

**“The Whole World Now Speaks One Language... SIT AT HOME”.
A Netnographic Reading of COVID-19 Lockdown Headlines on
Nairaland Virtual Community**

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Abstract

Extant works on news headlines have addressed the use of clickbait, nature and functions of newspaper headlines in electronic and print newspapers leaving out the functions of headlines as a historical source and the representation of the society that creates them. This study investigates headlines as history of the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria from *Nairaland*, a virtual community. A daily visit to the platform from March to September 2020 was done to collect headlines bearing lockdown narratives. A total of 100 headlines on COVID-19 lockdown were collected and subjected to a netnographic analysis. Language in form of the headlines is used to construct historical formations of the COVID-19 lockdown narratives in Nigeria. The images of the effects and coping strategies of COVID-19 lockdown are represented in the headlines. The headlines provide copious historical accounts on events and personalities involved in the news.

Keywords: COVID-19, narratives, lockdown, netnography of communication, news headlines, Nairaland, history

Introduction

The crux of this research is the representation of language as history (Macaulay, 2011). History facilitates a link between the past, present and future about a particular epoch in human existence. Speech communities are studied to find out how language behaves functionally and not formally in the communities. COVID-19 opened a new history in the existence of humanity when its incidence was announced in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. A major strategy of coping with the unsavoury news of the approach and presence of the deadly disease in the midst of utter unpreparedness and scantiness of ways of handling it was the total

lockdown experienced by many nations worldwide. The total lockdown had an excruciating effect on the political, social and economic lives of Nigerians. Almost all human communicative activities were conducted online to prevent the spread of the virus. *Nairaland* as an e-community of Nigerians was not left out of the narratives of the woes of the pandemic. The process of locking down the country featured in the news on the platform synchronously highlighting the voices of the state actors and the non-actors.

COVID-19 opened a new history in our existence. The virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China on December 8, 2019 and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic in January 30, 2020. The virus spread steadily in Nigeria from the imported case to community transmission. The fatality was low at first with 2.8% (Amzat, et. al. 2020). Lockdown was a community's response to prevent community transmission of COVID-19. There was a lockdown in two states (Lagos and Ogun) and the FCT for four weeks operative from March 30, 2020, with restrictions on inter-state travels throughout the country (Muanya, et. al. 2020). A relaxed lockdown began on May 4, 2020 to replace the total lockdown with a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. while the inter-state ban was still in place. Both the lockdown and the curfew exempted workers in essential services (health workers and security personnel) and those involved in the movement of essential commodities (food and drugs).

The lockdown curfew was put in place with the hope that people would adhere to the basic safety guidelines of social distancing, hand washing, and the use of facemasks in public. Nigeria recorded a relative increase in the number of COVID-19 cases during the relaxed lockdown from May 18 (2 weeks after the relaxed lockdown) to June 7 (a total of 20 days). Nigeria recorded 6,527 positive cases, (which represents a 52% increase in the number of positive cases (NCDC, 2020). The country was faced with the consideration of a further lockdown which was met with stiff opposition from Nigerians. The lockdown and stay at home directives exact adverse effects on the vulnerable population; the daily income earners who work in the informal sector, which requires close person-to-person interactions for cash transactions and patronage. While the lockdown is critical for disease containment, it determines the economic and social foundations for survival and the resilience structures of

Nigeria's most vulnerable population. (UNDP, 2020)

Healthy tips such as; regular hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, social distancing, wearing a face mask, self-isolation, partial and eventually, total lockdown were provided by the various health organisations in the country as the situations warranted. Out of all these measures, the total lockdown had an excruciating effect on the political, social and economic lives of Nigerians. The poverty level of Nigerians increased with the temporary or permanent unemployment experienced by a larger percentage of the Nigerian population. This was an addition to the economic threat which insurgence has earlier subjected the nation. The social lives of Nigerians were put on hold with the strict rules of reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the social media accommodated many news readers. They filled the huge gaps that would have been created through the various social restrictions put in place at redressing the spread of the virus. *Nairaland* was not left out of the narration of the woes or COVID-19. The process of locking down the country featured in the news on the platform and the trends of the stages of the communication between the government of Nigeria (actors) and the governed (non-actors) in the COVID-19 issue were broadcast through their voices and these made the headlines of news on the platform. These headlines are culled from their original publications from the print media and digital channels. The headlines direct the readers to the themes that reveal the government's efforts in combating the virus.

