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Comparative study of Nigerian Television Authority and Taraba Television Ccoverage of COVID-19 Pandemic in Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research study conducted a comparative analysis of COVID-19 pandemic coverage by Nigerian media stations, focusing on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Taraba Television (TTV). The study adopted content analysis research design and it was built on agenda setting theory and Health Belief Model. Findings of the study revealed that TTV covered 64.61% of COVID-19-related stories, while NTA covered 35.39%. TTV demonstrated broader coverage of COVID-19 themes, particularly in prevention aspects, while NTA had a stronger emphasis on vaccination. TTV's coverage exhibited a higher proportion of neutral tonal directions compared to NTA, which presented a more varied range of tonal expressions. Moreover, TTV prescribed remedies for COVID-19 at a higher rate than NTA. The statistical analysis revealed significant differences in thematic emphasis, tonal direction, and remedy prescription between the two stations. The findings suggest that TTV played a more significant role in disseminating information and discussing various aspects of the pandemic in Taraba State compared to NTA. Recommendations based on these findings highlight the importance of comprehensive and balanced coverage in COVID-19 reporting. Media outlets should strive for nuanced reporting that addresses diverse thematic areas, maintains a balanced tone, and provides accurate information on preventive measures and remedies. Additionally, collaboration and knowledge-sharing among media organizations can enhance the quality and

breadth of pandemic reporting, ultimately contributing to effective public health communication.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Coverage, NTA, TTV, Taraba State

1. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing global pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus, referred to as COVID-19, has become a subject of immense concern and scrutiny worldwide. Originating in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, this novel strain, previously unidentified in humans, belongs to the coronavirus family. Initially transmitted from animal sources, notably bats, COVID-19 has rapidly evolved into a human-to-human transmitted disease, characterized by symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia, kidney failure, and death. The World Health Organization (WHO) has underscored the urgent need for comprehensive understanding and effective management of this pandemic (WHO, 2020).

The impact of COVID-19 has been profound, not only on public health but also on socio-economic dynamics globally. The pandemic has led to significant disruptions in daily life, interpersonal interactions, and economic activities, prompting widespread fear and uncertainty. Described as a "health pandemonium" by some scholars (Antonio, 2020), the crisis has strained healthcare systems and tested societal resilience on a scale unprecedented in recent history.

Nigeria, like many nations, has grappled with the ramifications of COVID-19 since its first reported case in February 2020. The imported case, involving an Italian citizen, marked the beginning of a series of infections, including among political elites and prominent figures, underscoring the virus's indiscriminate nature (NCDC, 2020a). Despite efforts to contain the spread, limited testing capacity and inadequate adherence to health guidelines have posed significant challenges, exacerbating the situation.

As of October 31, 2020, Nigeria has reported a considerable number of confirmed cases and deaths attributed to COVID-19, albeit underreporting due to testing constraints (NCDC; WHO, 2020). Globally, the pandemic's toll has been staggering, surpassing historical benchmarks such as the Spanish flu of 1918 in terms of mortality (WHO, 2020). The magnitude of the crisis underscores the inadequacy of global preparedness and response mechanisms, highlighting the need for concerted international cooperation and proactive measures to mitigate future outbreaks.

Media coverage has played a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and responses to COVID-19 in Nigeria. Despite challenges such as resource constraints and logistical hurdles, journalists have diligently reported on the pandemic, disseminating vital information and raising awareness among the populace (APA, 2020; Ripples Nigeria, 2020). However, concerns remain regarding the accuracy and comprehensiveness of media coverage, particularly in light of evolving narratives and the dynamic nature of the crisis.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the coverage of COVID-19 by two prominent media outlets, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Taraba Television (TTV), within Taraba State, Nigeria. By examining the content, tone, and framing of their reporting, the study seeks to elucidate the role of media in shaping public discourse and perception of the pandemic at the regional level.

Statement of Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted extensive media coverage worldwide, influencing public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards the crisis. In this study the researcher is focusing on two major television stations NTA and TTV in Taraba state, Nigeria which have been actively reporting on the pandemic. However, there is a need to examine and compare the coverage provided by these two media stations to gain insights into their respective approaches and contributions to public discourse on COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of NTA and TTV coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Taraba State. The study seeks to ascertain the number of stories, themes, tonal direction, and remedies presented in the coverage of the pandemic by these two television stations.

