

NAVIGATING THE PATHWAYS OF INFODEMIC ON COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA: ITS ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The global discourse on COVID-19 clearly shows that while social media has assisted quite a lot of people to communicate all over the world, it has also turned out to be the leading supplier of half-truths about COVID-19, an occurrence popularly known as ‘infodemic’. Given the inadvertent consequences of globalization and the confusion linked with half-truths about COVID-19 as well as the escalating frequency of social media consumers, it is therefore imperative to appreciate how people utilize, respond to, and make use of the information concerning the deadly disease on the internet. Scholarly investigation into the infodemic about COVID-19 has regrettably been modest and disproportionate. This study is an attempt to respond to the thesis that the current approach toward half-truths about COVID-19 seems overly theoretical, considering the social and health concerns that now confront us. There is, therefore, a need for deconstruction and re-envisioning of the notion of half-truth which will serve as a useful resource in dealing with contemporary health problems, and the multiple crises that face us today. Employing the descriptive methodology and content analysis, the present study examines the ethical implications of the infodemic on COVID-19 and investigates the extent to which people can tackle half-truths that do not agree with their beliefs. Findings reveal that propaganda about COVID-19 is mainly multiplied through social media theatres like reports, stories and gossip. These conspiracy theories tend to produce some level of unrestricted alarm which can lead to certain unsafe practices and behaviour.

Key Words: Infodemic, Misinformation, Social Media, Conspiracy theory, Internet

Word Count: 245

Introduction

COVID-19 has made history as the foremost epidemic to take place in the technological age and is masked with an “infodemic” of half-truths and conspiracy theories (Ahorsu 2021, 11). It is pertinent to note that the world today has witnessed a dramatic increase in admission to new equipment for the sending and receiving of information and messages, however, the value of these messages people make use of raises some moral inquiry between their accuracy and their untruth nature as well as how to determine its insight, people’s viewpoint and stance (Benziman 2020, 27). The advent of the internet and its expertise has transformed how people live and get things done. This is exemplified in the way people live in the world today where time and space are relative ideas, in which case boundaries do not exist any longer, and associations with others are done swiftly (Ahorsu 2021, 11). All these represent having enormous clout, which can turn out to become hazardous with drawbacks.

This is epitomized in the emergence of COVID-19 as the foremost social media infodemic activator at the turn of the 21st century. This is owing to the increased speed at which information and propaganda are spread around the globe concerning COVID-19 which is stimulating fright and horror in the minds of people. The coming and stretch of COVID-19 did not only usher in combating the deadly disease, but it also escorted us into the field to fight infodemic’ (Dawson, Emmanuel, and Parker et al. 2020, 88). This scenario become critically important because people at the point were

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enthusiastic to have knowledge and news about the pandemic which they think can facilitate their understanding of the coronavirus emergency, make it clear to them what they can do to defend themselves, instruct them on what to do to people they are concerned about, and their extended neighbourhood, as well as offer free information on how people should respond to the epidemic. It is at this juncture that it becomes comprehensible that certain news items and their accompanied deceptiveness could go a long way to alter and/or shape the way people identify with and take action regarding certain public health occurrences or emergencies and determine who is sincerely helping them and which institutions are genuinely assisting them to tackle the disaster confronting them or not (Essien 2020, 135).

However, the huge amount of reports and news about COVID-19 and its accompanied uncertainty, deceptive personality, and outright false nature explains why the World Health Organization makes use of the expression ‘infodemic’ to depict the state of affairs (WHO 2020, 29). Similarly, this lends credence to the caveat issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) concerning the infodemic’s impact on individual technological knowledge (especially in less developed societies), the consequence of well-being literacy, and the response to COVID-19. Amazingly, the quantity of propaganda neighbouring COVID-19 that has flowed from side to side shared media since January 2020 is extremely remarkable and has been correlated to the growing intensity of concern and panic among social media consumers (WHO

2020, 29). At the epicentre of the infodemic and propaganda spread is the net and social media proposal which gives out announcements that permit consumers to discerningly speak with others and obtain information from consumer-created content. It has turned out to be a brilliant means for contributing information, such as therapeutic and wellbeing-related information (Essien 2017, 165). However, dependence on social media to assemble information and reports has been seen to have been greater than previous considerably over the preceding two decades and attained its zenith with the coming out of COVID-19/VID19 epidemic (WHO 2020, 26).

