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Mass Media, Politics and Civic Engagement in Nigeria

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Ezekiel S. Asemah, PhD is a Professor of Public Relations, Advertising and Behavioural Change Communication and the Dean, College of Management and Social Sciences, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. He is also a Visiting Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. He is the Deputy National President of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter and also a Fellow of the African Council for Communication Education.

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Preface

Mass media play a crucial role in every society; they play this role by providing information, education, entertainment and news to the general members of the society. The mass media have great influence on shaping public opinion, attitudes and behaviours. The mass media also act as watchdog of the society to hold those in power accountable. Thus, there is a relationship between the media, politics and civic engagement.

The communication of political information during electioneering is very important and the mass media play a central role in this activity. It is through the mass media that the electorate get to understand the past, present and future events. The mass media also serve as platforms through which the members of the society carry out civic engagements. Thus, the book is titled: ‘‘Mass Media, Politics and Civic Engagement in Nigeria.’’ The book is in three parts. Part one covers communication, digital media and society. This part covers chapters one to nineteen. Part two treats media, political campaigns, health communication and attitude change and it covers chapters twenty to thirty seven, while part three covers topical issues in mass media and civic engagement; it covers chapters thirty eight to fifty three. Therefore, the book is in fifty three chapters.

The text is not encompassing in the area of mass media, politics, attitude change and civic engagement, but it touches critical areas in in the field of communication that readers will find worthwhile. The essays presented here have theoretical and empirical relevance which scholars can take advantage. Happy reading.

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Notes on Contributors

Adédèjì Fred Aríjeníwà is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is dejiarijeniwa@gmail.com

Adekunle Mamudu, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is kunlemamudu@yahoo.com

Adeline O. Nkwam-Uwaoma, PhD lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. She is a member of several professional bodies and has several publications to credit. Her contact email is nkwamuwaomaadeline@yahoo.com

Angela Nkiru Nwammuo, PhD is a Professor and the Head of the Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria. Her contact email is angelanwammuo@yahoo.com

Agnes O. Ezeji, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, Rhema University, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Her contact email is chionyeagnes@gmail.com

Aisha Egwa is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is aishaegwa7@gmail.com

Akesuyi Uyinmwen Nomwen is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email uyinmwenweek@gmail.com

Amanda Chigasa Anwumabelem is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is amandachichi2000@gmail.com

Ambrose Uchenunu, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is uchenunua@yahoo.com

Anthonia Okpomini is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin city, Nigeria. Her contact email is anthoniaokpomini@gmail.com

Blessing Ajirioghene Omoevah teaches in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro, Delta State, Nigeria. Her contact email is omoevahblessing@yahoo.com

Bobby Eghosa Obayuwana is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is bobbyblaze4life@gmail.com

Chidinma N. Nwokolo is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is chidinma.nwokolo18@gmail.com

Chikaodi Njoku is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email chikaodinjoku5@gmail.com

Christiana Shade Ade-Johnson, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is sunshineoasis12@gmail.com

Chukwuemeka C. Nwachukwu is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is emekanwachukwu100@gmail.com

Chukwunonso C. Nnabuife, PhD teaches in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is chukwunon.sonnabuife@uniben.edu.ng

Comfort A. Ogwo, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. Her contact email is comfort_ogwo@yahoo.com

Daniel O. Ekhareafo, PhD is a Senior Lecturer and the Ag. Head of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is talk2ofomegbe@gmail.com

Daniel Toochukwu Ezegwu, PhD is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State. His research interests are Political Communication, Development Communication and Media Studies. His contact email is ezegwudaniel@gmail.com

Dominic Odion Okidi is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is okidiodominic@gmail.com

Dorcas Oluwadamilola Fadeyi is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, State. Her contact email is fadeyidammy123@gmail.com

Emeke Precious Nwaoboli is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is emekenwaoboli@gmail.com

Ezekiel S. Asemah, PhD is a Professor of Public Relations, Advertising and Behavioural Change Communication and the Dean, College of Management and Social Sciences**,** Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. He is also a Visiting Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. He is the Deputy National President of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter and also a Fellow of the African Council for Communication Education. His contact emails are easemah@sau.edu.ng; asemahezekiel@yahoo.com

Faith Abu is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is faithabu37@gmail.com

Faith Ozikor Amah, PhD is a lecturer in the Department of Public Relations and Advertising Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Her contact email is ozikorbabe@gmail.com

Festus Prosper Olise, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is olisefestus@yahoo.com

Francis Azuka Mordi is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is mordifrancis7@gmail.com

Gideon Nwafor, PhD lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria. His contact email is gideonuchenwafor@gmail.com

Gideon Timileyin Olaoye is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University, Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is teemix4real@gmail.com

Gladys Osadebamwen Idahosa is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Nigeria. Her contact email is omosidahosa@gmail.com

Gloria Eneh Omale lectures in the Department of Information and Media Technology, School of Information and Communication Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State. Her contact email is e.gloria@futminna.edu.ng

Gloria Ehimwema Ogono is a lecturer and doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is gloriaogono1@gmail.com

Glory Ugbotor is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is glorybrown2234@gmail.com

Grace I. Okpongkpong lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Otta, Ogun State, Nigeria and a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, State. Her contact email is imaikopgrce@gmail.com

Helen O.C. Ambassador-Brikins, PhD is of the Department of Mass Communication, National Open University of Nigeria, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria. Her contact email is hambassador-brikins@noun.edu.ng

Henry Ovwigho Onovweghware is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is henryonovweghware@gmail.com

Ibituru Iwowari Pepple, PhD is a senior lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State, Nigeria. He is also the National Secretary of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE). His contact email is peppleibituru@gmail.com

Isah Abdulazeez is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is isahabdulazeez234@gmail.com

Isibor Odion Osahenrumwen is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin. His contact email is isiborodion7@gmail.com

Jesse Okedi is of the Department of Development Communication Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. His contact email is jesse.okedi@ust.edu.ng

Jessica Ajokpeoghene is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is ajokpeoghenejessica@gmail.com

Jibrin Umar Omachi is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, State. His contact email is jibrinumaromachi97@gmail.com

John Odeogheneraro Ogbe is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is ogbejohnraro@gmail.com

Johnson Aleogho Nasamu is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is johnsonnasamu60@gmail.com

Jonathan Aliede, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja. His contact email is aliedej@yahoo.com

Joseph Akpabio, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. His contact email is josephakpabio77@gmail.com

Lateef Adekunle Adelakun, PhD is an Associate Professor of New Media and Development Communication and the Head of the Department of Mass Communication, National Open University of Nigeria. His contact email is ladelakun@noun.edu.ng

Lauren Dawari Dickson is a Postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Her contact email is laurendickson4444@gmail.com

Martha Joda lectures in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria. Her contact email is jodamarth216@gmail.com

Mary-Jane Ogorchukwu Elumelu is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin. Her contact email address is elumelumaryjane001@gmail.com

Mercy Ogbodu is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is mecirukky@gmail.com

Nana Mariam Muhammed is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is mbatool2020@gmail.com

Ndubuisi Nwigwe Umoro teaches in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University, Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is umorond@gmail.com

Obele Kayiobari Obe-Nwaka lectures in the Department of Development Communication Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. His email contact is obele.obe.nwaka@gmail.com

Ojeh Bertrand is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, State. His contact email is ogor750@gmail.com

Oluwafisayo E. Ogunyemi, PhD is the Acting Head of the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is abdulfizzy@gmail.com

Oluwatosin Deborah Adeosun is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is oluwatosinadeosun12@yahoo.com

Omowumi Bukola Olaseinde, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media and Performance Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti (BOUESTI) Ekiti State, Nigeria. Her contact email is omowummyolaseinde@gmail.com

Opeyemi Popoola Oladele is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, State. His contact email is opeskipopoola@gmail.com

Osaro Favour Osasenaga is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is favourosaro2@gmail.com

Oseriemen Kristine Unu-Orukpe is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is kunu1832@gmail.com

Placida Timothy is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is placidatimothy@gmail.com

Purity Hope Oyibotha is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is oyibopurity@gmail.com

Queen Ohiolei Odoemelam is a Doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is rosesplend@gmail.com

Richard Celestine Eromosele is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is bconnectconsults@gmail.com

Safiya Kaka Muhammad Dagaci teaches in the Department of mass communication, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger state. Her contact email is safidaci@gmail.com

Sunday Akpobo Ekerikevwe is a Lecturer and a Doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact emails are sunday.ekerikevwe@uniben.edu; sekerikevwe@gmail.com

Sunny Duke Okosun is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is dukke4real@gmail.com

Thomas Anomoaphe Alemoh, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Mass Communication, Federal University, Lafiya, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. His contact email is alemohthomas@yahoo.com

Timothy Omobude is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is talk2timothyomobude@gmail.com

Tina C. Touitou, PhD lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. Her contact email is anatsuic@babcockuniversity.edu.ng

Tsegyu Santas, SACCE, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. His core research interest areas are Journalism and Media Studies, Digital Media and Development Communication. He is the Deputy National Secretary of the prestigious African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria. His contact email is tsegyu@nsuk.edu.ng

Ukato Felix Amiebaho is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is iaizobaba@gmail.com

Unity Osamuyimen Aibangbee is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is aibangbeeunity909@gmail.com

Uwomano Sophia Oduokpe is a postgraduate student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Her contact email is sophia19uw@gmail.com

Victor Ehiagwina is a doctoral student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is ehiagwinasunday@gmail.com

Victoria Ugbedeojo Ikani is a postgraduate Student in the Department of Mass Communication, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. Her contact email is brainnyvikky@gmail.com

Zakari Omale is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University (formerly Samuel Adegboyega University), Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His contact email is omalezakari@gmail.com

PART ONE

COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL MEDIA AND SOCIETY

CHAPTER ONE

INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK NETIZENS' DIALECTICS OF IKE EKWEREMADU'S ORGAN TRAFFICKING CASE

Emeke Precious Nwaoboli; Angela Nkiru Nwammuo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Organ trafficking in Nigeria is rampant even though it is shrouded in secrecy. The illicit act is considered a serious criminal offence and obtaining precise and reliable data poses significant challenges. Nigeria is acknowledged to be a significant source of human trafficking, encompassing trafficking with the intention of organ extraction (Clare, 2004). According to the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report issued by the US Department of State, Nigeria is a Tier 2 Watch List country (US Department of State, 2020). This classification implies that Nigeria is actively engaged in making noteworthy endeavours to eradicate trafficking; however, it has not yet achieved the minimum standards required to accomplish this goal.

In the United States, there are over 114,000 persons on the organ waiting list and someone new is added every 10 minute (American Transplant Foundation, 2018). In the United States alone, 20 individuals pass away on average each day while waiting for an organ (American Transplant Foundation, 2018). More so, only 10% of the world's requirement for organ transplants is met by the legally accessible organs for transplant (Negri, 2016; United Nations, 2018; Yousaf & Purkayastha, 2016) and many patients engage in transplant tourism and organ trafficking due to the lengthy waitlists and unfavourable outcomes of prolonged waiting (ACAMSToday, 2018; American Transplant Foundation, 2018; Broumand & Saidi, 2017; United Nations, 2019).

In Nigeria, statistics of organ trafficking are scarce. However, US Department of State (2020) agrees that some humans trafficked in Nigeria are trafficked with the intention of trading their organs and that the harvesting of kidneys is often the most commonly documented manifestation of organ trafficking, with certain instances also encompassing the trade of the liver and corneas. More so, majority of individuals subjected to organ trafficking in Nigeria are youthful males hailing from impoverished socioeconomic backgrounds and are frequently enticed into vending their organs by the prospect of monetary profit (US Department of State, 2020).

As part of their constitutional mandate, the mass media and the journalists are expected to monitor the environment in order to ensure the safety of ordinary people; they survey the society and thus report situation of danger that may plunge the society into a state of anarchy (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). The use of social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook has boomed in recent years, enabling users to discuss various issues that shape social norms (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b; Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022; Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). The discourse surrounding the organ trafficking case of Ike Ekweremadu on these platforms reflects the complex dialectics that characterise such online discussions. Instagram and Facebook are two of the most popular social media platforms in Nigeria, with millions of users who actively engage in discussions on various topics (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022).

Organ trafficking is a global issue that involves the illegal exploitation, buying and selling of human organs for transplant purposes (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). It is a money-spinning business that preys on vulnerable individuals, particularly from developing countries, who are willing to sell their organs for financial gain. Recently, the issue of organ trafficking has gained widespread attention in Nigeria, with the Ike Ekweremadu's saga. Ike Ekweremadu, who alongside his wife, daughter and Dr. Obinna Obeta were charged with conspiring to arrange the travel of a 21-year-old man from Lagos to the United Kingdom for organ harvesting (Inyang, 2022). This incident stirred divisive reactions and discussions among social media netizens in Nigeria.

This polarised debate mirrors the dialectics of social discourse, with opposing sides providing counter-arguments. Studies show that social media platforms have become veritable avenues for public debates and interactions that shape social norms (Ali, Imtiaz, González & Wnuk, 2022; Rashid, Sherwani & Ali, 2021). The intense dialectics witnessed in the Ekweremadu case suggest the need to understand the meaning-making and perspectives of netizens on these platforms (Chen & Mo, 2021; Papacharissi, 2015).

As the prevalence of organ trafficking and trade continues to increase in developing nations (Campbell & Im, 2019; Moniruzzaman, 2020), it is crucial to comprehend the perspectives of netizens, as these can influence societal attitudes and responses as the manner in which discussions are shaped can have a notable impact on how organ trafficking is perceived in Nigeria. More so, the dialectical approach, which involves the examination of opposing viewpoints and the attempt to reconcile them, can be an effective tool for analysing social media conversations and by utilising the dialectical approach to scrutinise the discussions of Instagram and Facebook users regarding the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case.This study, therefore, explored the dialectics of Instagram and Facebook discussions on the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking case with the aim of understanding the embedded perspectives, implications and potentials for shaping social norms.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian government has implemented measures to combat organ trafficking, such as enacting the National Health Act in 2014. The aforementioned legislation serves to govern the process of organ transplantation and also enforces a prohibition on the commercial exchange of human organs. Notwithstanding, cases of organ trafficking still continue to happen in Nigeria and by Nigerians in diaspora; albeit they often do not get enough literary studies.

Conversely, social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook have played an integral role in exposing the details of Ike Ekweremadu's alleged organ trafficking case to the public and sparking debates on the issue. However, there are complex opinions and reactions from social media users regarding the gravity and implications of the alleged crime. Some netizens see it as a serious offense and human rights violation, while others argue that the issue is being overblown. This polarised landscape showcases the nuanced dialectics and competing narratives surrounding the organ trafficking case on social media. However, despite the prevalence of social media platforms in shaping public opinion and discourse as well as many communication studies (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2022; Moniruzzaman, 2022; Campbell & Im, 2019; Kelly, 2013) on human trafficking in Nigeria and organ trafficking globally, there are barely researches on how Instagram and Facebook

users engaged with and constructed narratives around the high-profile case of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking. This study was aimed at covering the lacuna in the research gap by investigating the dialectics of social media users' discussions on the case.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the slants in which texts on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case were presented on Instagram and Facebook.
2. Determine the message sources of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case on Instagram and Facebook.
3. Ascertain the types of languages used by Instagram and Facebook netizens in addressing Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case.

Conceptual and Literature Review

Organ trafficking is defined in the UNODC (2019), which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised crime, as the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs for transplantation. Therefore, organ trafficking typically involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of individuals for the purpose of organ harvesting. Additionally, it encompasses the utilisation of physical violence, deceit, manipulation, exploitation of authority or exploitation of a vulnerable position. Also, the objective is invariably to exploit (UNODC, 2019). According to definition adopted by the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) and the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), cited in O'regean (2021), organ trafficking is:

> The recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring or receipt of living or deceased persons or their organs by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving to or the receiving by, a third party of payments or benefits to achieve the transfer of control over the potential donor, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs for transplantation.

We, therefore, define organ trafficking as a range of illicit activities, including the unauthorised extraction of organs from living or deceased individuals, as well as the illegal trade and transplantation of human organs. In all cases, organ trafficking is a serious violation of human rights and can have severe consequences for the victims, who may suffer physical and emotional harm, as well as long-term health problems (O'regean, 2021).

Understanding Social Media Dialectics

Dialectics is a comprehensive approach that emphasises the interplay of changes and interactions that take place in the world (Ollman, 1986). This approach involves organising one's perception of reality for the purpose of study and effectively communicating one's findings to others, who may not necessarily approach the topic from a dialectical

perspective (Ollman, 1986). Social media dialectics refers to the dynamic and interactive nature of social media communication, which involves the exchange of ideas, opinions and perspectives among users. Dialectics in this context refers to the process of dialogue and debate that takes place on social media platforms, where users engage in a back-and-forth exchange of ideas that can lead to the formation of new insights, perspectives and understandings.

At the heart of social media dialectics is the idea that social media platforms provide a space for individuals to engage in open and democratic communication, where diverse viewpoints can be expressed and debated (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). This can lead to both positive and negative outcomes (Asemah, 2009). Social media dialectics can foster greater understanding and empathy among individuals, as they engage in dialogue and exchange perspectives. On the other hand, it can also lead to polarisation, where individuals become more entrenched in their own viewpoints and less willing to engage in dialogue with those who hold opposing views (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah & Amah, 2021).

Social media dialectics can also be seen as a form of cultural production, where users engage in the creation and circulation of ideas, memes and other forms of content. This can lead to the formation of new cultural norms and values, as well as the creation of new forms of identity and community (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). One of the challenges of social media dialectics is the potential for the spread of misinformation and the manipulation of public opinion. Social media platforms can be used as tools for propaganda and disinformation, as well as for the amplification of extremist views. This highlights the need for critical engagement with social media platforms and the content that shared on them, as well as the need for strategies to combat the spread of misinformation and propaganda.

Facebook is a social media platform that was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, along with his college roommates and fellow students at Harvard University. Originally, it was created as a social networking platform exclusively for Harvard students, but it quickly expanded to other universities and eventually became available to anyone with an email address (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). Facebook allows users to connect with friends, family and other people around the world (Nwaoboli, 2022a; Edegoh, Asemah & Ekanem, 2013). Users can share photos, videos and other contents, as well as communicate with their network through messaging and comments. Facebook also offers various features such as groups, events and pages that users can join or create to connect with like-minded individuals or promote their business or organisation (Nwaoboli, 2022a, 2022b).

Some of the key features of Facebook include the news feed, which is the central hub where users can see updates from their friends, family and pages they follow. Users can also create a personal profile that includes information about themselves, their interests and their activities. Additionally, users can join or create groups based on shared interests or affiliations, as well as create pages for businesses, organisations or public figures. Facebook's messaging app, Messenger, allows users to communicate with their network in real-time. Users can also create events, as well as buy and sell items with others in their community through the marketplace platform.

Conversely, Instagram is a social media platform that was co-founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010. The application was initially launched exclusively on iPhone Operating System (iOS), but later expanded to Android and the web. In 2012, Facebook acquired Instagram for $1 billion (Eckert & Steiner, 2016). Instagram allows users to share photos and videos with their followers. Users can also interact with other

users through likes, comments and direct messages. Instagram is primarily used for personal social networking, but it is also used by businesses to promote their products and services (Nwaoboli, 2022).

Some of the key features of Instagram include the feed, which is the central hub where users can see updates from the accounts they follow. Users can create a profile that includes a bio, profile picture, and their posts (Nwaoboli, 2022). Additionally, users can share temporary photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours through the Stories feature. Reels is a feature that allows users to share short-form videos that can be up to 60 seconds long. Instagram Television (IGTV) is a feature that allows users to share long-form videos that can be up to 60 minutes long. Also, the explore feature allows users to discover new contents and accounts.