Online News Headlines

Technology advancement marks the emergence of new trends in communication. People all over the world now interact with one another in real time with a click on their computers and the Internet which send the signals. Online platforms like: Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twiter, and recently, the TickTalk to mention the popular ones emerge everyday as means of communication. With these, the consumption of newspaper articles has reduced because they can be accessed online outside their original publication through these platforms. More so, the cost of consumption and the chance of getting access to many news articles from different aspects of human lives are predilections for online news articles rather than physical newspapers. People read articles shared on social media or some online platforms or search engines while they listen to news

on the television broadcast from Channels TV, Al-Jazeera, BBC News, and the National Television Authority (NTA) to find articles interesting to them. These many primary news channels contributed to the competition between news sources for the readers' attention online (Chen, Conroy, and Rubin, 2015). The social media accommodate many news readers. The need for a good headline that attracts many CLICKS becomes imperative for online news writers and editors. This most time leads to a vague headline that induce curiosity, which is purposely to entice readers into clicking on the headline.

This is called 'clickbait'. Opera Mini news and many other news apps deploy this in their news display. Though, fake news, deliberate misrepresentation, total fabrication and sheer speculations can be militating factors to the authenticity of some news headlines, the fact remains that news headlines are still the punch to the happenings in our human existence. Also, featured news items on *Nairaland* virtual community platform are those on general issues affecting Nigeria and Nigerians. The platform is not under any obligation to attract many readers because its Netizens keep growing daily with the array sections it operates.

The Nairaland Virtual Community

The *Nairaland* virtual community (NVC henceforth) is a community of like-minded people online, who come together to discuss common life issues. The *Nairaland* virtual community was founded by Seun Osewa in 2005. It was established to serve as a means of establishing interpersonal relationship among its members. NVC has the largest out of all Nigerian-moderated virtual communities (Naijanet, Naijaworld, NaijawomanNet, Nigerian Village Square etc). The current status of NVC is 2,733,127 members. NCV is the representation of Nigeria on the Internet which can be tagged an 'e-Nigeria' site. There are different sections in the forum where posters can initiate new threads or contribute to the existing ones. These are divided into three major sections: Technology, Entertainment, and General Welcome. It is a virtual community which has its base in Nigeria, and Nigerians, both at home and abroad constitute its Netizens. The forum is open to both males and females. They post their various contributions, using nicknames or pseudonyms. NVC is different from other online groups or platforms because of its moderated status. Members collect news articles from both print and electronic media in Nigeria and

post on the NVC forum for discussion. In some instances, there are topics on personal life experience initiated for discussion by members. Data for this study were collected from the general section of the forum because COVID-19 is a major issue affecting the whole world in general and Nigeria in particular. Out of about sixty seven headlines in feature news on each web page, more than forty are on COVID-19 and related matters.

News Headlines

This section examines existing works on news headlines. It spans through newspaper headlines and online news headlines because of their universal features of being the concise representations of the main news, their modes of transmitting notwithstanding. Scholars have studied various aspects of news headlines in print media. These works were basically on the language, nature and functions of news headlines. A novel and universal function of headlines identified in literature is serving as the summary of the article it represents (Van Dijk 1988) either by serving as an abstract to the main article, or by emphasizing the main point of that article (Bell 1991; Nir 1993). Dor (2003) refers to headlines as relevance optimizers, based on the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986). Dor (2003, p. 696) notes that headlines “are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers.” He asserts that headlines require a balance between being short and clear, and being an information-rich summary of the article. Pragmatic function of headlines constitutes the second function of headlines identified in scholarship with the work of (Iarovici and Amel 1989). The construction of headlines in this way is to attract the attention of the readers and to provoke them to read the article (Bell 1991; Nir 1993). Ifantidou (2009, p.717) emphasizes the preference of readers on headlines that are creative, even if that makes a headline longer, more confusing or less informative; he states that “readers seem to value headlines for what they are, i.e. under informative, creative, yet autonomous texts”.

Meccheroen et.al. (1998) carry out a survey of public understanding and preferences of newspaper headline language style. They establish that understanding and preferences of headline language were diverse. Taiwo (2004) examines the nature and functions of a type of newspaper headline (Speech as Headline) and the implications of the preference for some sub-categories of headlines. He concludes that newspaper headlines are carefully written to mirror social values in

Nigerian society. Alabi (2007) analyses the major syntactic and lexical peculiarities of commercial consumer advertising by four chain stores which sell the same brands of products and whose main advertising texts are found in the headlines. She finds out that there is a great departure in the way these stores deploy the syntactic and lexical usages in commercial consumer advertising from the common syntactic and lexical features. These features are also distinctively used by each of the four stores to draw costumers' attention.