It is obvious that despite several intervention measures, COVID-199 deadly disease has persisted and has a considerable force on the public in so many countries. It has been established to be the foremost source of loss in quite several nations around the globe (Venkateswaran 2020, 23). It is pertinent to note that to date, individuals are still being eliminated from the impact of COVID-19 regardless of the accessibility of very many to medicine, unrestricted health interventions strategies adopted to control the viral spread, the latest curative alternative, and the gallant hard work of vanguard caregivers, particularly in the comfortable nations with better community health amenities. This development nonetheless, rests squarely on the problem of fear, panic, and uncertainty about the disease (Powell 2020, 14). The question then is why is this particular disease so headache? Why is it so susceptible to a wide array of misinformation and infodemic? Attempt to answer these questions will point to the fact that although the effort was initially focused on the deadly and

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contagious virus (COVID-19), many have failed to underscore the more deadly and contagious impact of COVID-19, manifest in the online misinformation and disinformation about the virus, how it spread, and how it can be tackled until many were concurrently beleaguered by it. Just like the COVID-19 pandemic, very many societies were confronted with the widespread COVID-19 with enduring consequences caused by the COVID-19 infodemic.

Cyberspace otherwise known as the internet, particularly social media has been broadly employed in the preceding few years to scrutinize, identify, and calculate diseases and outbreaks of epidemics, as well as to forecast moulds of individual's conduct concerning healthiness (Essien 2017, 177). Fascinatingly, employing social media today is especially correlated to behaviour associated with well-being information; as a result, consumers endeavoured to put in writing a series of write-ups about their physical condition on diverse social media stages, frequently looking for information and counsel.

In contemporary times, social media platforms happen to be the main extensively exploited resource for news and information in the world. The reason is that they are easy and inexpensive to access and provide admission to the net. Consequently, a huge amount of recorded consumers on these platforms make excellent utilization of them in the largely successful ways to publicize information (Essien 2017, 178). Internet community platforms have grown up to become cooperative even to the average member of the community to sustain contact with acquaintances and relations to ease up loneliness and dullness

which have been linked with apprehension and enduring suffering, as a result, there is a significant alternative for loneliness at anywhere the community people are which would be of assistance in the lessening of both shared and emotional hopelessness (Essien 2020, 139).

Remarkably, several of the largely significant features of the internet community policy principally during difficult periods such as the pandemic era involve the hasty spreading of definite symbols of behaviour at all levels of human being continuation. The whole plan of getting involved in a certain system of conduct for a particular sickness or treatment, special security apparatus to be made use of, and ideas for the distribution of inadequate medicinal delivery have today developed into the latest benchmark well accepted by numerous individuals with the coming of the internet (Essien 2019, 48).

Nonetheless, the ambiguity connected with COVID-19 has resulted in disproportionate worldwide transmission and a stretch of the huge amount of communication, information, and propaganda relating to the deadly disease, its avoidance, sources, difficulties, and effects through the cyberspace and internet community. Therefore, infodemic and fake news naturally orbit around the beginning of COVID-19, its long-standing impacts, and its control on diverse collections such as the aged and offspring, as well as anticipation process and accessible medicine (Ahorsu 2021, 11). This study, therefore, attempts an examination of the extent to which people experience a perceived threat, panic, and uncertainty in the presence of infodemics and when they consume

misinformation and/or communication that is not in agreement with their philosophy, communal custom, and principles.