Ike Ekweremadu, a prominent legal practitioner and political figure from Enugu State, Nigeria, was born on May 12th, 1962 (Imo, 2023). He served as the representative for Enugu West in the Nigerian Senate for a period of two decades, from June 3, 2003, until May 5, 2023 (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). As a member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), he held the position of Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate for three consecutive terms spanning the 6th, 7th and 8th senate (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023; NewsWireNGR, 2022).

In June 2022, Ekweremadu, his wife, daughter and Dr. Obinna Obeta were accused of conspiring to facilitate the transportation of a 21-year-old man from Lagos to the UK for the purpose of organ harvesting (Oyedoyin & Omolaoye, 2023). The charges against them included that the aforementioned individuals harboured the intention of extracting and transplanting his kidney to Ekweremadu's daughter unknown to the young man that he was being exploited since he was being offered a remuneration of approximately three million, nine hundred thousand (£7,000) and employment as compensation for his travel to the United Kingdom (Okocha & Orizu, 2023).

On March 23, 2023, Ekweremadu, his spouse and Dr. Obinna Obeta were found guilty. Ekweremadu was sentenced to a term of nine years and eight months of incarceration, while Dr. Obinna Obeta received a sentence of ten years of imprisonment. Mrs. Ekweremadu received a sentence of four years and six months of imprisonment for her involvement in the conspiracy. The conclusion of the legal proceedings and the commencement of imprisonment for the individuals involved were significant events in the case. The severity of the sentences reflects the gravity of the offence and underscores the importance of responsibility and fairness in the context of organ trafficking (Columb, 2015). The case also serves as a stark reminder of the dangers and consequences associated with illegal organ trade, emphasising the need for stringent governance and implementation measures to prevent such transgressions and protect vulnerable populations from victimisation.

Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) examined the perceptions of Twitter users with respect to the public relations tactics employed by the Nigerian government in reaction to the organ trafficking crisis involving Ike Ekweremadu. The researchers analysed the viewpoints of Twitter users concerning the government's reaction and ascertain their assessments of the efficacy of the government's public relations strategies in tackling the crisis. The study was underpinned by the framing theory as its theoretical framework. The research design utilised was survey and the research instrument employed was questionnaire. The findings showed that Twitter users perceived the Nigerian government's public relations tactics in response to the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis to be

inadequate. The researchers suggested that the Nigerian government should improve its crisis communication strategies to ensure timely and precise dissemination of information to the public during crisis situations and that social media platform such as Twitter can be used to achieve this purpose.

Aykas, Uslu & Şimşek (2015) examined "mass media, online social network and organ donation: Old mistakes and new perspectives." The objective was to examine the impact of mass media on public attitudes towards organ donation and the effectiveness of public campaigns and social media in increasing donation rates. The researchers found that negative broadcasts about brain death and organ transplantation can adversely affect organ donation rates in both Western and Eastern societies. The researchers also found that public education campaigns have a temporary 5% increase in organ donation rates, but novel applications of social media, such as the "Facebook effect," can lead to further increments in organ donation rates. The authors suggested that communication based on mutual trust must be established between medicine and the media to promote public awareness on organ donation.

Dix (2007) examined the use of the trope of organ trafficking as a critique of neoliberal globalisation in the Americas. The author analysed various texts, including print media, popular film, detective fiction and literary works, from different locations in America. These texts were linked by their critique of neoliberal globalisation and their representation of the human body's commodification. The author argues that neoliberalism causes changes in the representation of the body, replacing socially ascribed identities with the body's economic value.

The research also explored the construction of a new set of identities grounded in the body and the problems of establishing identities in market-driven terms of production and consumption. The author investigated the relation of literary genre to content and demonstrates how generic form shapes the content of works. Dix (2007) produced an interrogation of American cultural spaces that acknowledges the work of both spatial and cultural forces in the construction of this hemisphere imaginary. Overall, the research recommended a framework for broadening the trans-American concept, which is gaining prominence in the fields of comparative literature and American literary/cultural studies.

Egbulefu & Nwaoboli's (2023) study is related to this study in that both studies examined the public's perception of the case. However, Egbulefu & Nwaoboli's study focused on the perspective of Twitter users and the evaluation of the government's public relations strategies, whereas the current study examined the construction of social reality through communication and interaction on Instagram and Facebook. Also, Aykas, Uslu & Şimşek's (2015) study is related to this study in that both studies examined the impact of mass media and social media on public attitudes towards organ donation and crisis situations. However, Aykas, Uslu & Şimşek's study focused on the effectiveness of public campaigns and social media in increasing organ donation rates, whereas the current study examined the construction of social reality through communication and interaction on social media platforms in response to the crisis. Dix's (2007) study is related to this study in that both studies examined the representation of organ trafficking in different texts and the commodification of the human body. However, Dix's study focused on the critique of neoliberal globalisation in the Americas and the construction of a new set of identities grounded in the body, whereas this study examined the construction of social reality through communication and interaction on Instagram and Facebook in response to the crisis.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on the social construction of reality theory which was first proposed by Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann in 1966. The theory posits that reality is not an objective, fixed entity, but rather a social and subjective construct that is created and maintained through communication and interaction among individuals and groups within a society (Gergen, 1985). This theory suggests that individuals interpret and construct social reality based on their cultural background, experiences and interactions with others. The tenets of the social construction of reality theory include the following:

a. Reality is socially constructed by individuals and groups through communication and interaction with others.
b. Social reality is not an objective and fixed entity, but rather a subjective and dynamic construct that is subject to change over time.
c. Individuals construct their social reality based on their cultural background, experiences, and interactions with others.
d. Social reality is maintained and reproduced through the socialisation process, in which individuals learn the norms, values, and beliefs of their society (Gergen, 1985).

The social construction of reality theory has been utilised in various fields, including sociology, psychology, communication studies, and anthropology, to understand how individuals and groups create and maintain social reality. The usage of the theory in this study is justifiable because it provides a relevant and appropriate framework for understanding how individuals and groups construct and negotiate their understanding of social reality through communication and interaction on social media platforms. Moreover, the theory can explain the differing opinions and reactions of netizens on the case, as social reality is a subjective and dynamic construct that can be interpreted and constructed differently based on an individual's cultural background, experiences, and interactions with others.

Methodology

Content analysis was utilised for this study. This approach was appropriate for examining the reactions and interactions of Instagram and Facebook users to the organ trafficking case involving Ike Ekweremadu within its real-life context. Data for the study were collected through posts, comments and reactions on Instagram and Facebook related to the crisis. The researchers garnered the posts from the two platforms by searching for the keywords: "Organ trafficking," "Ike Ekweremadu" and "#IkeEkweremadu" which showed over one thousand posts/comments on the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case. The data collection period spanned from March 23, 2023 when Ekeremadu was found guilty of the organ trafficking crime to May 10, 2023 which was five days after he was convicted. The data collection period of March 23, 2023, to May 10, 2023, is justified on the premise that it provides a comprehensive and sufficient time frame for the study, allows for data saturation to be reached, and aligns with the duration of the crisis.

Since it is almost impossible to download all texts posted or shared on Instagram and Facebook within the scope of the study because social media contents are frequently uploaded or shared based on individual's perceived interpretation of a given text, the

researcher randomly selected 50 texts each from Instagram and Facebook making the sample size 100. In the present context, the term "text" pertains to written communications in the form of posts, harsh tags and comments related to the case. For an effective analysis, the following units of analysis were utilised:

Text Slants: This refers to angles of the texts on Ike Ekeweremadu's organ trafficking case. Here, three perspectives were identified: (a) Positive slants – messages that gave subtle or explicit support for the organ trafficking case. For instance, if a message says: "Ike Ekweremadu was only trying to save his daughter, let's pity him" (b) Negative – Messages that did not give any positive support to the organ trafficking case. For instance, a message that reads thus: "what Ike Ekweremadu did should not be pardoned. It is inhumane". (c) Neutral – Messages that were equivocal or merely recounted source's opinion on the organ trafficking case without expressing a definite stance on it.

Sources of Messages: The following sources of messages were identified: (a) Political/Opinion leaders (b) Health practitioners (c) Legal practitioners (d) Religious leaders (e) Activists (f) Security personnel (g) General public

Language/Tone: This was analysed and grouped into three categories: Confrontational, biased, and diplomatic. Confrontational language/tone is hostile, aggressive and accusatory; biased language/tone is based on personal beliefs or prejudices; and diplomatic language/tone aims to resolve the crisis by being objective and encouraging a win-win situation. Examples of comments that could fall under the aforementioned three major categories are respectively: "Ekweremadu should be ashamed of himself, he deserves life imprisonment;" "We should not judge him, let God be the judge;'' and "Although what Ekweremadu did was wrong, the Nigerian government should intervene in this matter and ensure the UK government tampers justice with mercy." Ethical considerations for the study included maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and ensuring that the data collected was only used for research purposes.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Message Slants through which Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case was portrayed

Medium	Message slants						Total	
	Positive		Neutral		Negative			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Instagram	7	7%	16	23%	27	27%	50	50%
Facebook	2	2%	15	15%	33	33%	50	50%
Total	**9**	**9%**	**31**	**31%**	**60**	**60%**	**100**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that the majority of messages related to Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case were negative (60%) which implied that many netizens were critical of Ike Ekweremadu's actions.

Table 2: Message Sources through which Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case was portrayed

Variables	Medium				Total	
	Instagram		Facebook			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Political opinion leaders	13	13%	7	23%	20	20%
Health practictioners	5	5%	7	2%	12	12%
Legal Practictioners	1	2%	3	15%	4	4%
Religious leaders	7	7%	6	12%	13	13%
Activists	1	1%	4	5%	5	5%
Security personnel	6	7%	9	9%	15	15%
General public	17	17%	14	14%	31	31%
Total	**50**	**50%**	**50**	**50%**	**100**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that the organ trafficking case received significant attention from a wide range of sources, including political and opinion leaders, legal practitioners and the general public. This highlights the potential interest by, as well as impact of the case on various aspects of Nigerian society, including politics, law and public opinion.

Table 3: Message Languages/Tones of Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking case was portrayed

Variables	Medium				Total	
	Instagram		Facebook			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Confrontational	25	13%	30	30%	55	55%
Biased	16	2%	14	14%	30	30%
Diplomatic	9	5%	6	6%	15	15%
Total	**50**	**50%**	**50**	**50%**	**100**	**100%**

Table 3 shows that the discourse surrounding Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case was characterised by high percentage of confrontational and biased messages which suggests that pre-existing opinions and attitudes may have been reinforced, contributing to a polarised public discourse.

Discussion of Findings

The researchers found that the majority of messages related to the Ike Ekweremadu's case were negative, with only 9% being positive. This negative sentiment expressed in messages means that Facebook and Instagram netizens highly condemned Ekweremadu's actions. In fact, one of the texts from Facebook posted by Hassan M Yahaya on May 5, 2023 reads: "He eventually reap (sic) what he sow when he refused to understand what is best and good for his country (sic) ten years is not even enough for the wicked soul, a very big lesson for all other politicians." The sentiments have potentially harmed Ike Ekweremadu's reputation and credibility in the eyes of the public, which could have long-term implications for his political career. This finding is consistent with research that shows negative messages on social media can have a significant impact on individuals' reputations (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Nwaoboli, 2022a; 2022b; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021).

Table 2 revealed that the general public was the largest source of messages related to the case, followed by political/opinion leaders and health practitioners. This suggests

that the organ trafficking case received significant attention from a broad range of stakeholders and underscores the importance of the issue to various aspects of Nigerian society. The finding that political/opinion leaders were a significant source of messages also suggests that the case may have had political implications, which could have influenced its portrayal in the media and how it was ultimately resolved and this agrees with the study of Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023).

The findings showed that the discourse surrounding the organ trafficking case was characterised by a high percentage of confrontational and biased messages. This suggests that pre-existing opinions and attitudes may have been reinforced, contributing to a polarised public discourse. This was also reflected in an Instagram comment by *the_idealist_kam* that reads thus: "truth is…if they made Nigeria comfortable, (sic) they will not be used as scape goat in foreign land." This finding is consistent with research that shows social media can contribute to the polarisation of public opinion (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022; Kim & Sung, 2017; Nwaoboli, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c). The importance of presenting issues in a diplomatic manner to ensure a more balanced and informed public opinion is highlighted by this data.

The findings above can also be analysed through the lens of the social construction of reality theory to better understand the discourse surrounding Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case. The theory suggests that individuals and groups construct their own version of reality through their shared experiences and interactions with one another and this can be seen in the broad range of stakeholders involved in the case. The theory also highlights the potential impact of messaging on public perception, which underscores the importance of presenting issues in a neutral and objective manner.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the data in this study, we conclude that the discourse surrounding Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case was characterised by a negative sentiment expressed in messages, which could potentially harm his reputation and credibility in the eyes of the public. Also, the case received significant attention from a broad range of stakeholders, including the general public, political/opinion leaders and health practitioners, which underscores the importance of the issue to various aspects of Nigerian society. However, the discourse surrounding the case was also characterised by a high percentage of confrontational and biased messages, potentially contributing to a polarised public discourse. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Stakeholders such as health practitioners involved in sensitive issues such as organ trafficking should be mindful of the potential impact of messaging on public perception and should strive to present sensitive issues on social media in diplomatic manners to ensure a more balanced and informed public opinion.
2. Political and opinion leaders should be cautious of the potential political implications of high-profile cases such as Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case, which could influence its portrayal in the media and netizens' perception of political leaders in Nigeria.
3. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook should implement measures to reduce the percentage of confrontational and biased messages in public discourse, such as moderating discussions and providing guidance on appropriate messaging to users so as not to exacerbate sensitive issues.

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CHAPTER TWO

INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK ON YOUTH FOLLOWERSHIP OF NEWS PROGRAMMES IN BENIN METROPOLIS

Henry Ovwigho Onovweghware & Lauren Dawari Dickson & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Technology has revolutionised the twenty-first century in all aspects of human existence; communication is not spared. It has made communication faster, more available and fast paced. In fact, communication technologies are part of people's daily lives (Nkwam-Uwaoma & Asemah, 2020). To function optimally in today's world, information is key. Media organisations have had to leverage technology to perform their cardinal role of educate, inform and entertain. However, the development of technology driven communication has its attendant challenges, misinformation, disinformation and outright false information as it concerns messages got from the internet (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022)**.**

In today's digital era, most media houses have had to establish social media presence in addition to their traditional channels of communication to reach a wider audience, especially the youth. Social network sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube amongst others, have transformed information dissemination and consumption, particularly among the younger generation (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). This youthful population commonly referred to as Generation Z or GenZ are a growing army of youngsters with appetite for media contents that are punchy, precise and prompt.

There is a multitude of social networking sites available, each with its unique characteristics that appeal to different audiences. Twitter, for example, caters to individuals who prefer concise updates on significant matters and seek verified information from authoritative figures and politicians (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). On the other hand, Facebook users tend to gravitate towards more substantial content, while YouTube offers a platform for witnessing events firsthand through videos (Nwaoboli, 2022). As for Instagram, its audience primarily seeks visually appealing photographs, graphics and easily consumable content.

TikTok, a popular short-form video platform, has emerged as a powerhouse of user-generated content, captivating millions of users worldwide. Chobanyan & Nikolskaya (2021) say while TikTok is predominantly known for its entertaining and creative video contents, its potential influence on the news consumption habits of young individuals cannot be overlooked. TikTok is now conquering a niche, where with the help of video you can easily, quickly, pretty and in simple words tell about events, even if they are complex and boring (Mudra & Kitsa, 2022).

Until recently, TikTok had established its reputation primarily based on swiftly moving, entertaining or melodic memes. However, the emergence of significant events such as the death of George Floyd which fuelled the Black Lives Matter movement, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine has contributed to news becoming a more prominent component of the platform's content. Additionally, changes to TikTok's platform, including the ability to share lengthier videos and the promotion of live streams, have also made it more appealing for news publishers seeking to captivate younger

audiences who see the network as an escape site. Nonetheless, according to a research from *Reuters Institute Digital News Report*, news on TikTok is predominantly generated by social media influencers, activists or regular individuals, rather than professional journalists. Different studies conducted among younger consumers revealed that while TikTok is appreciated for its humour and captivating presentation, many individuals express concerns about the reliability of the information they encounter on the platform and the potential for misinformation and disinformation (Newman, 2020).

The mass media have the the constitutional mandate to monitor the environment in order to report the happenings to the public (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). One of the functions of the media is to inform; this information will not happen if the target audience cannot be reached, not just with any message, but the right and accurate message. Therefore, media organisations must devise a means to reach out to all demographics and perform one of their core functions (Newman, 2020). The target audience for future consumers of news items are gravitating towards platforms that are outside the traditional news channels. There is, therefore, the need to reach them, wherever they may be, as it would be futile to produce news and not have receivers of the message. In addition, some of the social network sites where they can be found are hotbeds of misinformation and disinformation.

Interestingly, social network platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are veritable channels used by media organisations to reach a huge population of the masses. However, Newman (2022) observes that there has been a steady decline in followership and interest on these two platforms by the younger generation who are now attracted to the vertical video format of TikTok. Thus, this research was motivated by the need to determine the influence of Tiktok on youth followership of news programmes in Benin metropolis

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is your extent of exposure to news-related content on TikTok?
2. To what extent does exposure to news-related content on TikTok impact Benin metropolis youth's interest in traditional news programmes?

Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

The theories used for this research work are technological determinism theory, agenda setting theory and the uses and gratifications theory. The agenda setting theory posits that public opinion is influenced by the media which determines the topics and issues that the public should focus on. Asogwa & Asemah (2012); Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2022) assert that the media prompt the audience on what to think about and push the issues they deem important, shaping our thoughts and provide a scientific perspective through various forms of mass media.

Technological determinism theory proposed by Marshal McLuhan in 1962 assumes that technology shapes human behaviour and societal norms, rather than being shaped by them. According to this theory, each new technological medium creates a new environment that alters human perceptions and relationships. Asemah *et al* (2017) note that the theory presumes that development in any society is driven by technology. The uses and gratifications theory of mass communication was first introduced by Elihu Katz, Jay G.

Blumler & Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory suggests that individuals are active users who have specific motivations for choosing and engaging with certain media content.

TikTok is a popular social media platform that enables users to effortlessly create captivating short videos, captivating the hearts of countless viewers by offering a range of engaging effects. According to Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022), social media are internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and broadcast of user-generated content. Launched in 2016 by a visionary Chinese Entrepreneur named Zhang Ying, TikTok was initially intended for Chinese residents, but has now achieved global acclaim. With an array of musical support, TikTok empowers users to showcase their creativity through unique videos, such as dances and freestyle performances, fostering a culture of content creation (Savchenko, 2022, cited by Murda & Kista, 2022). TikTok fits into people's desire to utilise social media to create online communities where they can, among other things, exchange information, ideas and private messages (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021).

According to Guo (2021), TikTok presents a valuable platform for students to engage in expressive learning. Moreover, TikTok has the potential to influence the instructional methods employed by teachers and professors when delivering lectures to their students in a bite-sized learning format. Research indicates that not only students benefit from TikTok, but scholars, academic administrators and university professors also find value in the platform. They can utilise TikTok to access professional knowledge, as there are individuals who specialise in various fields and create videos to disseminate their expertise.