Online news headlines exhibit more competition between news sources for the readers' attention (Chen, Conroy, and Rubin 2015). This is because of the daily increase in the number of the Internet users all over the world and the many content providers on the Internet as well. Each provider wants his news to attract many likes and views and eventual sharing of the news articles. As a result of this, online news headlines feature the use of clickbaits. Many of the techniques often deployed for clickbait have been described and investigated. Clickbait is described by Kuiken, et. al. (2017, p. 1302) 'as an umbrella term, used to describe many different techniques, all with the common goal of attracting attention and invoking curiosity to get the reader to click on a headline'. (Blom and Hansen 2015; Rowe 2011; Tenenboim and Cohen 2015) have identified simplification, spectacularization, negativity, and provoking contents as characteristics of clickbait. In the same vein, (Blom and Hansen 2015) identify forward referencing as a stylistic feature that is used in many clickbait headlines. This is described as something that is mentioned in the article. Words like “this,” “why” or “what” are used for forward referencing. (Lai and Farbrot 2014; Tenenboim and Cohen 2015) and (Safran 2013) have also identified the use of questions as a feature of clickbait headlines. Dick (2011) and Tandoc (2014) have shown that editors and journalists deploy different writing techniques with the sole aim of attracting more readers to their articles by skillfully using words, phrases, and stylistic techniques that are known to attract more clicks.

Kuiken, et. al. (2017) is a study on the effect on click-through rates of applying textual and stylistic features often related to clickbait to headlines of newspaper articles which can be purchased online. Their findings are: the data shows that editors of Blendle indeed often use clickbait features when rewriting headlines, most of the clickbait features lead to a statistically significant increase in the number of clicks and

predicting the effectiveness of a headline only on the basis of its clickbait features is not possible. This is a study mainly on the survival of online news sources with the increase influx of content providers online. It is a structural study of online news headlines which is different from the functional role of the headlines the present study represents.

From these works, the offline and online news headlines are written or constructed to attract the attention of the readers to scan through, buy and read the full articles in case of the written newspaper and to view, read, like, and share in the case of online broadcast. The headlines are designed as attention getters for economic gain of the writers. The *Nairaland* forum is a secondary source of news. Members have the opportunity of reading the full news without concealing any details on the headlines. Our study is different from all these previous studies because it is a study of the content of the news which is beyond the sense of reading the news to acquire information only. It is an in-depth reading of the headlines as the historical narration and representation of the community that creates them.

Methodology

Following the declaration of COVID-19 as pandemic in January 2020, there was great anxiety in the country on the reality of the harsh effect COVID-19 would have on the country if the pandemic ravaged as it did in other developed countries of the world. Nigeria was categorized as one of the 13 high-risk African countries with respect to the spread of the virus (WHO). Nigeria is also among the vulnerable African nations given the weak state of the healthcare system (Marbot, 2020). Data for this study were collected from March- October 2020 when COVID-19 activities unfolded in the country. Apart from the daily reports on COVID-19, other issues are on the lockdown which had personal effects on individual Nigerian. These constitute the data. A daily visit to the forum was observed to collect headlines on the front page. A total of 184 headlines were collected. One hundred headlines were gathered from the general data and subjected to qualitative netnographic analysis. These were read through to identify the key actors, the themes and actions involved in the tales of the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria by coding the items constituting each selected headline. These are labelled for easy referencing. An in-depth study of the labelling follows to locate a pattern in the data. A narration is generated according to the assigned labels. .