The Nigerian Experience and Cost Implications of Infodemic and Misinformation

COVID-19 remains the one single outbreak that has intensified the level of mistrust between citizens and their leaders all over the world. Notwithstanding the disruptions caused by the disease in all aspects of life, the disease has been considered prominent in all manner of infodemics. In Nigeria for instance, there has been a prevalence of so much confusion, conspiracy theories, and fake news surrounding the disease including the fact that the vaccines which were successfully introduced by WHO and some scientists to avert and bring to discontinuation the spread of the virus has been refused warm cuddle (Essien 2017, 177). Despondently though, this misinformation is being supported and encouraged by some highly placed and educated persons in the society who have exerted a lot of influence on others and thus affect the levels of acceptance of the different protocols and vaccines despite no scientific proof. A very good example is the scenario where some clergies have unscientifically tagged the vaccine “satanic” and have the “mark of the beast” (666) (Naumova 2020, 11).

This has however produced a negative impact on the fight against COVID-19 as well as the health of individuals infected with the disease. In addition to this disposition are the misconceptions against COVID-19 and the vaccines such as

that, “the vaccine can cause sterility in females”, that “Covid19 medicine modifies one’s hereditary secret code”, that “5G network multiplies Coronavirus”, that “the consumption of alcoholic drinks can lessen the danger of infectivity”, that “Covid-19 inoculations implant in them ‘mark-of-the-beast’”, that “authentic Covid-19 inoculations takes a very long time (many many years) to manufacture”, and that “COVID-19 inoculations pull towards you harsh consequences and sensitive to certain responses”, among others. Unfortunately, this misinformation has made the reception of the vaccines and the protocols difficult if not very slow in Nigeria by some Nigerians who have inconsiderately bought into this misinformation thereby promoting hesitancy in embracing the COVID-19 protocols and vaccine administration in the country (Musu 2020, 53).

Expectedly, in every functioning society, the procedure through which individuals structure their estimations and philosophy about any occurrence and events are consequently of clear communal significance, mainly if the foremost flow of the thinking continues which conflicts with well-known proofs. Again, in a case where major the city trust in an erroneous thing, misinformation may then structure the foundation for a government and communal judgments that can contradict the society’s most excellent concern; are misled sons are misled, they may equally put together certain decisions for themselves and members of their families (Bayer and Fairchild 2016, 44). Understandably, dependence on misinformation varies from lack of knowledge, which can be described as the lack of appropriate information. Unawareness, also, is capable of

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maybe shockingly, those consequences could be not so much harsh as some occurring from dependence on propaganda. Lack of knowledge could also be a smaller malevolence for the reason that in the dearth of information, individuals usually resort to easy experiments when constructing judgments (Bayer and Fairchild 2016, 44).

Certainly, throughout the COVID-19 deadly disease, health specialists around the globe instituted themselves as being capable of managing the surge of not merely the disease, but in addition misinformation regarding the disease. Following the declaration by the World Health Organization about this world deadly disease, the United Nations agency responsible for international public health (WHO) cautioned people concerning a possible “infodemic” scenario as half-truths on the origin, solution, and probable avoidance of multiplication in the net (WHO 2020, 24). Amendment groups set out for work to discredit popular news items, such as those alleging that consumption of garlic, and bananas, and rinsing your mouth with salt water can avoid or cure COVID-19. Though scholarship and testimony contain recognized ways that propaganda could affect a variety of behaviours, particularly in political circumstances (Apuke and Omar 2021, 17), the outcome of half-truths is above all central to the comprehension of the perspective of the plague, when the people require dependable information to be able to construct crucial judgment that can influence their personal as well as the well-being of others. Similarly, governmental agencies around

the globe have requested their people to defend themselves by involving in preventative behaviours, such as hand cleansing and exercising safe distancing; and up till now, some popularized communications which suggested some pre-emptive behaviours to health professionals were all discredited as unsuccessful and injurious.

Misinformation connotes the existence of dispassionately inaccurate or fake information that fails to attract unambiguous substantiation and professional judgment (Biana and Joaquin 2020, 37).” Many people use the expression to cover information that is wholly untrue as well as information that combines genuineness and untruth to misinform people which could also be “intentionally encouraged or unintentionally disseminated” (Essien 2017, 170). Deciding on what is logically accurate or fake, particularly in a deadly disease era is difficult, as the latest technical data has become known that over some time, new results may disagree with earlier values and conclusions about the virus. In the latest study, we categorize as half-truths some positions that have been discredited or accepted by professionals as either fake or deceptive as at the period of the said research.