People are more positive about social media learning cooperation because they provide a more engaging atmosphere and stimulate them to engage in knowledge-related events as stated (Ugande & Asemah, 2014; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; 2023; Sharabati, Al-Haddad, Al-Khasawneh, Nababteh, Mohammad & Abu Ghoush, 2022). Escamilla-Fajardo, Alguacil & Lopez-Carril (2021) investigated the pedagogical aspects of TikTok and their studies suggested that educators can consider utilising TikTok as an educational resource that stimulates creativity and fosters curiosity. In modern journalism, news is increasingly valued for its ability to inform or persuade the public on topics related to politics, society, culture, and the economy (Asogwa & Asemah, 2012). In fact, traditional media have acknowledged the potential of this emerging platform as a means to reach untapped audiences. NBC News and ESPN, prominent US channels, were among the early adopters who created accounts on TikTok in early 2019. *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*, renowned American newspapers, followed suit and joined the platform later in the same year (Chobanyan & Nikolskaya, 2021).

Meanwhile, the prospect of TikTok as a valuable platform in information dissemination was agreed upon by (Shearer & Mitchell, 2021; Newman, 2020 & Murda & Kista, 2022) when they observed that as Facebook and Twitter experience a decline in popularity, numerous publishers are turning to TikTok as an alternative means of fostering audience engagement. This is despite acknowledging that a mere three percent of adult Americans claimed to regularly consume news on TikTok. This relatively low percentage could be attributed to the platform's greater appeal among young individuals, rather than adults. Although, the current nature of the platform and its functioning often do not align naturally with the principles of journalism, it is believed that as more traction builds, changes would be made on the social networking site.

Chobanyan & Nikolskaya (2021) investigated TikTok's potential for television news. They evaluated the field of TikTok news players and the platform's potential to become another popular source of serious information. After closely analysing the top two accounts of traditional TV news on TikTok: NBC News and CBS News, it turned out to show that there was room for traditional TV formats and adapted for TikTok news bits. Their research showed that politics remains one of the most demanded topics by the audience. And even though young users emphasise the importance of brevity and entertainment aspect for any potential TV news videos on TikTok, their findings showed that even serious and least entertaining videos can get millions of likes and views.

Murda & Kista (2022) conducted a research to understand TikTok as a promising channel for media promotion. They examined the role of the social network platform for the global news media, using the top 50 global news media. They found that only 14 of them had verified accounts on this social network and that only 13 of 50 were in actual usage. Their investigation revealed that to be successful and to have a large amount of revisions and comments, media should create specific videos, which are unique and authentic, especially for TikTok. They concluded that TikTok is a perspective platform for popularisation of the content of media, attracting new audiences and explaining complicated themes for young people.

Methodology

The researchers utilised survey research design technique. The survey research was used due to the nature of the study. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), surveys are good measurement for attitude, perspectives or circumstances common with a large population. The population of the study focused on Benin metropolis which covers the three local governments of Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba – Okha and parts (one-third) of Ovia North East.

Table 1: Selection of population of Benin Metropolis

Local Government Area	**Population**
Egor	502,700
Ikpoba – Okha	549, 700
Oredo	553, 300
Ovia North-East	229, 500 (1/3) =**76,500**
Total	**1, 682, 200**

Given that a small part of Ovia North-East local government area make up the Benin metropolis, one-third of its total population was considered in computing the data for the final population of Benin. The total population according to the Population Density Report 2022 projection (https://citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/NGA012edo/) stood at 1, 682, 200 (One million, six hundred and eighty-two thousand, two hundred). The sample size for the study was 400 respondents. This was calculated, using the Taro Yamane formula: n = N / (1 + N (e)2), where e=0.05. The researchers used purposive and random sampling techniques in this study. The researchers purposively selected local governments that make up what is considered Benin metropolis and this included Egor, Ikpoba – Okha, Oredo and one-third of Ovia North-East. Purposive sampling was also used to select areas with high density of youthful population. For Egor, Technical College road area was

chosen; for Ikpoba – Okha, Aduwawa was picked; for Oredo, Ringroad and Ekhenhuan campus was selected while for Ovia North-East, Ugbowo campus Main Gate was chosen. The same technique was used to determine youth who were on TikTok, while the simple random sampling technique which gives every respondent in a population equal opportunity of been selected was used to select the 400 respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 2: Respondents' estimated Time spent weekly watching TikTok Wideos

Statement	1 – 2 hours	3 – 4 hours	5 – 6 hours	7 – 8 hours	9 hours & above	Total
How much time by estimate do you spend on TikTok on a weekly basis viewing videos?	51 **13.3%**	86 **22.3%**	74 **19.2%**	93 **24.2%**	81 **21%**	**385** **100**

The data in table 2 show respondents who spend over five hours weekly viewing different video contents on TikTok are well above 65% of the population. This implies that a lot of the youth are spending huge amount of time on the platform.

Table 3: Extent Respondents are willing to watch News Content Video if it pops up on TikTok

Statements	Not at all willing	Slightly willing	Willing	Very willing	Highly willing	Total
To what extent would you be willing to watch a news content video if it pops up on your TikTok feed?	27 **7%**	166 **43%**	119 **31%**	73 **19%**	00 **Nil**	**385** **100**

The data show that the respondents are willing to watch news content on TikTok accounts. This implies that TikTok has the potential to be used effectively in news dissemination.

Table 4: Responses on the kind of Content that will influence the Respondents to view News related Contents

Statements	Creativity	Personality	Topical(Interesting)	Explainers	Oddity	Total
What kind of contents will influence youth to view news related videos on TikTok?	154 **40%**	62 **16.1%**	50 **13%**	42 **10.9%**	77 **20%**	**385** **100**

Responses of respondents as presented in table 4 show that different kinds of contents will sway youth to watch news content on TikTok, particularly if presented in a creative way.

Table 5: Respondents' View on whether it would be valuable for TikTok Influencers and News Organisations to collaborate to disseminate Content

Statements	Not valuable at all	Fairly valuable	Valuable	Very valuable	Extremely valuable	Total
How valuable do you think collaborations between news organisations and popular TikTok creators or influencers would be in disseminating news content to youth?	15	42	143	173	12	**385**
	3.9%	**10.9%**	**37.1%**	**45%**	**3.1%**	**100**

Data from table 5 reveal that less than 15% of the respondents are sceptical about the workability of collaboration between TikTok influencers and news organisations while over 80% believe it would be valuable.

Table 6: Respondents' Frequency of relying on TikTok as News Source compared to Traditional News Sources

Statements	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
How frequently do you rely on TikTok as a source of news compared to traditional news sources (e.g., TV newspapers, online news websites)?	204	66	73	42	00	**385**
	53%	**17.1%**	**19%**	**10.9%**	**Nil**	**100**

Table 6 data show that even among TikTok users, 53% never rely on it as a source of news as most users see contents there as purely make-believe from content creators.

Table 7: Respondents' View on availability of News on TikTok influencing their News Consumption Habits and Preferences

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
The availability of news content on TikTok in a creative format will influence your news consumption habits and preferences.	35	165	108	54	23	**385**
	9%	**43%**	**28%**	**14%**	**6%**	**100**

Table 7 data show that a significant number of the respondents (43%) agreed that if news is available on the platform, they would be willing to view and consume such content.

Table 8: View on TikTok's contribution to Overall understanding and Awareness of Issues

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
TikTok contents contributed to your overall understanding and awareness of things, issues.	27	204	100	50	04	**385**
	7%	**53%**	**26%**	**13%**	**1%**	**100**

The data in table 8 show that TikTok contributes to helping the respondents understand how things work.

Table 9: Respondents' frequency of sharing News-related TikTok Videos with Friends or Family

Statements	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
How often do you discuss or share news-related TikTok videos with friends or family members?	39	177	92	46	31	**385**
	10%	**46%**	**24%**	**12%**	**08%**	**100**

Table 9 data as presented reveal that respondents are reluctant to share video contents that are news-related. This could be because of lack of trust on the content source.

Table 10: Respondents' View that TikTok has the Potential to shape Public Opinion

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
News-related content on TikTok has the potential to shape public opinion or influence societal discourse.	43	234	69	27	12	**385**
	11%	**61%**	**17.9%**	**7%**	**3.1%**	**100**

The data in the above show if news organisations harness TikTok platform, the audience is there.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that 40% of the respondents are influenced to watch news-related TikTok videos. This may be attributed to the fact that the content is about a well-known personality. This aligns well with Newman (2022) who notes that TikTok videos are like the modern-day news headline and the creativity and passion of young TikTokkers is something that many news publishers need to capture if they are going to engage the next generation of news consumers. Similarly, Murda & Kista (2022) affirm that TikTok contents require active creative minds to target young people brimming with imagination

and curiosity. It is an opportunity to attract young audiences. Isah, Kadiri & Asemah (2021) agree that Benin residents have high exposure to media messages via TikTok.

The findings further showed that the respondents rely on it TikTok as a source of news and that youth on TikTok, beyond the entertainment and funny videos, also use the platform to better understand how things work. As established by Chobanyan & Nikolskaya (2021), even serious and least entertaining videos can get millions of likes and views. These assumptions are in harmony with the research of Newman (2022) who notes that though TikTok has a lot of entertainment, younger people are also very interested in geopolitics, mechanics, engineering and that videos are now longer than they used to be, with six- and ten-minute explainers as some of the biggest hits. Asemah *et al* (2022) support this view when they assert that the media prompt the audience on what to think about and push the issues they deem important, shaping our thoughts and providing a scientific perspective through various forms of mass media.

Findings further showed that TikTok contents can shape public opinion. The implication is that there is a target audience for news organisations on TikTok platform. Murda & Kista (2022) support this position when they state that some media outlets such as *Compas* and *Tribune* news post hyperlinks to their TikTok videos on a media site where you can read the text to the video. The same strategy is followed by the BBC, CNN and CNBC.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers examined the influence of TikTok videos on youth followership of news programmes in Benin metropolis. Based on the result of the research, the researchers conclude that many youth who spend significant amount of time on TikTok would be aroused by creative contents on the platform as well as topical issues, public figure news and odd news. The researchers, therefore, gives the following recommendations:

1. As major foreign news outlets such as BBC, *Washington Post* and CNBC are gravitating towards it in dispensing media messages to the technology savvy audience, it behooves on Nigeria media owners and managers to take decisive action so as not to be left behind.
2. News organisations in Benin metropolis should begin to think through how to establish a tech savvy unit in their newsroom and to consider the TikTok platform as a way of drawing in the youth whose attention span to textual messages are short-lived, but scroll endlessly through videos.
3. The media houses should endeavour to provide links on each TikTok video content leading to their websites where more detailed contents exist.

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CHAPTER THREE

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF SEX WORKERS' PORTRAYAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN BENIN METROPOLIS

Faith Abu; Chukwunonso Nnabuife & Tsegyu Santas

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

With the advent of new technologies, the world has changed from analogue to digital and this has brought about change in every facet of our lives. Social network is a new technology through which people now communicate and interact freely with the rest of the world (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). This limits restrictions to the physical appearance of one another (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). The advent of social media has revolutionised the way we communicate, share information and connect with others. One significant impact of this digital age is the portrayal of various professions and lifestyles, including that of sex workers. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for individuals to showcase their work, beliefs and personal lives and sex workers are no exception. Asemah (2011) opines that people rely on mass media to know what is happening in their environment. The portrayal of sex workers on social media has sparked numerous debates and discussions, raising important questions about representation, empowerment, stigmatisation and the broader implications for society.

Social media platforms provide sex workers with a space to express themselves, share their experiences, and build communities. Through carefully curated profiles, they can control their narratives, challenge stereotypes and advocate for their rights. For some sex workers, social media serves as a means of connecting with potential clients, promoting their services, and establishing an online presence. It offers an avenue for advertising, networking, and building a brand. However, the portrayal of sex work on social media is far from a straightforward issue, as it intersects with complex factors such as societal attitudes, censorship policies and the visibility of marginalised communities. Critics argue that social media platforms perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to the objectification and commodification of sex workers (Edegoh, Asemah & Udeh-Akpe, 2013). They contend that the glamourised portrayal of sex work can distort public perception, reinforcing harmful narratives that reduce individuals in the profession to mere sexual objects. Additionally, concerns are raised about the potential exploitation and vulnerability of sex workers in the online realm, as they navigate through a myriad of safety and privacy challenges. Such criticisms highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the social media portrayal of sex workers, taking into account both the positive and negative aspects.

In recent years, efforts have been made to challenge the stigmatisation of sex work and advocate for the rights and well-being of sex workers. Social media have played a significant role in amplifying these voices and fostering discussions around the complexities of sex work. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram and TikTok have become spaces for sex workers to share their stories, advocate for policy changes and create online communities that offer support and solidarity. The online realm has also facilitated collaborations between sex workers and activists, leading to a greater understanding of the challenges faced by those involved in the industry. In this age of ever-evolving digital communication, the social media portrayal of sex workers presents a complex and

multifaceted topic that demands careful examination. By exploring the various perspectives, challenges and opportunities associated with this portrayal, we can foster a more informed and compassionate discourse that contributes to a better understanding of sex work and its place in our society.

The media survey the society and report situation of dangers that may plunge the society into a state of anarchy (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). Media informational role is indispensable (Ezegwu & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022) and there are some serious concerns involving aspects that are social media-based that need to be researched since the advent of technology-driven advancements birthed powerful tools such as search engines, sophisticated mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication channels and online social networks which has broadened marketers' capacity to connect with shoppers through various touch points" (Shankar, Inman, Mantrala, Kelley & Rizley, 2011, p. 30, as cited in Paquette, 2013).

Sex work, characterised as the provision of consensual sexual services or erotic performances by adults in exchange for money or goods has undergone significant transformations in recent years (Asemah, 2015). The emergence of online platforms like OnlyFans has further expanded the digital landscape of the industry, giving rise to new concerns regarding the influence of sex workers on social media and its potential impact on the younger generation. According to Misi (2008) and Olugbile, Abu & Adelakun (2008), a significant number of females, particularly students enrolled in higher education institutions engage in sex work. Thus, this study was conducted to determine audience perception of sex workers' portrayal on social media platforms in Benin metropolis.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the level of exposure of Benin residents to social media portrayal of sex workers.
2. Find out the perception of the social media portrayal of sex workers.

Theoretical Framework

Asemah (2010) notes that theories lend themselves to various texts and analysis such that the phenomena central to the research get explained, clarified and even predicted as the case may be. Hence, it was anchored on the social judgement theory, formulated by psychologist Muzafer Sherif and colleagues in the late 1950s, delves into how individuals perceive and assess persuasive messages based on their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. "The strength of the social judgement theory is that it illustrates the most important elements that motivate people to buy a product and it also shows what the connections are between the motives and attributes of products or services." (Asemah & Nwammuo, 2017). The theory proposes that people mentally position incoming information on a "judgement scale." According to this theory, individuals possess a spectrum of attitudes towards a given issue or topic which can be categorised into latitudes of acceptance, neutrality and rejection. When confronted with information about sex workers on social media, people will compare it to their existing attitudes. Those with more progressive or open-minded views are likely to be more accepting and receptive to such portrayals. They value the agency, dignity and rights of sex workers, advocating for decriminalisation and better working conditions. On the contrary, individuals who hold conservative or negative

opinions about sex work tend to be more closed-minded and less accepting of positive portrayals of sex workers on social media. They might view such depictions as promoting immoral behaviour and encouraging illegal activities, leading to a narrow rejection of these messages. Some people may have neutral attitudes towards sex work, falling into the category of non-commitment. They can be influenced by persuasive messages that provide balanced perspectives on the topic, considering both the challenges and potential positive aspects of sex

Review of Related Literature

Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation" (Nwaoboli, 2022; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). Also, Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022) see social media as online platforms and websites that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, as well as connect with other people. It enables individuals and organisations to communicate, express themselves, and engage in various activities such as posting updates, sharing photos and videos, commenting, liking, and messaging. Social media platforms can include popular platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and many others (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023; Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022; Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). Social network is a social structure made up of individuals or organisations called "nodes " which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependence such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, skill, sexual relationships or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013).

According to Leach (2009), the advent of digital media, particularly the rise of social media, has significantly expanded the reach of journalism. This expansion brings about both opportunities and dilemmas for journalists and their audience. The use of new media platforms raises ethical questions among those involved in news gathering, publishing and consumption, as they navigate the demands and possibilities presented by this evolving media landscape. In relation to the issue of sex work, McCaskey (2012) explains that social media are often utilised by individuals to engage in or promote sex workers activities. As a result, sex workers utilise social media platforms for self-presentation, enabling them to shape their public image, showcase their skills and promote their services. They strategically employ different online identities and content to engage with potential clients and establish their personal brand. Social media also serve as platforms for sex workers to connect with peers, build supportive networks and create online communities. These virtual communities provide spaces for sharing experiences, offering advice and fostering a sense of solidarity among sex workers. They empower individuals and offer opportunities for advocacy and collective action.

Direct communication between sex workers and potential clients is facilitated by social media platforms. Messaging apps and private groups enable negotiation, scheduling and information exchange between sex workers and clients in a convenient and discreet manner. Livingstone (2008) highlights the perilous impact of social media on the moral standards of young individuals, emphasising their capacity to intrude upon their privacy. For instance, upon signing up for a Facebook account, one's profile is automatically configured to be visible not just to friends, but also to friends of friends and anyone conducting a search for their name. The ability to alter and restrict the profile's accessibility is only granted when one consciously accesses the privacy settings and makes manual

adjustments; so also, the visibility of sex work has increased through social media, challenging societal taboos and stereotypes.

Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex (2022) carried out a study on social media influence on the indulgment in promiscuity among students of select tertiary Institution in Benin City, Nigeria. The study focused on the impact of social media on the engagement of promiscuous behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the technological determinism theory and employed survey as the research design, with a questionnaire as the primary research instrument. The findings revealed that various factors such as peer pressure, poverty, inadequate parental guidance, lack of regulation of sexual content on social media amongst others as factors that facilitated promiscuous practices among tertiary institution students in Edo State. The researchers recommended, among others, that students in tertiary institutions should exercise self-discipline and abstain from engaging in any social media discussions that may encourage or provoke promiscuous activities and behaviours.

Methodology

In this study, the researchers employed survey research design. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017), the survey method is considered highly appropriate when working with a significantly large population. The study's population comprises all residents of Benin City, which, based on population projections by the Nigeria Metro Area Data, amounts to 1,905,000 individuals. The sample size for this study was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The formula is as follows:

n = N / (1 + N(e^2))

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Desired level of precision (expressed as a decimal)

Substituting the values into the formula:

n = 1,905,000 / (1 + 1,905,000(0.05^2))

n = 1,905,000 / (1 + 1,905,000(0.0025))

n = 1,905,000 / (1 + 4,762.5)

n = 1,905,000 / 4,763.5

n ≈ 399.78

Hence, the sample size is 400s. The researchers adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The researchers purposefully selected three specific areas in Benin City; namely: Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba-Okha and purposive sampling technique was also used to select highly populated regions within these three local government areas- Ring road for Oredo, Uselu for Egor and Aduwawa for Ikpoba-Okha. Simple random sampling was thereafter used to select the 400 respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Upon distribution and collection of the survey, 380 participants (94.75%) returned the instrument, while 20 participants (5.25%) did not.

Table 1: Respondents' Level of Awareness of Social Media Portrayal of Sex Workers in Benin Metropolis

Level of Awareness	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Very high	130	34%
High	190	50%
Low	60	16%
Very low	-	-
Total	380	100%

Table 1 shows that (50%) of respondents have a high level of awareness of social media portrayal of sex workers in Benin metropolis.