Netnography of Communication

Netnography is a method of ethnographic investigation embraced to take account of the Internet's influence on the present social worlds. It is a specialized form of ethnography modified in line with the unique computer-mediated exigencies of today's social worlds. "Netnography revealed and analysed the self-presentation strategies that people use to construct a 'digital self'" (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Kozinets, 2010, p.1). It is an approach to participant-observational online research that investigates a diverse set of procedures and conventions. It employs computer-mediated communication as a source of data to arrive at the 'ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon' (Kozinets, 2010, p. 60). The change in the context in the case of online interaction demands new outlook to data and their manifestations. This is argued by Rice & Rogers (1984, p.82) cited in Kozinets, 2010, p. 67) that 'the new online environment provides context that may limit how a faithfully traditional research design and methods (like ethnography of communication: emphasis-mine) may be applied'. Netnography is suitable for the study of both online communities and communities and cultures that feature important social interactions online. A netnography approach works mainly on the content of the interaction online. AlDajann (2020) posits that netnography does not study the participants or the group but 'tends to concentrate on the topic that relates to the participants, the group, and the social network site focusing on the hypothesis of the research' AlDajann (2020, p.157). With this view, netnography can be seen as an approach that works mainly on the content of the online interaction in relation to the participants and the virtual community. The two types of data analysis in netnography are the analytical coding-based methods and hermeneutic interpretations. The first method is a qualitative data analysis using inductive approach. It entails building up individual observations so as to generate more general statements about a phenomenon. It involves qualitative data analytic processes like; coding, noting, abstracting and comparing, checking and refinement, generalizing, theorizing (Mathew Miles & Michael Huberman (1994, p.9).

The hermeneutic approach is 'a methodological process for interpreting qualitative data. It is an iterative one in which a part of the qualitative data (or text) is interpreted and reinterpreted in relation to the developing sense of the 'whole'. These iterations are necessary because a

holistic understanding must be developed over time. Furthermore, initial understandings of the text are informed and often modified as later readings provide a more developed sense of the texts meaning as a whole (Thompson, et al. 1994, p. 433).

Analysis and Findings

Coding of the data was done by grouping and labeling the headlines through the inductive meaning they communicate and the hermeneutic analysis follows with the interpretation of the codes in relation to the participants and the community. The participants here are Nigerians (the actors and the non-actors) while the community is the country, Nigeria. The COVID-19 lockdown narratives started with the various preparation to go on lockdown so as to control further spread of the virus. The first labeling is on posts that signify the participants. Historical account of any type is not complete without the actors of the actions in the narrative. The participants as actors, initiate and direct the actions while as non-actors, they perform and comply with directives given by the actors. The actors here are the President, the Vice-President, the Ministers, Members of the House of Assembly, governors of all the 36 states of the nation, commissioners, local government chairmen, royal fathers, religious leaders, philanthropists, Nigerians. The following posts are samples.

Participants

Datum A

1. President Buhari Signs the COVID-19 Regulations (*President*)
2. V.P Osinbajo Explains How the Law Supports Presidential Restriction Orders. (*Vice President*)
3. Ogun-Lockdown to commence on Friday- Governor Abiodun (*Governor*)
4. Coronavirus: Davido's Dad, Deji Adeleke Donates #500m, Shares Foodstuff Across Osun. (*Philanthropist*)
5. Police Blocks Lagos-Ibadan Express Way As Lockdown Order Takes Effect. (*Law enforcement agent*)
6. Experts Want More Nigerians Tested for COVID-19. (*Medical Practitioners*)
7. Coronavirus: NAFDAC Orders Chloroquine Manufacture for Possible Clinical Trial. (*Health Body*)

8. COVID-19: Dominion City, Lagos Shares Food Items. (*Religious Body*)
9. Lagos Traders Lament Market Closure, Appeal to Sanwo-Olu for Palliatives. (*Low Income Earners*)
10. Ooni of Ife Shuts Palace Over Coronavirus, Suspends Traditional Activities (*Traditional Ruler*)

The participants are mentioned in each case of an action which each post represents. Verbs like; *signs, explains, commence, donates, blocks, orders, shares, lament, shuts* are deployed to show the actions of the two categories of participants identified. Most of the verbs manifest authority while only *lament* signifies followership. The reason/purpose for the actions is safety of Nigerians, both the leaders and the led. This manifests in the following samples.

GOAL

The aim of the actions of the participants is to be saved from the virus. All participants played their roles as applicable to them. The President and his vice are working to save Nigerians from the deadly disease through the orders and restrictions they make.

DATUM 2

11. COVID-19: First Batch of Free Bags of Rice for the Elderly Arrives in Anambra (*preventing hunger*)
12. Buhari Exempt Banks and Other Financial Institutions From Lockdown (*economy enhancement*)
13. Umahi Tightens Ebonyi State Borders, Visits Boundaries to ensure Total Lockdown (*compliance for safety*)
14. COVID-19: MTN Staff to Start Working From Home (*safety*)
15. Coronavirus: IGP Tells Nigerians not to Visit Police Stations for Social Visits (*safety*)
16. Coronavirus: Adeboye, Oyedepo, Okonkwo, Adeyemi, Others hold Online Services. (*safety*)

Preparation

The act sequence of the COVID-19 lockdown headlines follows the sequence of warning to prepare for lockdown, enforcement of lockdown,

support during lockdown, informing easing lockdown, warning, opening of the economy.