Propaganda can also be purposely encouraged or inadvertently given out to people by some persons (Roozenbeak et al. 2020, 1) and the probability of its dissemination is contingent upon a wide range of reasons that include persons and society, plus the exact substance (Roozenbeak et al. 2020, 1). Researchers have found it necessary to look at the place of the internet in the dissemination of half-truths. Not only does the internet offer simple and within reach conduits for propaganda to multiply,

but the common sense behind these platforms, such as organizing societal correlation and common switchover, also offers an enticement for the usage of social media by its consumers to share entertainment, offensive, and fashionable substances, from time to time at the cost of genuine information and its quality (Guttman et al. 2020, 50). The multiplicity of propaganda on the internet is not only due to individuals partaking in them, but the propaganda environment is branded with software programs intended to increase untruth, deception, and conspiracy assumptions (Finset 2020, 12).

The Role of the Internet in Infodemic and Misinformation

Cyberspace or the Internet has transfigured the accessibility, obtainability, and simplicity of information in contemporary society. Nonetheless, it has as well made it possible the widening the cost of propaganda because it prevents the utilization of the usual “gate-keeping” apparatus, such as specialized editors (Eysenbach 2020, 11). This is predominantly the case with the enlargement of the World Wide Web, where consumers have been enthused from being merely inactive customers and end users of data to dynamically producing the data themselves on the Internet through the different social media platforms (Eysenbach 2020, 11). Individuals who employed novel media platforms, such as podcasts as their channels for information and stories considered them to be believable, and additionally comprehensive in nature rather than the conventional resources. Similarly, news items on the net can sometimes be

exceedingly deceptive, and it is increasingly substituting professional counsel. For instance, in the medical field, individuals are gradually obtaining their well-being information from the internet (Lewnard and Lo 2020, 6). Depending on the net and social media for their supply of medical and health information is burdened with danger because its dependability is extremely unpredictable. Empirically speaking, a study of fifty websites on “weight loss diets” shows that barely three of them gave good nutritional recommendations (Lewnard and Lo 2020, 6).

On the other hand, virtual videotapes are an efficient and fashionable means of distributing data and propaganda. Nearly 1.2 billion persons patronize virtual videos as of October 2011 alone (Guadagno 2020, 4). In the same vein, a study of hundred and fifty-three (153) YouTube videos corresponding to investigating date conditions of “inoculation” and “vaccination” shows that roughly part of the videos was not overtly encouraging of inoculation and that data from the anti-inoculation videos frequently disagrees with certified suggestions made (Natividad 2020, 32). Ultimately, there are some prank internet locations whose exclusive function is to circulate half-truths and propaganda even though their locations have various hidden intentions, together with caricature, they are more unsafe locations feigning as an authorized medium of information (Essien 2017, 162).

Navigating the Pathways of Infodemic

The value of the absence of restrictions on communication and improved information skill in our modern culture has produced uninhibited fast and extensive communications of gossip,

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propaganda, and deception. This has lent credence to the exponential increase in the demand for as well as the propagation of news concerning COVID-19. This scenario shows that the pandemic is going along with the 'infodemic' which represents the plethora of precise and imprecise news (Budhwani and Sun 2020, 48). Nonetheless, the deadly disease (COVID-19) took place together with a global infodemic everywhere there is the outstanding intensity of propaganda which has added to the insidious misapprehension regarding the novel sickness identified as the coronavirus. This situation set off other scenarios such as conspiracy theories, defectively established health instructions and a large amount of much more information that reveals a nonchalant approach toward the disease which shows the features of disregarding the nationwide restrictions and distribution.

One distinguishing element of this type of information multiplication is its incidence albeit the common and tough tendency for homely nationwide means of communication as well as the internet community which has the propensity to be by its nature controlled. There is no denying the fact that the rapid spread of information online otherwise known as infodemic has the capability of transforming mindsets and manners, which will in turn have an impact on the communication model of certain ailments and events in society (Essien 2017, 161).