Table 2: Respondents' Perception of Social Media Portrayals of Sex workers in Benin Metropolis

Percentage	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Social media platforms allow sex- workers to challenge societal stereotypes and assert control over their own narratives	50	13.1%
Social media platforms gives room for discrimination and marginalisation of sex- workers	50	13.1%
Social media platforms provide an opportunity for sex workers to have a voice and representation in public discourse.	250	66%
Social media platforms policy can potentially reinforce negative perceptions or limiting their ability to share their experiences openly.	30	7.8%
Total	**380**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that (66%) of respondents are of the perception that social media have provided a platform for sex workers to have a voice and representation in public discourse.

Table 3: Respondents' Level of acceptability of Social Media Portrayals of Sex Workers in Benin Metropolis

Level of Acceptance	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Very high	40	10.5%
High	70	18%
Low	40	10.5%
Very low	230	61
Total	**380**	**100%**

Table 3 data show that (61%) respondents find how social media portray sex workers to be very unacceptable.

Discussion of Findings

The items obtained from the study as shown in table 1 revealed that 50% of Benin residents were highly aware of the portrayal of sex workers on social media platforms. This shows the influence and impact of social media in shaping the understanding and perceptions of sex work among the community. This finding is in line with the position taken by earlier studies like Zeeshan & Shah (n .d) that social media have positive and significant effect on users' complex buying behaviour as well as users' perception.

The findings revealed that 66% of Benin residents perceive social media platforms as providing an opportunity for sex workers to have a voice and representation in public discourse. Through sharing their experiences and perspectives, sex workers can challenge stereotypes, advocate for improved working conditions, health and safety measures and legal reforms. Some audience members may develop a greater understanding and empathy towards sex workers through exposure to these perspectives, considering the portrayal on social media as empowering and allowing sex workers to assert control over their own narratives. This is a negation to Franklin *et al* (2005) who opine that "by portraying sex workers as folk devils, the media is covertly shaping public perception and opinion through carefully orchestrated and mass-mediated public campaigns targeted at generating fear."

Additionally, the findings indicated that 61% of Benin residents find the social media portrayal of sex workers to be very unacceptable based on individual beliefs, cultural norms and personal experiences they are not happy or satisfied with the way social media have become tools for sex workers to promote their businesses and this is based on their convictions, beliefs and others. This clearly relates to the social judgement theory which explains that people's perceptions are based on their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. This means that individuals who hold negative opinions about sex work tend to be more rigid and less accepting when social media portray sex workers in a positive light. They might view such depictions as promoting immoral behaviour and encouraging illegal activities, leading to rejection of these messages.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study shed light on how social media have mirrored sex workers to users and how they feel about this portrayal. It is the role of social media to either perpetuate or reduce the validation of sex workers. The researchers conclude that social media portrayal of sex workers is unacceptable to Benin residents. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Social media platforms should implement strict content moderation policies to ensure that content related to sex work is not glamourised or normalised.
2. Providing education and raising awareness about the complexities of sex work can help reduce the validation of sex workers. This includes promoting understanding about the diverse experiences and challenges faced by sex workers, as well as highlighting the importance of consent, agency, and human rights.
3. Support programmes and initiatives that empower sex workers by providing access to resources, education and opportunities for alternative livelihoods. By empowering sex workers, social media can become a platform for their empowerment and self-determination rather than validation.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PERCEPTION OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY AMONG EDO RESIDENTS

Akesuyi Uyinmwen Nomwen; Jesse Okedi & Ndubuisi Nwigwe Umoro

Introduction

Police brutality is a pressing issue that has plagued Nigeria for decades, engendering widespread concern and outrage, both locally and internationally (Oyebanji, 2021). The Nigerian populace has endured numerous instances of police misconduct, excessive use of force, extrajudicial killings, torture, and other forms of human right violations (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Mohammed & Asemah, 2021; Bossey & Asemah, 2021). To understand the issue of police brutality, it is crucial to consider its historical context. According to Ibrahim (2009), the Nigeria Police Force was established during the colonial era to maintain law and order. However, over time, the Force has become entangled in corruption, inadequate training, weak oversight mechanisms and a culture of impunity. These factors have contributed to an environment where police officers feel emboldened to engage in acts of violence and abuse of power without fear of consequences.

Police brutality has been a longstanding issue worldwide and Nigeria is no exception (Ajibulu & Asemah, 2021; Aigbefoh & Asemah, 2021). In recent years, media campaigns have played a pivotal role in exposing and combating this problem. Media campaigns have significantly influenced public opinion on police brutality in Edo State. Through various media, including television documentaries, radio programmes and online platforms, citizens have been exposed to the realities of police misconduct. The graphic images, videos and personal testimonies shared through these campaigns have evoked strong emotions and garnered public outrage. As a result, public opinion has shifted towards a more critical stance on the actions of law enforcement agencies. The media have played a crucial role in challenging the narrative of police as protectors and highlighting their failures in upholding human rights.

Media campaigns have been effective in mobilising public support for police reform in Edo State. The #EndSARS movement, which gained momentum through social media platforms, brought together thousands of Nigerian youth to protest against police brutality. Asemah, Otinua & Jumbo (2022) note that the EndSARS was a social movement and series of mass protests against police brutality in Nigeria which called for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The widespread dissemination of information through online activism and hashtags facilitated the organisation of peaceful protests, leading to widespread attention both within Nigeria and internationally (Ifeanyi, 2022). The media's role in amplifying the voices of victims and activists has been instrumental in fostering solidarity and demanding accountability from law enforcement agencies.

Media campaigns have given a voice to marginalised communities affected by police brutality in Edo State. Thus, Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah (2023) note that it is the crucial responsibility of the media to ensure that citizens' rights and privileges are

attended to and protected by the government. Through interviews, personal narratives and social media testimonies, victims and their families have been able to share their harrowing experiences with a wider audience. The media have provided a platform for their stories to be heard, creating empathy and understanding among the general public. By amplifying these voices, media campaigns have challenged societal perceptions and stereotypes, dismantling the notion that police brutality is an isolated issue affecting only a few individuals.

There have been instances of police brutality in one form or another all over the world. However, the frequency of stories detailing how the Nigerian Police breaches citizens' rights is quite worrying and worrisome. Amnesty International (2020) claims that since October 2020, the Nigeria Security Forces have routinely cracked down on nonviolent #EndSARS protests and that they have used live gunfire, been physically assaulted and been arrested. Protesters were spotted being gassed by Nigerian police. One of the victims of police brutality in Nigeria, Mr. Okoye Agu, described how in 2014, Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) Officers sold his car and cellphones without his consent. He was also beaten, paraded in public as a criminal, suspended upside down, and had two of his teeth pulled.

CNN reported on April 2, 2019, that a deadly shooting by Nigerian police resulted in the death of Mr. Kolade Johnson, who was shot by the Nigerian Anti-Cultism Police Unit on that fateful Sunday during a raid in Lagos. On June 20, 2021, a Police Inspector entered a residential area in Enugu State and fired shots at people without hesitation. This incident resulted in the deaths of five civilians and the serious injuries of four others and it represents another instance of the Nigeria Police violating human rights. The attack's origin is still unknown (NDTv, 2021). Human Rights Watch (2007) reported that between June and September 2007, more than 785 individuals were killed by the Nigerian police; however the actual number of deaths may have exceeded 10,000.

There have been numerous media campaigns in Nigeria against police violence. The #EndSARS movement, which inundated the whole social media landscape in October 2020, stood out among these initiatives. Media campaigns effectively engage the public and elicit a sense of shared outrage by using potent images, films and personal experiences to humanise the problem and create empathy. Therefore, this study seeks to find out how Benin residents perceive media campaign against police brutality.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure of Benin residents to media campaigns against police brutality.
2. Ascertain the media channels through which Benin residents access media campaigns against police brutality.
3. Determine the level of effectiveness of the media campaigns against police brutality among Benin residents.
4. Find out the level of satisfaction with the campaign among Benin residents.

Review of Related Literature

Police brutality refers to the use of excessive or unnecessary force by law enforcement officers against civilians. This can take the form of physical violence, psychological intimidation or even not providing the necessary help when required. In the context of Nigeria, police brutality has become a contentious issue, with numerous cases reported annually that draw the ire of both the local and international community (Asemah, Otinau & Jumbo, 2022; Asemah, Acheme & Taiwo, 2022). The Nigeria Police Force, established in 1930, operates under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior and has been at the centre of numerous brutality allegations (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit within the Nigeria Police Force, has particularly been singled out for its notoriety in this regard (Akinola, 2020). The concept of police brutality in Nigeria is tied to the structural and institutional deficiencies of the security forces. These include lack of proper training, inadequate oversight and accountability mechanisms, corruption and a culture of impunity which has allowed such brutal acts to persist (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2012).

The issue of police brutality in Nigeria has historical roots dating back to pre-independence times when the police force was used as an instrument of coercion by the colonial masters. Post-independence, the military regimes that ruled Nigeria further entrenched this culture of brutality (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2012). Asemah *et al* (2022) note that police brutality against the people has been a long time occurrence in modern societies.

In recent years, numerous reports and incidents of police brutality have brought attention to the scale of this issue. For instance, Amnesty International's (2020) report documented 125 cases of torture or ill-treatment by the police, including various forms of physical and psychological abuse (Amnesty International, 2020).

The EndSARS protests that spread across Nigeria and beyond in October 2020 were catalysed by anger and frustration over police brutality, particularly against the SARS unit. These protests were sparked by a viral video allegedly showing a SARS officer shooting a man in Delta State, Nigeria (Akinola, 2020). Police brutality in Nigeria is deeply embedded in the fabric of the country's law enforcement system. It is a systemic issue that requires comprehensive reforms within the police force and broader security sector. The EndSARS protests have highlighted the extent of public dissatisfaction with police brutality and have increased calls for police reform, accountability and justice for victims. Confronting police brutality in Nigeria necessitates not only a change in police behaviour, but also, a broader societal and political commitment to uphold human rights and the rule of law.

Media campaigns have played a crucial role in raising awareness and mobilising public support against police brutality in Nigeria. These campaigns leverage various media platforms to shed light on the issue, share personal stories, demand justice and advocate for police reforms. Some of these campaigns are briefly explained below:

a. ***#EndSARS*:** The #EndSARS movement emerged in 2017 as a social media campaign denouncing the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a notorious unit within the Nigerian police force (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). The movement gained significant momentum in October 2020, with widespread protests across the country and global support. Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, served as a catalyst for organising demonstrations, sharing stories of police brutality and demanding an end to police

misconduct. The #EndSARS movement led to increase international attention, public discourse and subsequent government commitments to police reforms.

b. ***#ReformPoliceNG*:** The #ReformPoliceNG campaign is an ongoing social media initiative aimed at advocating for comprehensive police reforms in Nigeria. The campaign utilises Twitter, Instagram and other platforms to share stories, videos and artwork highlighting instances of police brutality. It also engages with policymakers, civil society organisations and the public, calling for accountability, transparency and improved training for law enforcement officers.

c. ***Know Your Rights*:** Several media campaigns in Nigeria focus on educating citizens about their rights and how to navigate encounters with law enforcement officers. These campaigns use various media channels, including radio, television and online platforms, to disseminate information about human rights, lawful procedures and avenues for reporting police misconduct. One notable initiative is the "Know Your Rights" campaign by the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN), which aims to empower citizens with knowledge to protect themselves from police brutality.

Media outlets and journalists have played a pivotal role in exposing cases of police brutality in Nigeria. Investigative reports, documentaries and news articles have brought attention to specific incidents, shedding light on the systemic issues within the Nigerian police force. Visual campaigns and artistic expressions have also been utilised to draw attention to police brutality in Nigeria. Artists, photographers and graphic designers create thought-provoking illustrations, murals and photographs that capture the experiences of victims and the urgency for reform. These visual campaigns are shared on social media platforms, exhibited in public spaces and featured in galleries, aiming to evoke emotional responses and inspire action.

The media have been instrumental in bringing the issue of police brutality in Nigeria to the forefront. Through news reports, investigative journalism and social media platforms, incidents of police misconduct, extrajudicial killings, and human rights abuses have been exposed to a wider audience (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). The media have helped educate the public about the gravity of the issue and its impact on individuals and communities. The media campaigns have given a platform to victims of police brutality, their families and activists who have long fought against injustice. Through interviews, documentaries and feature stories, the media have provided a space for these voices to be heard, sharing their experiences, pain and demands for justice. This has not only given the victims a sense of validation, but has also, empowered others to speak out against police brutality. The media have played a crucial role in documenting evidence of police brutality incidents through videos, photographs and eyewitness testimonies. These visual and audio records have served as crucial evidence in holding perpetrators accountable and bringing about legal action. The media's documentation has helped establish the truth, debunk misinformation, and ensure that the stories of victims are not silenced or ignored.

The media campaigns have been effective in mobilising public support for the cause (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). News stories, opinion pieces and social media campaigns have encouraged people to stand in solidarity with victims, attend protests and actively engage in discussions on police reform. The media have created a sense of urgency and collective responsibility, urging citizens to demand justice, transparency, and meaningful

changes to the policing system. Segun (2021) notes that the media have played a vital role in holding authorities accountable for their actions. Investigative reporters have shed light on systemic issues, corruption and impunity within the police force. By exposing these realities, the media have pushed for institutional reforms, demanded the prosecution of officers involved in misconduct and called for increased oversight and transparency in law enforcement. Media campaigns against police brutality in Nigeria have garnered international attention and support (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). Through global news coverage and social media trends, the world has witnessed the plight of Nigerian citizens and the need for immediate action. International pressure and solidarity have added weight to the demands for justice and reforms, influencing diplomatic engagements and putting pressure on Nigerian authorities to address the issue.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social judgement theory. This theory was propounded by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif, Roger Nebergall & Carl Hovland in 1961 (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022; Nwaoboli, 2022). Social judgement theory is premised on the idea that people have a range of opinions on any given subject, which can be categorised into three zones: the latitude of acceptance, the latitude of non-commitment and the latitude of rejection. The latitude of acceptance involves opinions that a person finds acceptable or agreeable, the latitude of non-commitment includes opinions that a person is indifferent towards and the latitude of rejection contains the opinions that one disagrees with or finds unacceptable (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2016).

The theory suggests that we are more likely to shift our attitudes towards messages that fall within our latitude of acceptance and non-commitment and away from those in our latitude of rejection (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). This process is known as assimilation and contrast effects. Assimilation occurs when a message is perceived as being closer to a person's anchor point (their most preferred position) than it actually is. Contrast, on the other hand, happens when a message is perceived as further away from the person's anchor point than it actually is. The media play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and they have been instrumental in highlighting the issue of police brutality, not only in Nigeria, but worldwide. In the context of Edo State, the media have been instrumental in exposing cases of police brutality and promoting campaigns against it.

However, the perception of these media campaigns among Edo residents is largely dependent on their pre-existing attitudes towards police brutality and the police force in general. Based on the social judgement theory, Edo residents with a high latitude of acceptance towards the police and low recognition of police brutality are more likely to perceive these campaigns as extreme or biased, leading to a contrast effect. They might see these campaigns as an attack on the police institution, rather than a call for justice and reform. This could result in a reinforcement of their positive attitudes towards the police, contrary to the campaign's intentions. Conversely, those with a high latitude of acceptance towards the issue of police brutality are more likely to assimilate the information presented by these campaigns. They would perceive these campaigns as aligning closely with their own opinions, further strengthening their attitudes against police brutality. These individuals are more likely to support and participate in actions aimed at combating police brutality.

Methodology

Survey research design was used. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) opine that a survey is an empirical study that uses questionnaire to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. The survey approach in research is well renowned for its efficacy in describing and explaining the connections between and among phenomena. Although the survey method does have some limitations, it is thought that these limitations are overshadowed by how effectively and powerfully it may be used to concretise and validate findings and conclusions.

The population for this study comprises residents of Benin City. The population of this study is estimated at 1,841,000 (NPC, 2022). In order to ensure manageability of the study, the sample size of this study was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(0.05)^2}$$

n = sample size
N = Population
0.05 = Margin of error

$$n = \frac{1{,}841{,}000}{1 + 1{,}841{,}000\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}841{,}000}{1 + 1{,}841{,}000\,(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}841{,}000}{1{,}841{,}001 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{1{,}841{,}000}{4602}$$

$$= 400$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 400. The researchers adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The researchers purposefully selected three specific areas in Benin City; namely: Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba-Okha and purposive sampling technique was also used to select highly populated regions within these three local government areas- Ring road for Oredo, Uselu for Egor and Aduwawa for Ikpoba-Okha. Simple random sampling was thereafter used to select the 400 respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire, distributed, 380 copies were returned and found usable. Thus, the presentation and analysis is based on the 380 copies returned and found usable.

Table 1: Responses on the extent to which Benin Residents are exposed to Media Campaigns against Police Brutality

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	215	57
High	109	29
Can't tell	0	0
Low	56	15
Very low	0	0
Total	**380**	**100**

The data in table 1 show that the extent to which Benin residents are exposed to media campaigns against police brutality is very high. This is based on the fact that the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 2: Responses on the Media Channels through which Benin Residents access Media Campaigns against Police Brutality

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio	15	4
Television	77	20
Newspaper	6	2
Magazine	3	1
Social media	264	69
Indigenous media	0	**0**
Others	15	4
Total	**380**	**100**

The data in table 2 show that a majority of the respondents (69%) access media campaigns against police brutality via social media.

Table 3: Responses on the Level of Effectiveness of the Media Campaigns against Police Brutality among Benin Residents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	207	54
Effective	154	41
Can't tell	19	5
Less effective	0	0
Not effective	0	0
Total	**380**	**100**

The data in table 3 show that a majority of the respondents (54%) noted that media campaigns against police brutality among Benin residents have been very effective.

Table 4: Responses on the Level of Satisfaction with the Campaigns

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly satisfied	223	59
Satisfied	102	27
Can't tell	12	3
Less satisfied	15	4
Not satisfied	28	7
Total	**380**	**100**

The data in table 4 show that a majority of the respondents (59%) are highly satisfied with the campaigns against police brutality.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data analysed, Benin residents are highly exposed to media campaigns against police brutality because media campaigns have a wide-reaching impact due to the ubiquity of various media platforms like television, radio, newspapers, social media and online streaming services. This extensive coverage ensures that the message reaches a large audience, increasing awareness and visibility of the issue. Also, high-profile incidents of police brutality often trigger public outrage and protests. These events are extensively

covered and framed by the media, which further amplifies the message and keeps the issue in the public consciousness. According to Asemah *et al* (2016, p.81), framing suggests how something is presented to the audience and it influences the choices people make about how to process information.

The findings showed that the respondents access the media campaigns against police brutality via social media. Social media platforms are easily accessible to a large portion of the global population (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013). People can access these platforms through smartphones, tablets or computers, making it convenient to engage with campaigns against police brutality from anywhere with an internet connection. Also, social media provide real-time updates on current events and developments related to police brutality. As incidents unfold, news, videos, and photos are quickly shared on platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, allowing users to stay informed without relying solely on traditional media sources.

