



Social Network Services as a Vital Tool for Containment of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Port Harcourt City, Rivers State

¹EGBUNEFU, Chibuike PhD & ²UBANI, Chinyere

¹Department of Business Education
Faculty of Education
Rivers State University,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

²Department of Computer Science
Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic,
Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was determining the Internet Services as a vital tool in containment of Corona Virus (COVID-19) in rural areas of Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were used for the study. The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 1,144 while as the sample for this study comprised 343, being the 30 percentage representation of the study selected from rural dwellers in Rivers East Senatorial District. A structured instrument on a four-point scale Likert scale of very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and very Low Extent (VLE) as a questionnaire was used to elicit data for the study. The instrument was validated by two research experts selected from Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. To test the reliability of the instrument, test re-test method was adopted which yielded the coefficient score of 0.81. all the questionnaire administered to the respondents were returned and used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The decision on research questions were made based on the real limit at scale values. 1 to 4 on a four point scales and follows very High Extent 1.50 to 2.49, and very Low Extent – 0.50 to 1.49. While the null hypothesis was accepted where the calculated t-value was less than the t-table value at the appropriate degree of freedom, otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the analysis, it was revealed that Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter are vital tools for containment of spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State and it was recommended that Government should make available information systems as to enable the rural dwellers have access to internet services, that rural dwellers should be trained on how to use Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp for information and that government should provide internet services as the available the rural dwellers to have access to internet services.

Keywords: Social, Network, Services, Containment, Coronavirus

INTRODUCTION

Corona virus (COVID 19) is a new strain virus that infects humans. The disease is transmitted between animals and human and afterwards, human to human. According to Rivers State University Health Service (2020), corona virus is transmitted mainly via respiratory droplets of infected persons Sneeze, cough or exhale, especially when people are in close contact with one another. Corona virus can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby and inhale into their lungs. WHO (2020) opined that corona virus

can be transmitted through touching of surface or objects that already have the virus on them and thereby touching their faces, nose, eyes, mouth etc. Apart from the avoidance of eh stated measures, people are thought to be contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

The spread of COVID 19 may be transmitted through some corona virus carriers who have not shown any symptoms. WHO also declared that the incubation period for this corona virus (COVID 19) ranges from two (2) to fourteen (14) days. According to Rivers State University Health Services (2020), most common symptoms of COVID 19 are fever, tiredness and dry cough. They stated that some patients may have muscle aches and pains, nasal congestion, running nose, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, chest pain, pneumonia, kidney failure, rapid heartbeat etc.

WHO (2020) stated that corona virus diseases can be prevented through frequently cleaning of hands using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, rub or soap and water cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. WHO also stated that individuals should cover their nose with flexed elbow or tissue. It is important to also note that the used tissue should be thrown away immediately and wash your hands, maintenance of at least two-meter distance between anyone who is coughing and sneezing. The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoids, raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices. Avoid unprotected contact with wild or farm animals. Facebook is a popular social media networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages as well as keeping in touch with friends, family members and colleagues.

Ashley (2014) opined that Facebook offers a range of privacy options to its members and that Facebook is a personal news site where stories are received. Facebook is for information dissemination and reception, it also used for connection of friends and reception of latest information. Facebook is one of the most influential social networking sites that can be used to connect friends. Internet has brought in a period of high connectivity that one could never imagine. It is a platform used for spread of genuine and fake news, rumours and other threatening messages. WhatsApp therefore, is used for dissemination of information about an issue, it is an online communication format that enables its users to communicate as well as send messages. Apart from Facebook and WhatsApp, twitter can also be used for dissemination and reception of information.

Twitter is a microblogging site that allows to tweet news and information to family members, friends, colleagues and clients. Twitter enables users to send and receive messages concerning an event. It can be used for interaction between the individuals.

Statement of the Problem

The rural dwellers are expected to have time to vital information especially in times like this global pandemic called Corona virus and because of the precautionary measures such as social distancing and self-isolation, internet service has become the safest medium to dissemination the information of the spread of symptoms of the global pandemic called corona virus. It is no longer a news that there is corona virus and the rural dwellers are expected to be acquainted on the precautionary measures to stop the spread of the pandemic. Internet services as an aspect of information systems has become the most utilized network service in the world today. It is a computer commented network which enable individuals to disseminate and receive information. According to Quibble (2011), "Social network services is a network which uses a set of standards, formally known as protocols that make the sending and receiving of information possible.