Ultimately, infodemic is able of adjusting to the degree and the character of every lethal sickness. Infodemic kinds of news items can appear commencing from a wide variety of starting

places, but there is an explanation mainly concerning the function performed by the internet community like Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp. These outfits have been created to be the conduit pipes in the course of which deceptive information penetrated the conventional dialogue about whichever lethal infection (Essien 2017, 159). There is no disbelief that this is principally accurate in the case of Nigeria during the COVID-19 epidemic. Nigerians were before the pandemic exposed or open to the elements of constant communication using the conventional means of communication and information from selected politically privileged few highlighting the value of the major steps to be taken to wrestle with the deadly disease.

Despite the best indicator, misinterpretation appears to have entrenched itself in a considerable segment of the Nigerian population (Essien 2020, 133). This is because infodemic can reproduce itself throughout an assortment of information outlets. It can also be distributed through the conventional means of expression in which case reporters, policy-makers, or lawmakers accept incorrect and deceptive situations as appropriate (Essien 2020, 137). Infodemic is capable of also being multiplied through equals in the communication of gossip and unsubstantiated plots and machinations habitually associated with deadly diseases such as HIV and AIDS as well as other problems of well-being relating to inoculation.

Ethical Implications of Infodemic on COVID-19

The coming into existence and subsequent enlargement of COVID-19 has given birth to what was then described by the United Nations agency responsible for international public

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health as a “pandemic” and “infodemic”. The previous refers to an urgent situation that has frequently been contrasted with other remarkable proceedings in the past such as the Spanish flu of 1918, whereas the latter represents an experience in which case there exists a plethora of data that proves hard for individuals to trust the resource as well as have dependable assistance as soon as they require it (Liu and Mehta 2020, 14). This conversely explains the reason why the WHO had seen it to be crucial to affirm that in addition to the deadly disease threat initiated by COVID-19 disease, there is an infodemic, which has been engendering by a huge quantity of information obtainable on the issue, as well as by the complexity to arrange the open information from the sham. Message exchange initiates a significant responsibility in all the phases of the virus event and its administration. Beginning from the instant it is legitimately established that government and community wellbeing associations have various liabilities as well as confronting the test of notifying the community as regards the dangers of the disease and to promote individuals to accept alleviation process and practices (UNDP 2020, 43). This we all know tends to elicit some ethical concerns the reason that alleviation works entail considerable alterations in individuals’ way of life, and their standard of living, and contravene their liberty of association and confidentiality (Essien 2020, 130).

Predicated on this understanding of what led COVID-19 to be formally confirmed as a deadly disease, the officer in charge of the United Nations agency responsible for international public health made it known openly that “all nations must strike an

extremely dynamic balance between defending wellbeing, avoiding monetary and societal interruption, and disregarding the question human rights” (WHO 2020, 22). By inference, messages intended to advise the community regarding the deadly disease and to persuade individuals to accept improvement traditions about the pandemic must admire the necessary belief in human rights, together with independence, equal opportunity, distinction, and confidentiality. These are all ethical values that must regulate the behaviour of all stakeholders. However, the details of lessening exercises concerning COVID-19 differ from corner to corner of the country and its neighbourhood. Characteristically, they comprise certain protocols such as training on bodily separation, putting on the nose cover, unfailing cleansing of the hands or the utilization of hand disinfectant, adherence to the crowd and individual isolation regulations, limitations of the number of citizens in unrestricted and personal congregations, and making known one’s location when recognized as constricting the disease to find others with whom one was in the lock and could make contact with.

In addition, the system may make use of intimidation, alarm, and panic communication strategies, as well as application to pro-social ethics. Nevertheless, it must be well-known that bringing notice to moral anxiety throughout the deadly disease period is not only a moral necessity but fundamental for engendering public faith in the powers that be, considered to be a crucial issue in the community recognition of caring tradition (Liu and Mehta 2020, 41). In all proclamations and pronouncements, there is the responsibility for honesty,

accuracy, confidence, genuineness, and unambiguousness (Johannesen et al. 2008, 33). These household tasks without any hesitation are linked with people's inherent right to independence and decorum, as well as the thoughts of producing well-versed judgment on issues that affect existence and problems that influence the victims. Related to such conditions are the promotion narrative concerning the responsibility to honesty, legitimacy of the influencer, reverence of the proposed consultation, fairness of the convincing request, and societal accountability for the general good of the people (Johannesen et al. 2008, 33).