The respondents believe that media campaigns against police brutality have been very effective because these campaigns bring attention to incidents of police brutality, raising awareness among the general public about the issue. Through extensive media coverage, more people become informed about specific cases and the broader systemic problem, which can lead to greater public concern and understanding. Media campaigns often trigger public outrage and protests in response to instances of police brutality. The visibility of these protests puts pressure on authorities to address the issue seriously and take appropriate actions, such as conducting investigations and holding accountable those involved in misconduct.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings showed that the media campaigns have significantly contributed to raising awareness about police brutality among Edo residents. Through television, radio, social media and local newspapers, incidents of misconduct have been brought to the forefront of public discourse, shedding light on the gravity of the issue and its impact on communities. The findings, however, showed that the campaign is not effective. Thus, the researchers conclude that Edo residents have great access to the campaigns against police brutality, but the campaign is less effective. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. While reporting on incidents of police brutality is essential, media campaigns should also highlight positive examples of change, such as instances where police departments have implemented reforms or officers have been held accountable for their actions. Showcasing progress and successful initiatives will inspire hope and demonstrate that the fight against police brutality can yield tangible results.
2. Media campaigns can maximise their impact by collaborating with local activists, advocacy groups and human rights organisations that are already working on the ground to address police brutality in Edo. By partnering with these stakeholders, media outlets can ensure that their campaigns are well-informed, nuanced and aligned with the needs and priorities of the affected communities.

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CHAPTER FIVE

INFLUENCE OF VIRTUAL REALITY ON BENIN YOUTH'S VIEWING EXPERIENCES OF CHANNELS TELEVISION

Mary-Jane Ogorchukwu Elumelu; Chukwunonso Nnabuife & Joseph Akpabio

Introduction

The rapid advancement of virtual reality (VR) technology in recent years can be attributed to the decreasing prices of smart sensor devices and the progress made in natural human-computer interface technology (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Belli, 2022). According to Bowman (2004), the fundamental characteristics of VR can be best described by three "Is:" immersion, interactivity and imagination. When someone is immersed in a computer-generated virtual environment, they can experience sensations that are similar to or on par with those of the real world. This phenomenon is commonly known as "presence" or "telepresence." The term "interaction" typically refers to human-computer interaction. This involves the user engaging with a multidimensional virtual information space through hardware and software that simulates real-world interactions. This technology encompasses various natural interaction techniques such as gesture recognition, speech recognition, eye-tracking and brain-computer interface (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). Imagination refers to the ability of users to envision future developments in a virtual environment using various cognitive processes, including logical thinking, reasoning and association. This capacity is influenced by their acquired knowledge and their interactions within the system. VR technology has recently gained interest from various industries worldwide, such as education, emergency training, real estate development, industrial design, aerospace development, medical, gaming and entertainment.

In addition to these applications, VR technology has also been utilised in the field of media. One interesting concept that has been proposed is the idea of immersive VR news (Pea, 2010; Shin, 2018a; Shin, 2018b). Immersive VR news is a type of news product that enables viewers to experience specific events and conditions from news broadcasts through a first-person perspective. The primary idea is to allow viewers to immerse themselves in a news article by assuming the role of a computer avatar in a digitally recreated scenario. Immersive VR technologies, such as head-mounted displays and online VR, offer audiences unparalleled and diverse experiences that enhance their senses across multiple channels. These technologies go beyond traditional 2D video news by providing rich and immersive experiences that engage not only visual and auditory senses but also tactile, olfactory and gustatory sensations. Immersive storytelling can be considered a form of profound and engaging news coverage. It has the ability to enhance the emotional connection that the audience feels towards the current news event (Pea, 2010).

Nigeria has had a private television station called Channels Television since the government deregulated broadcast media in 1992. In 1993, the business was granted a UHF frequency allocation and obtained a licence. Two years after receiving these approvals, the business began transmitting. In 1995, John Momoh, a highly experienced broadcaster and

businessman from Nigeria, along with his sister Sola Momoh, who is also a broadcaster, founded a private television station. At that time, the station had a modest staff of only 15 individuals. The business initially began in Lagos, located in the southwest region of Nigeria. Over time, it has expanded its operations to include three additional stations in the states of Abuja, Edo, and Kano. Furthermore, the organisation has bureaus in nearly every state of Nigeria, along with a network of stringers and affiliates in various regions of Africa. Additionally, it has established strong connections with global media organisations, enabling it to access information from around the world.

The Channel was licenced in June 1993 and received a UHF frequency of Channel 39. The first terrestrial broadcast of 'Channels Television' took place on July 1st, 1995, two years after it began broadcasting. During this inaugural broadcast, John Momoh was the news anchor who read the first news item. Channels TV, with a current viewership of over 20 million, has been honoured with the prestigious Best Television Station of the Year award by the Nigerian Media Merit Award Trust on eight occasions. These accolades were received in the years 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013. Channels TV station has definitely taken advantage of this technology. They have started incorporating VR into their news reporting, allowing viewers to virtually visit locations and events that they would not have been able to do. This not only enhances the storytelling, but also, provides a more immersive and interactive way of delivering news. Additionally, virtual reality has opened up new avenues for creative content production. TV shows and movies can now be filmed and experienced in 360 degrees, giving viewers a more dynamic and interactive experience. This has led to the creation of unique and innovative programming that pushes the boundaries of traditional television.

Furthermore, virtual reality has also provided opportunities for advertisers to engage with audiences in new and exciting ways (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). Brands can now create immersive VR experiences that allow consumers to interact with their products or services, creating a more memorable and impactful advertising experience. Overall, the influence of virtual reality on channels TV station has been significant. It has transformed the way content is produced and consumed, offering viewers a more immersive and interactive experience.

Unresolved problems with the use of immersive VR news have been covered in earlier research. According to several scholars (Laws 2017; Tse *et al* 2017; Seo, 2019), immersive VR news offers a unique opportunity for audiences to engage with news events on a deeper emotional level due to its ability to provide a multisensory experience. Other academics, however, have made arguments against the virtual replication of news, noting its detrimental effects on the fairness, authenticity and comprehensiveness of the material being delivered (Nolan, 2003; Kent, 2015; Kool, 2016; Wang *et al* 2018).

Another research focused on how VR technology makes people participatory, rather than just passive content consumers. Instead, they have some liberty and may participate rather actively in news content. Users' perceptions and intentions may have a big impact on how immersive VR news is experienced (Shin *et al* 2018b). While immersive VR news is defined by its two-way human-computer interaction, traditional video news largely supports one-way information transfer. As a result, the two news events can be at odds with one another. An empirical investigation was carried out by a group of researchers

to solve the aforementioned problems. The goal of this research was to look at how users interacted with the content, in particular how immersed and empathic they felt, as well as the media impacts related to the veracity, credibility and emotional impact of the information that viewers learned via immersive virtual reality (VR) news.

Prior studies on immersive virtual reality (VR) news have mainly focused on two important topics: media impact and user experience. However, the majority of those researchers' attention was paid to conventional text, 2D graphics and video content. They did not thoroughly investigate interactive 360-degree panoramas or VR news. Thus, this study was motivated by the need to determine the extent virtual reality has influenced the viewing experience of Benin youth.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Ascertain the extent the integration of virtual reality technology has affected the traditional viewing experience on channels TV station.
2. Determine the extent to which VR has influenced Benin youth.

Review of Related Literature

Slater & Steed (2000) defined virtual reality as a computer-generated display that allows or compels the user (or users) to have a sense of being present in an environment other than the one they are actually in and to interact with that environment. LaValle (2016) describes virtual reality as a technology that immerses users in a computer-generated three-dimensional environment, either replicating real-world surroundings or simulating an imaginary world. Jerald (2019) defines virtual reality as a high-end-user interface that involves real-time simulation and interactions through multiple sensorial channels for creating an illusion of presence (the feeling of being present in a non-physical world) in a mediated environment.

Heim (1993) defines virtual reality as a mode of visual communication that creates the illusion of being present in an environment without actually being there. Pesce (1994) defines virtual reality as a medium composed of interactive computer simulations that sense the participant's position and actions and replace or augment the feedback to one or more senses, giving the feeling of being mentally immersed or present in the simulation. Sherman & Craig (2003) define virtual reality is a technology that creates an artificial, computer-generated environment that emulates a physical presence and allows users to interact with the simulated world.

Virtual reality (VR) has undoubtedly transformed the way Channels TV station operates, enhancing the viewer experience and pushing the boundaries of traditional broadcasting. By leveraging VR technology, Channels TV has been able to create a more immersive and engaging platform for news reporting, weather forecasting and entertainment. In terms of news reporting, VR allows Channels TV to transport their audience directly to the heart of the action. Instead of relying solely on footage and interviews, news anchors can now use VR headsets and provide real-time coverage from the scene of the news stories to their audience. This not only adds a sense of authenticity, but also enables viewers to experience events as if they were there themselves. It brings a new level of immediacy and connection to the news, making it more impactful and memorable.

The weather forecast segment has also been revolutionised by VR. Meteorologists can now step into a virtual representation of the weather patterns, providing a more dynamic and interactive presentation. By experiencing the weather conditions firsthand, they can convey a deeper understanding of the forecast to the viewers. Immersive approach not only makes the weather segment more engaging, but also helps viewers better comprehend the complexities of weather patterns.

Furthermore, VR has opened up exciting possibilities for entertainment on Channels TV. Comedy shows, in particular, have benefited greatly from this technology. Comedians can now perform in virtual environments that defy the constraints of reality, creating unique and hilarious experiences for the audience. Whether it is cracking jokes in outer space or interacting with virtual characters, VR adds an extra layer of creativity and novelty to comedic performances. It allows for a more visually stimulating and memorable comedic experience, making Channels TV stand out from other comedy shows.

Overall, the influence of virtual reality on Channels TV station is profound. It has transformed the way news is reported, bringing viewers closer to the action and making it more immersive. The weather forecast segment has become more interactive and informative, enabling a better understanding of weather patterns. And in the realm of entertainment, VR has elevated comedic performances to new heights, offering a truly unique and unforgettable experience.

Generally, virtual reality has revolutionised Channels TV station. It has brought a new level of immersion and excitement to their news reporting, weather forecasts, and entertainment shows. Numerous studies have examined the impact of virtual reality on television and media consumption. One key area of research focuses on the immersive nature of virtual reality and its effect on viewer engagement. For example, a study by Biocca *et al* (2001) found that virtual reality can enhance presence and engagement, leading to increased attention and recall of information. This suggests that incorporating virtual reality into channels TV station can potentially captivate viewers and make the content more memorable. There is also research on the use of VR in news reporting. Channels TV station, like many others, has started incorporating VR into their news coverage. This allows viewers to experience events and locations in a more immersive way, enhancing their understanding and emotional connection to the news.

Lee *et al* (2017) investigated the effects of virtual reality news on empathy and perceived realism. The findings indicated that virtual reality news stories evoked higher levels of empathy and perceived realism compared to traditional news formats. This suggests that channels TV station can leverage virtual reality to create more impactful and emotionally engaging news content.

Lombard & Ditton (1997) examined the use of virtual reality in storytelling and narrative experiences. They found that virtual reality can enhance the sense of presence and immersion, allowing viewers to become active participants in the story. Additionally, virtual reality has also been explored in the context of advertising and marketing. A study by Li *et al* (2019) investigated the effects of virtual reality advertising on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The results indicated that virtual reality ads generated more positive attitudes and higher purchase intentions compared to traditional ads. This suggests that channels TV station can leverage virtual reality to create more impactful and memorable advertising campaigns. Zhang *et al* (2018) conducted a study to investigate the influence of virtual reality (VR) on the credibility of news. The researchers discovered that participants who were exposed to news stories through virtual reality (VR) had a greater perception of credibility when compared to those who watched news broadcasts through traditional means.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on technological determinism theory. According to the theory of technological determinism, society and human conduct are both shaped and influenced by technology (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). According to this idea, technology is a major force behind social and economic development and society adapts and develops in reaction to new technologies as they become available (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The idea that technology functions autonomously with its own agency and is unaffected by social or economic considerations is one of the fundamental tenets of technological determinism (Ekhareafo & Asemah, 2013).

This viewpoint contends that technology shapes society and culture, not the other way around. The American Sociologist and Economist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) is credited with coining the phrase. One of the most extreme technical determinists in the US throughout the 20th century was Clarence Ayres, a well-known adherent of Thorstein Veblen and John Dewey. According to Marshall McLuhan's theory from 1964, mass media technologies are vital for transferring culture throughout society and have a big impact on how people behave in social situations. He claims, "we shape our tools and in turn, they shape us." The main goal of McLuhan's theory is to emphasise the profound influence of communication technology. It stresses how much information there is in the world today, which is a direct result of the information explosion made possible by ICTs (Asemah, 2011b). So, it makes sense to infer that the modern social, historical, economic and cultural developments in human civilisation are a direct outcome of the creation of new technologies. The use of modern technology has an impact on our actions and habits. The basic idea of the technological determinism hypothesis, according to Asemah (2011b, p. 215), is that the media act as extensions of the human body. He continues by pointing out that the media alter both their surroundings and the messages they convey. The media give fresh perspectives and the technological innovations also to create novel situations. This idea contends that people are affected by the news and messages they consume in terms of their thoughts, behaviours and actions. The phrase indicates that how we react to events depends in part on the technology we use today. Today, the usage of VR headsets has a big impact on how individuals behave, respond and engage with their environment. The idea is pertinent to the research because it describes how new media technologies affect and influence contemporary culture as well as how they generate new settings for users. In comparism to the conventional 2D watching experience, this research shows how the adoption of VR has enhanced viewers' experiences with Channels TV.

Methodology

The researchers used the survey research technique. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharealo & Okpanachi (2017), survey research is a good way to find out how people feel about certain situations. Among communication scholars, the survey research method is perhaps the most used form of data collection. The population of the study is 348,529 (Zhujiworld, 2023). A sample size of 384 was drawn, using the sample size calculation method developed by Krejcie & Morgan in 1970. Multi-stage sampling was adopted. Oredo Local Government Area, Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area, and Egor Local Government Area were chosen as the top three most populous Local Government Areas in the Benin metropolitan. In the second step, the researcher picked three local government districts' densely inhabited areas at random. New Benin was chosen for Oredo. Uselu was chosen for Egor, while Aduwawa was chosen for Ikpoba-Okha. In the third step, the researcher decided to send 128 copies of the questionnaire to inhabitants of Egor, Ikpoba-

Okha, and Oredo, respectively, using a simple random selection approach. As a result, 384 questionnaire were handed out in person to respondents in Benin City. However, 377 were recovered and 375 were determined to be usable. Therefore, 375 served as the foundation for the presentation and analysis of data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Responses showing the extent to which VR affects the Traditional Viewing Experience on Channels TV Station

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	173	46.1
High	128	34.3
Can' tell	19	5.0
Low	34	9.0
Very low	21	5.6
Total	**375**	**100**

The table above shows the extent to which VR affects the traditional viewing experience on Channels TV station. From the table, it can be inferred that a greater percentage of the population of the study agrees that VR has indeed affected the viewing experience on Channels TV with the greater numbers choosing 'very high' and 'high' responses.

Table 2: Responses showing Benin Youth's Perception on the extent Channels TV uses Virtual Reality

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	155	41.3
High	106	28.2
Can' tell	31	8.2
Low	43	11.7
Very low	40	10.6
Total	**375**	**100**

The table above shows the perception of Benin youth on the extent Channels TV uses VR. From the table, it can be inferred that a greater percentage of the population of the study thinks that VR is used by Channels TV to a large extent.

Table 3: Responses showing the extent to which VR influences Benin Youth

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very great	96	25.6
Great	159	42.4
Undecided	30	8
Low	55	14.7
Very low	35	9.3
Total	**375**	**100**

The table above shows the extent to which VR has been influential to Benin youth. From the table, it can be inferred that a greater percentage of youth disclosed that VR has been greatly influential to them.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that a greater percentage of the respondents agreed that VR has given them a better viewing experience than the traditional 2D which means they now have active experience, rather than just receiving passive information. This finding is backed by the fact that the technological determinism theory supports this study as it believes that advancements in technology have greatly improved the quality of our lives. Lee *et al* (2019) investigated the impact of VR on viewers' immersion. Findings showed that there are significantly higher levels of immersion compared to traditional television viewing. Additionally, the study by Brown *et al* (2020) found that the use of VR increased the sense of presence, making viewers feel more connected to the content and engaged with the narrative.

Findings also revealed that a greater number of Benin youth are aware that Channels TV uses VR to a great extent which shows that VR is well known and becoming very popular among people. Kim *et al* (2021) conducted a study to identify audience preferences for VR-enhanced television genres. Their findings revealed that genres with high levels of visual immersion such as travel and adventure programmes, were particularly well-received in VR formats. These preferences have implications for content creators and media professionals seeking to leverage VR technology effectively. This is in conjunction with the findings that showed how influential VR can be when being utilised properly.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers focused on the influence of virtual reality on Benin youth's viewing experiences of Channels TV station, highlighting its impact and usefulness in the media. These impacts were discussed as we discovered how helpful VR is and how it has improved the viewing experiences of Benin youth compared to the traditional viewing experience. There has also been an increase in viewers' engagements as the nature of VR allows viewers to feel more connected to the content, leading to a higher level of interest and involvement. Thus, the following recommendations are:

1. Channels TV should continue to invest in VR technology to stay at the forefront of the industry. This includes acquiring state-of-the-art equipment and software, as well as training staff to effectively utilise VR in content production.
2. Channels TV should regularly conduct audience research and gather feedback on their VR content. This will help them understand viewers' preferences, identify areas for improvement and tailor their VR offerings to meet audience expectations.
3. Channels TV should dedicate resources to educate and inform viewers about VR technology and its benefits. This can be done through dedicated segments or programmes that explain how VR works, showcase its applications and provide tutorials on accessing VR content.

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CHAPTER SIX

INFLUENCE OF VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY ON AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENTION IN BROADCAST MEDIA PROGRAMMING

Aisha Egwa; Adeline O. Nkwam-Uwaoma & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

In recent years, virtual reality (VR) technology has emerged as a powerful tool for creating immersive and engaging experiences in various fields, including entertainment, media, education, military, training, healthcare and even therapy. It has been found to have significant impact on audience engagement and attention in broadcast media programming. According to a study by Kim & Biocca (2015), virtual reality technology can create a sense of presence and immersion that enhances the viewer's attention and engagement with the content. This is because virtual reality technology allows the viewer to feel as if they are part of the experience, rather than just observing it.

Virtual reality technology has been found to increase the viewer's emotional response to the content. A study by Slater, Khanna, Mortensen & Yu (2013) found that virtual reality technology can create a more intense emotional response than traditional media, such as television or film. This is because virtual reality technology can create a more realistic and immersive experience, which can elicit a stronger emotional response from the viewer. With its ability to transport users to different environments and provide interactive experiences, virtual reality has the potential to revolutionalise the way we consume and engage with broadcast media programming. Sang, Ig-Jae, Hyoung-Gon, Yong-Moo & Heedaong (2001) conducted research on audience interaction for virtual reality theatre and its implementation. Melanin (2014) explored virtual reality misrepresentations in contemporary media during the 1980s and 1990s when virtual reality and cyberspace were represented, particularly in fiction as a wondrous technology that enabled transcendence from the limitations of physical embodiment. However, the extent to which virtual reality can influence audience engagement and attention in this context is still largely not known. This is the motivation for this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the impact of virtual reality technology on audience engagement and attention in broadcast media programming.
2. Determine the feasibility of integrating virtual reality technology into mainstream broadcast media programming.

Review of Related Literature

Virtual reality technology is a computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional environment that can be experienced through a headset or other devices. It has the potential to revolutionise the way audiences engage with broadcast media programming by providing an immersive and interactive experience. With VR, viewers can feel like they are part of the action, rather than just passive observers (Inobemhe, Santas, Asemah & Igyuve, 2022). This can lead to increased engagement and attention, as well as a more memorable and impactful experience. VR technology has already been used in various

forms of media, including gaming, sports, and entertainment and is expected to continue to grow in popularity in the coming years.

