trust Newspaper	10	10
3.	Premium Times	10	10
4.	Leadership	10	10
5.	Nigeria Television Authority (NTA)	10	10
6.	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria	10	10
7.	The Guardian	10	10
8.	The Sun	10	10
9.	Television Continental (TVC)	10	10
10	NUJ FCT Council	10	9
Total responses received			99

Appendix 6

S/No.	Interviewee	Mode	Date
1.	Chairman, Leadership Group/NPAN Exco Member	Face-to-face Recorded	August 30, 2020
2.	Editor-in-Chief Guardian	Face-to-face Recorded	September 02, 2020
3.	Daily Editor, The Trust Newspaper	Face-to-face Recorded	September 07, 2020
4.	National President of NUJ	Phone (Recorded)	September 16, 2020
5.	Northern Regional Editor, Vanguard	Phone (Recorded)	September 17, 2020
6.	Station Manager, Silverbird Rhythm	Phone (Recorded)	September 17, 2020
7.	Editor-in-Chief Premium Times	Online Questions	August 10, 2020
8.	National President, GCOP	Online Questions	August 14, 2020
9.	Founding Member NPAN	Online Questions	August 22, 2020
10.	Daily Editor, The Sun	Online Questions	August 22, 2020
11.	Executive Director ICIR	Online Questions	August 27, 2020
12.	Executive Director, Media Career Network	Online Questions	August 31, 2020
13.	Head of News, FRCN	Online Questions	September 03, 2020
14.	General Manager, FRCN	Online Questions	September 05, 2020
15.	Senior Editor TVC	Online Questions	September 02, 2020
16.	National President NGE	Online Questions	September 03, 2020
17.	Chairman, FCT Council of NUJ	Online Questions	September 03, 2020
18.	General Manager, NTA	Online Questions	August 22, 2020
19.	Eagle Online	Online Questions	August 15, 2020
20.	Editor, Leadership Daily	Online Questions	August 03, 2020



Group photo taken shortly after this research report validation meeting at ActionAid Nigeria office premises.

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Photo: ActionAid Nigeria/ Abuja, October 2020.

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