To proffer solution to the issues raise in this research the study tends to provide a comprehensive understanding of how NTA and TTV have contributed to the dissemination of information, shaping of narratives, and provision of guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in Taraba State. This research is essential for informing media practices, public health communication strategies, and policy decisions aimed at effectively managing the ongoing pandemic and future health crises.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to make comparative study of NTA and TTV coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in Taraba State with a view to ascertain the number of stories, themes, tonal direction and remedies in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic. The objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Identify the number of stories in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- 2) Determine the themes in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- 3) Ascertain the tonal direction in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- 4) Establish the remedies prescribed in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV

Research Questions

The study shall provide answer to the following research questions.

- i. What is the number of stories in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- ii. What are the themes in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- iii. What is the tonal direction in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV
- iv. What are the remedies prescribed in the coverage of covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV

2. METHODS AND MATERIAL

Research Design

This research study adopted content analysis as a research method to analyze the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Taraba Television (TTV) in Taraba State. Content analysis was chosen as the methodological approach due to its effectiveness in identifying patterns in recorded communication.

It allowed for the systematic examination of the number of stories, themes, tonal direction, and remedies presented in the coverage of COVID-19 by NTA and TTV. Content analysis was employed to study the content of the selected broadcast media through a well-constructed coding sheet. This method facilitated the systematic categorization and analysis of the content presented in the television broadcasts, enabling the researcher to identify common themes, trends, and variations in the coverage of COVID-19 by the two stations.

To address the research questions raised in this study, a quantitative content analysis of the two broadcast stations was conducted using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests for easy understanding.

This analytical approach provided insights into the nature and scope of COVID-19 coverage by NTA and TTV, allowing for comparisons between the two stations and identifying any significant differences in their reporting practices. Overall, content analysis served as a robust methodological framework for examining the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by broadcast media in Taraba State, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their reporting approaches and contributions to public discourse during the health crisis.

Population of the Study

The population of the study encompasses news bulletins aired by NTA and TTV from March 2020 to December 2020. It is essential to note that not all bulletins within this timeframe were dedicated solely to coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic; some covered entirely different stories. According to the News Manager at NTA Jalingo, NTA aired a total of 119 bulletins during this period, while TTV aired 145 news bulletins, as confirmed by the Director of News at TTV in 2023. Therefore, the total population under consideration for analysis comprises 264 news bulletins from both NTA and TTV.

Sample Size

Census sampling was employed as the sampling determination technique to study the entire set of 264 bulletins aired by NTA and TTV from March 2020 to December 2020. Census sampling was chosen to ensure comprehensive coverage of all available data within the population.

Given the manageable size of the total population, analyzing every bulletin allowed for a thorough examination of the entirety of news coverage during the specified period. This approach provided a complete picture of the content and themes presented in the bulletins, without the need for sampling or selection bias. Additionally, utilizing census sampling facilitated a more accurate representation of the overall trends and patterns in news coverage, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Sampling Techniques and Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select a subset of news bulletins from NTA and TTV. This sampling approach was chosen to ensure a focused examination of bulletins that best represented the range of coverage and thematic content relevant to the study objectives. By deliberately selecting specific bulletins based on their relevance and significance to the research questions, the study could efficiently capture key insights without the need to analyze every bulletin, thus optimizing resources and time.

Instrument For Data Collection

The instrument used for the research is coding sheet. Coding sheet is the placing of a recording unit of analysis into a content category. Frequency and percentage table was adopted to analyze data.

Content Categories

The content categories used in this study include the number of stories, themes, tonal direction, and remedies presented in their broadcasts. Each of these categories offers unique understanding into the nature and scope of the media's coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of stories reflects the quantity of COVID-19-related content aired by the stations, providing an indication of the extent to which the topic was addressed in their programming. Themes highlight the different topics and issues explored within the coverage, shedding light on the breadth and depth of the stations' reporting on COVID-19. Tonal direction refers to the overall tone or stance adopted by the stations in their coverage, such as whether it was predominantly positive, neutral, or negative, which can influence audience perceptions and responses. Remedies encompass the strategies, solutions, or recommendations offered by the stations to address the pandemic, contributing to public understanding and engagement with preventive measures and health interventions. Thus, analyzing these content categories allows for a comprehensive evaluation of how NTA and TTV addressed the COVID-19 pandemic in their broadcasts..

Units of Analysis

They are words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and themes on covid-19 pandemic.