Furthermore, these conditions represent key values famous in the moral values narrative such as "do well and circumvent hurt, reverence individual independence, value confidentiality and distinction, as well as producing the feeling of fairness and even-handedness (Beauchamp and Childress 1994, 30). This type of ethical precept can be traced to the down-to-earth process that stresses the responsibility to operate according to what is largely valuable and helpful to the larger integer of individuals in the world as a whole (Guttman 2017, 8).

A close assessment of the subjects that encourage ethics in the communication of coronavirus discourse can be viewed, dissected and presented in different segments as follows:

(1) The Use of threats and scare messages

Convenient is the opportunity for ethical concerns concerning the downside of using coercion and panic communication or a campaign for faithfulness to well-being etiquette.

Notwithstanding anxiety about delicate unease, several establishments utilize panic strategies targeted at drawing out the tough feeling of fright from the persons. Regularly, the best guess is that this will stimulate the community to hold fast to alleviation information. That type of endeavour is usually filled with ethical anxiety. A very good example in this direction is the case of curfew orders, arrest and detention of protocol violators, use of striking imagery of tormented sufferer, the use of echo from terror pictures, where individuals are brutally murdered, lockdowns everywhere resulting in wrongdoers or offender who get trapped by the law enforcement officers and “disciplined” compulsorily by being thrown into an ambulance sometimes with a COVID19 sufferer etc. These measures in earnest evoke ethical underpinnings which most times employ approaches that are unethical and objectionable (Hastings et al. 2004, 18 and Eysenbach 2020, 27).

(2) Stigmatization and Blame

Regarding the issues of stigma and blame, ethics tries to probe into what triggers these problems. There is the question of common negative outcome associated with the epidemic that has something to do with blame and stigmatization of some foreign nations or certain people from the beginning as well as individuals who contracted the virus, together with those helping the sufferers (Gostin et al. 2020, 13). This is exemplified in the circumstances where the UN has identified stigmatization as a major problem connected with COVID-19 and that is why the World Health Organization deliberately acknowledged the COVID-19 virus as being allied with the place of origin. Nevertheless, to buttress the question of blame

and stigma, some persons refer to the deadly disease as “the Chinese illness”. This expression promptly and has strengthened the logic about discrimination and bias toward people of Asian ancestry and settlers (Budhwani and Sun 2020, 36). In light of the above, WHO has been able to publish information for verbal communication to steer clear of making the case of public shame a complex one. These comprise the use of the official COVID-19 name instead of using something associated with its imagined place of origin or starting point, and the use of the phrase “contracting the disease” instead of “infecting” or “spreading”, which could mean deliberate spread or allocate responsibility (WHO 2020, 15).

(3) Health Protocols

Most important for consideration are the ethical issues involving communicating about specifics and/or some of the health protocols, relating to the mitigation and protective measures and practices that the people are confident to accept, such protocols include contact tracing, wearing of nose masks, space separation (otherwise known as social distancing), and hand cleansing, sanitization or disinfection.

(a) Connection Track-down

With regards to making contact with the victims or sufferers, individuals acknowledged as having acquired the disease are requested to be isolated from others and to also reveal their location and name of persons whom they were in close contact with so that it would be possible to trace them and quickly separate them from others and possibly discontinue further transmission of the disease to others and perhaps work toward

its prevention. This process is commonly attributed to “contract tracing” which has hoisted a lot of ethical concerns. There is therefore, the possibility that individuals might not be clever enough to retain all information about their location or connections since they were not conscious that they have the sickness and could prepare to experience insufficiency and embarrassment (Balog-Way and McComas 2021, 44).

At this point, it might look like they are unwilling to divulge things they think are confidential in their existence. This scenario presents a case of infringement on the confidentiality and tribulations of others by being isolated from others. Earnestly speaking, the art of talking to people regarding automated contact tracing is precisely an ethical issue that has a lot to do with the autonomy and confidentiality of persons as well as their public good. This however is because not every person is trustworthy enough to give reliable information about a system, therefore, the need for critical thinking (Bridgman et al. 2020, 38).