Meanwhile, most of the rural dwellers have heard the name corona virus but they have little knowledge of getting information on the precautionary measures of how to curbs avoid the spread of the corona virus pandemic. The researcher observed that since is an advocacy for social distancing, there is need to disseminate the needed information concerning the COVID 19 to the rural dwellers and deemed it necessary to determine how internet services can be used as a tool for containment of corona virus (COVID 19) in rural area of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was determining the social network services as a vital tool in containment of Corona Virus (COVID-19) in rural areas of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which Facebook can be used as a tool for containment of COVID-19 in rural areas of Rivers State
2. Determine the extent to which WhatsApp Services be used as a tool for containment of COVID-19 virus in rural areas of Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which twitter as a tool for containment of COVID19 virus in rural areas of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does Facebook be used as a tool for containment of COVID-19 in rural areas of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does WhatsApp Services be used as a tool for containment of COVID-19 virus in rural areas of Rivers State?
3. To what extent does twitter as a tool for containment of COVID-19 virus in rural areas of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the Facebook Services as a tool for containment of COVID-19 in rural areas of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the use of WhatsApp as a tool for containment of COVID-19 in rural areas of Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the use of Twitter as a tool for containment of COVID 19 in rural areas of Rivers State.

METHODS

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people considered to be representative of the entire group. The population of the study comprised 1,144 while as the sample for this study comprised 343, being the 30 percentage representation of the study selected from rural dwellers in Rivers East Senatorial District. A structured instrument on a four-point scale Likert scale of very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and very Low Extent (VLE) as a questionnaire was used to elicit data for the study. The instrument was validated by two research experts selected from Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. To test the reliability of the instrument, test re-test method was adopted which yielded the coefficient score of 0.81. all the questionnaire administered to the respondents were returned and used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The decision on research questions were made based on the real limit at scale values. 1 to 4 on a four point scales and follows very High Extent 1.50 to 2.49, and very Low Extent – 0.50 to 1.49. While the null hypothesis was accepted where the calculated t-value was less than the t-table value at the appropriate degree of freedom, otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent can Facebook be used for containment of COVID-19 in rural areas of Rivers State?*

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the Facebook services

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	I receive information through Facebook	4.11	0.89	High Extent
2.	There is a internet network in the rural area	4.17	0.91	High Extent
3.	Facebook enable me to have access to information	4.24	0.71	High Extent
4.	Availability of Facebook enables me to interact with friends.	4.41	0.81	High Extent
5.	Facebook promotes global information exchange	4.29	0.98	High Extent
6.	Facebook exposes me to things happening around the globe	4.62	0.61	High Extent
7.	I have access to Facebook	4.06	0.99	High Extent
8.	Use of Facebook helps me get information faster	4.30	0.77	High Extent
	Cluster Mean	4.28		

Table 1 revealed that 8 instrument items has the total mean (cluster mean) of 4.62 which indicate that the respondents took Facebook to High Extend for containment of spread of corona virus (COVID-19) in rural areas of Rivers State. The standard deviations for all the items are also within the same range which indicates that the respondents are not too wide in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2

To what extent does WhatsApp Services be used as a tool for containment of Spread of Corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State?

Table 3: Respondents Mean Ratings on WhatsApp Services for containment of corona virus

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	WhatsApp services are available in the rural areas.	4.12	0.17	High Extent
2.	I know everything about WhatsApp services	4.09	0.92	High Extent
3.	I cannot comfortably utilize WhatsApp services.	4.11	0.71	High Extent
4.	I have been using WhatsApp services.	4.62	0.51	High Extent
5.	I receive information via WhatsApp	4.08	0.89	High Extent
6.	I access global issues through WhatsApp.	4.15	0.17	High Extent
7.	I have heard about corona virus through WhatsApp	4.17	0.92	High Extent
8.	Interruption of power supply affects the use of internet services.	4.42	0.81	High Extent
	Cluster Mean	4.22		

Data in Table 2 showed the mean responses of the respondents on WhatsApp services as a vital tool for containment of Corona virus (COVID 19) spread in rural areas of Rivers State. The result revealed that all the items had the mean scores that ranged from 4.08 to 4.62. The mean scores are indications that WhatsApp can be a vital tool for containment of spread of Corona virus in rural areas in Rivers State. The study revealed that WhatsApp will be useful for dissemination of information to the rural dwellers on the precautionary measures for containment of spread of Corona virus in Nigeria and the globe at large considering the cluster mean of 4.22 which is greater than average score of 2.5. The standard deviations of all the items were relatively large, indicating that the responses of the respondents are within the mean ratings scales.