Inter Coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability served as a measure of agreement among multiple coders or analysts involved in content analysis, ensuring consistency and accuracy in the interpretation and categorization of data, particularly in qualitative research. In this study, inter-coder reliability was assessed to determine the degree of agreement between coders responsible for analyzing the coverage of COVID-19 by NTA and TTV. Cohen's Kappa coefficient was calculated to quantify inter-coder reliability, accounting for both the observed agreement and the agreement expected by chance. There were 100 coding decisions made by two coders, and they agreed on 80 of them.

The expected agreement by chance is 60%. Cohen's Kappa coefficient of 0.50 was gotten. This indicates moderate inter-coder reliability. This means that there was a substantial level of agreement between the coders beyond what would be expected by chance alone. The findings suggest that the coders demonstrated consistency in their interpretation and categorization of the COVID-19 coverage by NTA and TTV, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study results.

Method of data collection

The primary and secondary sources of data have been elicited for the study using coding sheet as the instrument to content analyze the broadcast contents. Secondary data on the other hand was obtained from the review of related literature sourced from extant books, journals,

online publications, Newspapers and other unpublished works such as thesis, dissertations and other library materials.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Descriptive statistic were used to analyze data while chi square and regression were used to compare the significance and associations between variables at p-value ($p \leq 0.05$). Analyzed data were represented in frequencies and percentage and developed in to tables and chats respectively.

3. RESULT

This section presents and discusses the results of the content analysis data retrieved by the researchers. The presentation and discussion is carried out systematically in tandem with the study’s research objectives.

Objective 1: Numbers of Stories in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Table 1 presents a comparison of Covid-19 pandemic coverage by NTA and TTV, based on the number of stories analyzed. Out of the total 650 stories examined, TTV covered 420 Covid-19-related stories, constituting 64.61% of their total coverage. NTA covered 230 Covid-19-related stories, accounting for 35.39% of their total coverage. Consequently, TTV had a greater proportion of Covid-19 pandemic coverage compared to NTA.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of the numbers of Stories in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Media house	Total Number of stories	Number of with covid-19 stories	Percentage (%)
TTV	650	420	64.61
NTA	650	230	35.39
Total		650	100.0

Objective 2: Themes in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Table 2, illustrates the frequency and percentage of various Covid-19 pandemic-related themes covered by two media outlets, NTA and TTV. The themes represent different aspects or topics discussed in their reporting, while the Number Examined indicates the total instances explored for each theme.

In terms of prevention, NTA addressed it in 104 instances (30.20%), while TTV's coverage amounted to 240 instances (69.80%). Both NTA and TTV provided comparable coverage for themes like wearing face masks, hand washing, and social distancing, with minor discrepancies in percentages. However, only TTV reported on the theme of palliative care,

encompassing all 49 instances (100%). Regarding vaccination, NTA offered more extensive coverage, more than three-quarter of the stories (90.90%) compared to TTV's solitary instance (9.10%). In terms of confirmed Covid-19 cases, NTA reported more than half (58.30%) than TTV (5, 41.70%). Notably, NTA exclusively covered mortality, with all 59 instances (100%), whereas TTV did not cover this aspect. The Chi-Square value of 151.474a with 7 degrees of freedom suggests a significant association between NTA and TTV's coverage of the Covid-19 themes. Additionally, the R^2 value of -0.238 indicates a negative correlation coefficient, implying that there's a weak negative relationship between the coverage by NTA and TTV. In the overall theme, NTA addressed 459 instances (42.10%) across all examined themes, while TTV covered 630 instances (57.90%), indicating broader coverage by TTV.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of themes in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Media Houses N(%)				
Themes	Number examined	NTA	TTV	Chi-Square
Prevention	344	104(30.20)	240(69.80)	151.474a
Wear face mask	206	93(45.10)	113(54.90)	
Washing of hands	203	93(45.80)	110(54.20)	
Social Distance	205	93(45.40)	112(54.60)	
Palliative	49	0(0.00)	49(100.0)	
Vaccination	11	10(90.90)	1(9.10)	
Confirmed cases	12	7(58.30)	5(41.70)	
Mortalities	59	59(100.0)	0(0.00)	
Total	1089	459(42.10)	630(57.90)	

NTA = Nigerian Television Authority, TTV = Taraba Television df = 7, Correlation coefficient $R^2 = -0.238$

Objective 3: Tonal direction in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Table 3 explores the tonal direction of the coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic by NTA and TTV. Tonal direction reflects the sentiment conveyed in their reporting. In terms of neutrality, NTA covered neutral tones in 16 instances (10.60%), while TTV did so in 135 instances (89.40%). Conversely, NTA reported negative tones in 75 instances (31.10%), compared to TTV's 166 instances (68.90%). Moreover, NTA portrayed positive tones in 98 instances (85.20%), whereas TTV did so in only 17 instances (14.80%).