(b) Hand Washing

In the case of hygiene practices, all contagious diseases require protective measures or customs and traditions to shun acquiring the virus. COVID-19 is a typical case in point that is necessitated by sanitation-associated processes such as cleansing of hands using a cleansing agent and water, especially running water, also employing an alcohol-based decontaminator and tidiness and cleaning of all surfaces exterior. Even though for numerous people, the idea of cleansing hands is an old practice and quite widespread, mechanical, customary practice, the recommended conduct

entails certain adjustments in their occurrence and/or in exercising them cautiously (Finset et al. 2020, 28). It also raises ethical questions about certain commonplace household tasks and rituals that may elicit different responses likely to generate uncertainty or apprehension. This necessity is further aggravated by well-known propaganda concerning possible harmful processes. At this point, COVID-19 communication is supposed to put forward socially-friendly details on the subject of what ought to be done in a particular circumstance, for instance, while an individual cannot cleanse his or her hands and/or know how to disinfect exterior places once sterilizer is out of stock (UNICEF 2020, 21).

Moreover, the cleanliness-related process of COVID-19 brings forth valid ethical questions related to inequity in society. This is so because many populations especially in several societies in less developed countries such as Nigeria have no or inadequate right to use hygienic water and cleanliness facilities. It is evident from studies that approximately three billion individuals in several countries especially in Africa subsist in surroundings in which uncontaminated water is an inadequate supply and maintenance equipment and resources are extravagance (Desmon 2020, 17). There are also scenarios in which case, items such as soap and water are found unavailable in a few households as manifest in places like Malawi, Ethiopia, Benin, and Mali (Desmon 2020, 17).

(c) Wearing of Face Mask

On the wearing of face masks or nose covering, it is apparent that while several individuals are familiarized with face mask

use especially in wellbeing amenities, for scores of others, it is a new and upsetting exercise when integrated into daily life. To have on the face masks noticeably alters in-person communication and may perhaps be frightening for children and very complicated for grown-up persons particularly those in the countryside and individuals having earshot - impairment. In the face of this type of concern, obligations about masks and face coverings should be able to diminish or ease all styles of fretfulness by providing convenient details on how to deal with related anxiety and embarrassment connected to putting on covering in a variety of circumstances, such as dealing with interpersonal communications, providing brief strategies vis-à-vis what time and where it is essential to put on covering and when not (Essien 2019, 47). Pronouncement regarding putting on masks also needs to evaluate the unhelpful inadvertent consequences.

One such apprehension is that the putting on of coverings may perhaps be the basis for uncalled-for worry as it would become a continuous reminder of the wearer being in danger or threat (Martin et al. 2020, 51). Similarly, there is the problem of the incident of “danger reparation”, whereby once one starts implementing defensive measures, that particular protecting gauge such as the face mask or nose coverings, there is the likelihood of a possible outcome in falling to employ other defensive instruments which would have been essential to take because of a false impression of feeling already protected. Therefore, individuals putting on face masks might be not as much cautious regarding the observance of apposite distancing from others.

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In this regard, there is furthermore, the ethical concern about equity. Proponents of this protocol are of the judgment that announcement about putting on face masks that are reasonable and especially when these individuals does not have the right to use face masks that does not meet up with stern benchmark by simply applying the “deterrent theory” in which case even inadequate safeguard is capable of checking spread (Brooks et al. 2020, 33). The big question begging for an answer is what happens to those who cannot even meet the expense of industrial-produced face masks which have high protection status. In this instance, many have been found to resort to alternatives such as leave (as we find in the rural areas, braziers, head ties, and other make-shifts. Therefore, to attain the requirement of truthfulness, it requires speaking earnestly concerning the boundaries of what constitutes “low-cost” face coverings, which could contribute to what can be termed as “false hope”, “vulnerability” and “negative emotions” amongst folks who cannot meet the expense of costlier and safe masks (Essien 2019, 46).