Research Question 3

To what extent can twitter be used as a vital tool for containment of COVID 19 in rural areas of Rivers State?

Table 3: Respondents mean ratings on the twitter services

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Twitter is good for exchange of information	4.17	0.81	High Extent
2.	I receive information through twitter	4.40	0.82	High Extent
3.	I have access to network	4.28	0.91	High Extent
4.	I utilize twitter for information	4.30	0.81	High Extent
5.	I disseminate information using twitter.	3.89	0.71	High Extent
6.	I exchange information with my friends through twitting.	4.63	0.77	High Extent
7.	Rural Area dwellers used network to enable them twit.	4.38	0.51	High Extent
Cluster Mean		4.29		

Table revealed that all the 8 items has the total mean score of 4.63. This indicates that the respondents took twitter to high extent as a vital tool for containment of corona virus (COVID 19) in rural areas of Rivers State. The cluster mean score of 4.29 indicates that twitter as an internet services is a vital tool for containment of corona virus (COVID 19) in rural areas of Rivers State. The standard deviation for the 8 items is in consonants with the mean ratings.

Testing Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Facebook as a vital tool for containment of Corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test result analysis of Facebook as a vital tool for containment of Corona virus
N 343

Lecturers	N	\bar{X}	SD	@	Df	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Male	162	3.80	1.38	0.05	341	0.883	0.371	No. of significant
Female	181	3.62	1.22					

Source: Field Study, 2020

Data in Table 4 indicate that the aggregate mean ratings of rural area dwellers on the Facebook services for containment of Corona virus (COVID 19) in rural areas of Rivers state is 4.62 and 4.06, while the corresponding standard deviation is 0.99 and 0.61. The table indicated that the t-test value is .883 at degree freedom of 341, while the p-value is 0.371. Testing alpha level 0.51, the p-value is not significant, since the p-value is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, since, the mean responses of rural area dwellers (respondents) do not significantly differ on Facebook services in containment of corona virus spread in rural areas of Rivers State.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the use of WhatsApp as a vital tool for containment of corona virus spread in rural areas of Rivers State

Table 5: Summary of t-test result of analysis on WhatsApp as a vital tool for curtailing spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State.

N 343								
Lecturers	N	\bar{X}	SD	@	Df	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Male	162	3.64	1.21					
				0.05	341	0.602	0.348	No. of significant
Female	181	3.21	1.18					

Source: Field Study, 2020

Data in Table 5 indicates that the aggregate mean ratings of the respondents on the use of WhatsApp as a vital tool for containment of spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State is 3.64 and 3.21, while the corresponding standard deviations 1.21 and 1.18. The table indicates that the t-value is 0.62 at degree freedom of 341, while the p-value is 0.348. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant, since the p-value is greater than the alpha values (0.05), so, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on twitter as a vital tool for containment of spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test result analysis on twitter as a vital tool for containment of spread of Corona virus

N 343								
Lecturers	N	\bar{X}	SD	@	Df	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Male	162	3.64	1.92					
				0.05	341	0.612	0.304	No significant
Female	181	3.32	1.18					

Source: Field Study, 2020

Data in Table 6 indicates that the aggregate mean ratings of the respondents on the use of twitter as a vital tool for containment of spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State is 4.63 and 3.89, while the corresponding standard deviation from 0.51 to 0.91. The table indicated that the t-value is 0.612 at degree of freedom of 341, while the p-value is 0.304 testing at alpha level of 0.05. The p-value is greater than the alpha value (0.05), so, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study is the first research questions agreed that Facebook is a vital tool for the containment of spread of corona virus in rural areas of Rivers State, Nigeria with the mean ratings of 4.00 to 4.62, will help in disseminating information about the COVID 19 disease and precautionary measures on how to avoid the spread. This will agree with the assertions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that internet services are vital tools in educating rural dwellers of Rivers State on the precautionary measures to curtail spread of corona virus (COVID 19) diseases in rural areas, and Nigeria at large.

The outcome of the study revealed that Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter services can be used to disseminate information on the containment of corona virus (COVID 19) in rural areas of Rivers State and Nigeria at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher twitters the following recommendations:

1. Government showed male available information systems as to enable the rural dwellers have access to internet services.
2. The rural dwellers should be trained on how to use Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp for information.
3. Government should provide internet services as the available the rural dwellers to have access to internet services.

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