Overall, NTA covered 189 instances (37.30%) across all tonal directions examined, while TTV covered 318 instances (62.70%), indicating a higher overall coverage by TTV. This

analysis offers insights into the differing approaches of NTA and TTV in their coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting variations in reporting styles and emphasis on different sentiments.

The Chi-Square value of 162.919 with 2 degrees of freedom suggests a significant difference between NTA and TTV's coverage of tonal directions in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, the R^2 value of -0.54 indicates a negative correlation coefficient, implying a strong negative relationship between the coverage by NTA and TTV regarding tonal direction, Thus underscores the distinct approaches taken by NTA and TTV in conveying the tonal aspects of their Covid-19 coverage, with statistically significant differences observed between the two media houses.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of Tonal direction in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Media Houses N(%)						
Tonal Direction	Number examined	NTA	TTV	Chi-Square	Df	R ²
Neutral	151	16(10.60)	135(89.40)	162.919a	2	-0.54
Negative	241	75(31.10)	166(68.90)			
Positive	115	98(85.20)	17(14.80)			
Total	507	189(37.30)	318(62.70)			

NTA = Nigerian Television Authority, TTV = Taraba Television df = 2, Correlation coefficient $R^2 = - 0.54$

Objective 4: Remedies prescribed in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Table 4, presents the remedies (Vaccination, Isolation, Testing, and Lockdown) prescribed in the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by two media houses, NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) and TTV (Taraba Television). The table includes the number of cases examined for each remedy, the number and percentage of cases where each remedy was prescribed by NTA and TTV. Vaccination, out of 22 cases examined, NTA prescribed it in 21 cases (95.45%), while TTV prescribed it in only 1 case (4.55%). The total number of cases examined for all remedies by both NTA and TTV is 109. Among these, NTA prescribed remedies in 29 cases (26.61%), while TTV prescribed remedies in 80 cases (73.39%). The Chi-Square statistic (128.154a) indicates the degree of association or difference between the remedies prescribed by NTA and TTV. A higher Chi-Square value suggests a greater difference between the two media houses in terms of the remedies they prescribed. The coefficient of determination (R^2) measures the proportion of the variation in the dependent variable (prescribed remedies) that is predictable from the independent variable (media houses). Here, R^2 is 0.596, indicating a moderate to high level of association between the media houses and the remedies prescribed.

The table suggests significant differences in the prescription of remedies for COVID-19 between NTA and TTV, with TTV generally prescribing remedies at a higher rate compared to NTA.

Table 4 Frequency and percentage of Remedies prescribed in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV

Media Houses N(%)				
Remedies	Number examined	NTA	TTV	Chi-Square
Vaccination	22	21(95.45)	1(4.55)	128.154a
Isolation	12	1(8.33)	11(91.67)	
Testing	8	1(12.50)	7(87.50)	
Lockdown	67	6(8.95)	61(91.04)	
Total	109	29(26.61)	80(73.39)	

NTA = Nigerian Television Authority, TTV = Taraba Television df = 3, R² = 0.596, Chi square table = 7.815

Comparative coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV in Number of stories, themes, Tonal direction and remedies

Table 5 presents a comparative overview of the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by two media houses, NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) and TTV (Taraba Television), across different aspects. Out of 650 stories examined, NTA covered 230 stories (35.39%), while TTV covered 420 stories (64.61%). Across 1089 themes examined, NTA covered 459 themes (42.10%), while TTV covered 630 themes (57.90%). Out of 507 instances analyzed, NTA's coverage exhibited 189 instances (37.30%), while TTV's coverage exhibited 318 instances (62.70%). Among 109 instances analyzed, NTA prescribed remedies in 29 cases (26.61%), while TTV prescribed remedies in 80 cases (73.39%). This indicates that TTV provided more coverage on remedies compared to NTA. The table illustrates that TTV had a higher volume of coverage in terms of the number of stories, themes explored, tonal direction, and remedies prescribed for the COVID-19 pandemic compared to NTA. This suggests that TTV may have played a more significant role in disseminating information and discussing various aspects of the pandemic in Taraba State compared to NTA.