(d) Social Distancing

One of the steps identified and advocated for cutting back the multiplication of COVID-19 transmission is the issues raised by social distancing. In this regard, individuals are requested to keep a spatial/physical detachment from others except for those in the same family unit. Although this requirement differs across nations and circumstances, they on average necessitate nonparticipation from activities that are very essential to individuals, including visitations and stop over to loved ones and other family members, attending the same place of work,

attending social meetings and outings, religious meetings, and/or cultural meetings, and in general, the keeping of a constant physical distance from others in your neighbourhood. Commenting about physical distancing touches on various moral fears, which have grave exceptional, societal, and financial implications. It further raises some worries regarding equity, even-handedness, and justice for the reason that the underprivileged and the defenceless populations are probable to be unreasonably affected by the limitations of their spaces (Essien 2019, 45). However, a considerable number of people might still not be able to exercise the “elementary” spatial separation practice suggested due to some systemic discriminatory practices that may be the upshot in a jam-packed living environment.

Most probably, the individuals discussing this practice may not be conscious of the current conditions of living in numerous African cities such as Nigeria where citizens reside in slums, shanties and over-congested margins of the cities (Abd-Alrazag et al. 2021, 17). Given that spatial separation impinges on individuals in such thoughtful manners, speaking about it raises a multitude of worries ranging from socio-ethical to socio-economic. Earnestly speaking, it is generally the helpless individuals that experience the most side effects from spatial distancing. In this direction, countless individual has suffered severe emotional unhappiness which later add to bodily decline for the reason that online making of contact with someone is just not adequate when viewed culturally (Campbell 2020, 47). It is quite implausible to think that in Africa, family members would be asked or told to isolate and/or keep away from vulnerable relatives that are in danger for them to be protected

from becoming sufferers of the coronavirus particularly after they are aware that it constitutes an ethical responsibility to be physically close to a defenceless relations (Guttman et al. 2020, 28).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the occurrence of COVID-19's deadly disease has influenced exceedingly and gravely every segment of existence in various civilizations around the world. Notwithstanding the accompanying fiscal depression, one foremost effect of the global virulent disease is the increase of 'infodemic' (overabundance of information resulting in difficulty finding trustworthy sources) and 'disinfodemic' which essentially creates dispute for community people to have the right of entry for trustworthy news, data, and statistics whenever they are required (Hua and Shaw 2020, 10). Although this chapter attempts a presentation of only a tiny proportion of the entire ethical issues surrounding COVID-19 communication, every aspect of the investigation directed toward highlighting the ethical, societal, realistic, and intellectual implications of addressing the assortment of ethical uneasiness is apt. Identifying the diverse moral anxieties requires engendering the impetus essential to deal with each problem and providing a design worthy of investigation on the different facets of COVID-19 communication. This will demand multidisciplinary understanding and feelings, trans-disciplinary teamwork, community dialogue, and encouragement.

This study, therefore, reflects clearly on the necessity for deepening the navigation of the pathways of infodemic on the COVID-19 pandemic in social media in Nigeria. It is noted that the infodemic as is experienced today is acknowledged as a global phenomenon, and there is currently no clear-cut national coordination and cooperation regarding its control. The study, therefore, tried to establish a different argument that to stay on track and become one of the major drivers of the global economy, and so that nations such as Nigeria and her people can reach their full potentials, Nigeria needs to urgently address efforts to combat infodemic through the social media and thereafter improve the management of COVID19 and other deadly diseases. This, however, has the potential of raising some critical ethical challenges bothering the question of responsibility on the part of the various stakeholders to tackle the infodemic in Nigeria. The current infodemic that poses a threat on the landscape of social media in Nigeria today, clearly shows that internet users (Nigerians) are being enormously impacted both by threats of infodemics that are trending globally as well as some other conspiracy theories that are more specific to other issues of health in the country. This study therefore, demonstrates that with the existing trend of infodemic, it will certainly take a concerted effort from the national and international governments, civil society organisations, and institutions to fight an outbreak of any disease such as COVID-19 successfully and improve health and well-being in the country without specific treatment accorded the management of information and infodemic.

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