DATUM 3

17. Lockdown: 'Go and Do Your Last Minute Shopping Now'- Governor Sanwo-Olu Tells Lagosians (*admonishing*)
18. Ogun Lockdown to Commence on Friday- Governor Abiodun (*informing*)
19. Doctors, Nurses, Around the World Unite in Begging People to Stay at Home.
20. FG Develops Rapid Response Register for Poor Nigerians
21. We have Spent #31 billion to Fight COVID-a9 in Nigeria- Accountant General
22. We Hope to Re-Open Land Borders Soon- Osibajo
23. COVID-19: Doctors, Parents, Teachers Caution FG Against Re-Opening of Schools
24. Oyo Relaxes Curfew, Gives Updates on Resumption of Schools, Offices, Churches, Mosques

Data one to three give the narrative of a country with his leaders at the top of the game of controlling the spread of the virus with the various directives they give to ensure safety of Nigerians. They did not just impose the lockdown on the people. They sensitize Nigerians to be prepared for the lockdown through the various acts in datum 3.

The headlines also reveal that a good number of Nigerians complied with the directive of staying at home while some did not comply. The following headlines represent each group.

DATUM 4

COMPLIANCE

25. Dominion City Lagos Holds Church Service Outside Church- At home
26. Umahi Tightens Ebonyi State Borders, Visits Boundaries to Ensure Total Lockdown
27. Coronavirus: Share Your Experience, Staying at home.
28. Ooni of Ife Shuts Palace Over Coronavirus; Suspends Traditional Activities

29. Coronavirus: Governor Wike Reveals Identity of Rivers Index Case, Close Down Markets
30. Kano Government Closes Borders, Shuts Airport, Roads Over Coronavirus
31. COVID-19: Makinde Imposes Curfew on Oyo, Bans Inter State Movement From Sunday.

NON-COMPLIANCE

32. EL- Zakzaky: Shits Members Protest in Abuja Despite Lockdown, Rock Face Masks
33. Ogun Lockdown: Colourful Masquerade Arrested, Cries After Ignoring Sit-At-Home Order
34. 4 Bridegrooms Arrested for Violating Movement Ban Order in Zaria
35. FCTA Shuts Down Christ Embassy Church Programme and Wedding in Abuja.
36. Muslims Hold Jumaat Prayer in Makurdi in Defiance of Ban.
37. COVID-19; Pastor Runs as Task Force Stops Him From Conducting Naming Ceremony in Ondo
38. Bishop Oyedepo Criticised for Holding Service at Canaan Land Amid COVID- 19 Lockdown
39. Coronavirus: Lagos State Government Distrupts Party, Seals Event Centres

From Datum 4, the headlines express the compliance and non-compliance attitudes of Nigerians during the lockdown order. The compliance is demonstrated by government more while the masses from individuals to religious groups constitute the non-compliant category. This is a clear indication of the economy power of the individuals and groups. There was no adequate financial support from the government unlike other countries of the world that went on lockdown.

DATUM 5

NEW NORMAL (The e-World)

The Internet became an option for all human transactions. Businesses, religious groups, the academia, education, and other human transactions were hosted online. This is a major effect of the lockdown.

40. Living Faith Creates USSD Codes to Facilitates Offerings and Tithes Online.
41. COVID-19: MTN Staff to Start Working From Home.
42. Links to Watch Live Church Services Online
43. Coronavirus: Adeboye, Oyedepo, Okonkwo, Adeyemi, Others Holds Online Services
44. University of Benin to Hold Virtual Matriculation

The virtual option was utilized by most schools (public and private) all over the country to avoid losing a great deal of time and to also generate some money in case of the private institutions because parents did not pay since their children were at home. The next aspect of the narrative is the headlines expressing the hardship Nigerians experienced during the lockdown. All the various sectors of the country experienced some setbacks. Datum 6 illustrates the effects of the lockdown on Nigeria and Nigerians.