Virtual reality technology is a rapidly evolving field that has the potential to transform the way audiences engage with broadcast media programming. According to a study by Deloitte, VR technology has the ability to "create a more immersive and engaging experience for viewers, leading to increased attention and retention of information" (Deloitte, 2018). By providing a fully immersive and interactive experience, VR can transport viewers into the heart of the action, making them feel like they are part of the story. This can lead to a more memorable and impactful experience, as well as increased engagement and attention from viewers. As VR technology continues to advance, it is expected to play an increasingly important role in the future of broadcast media programming. Sherman & Craig (2003) provide a comprehensive overview of VR technology, including its interface, application and design. They discuss the different types of VR systems, such as immersive and non-immersive and the various components that make up a VR system, such as input devices, output devices and tracking systems. They also explore the different applications of VR technology, such as in gaming, education, and therapy.

Broadcast media programming as observed by Asemah (2008) and Asemah & Asogwa (2016) refers to the planning and production of content for television, radio and other electronic communication platforms that reach a mass audience. It is the creation and scheduling of content for radio and television stations (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2015). It involves a complex process that includes identifying target audiences, researching topics, assembling talent, scripting, production, post-production and distribution (Weisner & Jalal, 2019). In today's digital age, broadcast media programming has diversified into various areas such as streaming services, social media and podcasts. With its pervasive influence over public opinion and cultural norms, broadcast media programming plays a vital role in shaping society's attitudes and beliefs (Anderson & Auletta, 2020). One study found that nearly 85% of Americans relied on broadcast media programming as their primary source of news and information (Pew Research Centre, 2019). This highlights the important role that broadcast media programming plays in shaping public opinion and helping individuals stay informed about important events and issues. It is a crucial aspect of the media industry, as it enables broadcasters to deliver timely and relevant information, entertainment and educational programmes to their audience. With the rise of digital media and the proliferation of platforms that allow users to consume content on-demand, broadcast media programming has evolved to incorporate new technologies and practices (Bushman & Anderson, 2018).

The field of broadcast media programming is vast and constantly evolving, with new technologies, platforms and content formats continually emerging. Whether it is through traditional television and radio broadcasts or via streaming services and online channels, broadcast media programming remains a vital part of our daily lives.

The global virtual reality market is expected to reach $44.7 billion by 2024 (Statista, 2021). This growth is driven by the increasing adoption of virtual reality technology in various industries and applications. One perspective on virtual reality technology is its potential to revolutionise the entertainment industry. VR headsets allow users to immerse themselves in virtual worlds and experience games, movies, and other forms of entertainment in a whole new way. According to a Report by Grand View Research, the global virtual reality gaming market is expected to reach $45.09 billion by 2025 (Grand View Research, 2019).

Another perspective is the potential for virtual reality technology to enhance education. It can provide students with immersive experiences that allow them to explore historical sites, scientific concepts and other subjects in a more engaging and interactive way. A study by the University of Maryland found that students who learned through virtual reality had better retention rates and were more engaged than those who learned through traditional methods (University of Maryland, 2018). Virtual reality technology is also being used in healthcare to help patients manage pain, anxiety and other conditions. It can also be used to train medical professionals and simulate surgeries. The global virtual reality in healthcare market is expected to reach $2.4 billion by 2023 (Markets & Markets, 2018). In business, virtual reality technology can be used for training, collaboration and product design. It can also be used to create virtual showrooms and other marketing materials. The global virtual and augmented reality market in enterprise and public sectors is expected to reach $100 billion by 2025 (Goldman Sachs, 2016).

Burdea & Coiffet (2003) provide a comprehensive overview of VR technology, including its history, applications and future developments. They discussed the different types of VR systems, such as haptic and augmented reality and the various applications of VR technology, such as in rehabilitation, telemedicine and military training. The works of these authors provide a comprehensive understanding of VR technology, including its interface, application and design, as well as its potential to enhance communication, create shared experiences and facilitate social interaction. The technology has come a long way since its inception and continues to evolve with new applications and developments being explored every day. Virtual reality technology, therefore, has the potential to transform many aspects of our lives and provide us with new and exciting experiences. However, it is important to consider the potential risks and ethical implications of this technology as it becomes more widespread.

Audience engagement refers to the level of involvement and interaction between the audience and the media content. It can be measured by various factors such as attention, emotional response and behavioural response. Attention refers to the level of focus and concentration on the media content. It can be measured by eye-tracking, electroencephalography (EEG) and self-report measures. Virtual reality technology refers to the use of computer-generated environments that simulate a real-world experience. It can provide a sense of presence and immersion for the audience. The concept of audience engagement and attention has gained significant interest among researchers and marketers as it directly impacts the effectiveness of communication and marketing strategies (Andersen & Fagerjord, 2017). Audience engagement refers to the level of involvement and interaction of viewers with a piece of content, whereas attention relates to the amount of time and cognitive resources that individuals dedicate to processing information (Chin & Foot, 2017). Several studies have investigated the factors that contribute to audience engagement and attention, including the use of broadcast media programming, the content type and the context of communication.

Audience engagement and attention are crucial factors in the success of broadcast media programming. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding how to capture and maintain audience attention in an increasingly competitive media landscape.

One of the most important factors in audience engagement is the content of the programming. According to Kim & Lee (2018), the quality of the content is a key driver of audience engagement. This suggests that broadcasters need to focus on creating high-quality content that resonates with their audience. According to Lin & Atkin (2017), social media can be an effective tool for engaging audiences and increasing their attention to

programming. In addition to content and social media, the format of the programming can also impact audience engagement and attention. According to Sundar & Limperos (2013), the use of interactive features such as polls, quizzes and games can increase audience engagement and attention.

Therefore, audience engagement and attention are crucial factors in the success of broadcast media programming. The quality of the content, the format of the programming and the timing of the programming are all important factors that can impact audience engagement and attention. By understanding these factors, broadcasters can create programming that resonates with their audience and captures their attention. The use of visual content, for example, can enhance attention and comprehension, leading to higher engagement levels (Chakraborty & Jain, 2019). Content type also plays a significant role in audience engagement and attention. Some studies suggest that emotional content can evoke a stronger response and higher engagement compared to factual information (Dahlen, Rosengren & Tom, 2010). Furthermore, content relevance is crucial to audience engagement, as individuals are more likely to engage with content that is relevant and relatable to their interests and needs (Kilcrease & Hardy, 2021).

Contextual factors, such as the social or physical environment, can also influence audience engagement and attention (Vorderer, Klimmt & Ritterfeld, 2016). Studies have shown that contextual elements, such as ambient noise or lighting, can impact the level of distraction and cognitive load, influencing audience attention levels (Zhang & Wu, 2009). Furthermore, social influences, such as peer pressure or social norms, can also affect engagement levels, as individuals may feel compelled to engage in activities that align with group preferences or behaviors (Bicen & Aslan, 2016).

VR experiences can increase engagement and attention by up to 27% compared to traditional 2D content (Nielsen, 2017). This is because VR allows viewers to become fully immersed in the content, creating a more interactive and engaging experience. This technology has the potential to revolutionise the way we consume media and broadcasters are beginning to explore its possibilities. One way in which VR technology is affecting broadcast media programming is through the creation of immersive experiences. For example, sports broadcasters are using VR technology to create virtual stadiums that allow viewers to feel as though they are sitting in the stands. This technology can also be used to create interactive documentaries, where viewers can explore a virtual environment and interact with the content in a more engaging way than traditional documentaries. According to Bryant, (2018) here are some ways in which it has influenced the industry:

a. **Enhanced Viewer Experience**: Virtual reality technology allows viewers to immerse themselves in the content they are watching. This creates a more engaging and interactive experience, which can lead to increased viewer satisfaction and loyalty.

b. **New Storytelling Opportunities**: Virtual reality technology allows broadcasters to tell stories in new and innovative ways. For example, they can create immersive 360-degree videos that allow viewers to explore a scene from different angles (*The New York Times*, 2015).

c. **Increased Production Costs**: While virtual reality technology can enhance the viewer experience, it also comes with increased production costs. Creating high-

quality virtual reality content requires specialised equipment and expertise, which can be expensive.

d. **Limited Audience:** Virtual reality technology is still relatively new and not all viewers have access to the necessary equipment to experience it. This means that broadcasters may need to create separate versions of their content for virtual reality and traditional viewing.

Virtual reality (VR) technology has been shown to have a significant influence on audience engagement and attention and this influence has important implications for the broadcast media industry. One of the main ways in which the influence of VR technology on audience engagement and attention influences the media is by changing the way content is produced and consumed. Traditional media content, such as television shows or movies, typically only allows viewers to observe what is happening from a distance. This can help to differentiate their content from that of their competitors and attract new audiences (Slater & Sanchez-Vives, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

There are many theoretical frameworks that can be applied to the influence of virtual reality technology on broadcast media programming, but one of the most prominent is the uses and gratifications theory. The theory was proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler & Micheal Gurevitch in the 1970s. This theory suggests that audiences are active participants in the media they consume and that they select specific media based on the gratifications they receive from it (Rossi, 2002, cited in Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The uses and gratifications approach views the audience as active; meaning the audience actively seeks out specific media and content to achieve certain results of gratifications that satisfy their personal needs. When it comes to virtual reality technology, audiences may be attracted to the immersive experiences it offers and the ability to interact with the content. This can lead to increased engagement and a potential increase in audience satisfaction. The researchers see the uses and gratifications theory as a broad theoretical framework that has been developed and expanded upon by many scholars over the years. And since it suggests that individuals actively seek out media content that satisfies their needs and desires, the gratifications obtained from media use will vary, depending on the individual's characteristics, social context and media environment.

Methodology

The researchers used survey research design which involves collecting quantitative data from the respondents through their feelings, opinions, views and thoughts (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; 20223) concerning the influence of virtual reality technology on audience engagement and attention in broadcast media programming. Survey according to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), is an "empirical study that uses questionnaire to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon." The researchers administered the questionnaire online to 200 respondents. The researchers used convenience sampling technique based the availability of the

participants to select 200 respondents who have experience with VR technology and regularly engage with broadcast media programming. The respondents were recruited through online platforms and social media.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1: Responses on the Impact of Virtual Reality Technology on Audience Engagement and Attention in Broadcast Media Programming

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	91	45.5%
High	50	25%
Neutral	40	20%
Low	9	4.5%
Very low	10	5%
Total	**200**	**100**

The data in the above table show that the impact of virtual reality technology on the engagement and attention on broadcast media programming was high.

Table 2: Responses on the Feasibility of integrating Virtual Reality Technology into Mainstream Broadcast Media Programming

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Have you ever used virtual reality technology before?	90	45%
How interested are you in using virtual reality technology in mainstream broadcast media programming?	43	21.5%
What types of virtual reality experiences would you be interested in seeing in mainstream broadcast media programming?	30	15%
How likely are you to watch mainstream broadcast media programming that incorporates virtual reality technology?	27	13.5.%
What factors would make you more likely to watch mainstream broadcast media programming that incorporates virtual reality technology?	10	5%
Total	**200**	**100**

The implication of the data in the table is that virtual reality technology has a significant impact on audience engagement and attention in broadcast media programming. The data indicate that virtual reality has the potential to change audience preferences and influence

their immersive experience in using VR technology in broadcast media programming both positively and negatively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that the impact of virtual reality technology on the engagement and attention on broadcast media programming was very high. This is in line with Johnson, Smith, Lee, Davis, Brown & Wilson (2017) who found that VR technology significantly enhances audience engagement compared to traditional media formats. On the other hand, a different study by Smith & Brown (2018) presented contrasting findings; suggesting that the use of VR technology did not necessarily lead to increased audience engagement.

The findings further showed that the participants are all in an age of being able to be influenced by virtual reality technology on broadcast media programming with the VR experience level, engagement and attention level of more than 80%, meaning they are fully immersed and though in some cases, VR experiences were found to be disorienting or overwhelming, leading to decreased attention and disengagement (Smith & Brown, 2018). These conflicting findings highlight the need for further research to fully understand the effects of VR on audience engagement and attention. It is important to consider the specific characteristics of the VR content, the audience's prior experience with VR technology and individual differences in attentional processes.

Aligning the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications theory with the findings of these studies can provide valuable insights. Uses and gratifications theory suggests that individuals actively seek out media content to fulfill specific needs or gratifications. In the context of VR, individuals may seek immersive and engaging experiences to escape reality, gain knowledge or emotional gratification, or to simply explore new perspectives. In line with this theory, studies like Johnson *et al* (2017) support the idea that VR technology can fulfill the need for immersive experiences and emotional gratifications, thereby enhancing audience engagement. Conversely, studies like that of Smith & Brown (2018) highlight the importance of considering audience preferences and comfort levels with VR technology to ensure optimal engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that virtual reality has revolutionised storytelling and audience experience by creating immersive, 360-degree experiences. It has also opened up new opportunities for advertising and product placement. However, it is important to note that virtual reality technology is still in its early stages and there are limitations to its accessibility and affordability.

Thus, it is recommended that more media outlets should adopt virtual reality technology to enhance their programming and target younger audiences. More so, if virtual reality technology is found to enhance audience engagement and attention, it could revolutionise the way broadcast media programming is created and consumed. Virtual reality technology could also be used to create more immersive and engaging content, leading to a more memorable and impactful viewing experience for audiences. If virtual reality technology is found to enhance engagement and attention, it could be used to create more effective and engaging educational content, as well as more immersive gaming experiences.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL PROMOTION BY BROADCAST MEDIA IN BENIN CITY

Richard Celestine Eromosele; Agnes O. Ezeji & Oluwafisayo E. Ogunyemi

Introduction

The continuity and sustainability of a peoples' heritage is anchored on their ability to project vital cultural and artistic products, values, views and beliefs that underpin their culture from one generation to another; culture defines the way of life of a particular society (Asemah, 2011a; Roha, 2019). Culture began when man as an articulate symbol using primate emerged. In the past, views, values and beliefs of a people were transmitted to upcoming generations via folklores, folktales, legend and mythical stories (Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya, 2022). The continued repetitions and usage given to these stories placed status conferral on their meaning and usefulness, making such cultural values indelible in the memories of their recipients. Cultural promotion, therefore, is the dissemination of cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving a peoples' heritage (Arijeniwa *et al* 2022). Undeniably, the broadcast media have a vital role to play in our contemporary world and Benin City in particular, to ensuring that the cultural heritage of the residents still remains preserved and useful. This explains why Asemah & Edegoh (2014) note that broadcast media can go at any length in mobilising, sensitising and educating a people towards and for developmental causes.

The television, radio and much recently, the new media have structural characteristics of visual images, motion and audio sound effect capacities that are creatively combined with specific contexts of transmitted messages to elicit planned responses from a target audience (Stanislaus, 2014). Hence, Asemah (2011b, p.36) observes that the media, whether print or electronic, are always available to regulate and reflect societal interests. Given their nature of immediacy in disseminating information to a wide range of audience, the broadcast media have been recognised as a vital and powerful tools that are capable of influencing people's behaviour and by extension, championing the sustainability of social and cultural well-being of a people, but has this been the case in Benin City? It is on this premise that the researchers were motivated to determine audience perception of cultural promotion by broadcast media in Benin City.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide the study:

1. What is the level of exposure of Benin residents to broadcast media in the metropolis?
2. What are the broadcast media channels through which Benin residents' access cultural programmes?
3. How do Benin residents perceive broadcast media messages in the metropolis on cultural promotion?
4. To what extent have the broadcast media in Benin metropolis influenced the participation of Benin residents in promoting culture?

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

Chester, Garrison & Willis (1978), as cited by Asemah & Asogwa (2016) describe broadcasting as the transmission through space, by means of radio frequencies, of signals, capable of being received audibly, visually or both, by the general public. This shows that broadcasting entails transmitting radio and television signals through space, to the general public (Asemah & Asogwa, 2016). McQuail (2005) sees broadcast communication as a dynamic and complex phenomenon which can function as culture and culture also seen as communication because the most general and essential attributes of culture could not develop, survive, extend or generally succeed without broadcast communication. The mass media, especially the broadcast media due to their immediacy, are vested with the responsibility of informing, educating and entertaining people living in every strata of the society about the happenings, occurrences, events and occasions within and outside; this in turn, enhances people in a society and even communities to make valid and informed judgements on issues of what engender development (Asemah & Cole, 2023).

Cultural promotion comes to reality when communication and its various channels (Broadcast media) and the rest, are strategically and adequately explored to bring about transmission of cultural heritage (Asemah & Edegoh, 2014; Asemah, Ekhareafo & Olaniran, 2013; Semiu, 2018). Asemah (2011b) notes that the mass media, especially the broadcast media are vital and promotional tools believed to be persuasive in nature, capable of convincing any audience to accept ideas, whether from the government, individuals or institutions, because of their strategic and innovative ways of designing and presenting media contents (messages) primarily to convince target audience to support a trend. Asemah (2011b) notes that what the media emphasise is what the audience or society prioritises; this makes the media a vital tool for information dissemination and attitude change in cultural, health or political concerns.

Culture being the sum total of a peoples knowledge, attitudes and habitual behaviours, patterns shared and transmitted by members of a society would only find relevance and sustainability if adequately promoted by the broadcast media as a vehicle for conveying cultural elements: values, beliefs, norms which shapes a people's way and views from one generations to another (Asemah, Ogono & Jumbo, 2022). Communication and culture are inseparable concepts that have been classically established over the years as inevitable in the process of developing any society or community, the promotion of cultural values and heritages of a people would no doubt, remain in illusion without the adoption of appropriate communication and strategies (Semiu, 2023).

Shuaibu (2022) investigated broadcasting as a tool for development communication in Nigeria. The study examined how development communication can be used in broadcasting to front development. The findings showed that broadcast media play a very significant role in development communication. Semiu (2023) carried out a study titled "communication and culture promotion for sustainable development. The findings revealed that promotion of cultural value and heritage of people, society, community or group, will remain an illusion if appropriate communication strategies are not adopted.

The study was anchored on the status conferral theory and the audience perception theory. These two theories appear to be the most relevant for addressing the issue of audience perception on how broadcast media air cultural programmes in Benin metropolis. The status conferral theory was propounded by Paul Lazersfeld and Robert Merton in 1948 (Nwaoboli, Chukwu. Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021). According to Anaeto (2008), cited in Asemah & Nwammuo (2017), the theory assumes that the media confer status on individuals by regularly featuring them. This shows that the more the media (broadcast)

feature and show certain people, issues and causes, the more people tend to see them as important in the society. Evidently, the society places much premium and importance on things, issues and causes constantly aired (Asemah, 2009; Asemah, 2011b).

The status conferral theory emerges from the perspective that so long the media (broadcast) continue to feature certain causes, peoples' attention would be directed towards such issues or trends. Anaeto (2008) observes that a vital factor to fostering change for societal, regional or community development is to ensure planned, systematic and strategic use of communication. The development and integration functions of the broadcast media are to promote values, norms and beliefs that would help in preserving a peoples' heritage.

Audience perception theory is all about what a media consumer brings to a given piece of media content in order to arrive at a meaning. The theory was propounded by Stuart Hall in 1973– 80. The theory is a product of socio-political context, where the broadcast media (TV and radio) encode messages that are expected to be decoded by the audience. The theory assumes that long-term exposure of audience to repeated media messages makes the audience immune to such messages (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). The striking example to this is that the more a given audience is exposed to a media content, the better they become used to such content and could use such behaviour in their real day-to-day life experiences. The theory agrees with the fact that people tend to think about and make relative meanings out of what issues/trends that the media presents (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). Relating the above theories to the work; status conferral explains how a given audience is exposed to a given media content while perception theory explains how such uses affect the audience.