Table 5. Comparative coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV in Number of stories, themes, Tonal direction and remedies

Media Houses N(%)			
	Number examined	NTA	TTV
Number of stories	650	230(35.39)	420(64.61)

Themes	1089	459(42.10)	630(57.90)
Tonal Direction	507	189(37.30)	318(62.70)
Remedies	109	29(26.61)	80(73.39)

NTA = Nigerian Television Authority, TTV = Taraba Television

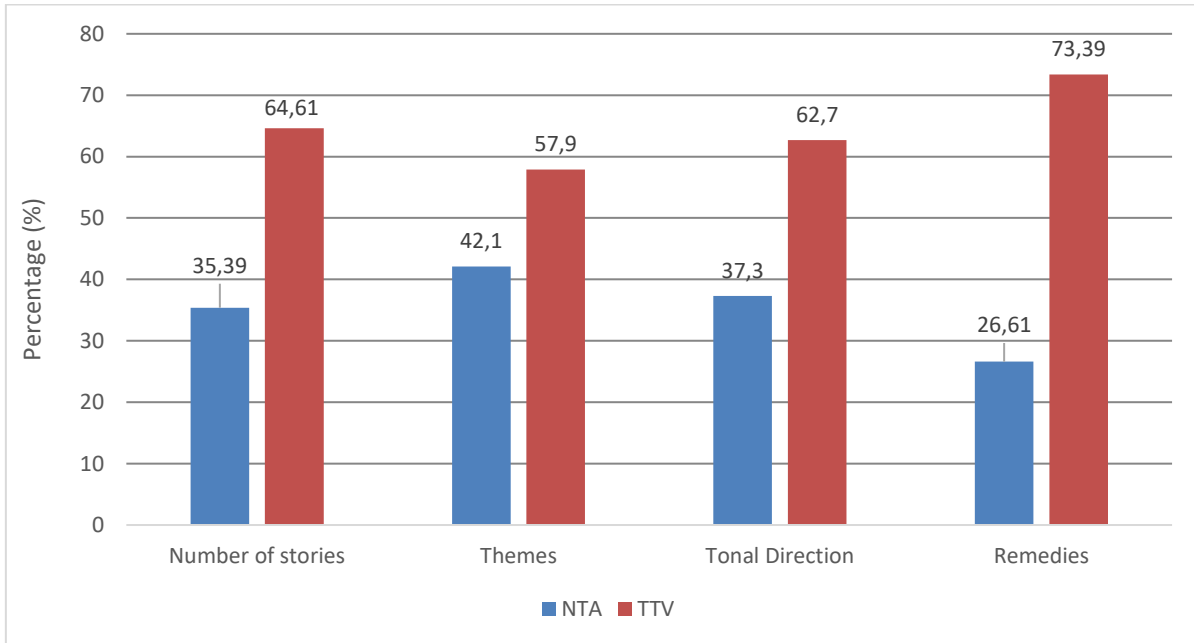


Figure 1. Summary coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV in Number of stories, themes, Tonal direction and remedies

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study compares the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by two Nigerian media stations, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Taraba Television (TTV), across various dimensions including the number of stories, themes explored, tonal direction, and remedies prescribed. The Numbers of Stories in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV, out of 650 stories analyzed, TTV covered 420 COVID-19-related stories (64.61%), while NTA covered 230 stories (35.39%). Hence, TTV had a higher proportion of pandemic coverage compared to NTA. Themes in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV showed that TTV covered a broader range of themes compared to NTA. For instance, in terms of prevention, TTV addressed it more frequently (240 instances) compared to NTA (104 instances). NTA had more extensive coverage on vaccination (10 instances) compared to TTV (1 instance). A possible reason for this could be that the government media are skeptical in exposing the weaknesses of the government in handling the problems of COVID-19. Research found that the government-owned mainstream media are mostly skeptical when it comes to criticism of the government in power (Apuke, 2017).

Tonal direction in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV, revealed that TTV had a higher overall coverage of tonal directions compared to NTA. TTV predominantly covered neutral tones, while NTA exhibited a more varied range of tonal directions including negative and positive tones. There was a significant difference between NTA and TTV's coverage of tonal directions, indicating distinct approaches in conveying sentiment regarding the pandemic. We reasoned that the use of more negative tone was to show the severity of the pandemic and as well make people take caution. This is in line with a recent study conducted to realize newspaper coverage of COVID-19 in Nigeria (Nwakpu, 2020).