DATUM 6

EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN

45. List of 8 Nigerian Entertainment Events Cancelled Because of Lockdown
46. We Have Spent ₦31 billion to Fight COVID-19 in Nigeria- Accountant General
47. COVID-19: Lagos Spends Between ₦100.000 on a patient daily
48. Lockdown: Umahi Suspends Commissioner, Permanent Secretary others Over Porous Boundaries.
49. Lagos Traders Lament Market Closure ; Appeal to Sanwo-Olu for Palliatives
50. Coronavirus: U.K. Returnee Causes Panic in Ondo Community; Self Isolates
51. Coronavirus: 4 in 10 Nigerians Lost Their Jobs in April-NBS
52. Coronavirus: WAEC Postpones Examination Indefinitely
53. Coronavirus: FG Orders Closure of Varsities, Schools Nationwide

The effects of the lockdown as illustrated in datum 6 range from economic drain, loss of jobs, education shutdown and fear. They also constitute the narrative of the lockdown. Despite the news of the mortality rate of the virus all over the world, some Nigerians still resisted the safety orders by the government. These are mostly human right activists. The following headlines are illustrations.

Resistance of Lockdown Order

This deals with how participants interpret each other's responses within Nigeria cultural belief system. In the case of governance, the cultural beliefs and the law of the nation are relevant in the interpretation of the order given by the major actors to the citizens. Some notable Nigerians questioned the lockdown order of the presidency.

DATUM 7

54. Buhari Lacks Power to Restrict Movement in Lagos, Abuja, Ogun and FCT-Ebun Olu Adegoruwa
55. COVID-19: Buhari Movement Ban is undemocratic- Dino Melaye
56. COVID-19 Lockdown: 'We are not in War Emergency' Soyinka Tells Buhari
57. Doctors, Nurses, Around the World Unite in Begging People to Stay at Home.
58. COVID-19: First Batch of Free Bags of Rice for the Elderly Arrives in Anambra

SUPPORT MECHANISM

The government, religion leaders, wealthy Nigerians supported people to ease the hardship of the lockdown. There was hunger and starvation in the country since people could not go out to for their daily bread. Here are pointers from the headlines.

DATUM 8

59. COVID-19: First Batch of Free Bags of Rice for the Elderly Arrives in Anambra
60. Coronavirus: Davido's Dad, Deji Adeleke Donates ₦500m, Shares Foodstuff Across Osun

61. Coronavirus: FG Starts Immediate Cash transfer to Poorest Households- Minister
62. Mike Adenuga Donates ₦1.5 Billion to Fight Coronavirus
63. COVID-19: Dominion City, Lagos Shares Food Items.

With the effects of the lockdown and stay at home on Nigeria and Nigerians, the Federal Government considered the re-opening of the economy by reversing the lockdown. This was necessary to prevent Nigerians from being submerged in poverty, loss of jobs and hunger.

Reopening of the Economy

DATUM 9

64. We Hope to Re-open Land Borders Soon- Osibajo
65. Nationwide Curfew Now 12-a.m. – 4 a.m.- FG
66. Oyo Relaxes Curfew, Gives Updates on Resumption of Schools, Offices, Churches, Mosques
67. COVID-19: FG Won't Reintroduce Total Lockdown Again- Boss Mustapha
68. Buhari Extends Gradual Case of Lockdown by 2 Weeks, Bans all Inter State Movements

The reopening of the economy was a gradual process as represented above. This was due to the contrary views of some Nigerians. The picture of the lockdown tales in the country has been traced through the headlines used as samples in our analysis. The lockdown was initiated by the federal government and enforced by the state government. Most Nigerians complied with the sit-at-home directive for the fear of the virus despite the hardship experienced by them while others did not comply. The latter were punished by law enforcement agents at different locations. The effects of the lockdown on Nigerians are unfolded through the headlines.

Conclusion

Language use as headlines constructs historical narratives of the COVID-19 lockdown tales in Nigeria. The images of the effects and coping strategies of COVID-19 are chronologically represented in the headlines. The analyses reveal that COVID-19 lockdown headlines constitute the history of the activities that unfold at the time. The end of the headlines is

for the political leaders to save Nigerians and themselves from the virus. The political leaders played active roles in enforcing compliance to the safety precautions given. The headlines put as a whole, is a narration of the history of the lockdown in Nigeria which serves as a reference point for future caution to the state-actors and the non-actors. News headlines on an issue, action or a person serve as a source where the information on human and the society that create them can be recalled. The headlines provide copious historical accounts on events and personalities involve in the news. They are additional source of historical data for the historians in studying Nigeria as a nation and by extension, other nations of the world.

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