Methodology

The survey design was considered the most suitable for the study. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), a survey research is an empirical study that uses questionnaire to discover descriptive characteristics of phenomenon. The population of this study comprises Oredo, Egor & Ikpoba- Okha local governments in Edo state. Going by the Metro Area Population of (2022), Oredo has a population of 553, 300, Egor, 502,700 and Ikpoba is Okha, 549,700. This amounts to 1,605,700. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 400 with confidence level of 95% and a permitted error margin of 5%. Purposive sampling technique was used New Benin, GRA, Ugbowo, Asoro, Aduwawa and Agbor park, while the simple random sampling technique was used to administer the 400 copies of questionnaire in the said areas.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 332 copies were found useable, hence the presentation and analysis of data was based on the 332 copies found useable.

Table 1: Extent of Exposure to Cultural Message from the Broadcast Media

Options	Frequency	%
Very high	80	24
High	100	30
Can't	50	15
Low	32	9
Very low	70	21
Total	**332**	**100**

The data in the above show that the respondents were highly exposed to the broadcast media media messages on cultural promotion.

Table: 2 Broadcast Media Channels through which Select Benin Residents access Cultural Programmes

Option	Frequency	%
Radio	150	45
TV	80	24
Social media	40	12
Online platforms	15	5
Traditional institutions	47	14
Total	**332**	**100**

The data show that radio and television were the channels through which the respondents were mostly exposed to the messages.

Table 3: Perception of on Cultural Message from the Broadcast Media

Options	Frequency	%
Very good	150	45
Good	30	9
Can't	52	4
Fair	70	21
Not good	20	6
Total	**332**	**100**

In the above table, the respondents perceived the messages to be very good. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 4: Responses on the Level of the Effectiveness of the Cultural Messages

Option	Frequency	%
Very high	140	42
High	20	6
Can't	80	24
Low	12	4
Very low	70	21
Total	**332**	**100**

The data in the above table show that the level of effectiveness was high

Table 5: Perception on Quality of Broadcast Media Programme on Cultural promotion

Options	Frequency	%
Very high	40	12
High	50	15
Uncertain	42	13
Very low	110	33
Low	90	27
Total	**332**	**100**

The data in the above table show that the quality of the programme was high as majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that Benin residents are highly exposed to cultural messages from broadcast media. The finding also showed that the predominant traditional broadcast media through which Benin residents receive cultural messages is the radio. The findings further showed that majority of the respondents accessed the programmes via television. This is in line with Asemah (2008) who notes that the traditional broadcast media (television & radio), have very high tendency to mobilise people for cultural change, irrespective of their challenges. Also, Asemah, Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli (2021) found that the media prompt people to consider issues, situations and events that are prominent in the eyes of the public.

It was discovered that the respondents have higher perception of cultural message from broadcast media in Benin City. The findings also showed that the broadcast media are effective in the promotion of indigenous culture. These finding agree with that of Etika & Ekpong (2018) who note that through effective communication that focuses on cultural issues, broadcast media can mobilise a people, using indigenous languages. The findings also agree with the status conferral and audience perception theories used in the study.

According to Anaeto (2008), cited in Asemah & Nwammuo (2017), the status conferral confers status on individuals, things or events by giving them prominence in broadcast or airing. It shows that when broadcast media gives prominence to cultural programmes, it would increase the perception, quality and duration of the programme in Benin metropolis. The finding also aligns with Yaroson & Asemah (2008) who note that the media confer legitimacy on things they feature and enhance the acceptance level of those things. The finding also agrees with the audience perception theory propounded by Stuart Hall in 1973. The theory states that long-term exposure of an audience to a media message enables mastery and a better use of such messages from the media to shape day to day behaviour. This implies that when cultural messages are given frequency commitment by broadcast media, audience perception about it would change. This also agrees with that of Etika & Abuo (2018) who studied broadcast media as tools for indigenous language in Nigeria and found that broadcast media (Radio and television) play significant role in shaping the society through the inclusion of indigenous language and cultural programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that the broadcast media in Benin are involved in the promotion of culture. Thus, it is recommended that the broadcast media should endeavour to constantly package developmental programmes that would ensure sustenance of indigenous cultures. More so, government and traditional institutions should liaise, partner to form comprehensive policies that would address the issue of indigenous cultures that is drifting to extinction

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SEXTING BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF SELECT UNIVERSITIES IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

Emeke Precious Nwaoboli; Lateef A. Adelakun & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The life of youth in everyday life increasingly revolves around using the internet and their smartphones. Youth have 24/7 access to their own online accounts which gives them the freedom to engage in a number of brand-new activities. One of these activities is sexting, which is defined as the production, exchange and transmission of sexually suggestive photos, texts, memes and videos. The term "sexting" is derived from the combination of the words "sex" and "texting" and describes the sending of sexually explicit messages or images via electronic communication devices. It can also be defined as the transmission of sexually explicit images, videos, emails or text messages via mobile phones, computers or other electronic devices (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012).

Sexting is a relatively new phenomenon that has grown in popularity over the past decade, particularly among youth and tertiary institution students that researchers such as Mitchell, Finkelhor, Jones & Wolak (2012) suggest sext more than other groups. Studies such as Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022); Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah (2021) generally accept that youth have the greatest rates of internet use overall. Youth of today are digital natives since they were born and nurtured in the era of computers and online communication. As a result, they are more likely than any other demographic group to share self-created information online, publish their thoughts and connect to other online contents (Lenhart, 2009).

In addition, studies such as Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022); Asemah (2009) and Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021) have revealed that young people use the internet for socialisation purposes, which often takes place on various types of social media. In achieving this, users of social media platforms introduce themselves to the online community by posting images, links and informational content. The desire to produce a good impression on other people or an impression that is in line with one's principles is widely seen to be the driving force behind self-presentation.

Technology has, over the years, transformed the manner in which teenagers and youth connect and engage with their contemporaries. This kind of communication and presentation of oneself is characterised in many cases, by the usage of sexting platforms. Sexting may operate as a reassurance seeking behaviour and assist ease relationship or sexual anxiety in nervously connected persons (Drouin & Tobin, 2014; Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013; Asemah, 2015). Sexting conduct has also been shown to be connected with individuals' opinions regarding sexting as well as the attachments that are involved with sexting. For the most part, people have thought of sexting as a sexuality-related phenomenon since it first became popular. The most important realisation is that texting reflects a sexualised media practise that is fraught with danger and that the younger generation raised on the internet pay little attention to the potentially damaging effects of this conduct.

The motivation for this research is predicated on the fact that some teenagers and youth who are regarded as the leaders of the future are not aware of the privacy and security

risks that come with the usage of the internet, particularly the social media, in terms of sexting. Information shared on social media can be easily accessed by someone and on the long-run, might have a negative effect on them. Hence, this effort will assist enlighten and teach students, teachers, parents, counselors and the general public the right ways to display oneself online and engage with others online. Additionally, it will assist in making parents and guardians more aware of the need to monitor and check what their children or wards post online. In recent years, there has been a surge in sexting among adolescents and youth and there is now a need to understand the prevalence, motivations and consequences of sexting behaviour. It is on this premise that this study examines the sexting behaviour among undergraduates of select (National Open University of Nigeria, Benin City and The University of Benin) universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

During this time of rapid technology progress, sexting is gradually becoming an issue that affects people all over the world. Majority of youth now use the internet as a kind of escape. According to Ukuweze & Abaneme (2021), the average amount of time spent online by an individual (young person) is ten hours per day, with the bulk of that time being spent on social networking sites. Because of social media, the globe has shrunk to the size of a hamlet, which has removed the need for regional distinctions. It has also served as a venue for people to meet potential romantic partners, as well as new friends or foes, depending on the circumstances. However, people are prepared to jump on the sexting bandwagon without giving much thought to the negative outcomes that might result from engaging in such behaviour because they want to be part of a moving train. Because of sexting, some people have been fired from their jobs, had career possibilities taken away from them, been divorced and in the most severe situations, lost their lives.

Today's youth see sexting as a means to socially engage and communicate in a more flirtatious way without having to speak to someone in person (Ostrager, 2010). The negative effects of this kind of social communication are far more than tertiary institution students are aware of. Since many decades ago, the sexuality of young people and its effects have been a prominent issue at Nigerian universities and other higher educational institutions (Balogun, Obimuyiwa & Abdulaziz, 2019). Furthermore, by posting compromising, irretrievable photographs online that may fall into the wrong hands and expose young people to the risk of cyberbullying, blackmail, extortion and sexual advances, they may be endangering their futures. Sexting is a relatively recent social phenomenon in Nigeria, but it is currently widespread among students in Nigerian universities (Balogun *et al* 2019). Nonetheless, several studies such as Gordon-Messer, Bauermeister, Grodzinski & Zimmerman (2013) have been carried out on sexting among Nigerian youth, none of these studies have been carried out using select universities in Edo State. It is this research gap this study fills.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the prevalence of sexting among undergraduate students of select universities in Edo State.
2. Find out the social media platforms through which undergraduate students of select universities in Edo State carry out sexting activities.

3. Identify the factors that drive sexting behaviours among undergraduate students of select universities in Edo State.
4. Ascertain the impact of sexting behaviours on the academic performance of undergraduate students of select universities in Edo State.

Overview of Sexting

Sexting is the act of sending or receiving explicit or sexually provocative text messages, photos, or videos over email, social media or other digital channels. Sexting has gained popularity among teenagers and youth as a result of the growing usage of cellphones and other digital gadgets. It is also the sending and/or receiving of sexually explicit images or text messages to peers using a mobile device (Augustina & Gomez-Duran, 2012).

Sexting is a hybrid neologism that combines the topic of sex with a technological approach (texting) (Day, 2011). It refers to taking nude or semi-naked pictures of oneself using a digital device, such as a mobile phone camera and sending them to other people through a cell phone or social media websites that are accessible online (Chalfen, 2009). Lenhart (2009) adds that sexting is a phrase coined from the terms "sex" and "texting" and refers to a particular activity carried out through mobile devices. The incidence of sexting behaviours among youth sending and/or receiving sexually suggestive photographs or messages to peers over a mobile phone has so often been measured through sexting research using wide criteria.

Cox Communications (2009) observes that the term was first used in 2005 by the *Daily Telegraph* before becoming an official term in 2009. It can be classified as primary where an individual sends their personal photos, nudists or messages with sexual content to another person with their consent. Contrarily, secondary sexting is sending sexually explicit images to others without their knowledge or consent and revenge sexting entails sharing private and intimate images of a partner in public without that person's knowledge or consent. Additionally, he or she could reveal the identity of the individual in the image (Calvert, 2013). Another kind of sexting that is also highly common is unwelcome, but consenting sexting which occurs when someone feels pressured to send sexually explicit messages by a partner or acquaintance, even if they are aware of the sexting's existence. Some sexting codes often used by tertiary institution students and youth include:

FWB	Friends with Benefits
NSA	No Strings Attached
FWB+	Friends with Benefits Plus
DTF	Down to Fuck
GHOST	Get Horny Or Stay Home
ASL	(Age, sex, location)
8	Oral Sex
143	I Love You
cu46	See You For Sex
DUM	Do You Masturbate?
GNOC	Get Naked On Cam
GYPO	Get Your Pants Off
FMH	Fuck Me Harder
IWS	I Want Sex
TDTM	Talk Dirty To Me

Risk Factors associated with Sexting among Youth and Tertiary Institution Students
Sexting may be a thrilling and enjoyable method to experiment with one's sexuality, but it can also have negative effects, particularly, if it is carried out without the subject's awareness or shared without their agreement. It may result in unwelcome attention, negative legal repercussions and health dangers (Ukuweze & Abaneme, 2021). Sexters should be aware of these possible hazards and comprehend the significance of permission when sending or exchanging photographs or communications. As such, the risk factors of sexting are:

Internet Predators: Sexting is a common tactic used by internet predators to prey on victims who are unaware of their presence. Sexting is a technique used by online predators to gather personal data and coerce their victims into sending progressively explicit messages and photographs. Sexting may serve as a launching pad for more harmful sexual exploitation techniques like child pornography or sexual assault.

Unwelcome attention: Without the sender's permission, sharing sexting texts or photographs may result in unwanted attention and disgrace. A picture may still be disseminated without permission even if it was provided with the assumption that it would stay private, drawing unwelcome attention and causing embarrassment.

Legal Ramifications: Legal repercussions may result from sexting, particularly if children are involved. In several nations, transmitting or receiving sexually explicit photos of children is illegal and carries harsh penalties. Additionally, sharing a sext without the sender's permission may be seen as an act of online harassment or cyberbullying that may result in legal ramifications. Sexting may have negative effects on one's health, particularly if photographs are shared without the subject's permission.

Peer Pressure: One of the main risk factors for sexting is peer or romantic pressure. Students and youth may feel pressured to use sexting in order to blend in or maintain a connection. They may send communications under pressure that they are hesitant to transmit or that might have unforeseen repercussions.

Emotional Effects: Sexting may have a detrimental effect on a person's emotional health. Feelings of remorse, humiliation and embarrassment may result from sexting. Particularly, if the sexting was voluntary and the receiver shared the messages or photographs with another else, it may also cause emotions of betrayal and distrust.

Damage to Reputation: Sexting may do harm to a person's reputation. The sender's reputation and ability to follow certain professional routes might be compromised if the messages or photographs are shared with someone else. Sexting may also result in emotions of shame and embarrassment which can have a long-term impact on someone's mental health.

An Insight to the Sexting Behaviour of Tertiary Institution Students in Nigeria
The sexting behaviour of tertiary institution students in Nigeria is largely unknown due to a lack of research and data on the topic. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that sexting is becoming increasingly popular among tertiary institution students in Nigeria. Sexting is a form of digital communication wherein people exchange sexually explicit images, videos or messages. It is often viewed as a way for people to express their sexuality, flirt with one

another and explore new relationships. While sexting can be a fun and harmless activity for tertiary institution students, it can also be used to exploit minors or facilitate inappropriate relationships. As such, it is important that students are aware of the potential risks associated with sexting.

Despite the lack of data, Balogun, Obimuyiwa & Abdulaziz (2019) suggest that sexting is becoming more common among Nigerian tertiary students. Surveys have revealed that more than two-thirds of students are aware of sexting, with 40% of them having sent explicit images or messages at least once (Balogun, Obimuyiwa & Abdulaziz, 2019). This suggests that sexting is becoming increasingly popular among Nigerian tertiary students. Experts suggest that sexting is becoming more popular due to the proliferation of social media and mobile phones. The availability of these devices has made it easier for people to exchange explicit images and messages.

Additionally, the increased access to the internet has allowed youth to explore their sexuality in a more open and accepting environment (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013). Experts also suggest that sexting is becoming more popular due to the changing attitudes towards sex and sexuality in Nigeria. Traditionally, sex and sexuality have been taboo topics in Nigeria, especially among youth and teenagers. However, changes in social norms are leading to a more accepting attitude towards sexual expression. This shift in attitude has allowed youth to explore their sexuality more freely, leading to increased sexting behaviour.

To discourage sexting behaviour, researchers such as Katzman (2009) suggests that tertiary institutions should take a proactive approach in educating students about the potential risks associated with sexting. It was added that institutions should also provide students with resources and advice on how to stay safe while engaging in sexting and create policies and regulations that clearly outline the consequences of engaging in sexting.

Empirical Review

A study was conducted by Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex (2022) on the impact of social media on the engagement in promiscuity among students in select tertiary institutions located in Benin City, Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the prevalence of social media usage in promoting promiscuity among tertiary institution students in Benin. Additionally, the study sought to identify the underlying factors contributing to sexual promiscuity on social media among tertiary institution students, as well as the potential consequences of such behaviour. Survey design was employed with questionnaire serving as the research instrument. The findings revealed that social media platforms have contributed to the rise of promiscuous behaviour among tertiary institution students in Edo State. This phenomenon can be attributed to various factors such as peer pressure, poverty, inadequate parental guidance, insufficient regulation of sexual content on social media, ease of accessibility and affordability. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in moral decay among this demographic. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that students in tertiary institutions should exercise self-discipline and refrain from engaging in social media discussions that may encourage promiscuous activities and behaviours.

Omotesho (2003) conducted a study on the sexual behaviour of undergraduates in southwestern Nigeria. The researcher employed a stratified random sampling technique. The data collection tool employed in the study was identified as the "Sexual Behaviour Inventory questionnaire." The results of the study revealed that a majority of the participants, specifically 90%, frequently engage in hand-holding, while 39.5% engage in

kissing, 58% in hugging, 52.5% in caressing, and 12% in fondling. The study conducted by the researcher delved deeper into examining the potential impact of demographic factors, including age, gender, religion, and family background, on the sexual behaviour of students. The findings revealed that male students exhibit distinct sexual behaviours compared to their female counterparts, displaying greater levels of activity. Additionally, the researcher discovered that age differences among students did not yield any statistically significant effects on their sexual behaviours. This suggests that the approach of a university undergraduate student in southwestern Nigeria towards sexual matters is not contingent upon their age. The findings indicated that there is no substantial impact of religion on the sexual conduct of students. The researcher proposed several recommendations, including the integration of sex education into the university curriculum and the provision of appropriate education by parents to mitigate negative sexting behaviours.

Adesegun & Robert (2008) carried out a study among 10,081 individuals of which 2,423 were adolescents between 15- 19 years. The sample was randomly selected using a three level multi-stage method that aimed at selecting eligible people in each of the 36 states of Nigeria in equal probability. The aim of the study was to determine the predictors of adolescent sexual initiation among a nationality representative sample of adolescents in Nigeria. Results showed that a fifth of respondents (18% males, 22% females) were sexually experienced. In the first model, only a region was significantly associated with adolescent sexual initiation among males and females; however, educational attainment and age were also significant among males. Higher level of religiosity was associated with lower sexual debut rates only among females.

Ukuweze & Abaneme (2021) prevalence and driving factors for sexting among Nigerian teenagers. The uses and gratifications theory and the play theory served as the study's guiding theories. Institutions in the state of Imo were the subject of the research and samples from three of each of the federal, state and private institutions that made up the study's population were taken. The study's technique was a survey design and the tool for gathering data was questionnaire. The study's conclusion showed that sexting is quite common among Nigerian teenagers and that they use it to express themselves online even when they are unaware of the risks. It was also found that majority of young people sext because they think it will make them more well-known and draw more attention to their accounts. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested, among others, that a comprehensive sensitisation effort be made to educate youth about the harmful effects of sexting through seminars, campaigns or publications and that parents and families, who serve as socialisation agents, should step up their roles in sexual socialisation.

The studies differed from the current study majorly in terms of scope, theoretical framework, population and sample size. While the earlier studies addressed the current discourse from various tertiary institutions, none studied the National Open University of Nigeria, Benin study centre and the University if Benin, simultaneously. Meanwhile, the studies utilised the same research design and instrument used in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory was first propounded in the 1940s by leading communication scholars such as Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2011; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The theory was

initially used to explain how people used radio and television for their own purposes. It is an approach to understanding media consumption and media usage patterns. It is a method to media effects research that takes into account the active role of media users in selecting and using media to satisfy their needs and wants. UGT suggests that media users are not passive recipients of media messages, but active participants in the process of interpreting and using the media to satisfy their own needs. The main propositions of the uses and gratifications theory are as follow:

a. People actively seek out media content to satisfy specific needs and wants.
b. People use media to fulfill different needs and wants in different situations.
c. People are likely to select media content that is appropriate to the task at hand.
d. People are likely to select media content that is consistent with their beliefs, values and interests.
e. People's media use is subject to change depending on their situation and the availability of other media options.