Remedies prescribed in the coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV, During the epic COVID-19 pandemic, everyone was overwhelmed and in fear of the outcome of the infection. Many people opted to complement modern medicine with home remedies to accelerate their recovery. Others felt it was better to use remedies that typically relieve similar symptoms as those of COVID-19. Consequently, they opted to use home remedies such as holy basil, lemon, ginger, black pepper, and Chinese chaste tree powder (Azam, et al., 2020). While this study confirmed that TTV prescribed remedies for COVID-19 at a higher rate compared to NTA. For instance, out of 22 cases examined for vaccination, NTA prescribed it in 21 cases, while TTV only prescribed it in 1 case. Fortunately, many were cured without any side effects. Other remedies included warm mixtures of ginger, cloves, coriander, black cumin seeds, honey, fruits high in Vitamin C, garlic, turmeric, cinnamon, and black pepper. To alleviate symptoms of the virus, such as fevers, myalgia, throat aches, and shortness of breath, people wiped their bodies with warm, wet sponges.

They also prepared tonics from garlic and performed steam inhalations. These strategies are congruent with the findings by Nuerthey et al., (2022) who reported that the use of specified herbs, certain tree leaves. Comparative coverage of Covid- 19 Pandemic by NTA and TTV in Number of stories, themes, Tonal direction and remedies, TTV comparatively provided more extensive coverage across all aspects compared to NTA, including the number of stories, themes explored, tonal direction, and remedies prescribed. This suggests that TTV played a more significant role in disseminating information and discussing various aspects of the pandemic in Taraba State compared to NTA. Thus the overall, the study highlights differences in COVID-19 coverage strategies between NTA and TTV, with TTV demonstrating broader coverage and a higher focus on remedies and neutral tonal directions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study focused on comparing Nigerian Television Authority and Taraba Television coverage of covid-19 pandemic in Taraba state. The study adopted content analysis to analyze the data using coding sheet. The news bulletins of NTA (119) and TTV (145) from March 2020 to December 2020, comprised the total population of the study which is 264. In conclusion, the study has provided valuable insights into the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by two prominent Nigerian media outlets, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Taraba Television (TTV). Through meticulous analysis across multiple dimensions including the number of stories, themes explored, tonal direction, and remedies prescribed, it was evident that TTV outperformed NTA in various aspects of pandemic reporting.

Firstly, TTV demonstrated a higher proportion of pandemic coverage, with a broader range of themes explored compared to NTA. This included a more extensive focus on

prevention strategies and a higher rate of remedies prescribed. Additionally, TTV exhibited a predominantly neutral tonal direction, suggesting a more balanced approach to conveying sentiment regarding the pandemic.

On the other hand, while NTA also provided significant coverage of the pandemic, it lagged behind TTV in terms of the number of stories covered, themes, and prescription of remedies. Furthermore, NTA showcased a more varied range of tonal directions, including both positive and negative tones, indicating a more diverse approach to pandemic reporting.

Overall, the study underscores the differences in COVID-19 coverage strategies between NTA and TTV, with TTV emerging as a more comprehensive source of information and discussion on various aspects of the pandemic in Taraba State. Moving forward, these findings could inform media stations' strategies for more effective and impactful pandemic reporting, ultimately contributing to public awareness and mitigation efforts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are hereby recommended:

- 1) Media outlets should strive for comprehensive coverage that addresses diverse thematic areas, including prevention, vaccination, and treatment options, to provide the public with a well-rounded understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) It is essential for media organizations to maintain a balanced tone in their reporting, avoiding sensationalism or undue alarmism, while still accurately conveying the severity and importance of the pandemic.
- 3) Media platforms should prioritize the dissemination of accurate information on COVID-19 preventive measures and remedies, helping to combat misinformation and promote public health awareness.
- 4) Collaboration and knowledge-sharing among media outlets can enhance the quality and breadth of pandemic reporting, fostering a more coordinated and effective response to public health crises.
- 5) Continuous training and capacity-building initiatives for journalists and media professionals can improve their understanding of public health issues and equip them with the necessary skills to deliver accurate and informative coverage of COVID-19 and other health emergencies.

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