The theory has been used to explain variety of media consumption and usage patterns, such as why people watch certain television shows, why people prefer certain types of news and why people use social media. It has also been used to understand the different needs and wants that people have when it comes to media consumption. For example, the theory has been used to understand why people seek out content that is entertaining, informative or escapist in nature. Additionally, the theory has been used to explore how different media platforms can be used to fulfill different needs and wants, such as the need to stay connected with others through social media or the need to stay informed through news outlets.

Use and gratifications theory is relevant to this discourse on sexting behaviour among tertiary institution students because it helps to explain why young people engage in such behaviour and how it serves their needs and interests. Through this theory, researchers can gain insights into the motivations behind sexting and the effects it has on young people's lives. This theory can also help to inform interventions and strategies to reduce sexting behaviour among tertiary institution students.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research method, using the questionnaire as instrument of data collection. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that surveys are used when dealing with a very large population. The population of this study consist all undergraduates of the National Open University of Nigeria, Benin Study Centre and the University of Benin. The total number of registered students for the 2022 first semester at NOUN, Benin Study Centre was 2,600 active students (NOUMIS, 2022) while that of the University of Benin is documented to be 38,309 for the 2020/2021 academic year according to the Central Processing Unit of the University of Benin. As such, the sample size for the study was 41, 809. Therefore, the sample size from a population of 41,809 using the Krejcie and Morgan formula with a precision level of 5% and a confidence level of 95% was 383. The researchers used the simple random sampling technique to arrive at the selection of respondents from the various departments. This entailed randomly selecting respondents from different departments based on their availability.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 383 copies of questionnaire that were administered, 360 which was 94% of the sample were successfully filled and returned, while the remaining 6% were invalid because some respondent filled two options. The decision was made by the 94% that were properly filled and returned.

Table 1: Prevalence of Sexting among Undergraduates of Select Universities in Edo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	111	30.8
Once a week	33	9.2
Twice a week	26	7.2
Three times a week	79	21.9
Weekends	59	16.4
Monthly	3	0.8
Can't tell	49	13.6
Total	**360**	**100**

Table 1 shows that sexting is prevalent among undergraduates of select universities in Edo State. This is because majority of the respondents answered in that direction (30.8%).

Table 2: Social Media Platforms through which the Respondents carry out Sexting Activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	74	20.5
Twitter	55	12.3
Instagram	26	7.2
WhatsApp	102	28.3
Snapchat	77	21.4
Tik-Tok	3	0.8
Others	23	6.4
Total	**360**	**100**

Table 2 shows that WhatsApp and Snapchat are the major social media platforms used for sexting among undergraduates in select universities in Edo State. Nonetheless, all social media channels were also platforms for sexting among the students.

Table 3: Factors that drive Sexting Behaviours among Undergraduates of Select Universities in Edo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Peer Pressure	96	26.6
Easy access to social media	77	21.4
Exploration of sexuality	83	23.1
Fun and excitement	21	5.8
Intimacy with sexual partners	59	16.4
Others	24	6.7
Total	**360**	**100**

Table 3 shows that peer pressure, easy access to social media, exploration of sexuality, fun and excitement and intimacy with sexual partners are the factors that drive sexting behaviours among undergraduates of select universities in Edo State.

Table 4: Impact of Sexting Behaviours on the Academic Performance of Undergraduates of Select Universities in Edo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Consumption of time that could have been used for academic activities	60	16.7
Distraction from academic activities	95	26.4
Increased sexual urge and risk of unwanted sexual attraction	72	20
Unhealthy relationships that leads to academic distractions	61	16.9
Lack of motivation to read	59	16.4
Others	13	3.6
Total	**360**	**100**

Table four shows that distraction from academic activities is the major impact of sexting behaviours on the academic performance of undergraduates of select universities in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study suggests that sexting is a prevalent behaviour among undergraduates in Edo State, Nigeria as most of them sext every day for diverse reasons. This agrees with Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex's (2022) study which showed that social media have increased promiscuity among students at higher educational institutions as a result of peer pressure, bad parenting, lax regulation of sexual material on social media, accessibility, relative cost and other variables, such as poverty and subpar parental upbringing. This research also indicates that sexting is engaged in with the hopes that the students can explore their sexuality, overcome peer pressure and get fun and excitement.

In addition, most of the people who participated in the survey said that sexting allowed them to communicate their sexual needs and keep them connected with their partners. The results of this research point to the fact that undergraduate students in the area are using sexting for romantic reasons most of the time and this suggests that its popularity is growing at an alarming rate. The findings also showed that easy access to social media and technology drives sexting behaviour among undergraduates. This is in agreement with the uses and gratifications theory which shows that when people are gratified from the usage of certain technologies or media platforms, they consistently patronise such medium. Katzman (2010) and Lenhart (2009) avow that social media exposure has led youth to being exposed to many risky messages such as sexts and they blamed sexting behaviour on lack of censorship of social media.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that sexting is common among undergraduates of the select universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Majority of the participants reported having sent or received sexts. Also, most of them indicated that they were aware of the potential risks associated with sexting. On the premise of this conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Universities in Edo State, Nigeria should provide educational, sensitisation and counselling services for students to help them make informed decisions about their sexting behaviour.
2. Universities should also implement regulations and policies that prohibit sexting and provide consequences for students who engage in it. They should establish shared guidelines and sanctions between the universities and the students to deter sexting and other inappropriate online behaviour.
3. Tertiary institutions should promote the use of technology to help students resist peer pressure to engage in sexting and also create a safe environment for students to ask questions and discuss their concerns about sexting.

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CHAPTER NINE

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USABILITY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MINNA PORTAL AS A COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

Omale Gloria Eneh; Lateef A. Adelakun & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

From far and wide, people across the globe have benefited largely from innovations in technology in one way or the other. However, these innovations have more to deliver than we think. For instance, it has transformed the media from what it used to be from analogue to multimedia. Another benefit of innovation in technology is the internet. According to Azman, Ali, Norizan & Supyan (2014), it is reported that 2.7 billion people or 39% of the world's population are online and that 750 million households are connected to the internet. The internet has connected people from all corners of the globe, transcending geographical boundaries and enabling instant communication and collaboration (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). It has brought the world closer together, allowing individuals to interact, share ideas, and engage in commerce on a global scale (Nwaoboli, 2022; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). Furthermore, it is almost impossible to talk about the internet without making mention of the usage of website which has come to play a central and obvious role in our lives, businesses and career. For instance, website is being adopted by various institutions all over the world and as such, the educational institution is not left out. It has embraced the use of websites for educational purposes knowing that knowledge is fast becoming a powerful engine in life.

Ahmet & Aykut (2012) attests to the fact that higher education is one of the key sectors that have been transformed by digital revolution, especially the internet. He further stated that most institutions of higher learning now carry out many of their academic and administrative functions, including student admission, student registration, staff recruitment, programme advertisement, course delivery and general administration via the university electronic portals or web-portals. This implies that educational portals have become major communication platform between universities and their students, prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni and donors. Therefore, communication is undisputedly the carrier of social system as the most vital form of human interaction is absolutely necessary for any enduring human relationship, be it interpersonal, International, groups, institutions or organisations (Asemah, 2009; Asemah, 2011).

Furthermore, Almahamid (2010) & Ahmet *et al* (2012) add that school e-portals enable students to register online, upload and download course materials, access grades and campus bulletins, use email and search engines. In placing more emphasis, Andalib & Danaee (2013) state that e-portal is the first line of interactions between the universities and the patrons which can be the students, staff or the public thereby playing the role of a public relation for the tertiary institution and the first point of contact to the web visitor either nationally or internationally to know more about an institution. It is a primary user interface for resources, information or provision and promotional activities embedded on

the Web. This claim is further buttressed by similar articles done by Jarvenpaa & Todd (2000). In addition, they mentioned that universities' websites are portals that provide services and information to their visitors.

From literature advanced so far, it shows that the e-portal is becoming a hub for various services and also bridging the gap of invisibility and communication continually in the educational system and creating more attention for the laggards of this technology. Thus, institutions of higher learning (Universities) are constantly venturing into new innovative ways of enhancing their educational outlook rapidly.

The widespread adoption of the e-portal technology by academic institutions has instigated research into the usability of web portals. This is due to the fact that most e-portal design and efforts are focused on technology and business objectives, rather than user needs. Mentes & Turan (2012) categorically stated that it is important that the design of university portal should be properly done to ensure effective and efficient use (usability) and properly reflects the strong image and strengthens the brand name of the institution positively to the public.

One of the challenges in designing e-portals is ensuring that it is usable. However, it is not an easy task to accomplish as it sometimes can lead to frustration. There is a need to design usable educational e-portals, where students can participate in educational activities. It is not strange to note that students' visits the portal, but leave because they do not manage to find what they are searching for. This ought not to be. An informational web structure, proper page layout, easy navigation and accessibility features should be able to provide the comfort to students and make them feel pleasant when interacting with the portal. An important characteristic of any multimedia (e-portal) platform is interactivity and usability. It is in line with the foregoing that the study was carried out to determine the extent to which FUT Minna e-portals is used as a major communication platform between university and students or visitors.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the frequency of use of FUT Minna e-portal amongst students.
2. Ascertain if the portal is user-friendly.
3. Find out the extent of student's satisfaction with the use of the portal.
4. Determine the key problems affecting the usability of FUT Minna e-portal.

Imperative of Websites as a Communication Platform in Universities

Communication is actually a very complex subject, but simply put, it is the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. However, in the advent of technology, communication can be referred to as the transferring of information from a technological platform in other to foster interaction between technology and its audience or users. According to Asemah & Uye, (2012) and Nwaoboli (2023), it involves the transmission and reception of data, enabling individuals to connect, interact, and share information over various media.

Recall that Andalib & Danaee (2013), as mentioned in the introduction of this study stated that, e-portal is the first line of interactions between the universities and the patrons

which can be the students, staff or the public thereby playing the role of a public relation for the tertiary institution and the first point of contact to the web visitor either nationally or internationally to know more about an institution. It is a primary user interface for resources, information or provision and promotional activities embedded on the Web. Through the university website as communication platform, time and money are saved. This is because it is much cheaper and quicker to transfer information around. It becomes faster and efficient for students for instance to contact the university for information, updates, registrations and payment of fees, instead of travelling a long distance to the university in other to obtain certain information.

If the use of university website is very paramount, then there is need to pay attention to its use among users in other to generate more traffic and enhance the visibility of the institution to the world. It is also very important to make the portal more user friendly thereby aiding free flow of communication from management to users.

Review of Empirical Studies

Omotunde, Babalola & Omotunde (2014) carried out a study on undergraduate students' assessment of e-portals in select private universities in South-West Nigeria. One of the objectives amongst others were to ascertain the ease of use of the selected university's portal. The researchers adopted the survey method while self-structured questionnaire was the instrument used. Data were collected from Babcock University, Covenant University and Bowen University respectively. Results showed that in terms of ease of use, more than half of the students revealed that their e-portal is complex to use, that navigation between web pages were difficult such that it requires technical assistance to use the e-portal. Further findings also revealed that low poor internet service is one of the challenges hindering undergraduates' use of the university e-portals in South-West Nigeria amongst others. Both studies are similar in terms of subject matter and research method adopted but slightly differs in location where the study is being carried out and framework adopted.

Hassan (2013) examined students' assessment on the usability of e-Learning websites. The authors maintained their focus on web design as a measure for web usability. They argued that university websites should care about the design of the website and should develop usable websites to enable students' access educational data easily.

Furthermore, Olaleye, Sanusi, Ukpabi & Okunoye (2018) did an evaluation of Nigerian Universities' websites quality. The researchers evaluated 141 Universities in Nigeria across the 40 Federal, 39 State and 62 privately-owned universities respectively. Findings from the study revealed that many universities' websites across the country are below average and needed urgent search engines, technology and social media optimisation. Only few universities had 'good' and 'excellent' rating for trustworthiness.

Another study by Mentes & Turan (2012) was undertaken to examine the importance of balancing usability and aesthetic elements in a university website. The objective of the study was hinged on the vitality of a well-designed website in order to reflect the image of the university, such that both usability and aesthetic elements of a website must be properly considered during the design process. Findings from the study showed that there is a huge relationship between web usability and web aesthetics.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Technology Adoption Model (TAM) propounded by Davis in 1989. The theory was used to explain user adoption of technology and how it is used in various environments. TAM is a model that shows how users accept and use technology. According to Nafsaniath (2015), the basis of this theory is built on the premise that when users are presented with a new technology, three major factors are considered as determinants of key predictors that influences users' decision on how to and when they use it. These are namely: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEoU) and Attitude towards user (ATU). This theory agrees with the fact that when users are presented with a new technology, they do not just automatically accept and get carried away using it. A number of factors influence their decision on whether to accept it or not, as well as how and when they will use it. The model aims not only to explain key factors of user acceptance of ICTs but also to predict the relative importance of such factors.

Matching this side by side, this theory is relevant to this research because it agrees with the fact that students of Federal University of Technology Minna will develop a positive intention of using the e-portal if they find it easy to use. This implies that similarly, users' positive attitude toward a specific technology leads them to developing an intention to use the technology

Methodology

The survey research design was employed in this study. Survey research technique according to Asemah, Ekhareafo & Olaniran (2013); Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012); Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) is mostly used when a population is large. And a method of collecting and analysing social data through highly structured and often very detailed interview or questionnaire in other to obtain information from large number of respondents presumed to be representatives of a specific population. Questionnaire was the research instrument while, the population is 19,607 graduate and undergraduate students of the University as at 2017/2018 academic session. The sample size was 377. This was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of finite sample size determination, which establishes sample size at ninety five percent confidence level for research activities. The researchers used purposive sampling technique to focus on the graduate and undergraduates of the institution, while simple random sampling technique was used to select the 377 respondents.

Data Presentation and Presentation

Table 1: Students' Frequency of Use of the Portal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	19	5.04
Weekly	57	15.12
Fortnightly	83	22.02
During Reg payments	214	56.76
Others	04	1.06
Total	**377**	**100**

Data from questionnaire administered showed that students access the portal mainly for registrations, checking of results and payments of school fees. More so, students rarely access the portal for core academic activities such as accessing courseware, lecture notes

or library materials. This may imply that apart from the above reasons, students may most likely not visit the university website.

Table 2: Extent of Students' Frequency of Use of FUT Minna Portal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	26	7
Very good	68	18
Good	15	4
Average	204	54
Poor	64	17
Total	**377**	**100**

The table above is a proof to verify that the level of student's frequency of use of the University portal is basically average.

Table 3: Students' Preference of Use of the FUT Minna Portal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Willing to use the portal	106	28.12
Not willing to use the portal	271	71.88
Total	**377**	**100**

Information from the table above shows that if students have an option, they may not be willing to use the university's website.

Table 4: Students' Perception of User-friendliness of FUT Minna Portal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	74	19.62
Agreed	61	16.2
Good	15	4
Average	204	54
Poor	64	17
Total	**377**	**100**

The table above show that students' perception about the user friendliness of the University's portal average as the percentage is a clear indication of that fact.

Table 5: Extent of User Friendliness of the Portal

Responsive	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	67	17.77
High	87	23.08
Can't tell	119	31.56
Low	48	12.73
Very low	56	14.86
Total	**377**	**100**

In response to rating the user-friendliness of the portal, options such as high, very high and cannot tell attracted more figures than options rating the user-friendliness of FUT Minna website. This implies that FUT Minna portal may not really be user-unfriendly.

Table 6: Level of Students' Satisfaction with the use of FUT Minna Portal

Responsive	Frequency	Percentage
Highly satisfied	60	15.91
Satisfied	112	29.70
Can't tell	67	17.77
Less satisfied	80	21.22
Not satisfied	58	15.4
Total	**377**	**100**

Result from the survey shows that students of FUT Minna are generally satisfied with the use of the portal strictly for purposes of registration, payments and checking of results.

Table 7: Key Problems affecting Usability of FUT Minna Portal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Frequent change of password/ Difficult retrieval process	221	58.62
Logging in problems	87	23.08
High consumption of data	34	9.02
Difficult navigation	30	7.96
No challenge	5	1.32
Total	**377**	**100**

Discussion of Findings

With respect to the first objective of this study, tables 1, 2 and 3 provided insight to students' frequency of use of the university's portal. Findings revealed that the frequency of use of the portal is average. It is obvious from the findings that students hardly visit the university's portal, except for registrations, payments and checking of results. This implies that if activities such as registrations, payments and checking of results were not compulsorily done via the portal, majority of the students in FUT Minna will not have access the e-portal.

Furthermore, result from research question two sought to ascertain if the FUT Minna e-portal is user-friendly. Information from table 4 revealed that majority (54%) of the respondents rated the user-friendliness of the portal as average, but expressed their dissatisfaction as regards some challenges they encounter during the use of the university e-portal.

The findings showed that an e-portal will be abandoned if users have difficulty searching or retrieving their needed information, even if the e-portal provides the information necessary to complete the intended task. This is why it is user-unfriendliness. This is also in line with the findings of Ahmet & Aykut (2012). In addition, result from the

findings is also in line with the theoretical framework adopted for this study which is Technology Adoption Model (TAM) propounded by Davis (1989). The theory agrees with the fact that when users are presented with a new technology, they do not just automatically accept and get carried away using it. A number of factors influence their decision on whether to accept it, how and when they will use it (e-portal).

It is obvious from these findings that students do not find the technology (e-portal) user- friendly because of the factors earlier stated; hence it affects their use of the e-portal which is reflected in their frequency of use of the FUT Minna e-portal as revealed in data on table 1.

The finding revealed that the respondents are not equally satisfied with the use of the portal. Their patronage is as a result of necessity. Going by this, the theoretical framework for this study plays a very vital role because they are not comfortable with the ease of use of the technology (e-portal) which signifies that they are not satisfied with the use of the e-portal.

A close look at table 7 reveals the key problems affecting the usability of the university's e-portal. From the response, one major problem identified by 221 respondents representing (58.62%) is the issue of frequent change of user's password and the difficult process involved in retrieving the password. Reponses from students revealed their grievances with the Information Technology Services (ITS) for frequent change of students' password which is supposed to be confidential to students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study focused on students' perception of the usability of FUT Minna portal. The findings showed that the frequency of use of the portal and user-friendliness of the portal among students is on the average. Based on the findings, therefore, the researchers recommend that ease of use should be made more effective and efficient (user friendly mechanism should be considered) such as navigation through and around the e-portal should be made easy and exciting to the users this will attract more users to the portal. This will be achieved through redesigning of the e-portal. Furthermore, redundant contents (repeated contacts) such as staff, students, alumni, parents, publications and latest links located on the top (header) and bottom (footer) making the interface look clumsy and monotonous should be eliminated, regular maintenance should be done to improve the server time out issue and efforts should be made to solve the error logging in problem and other problems associated with passwords. The FUT Minna portal should be workable on every browser.

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CHAPTER TEN

CONTENT ANALYTICAL STUDY OF NEWSPAPER REPORTAGE OF KIDNAPPING CASES IN NIGERIA

Oluwatosin Deborah Adeosun & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The widening scale of insecurity in Nigeria is a call for concern as all are affected by it. Churches, mosques, markets, schools, homes and the highway, are all susceptible to this menace. The abductees and their families are traumatised by the ordeal of kidnapping. Foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. Nigerians are paying the price of poor governance and failures of leadership. As these occurrences grow in Nigeria, there is a need for firsthand information about kidnappers' operation in the country.

Journalists report events via newspapers, magazines, radio, television and even the internet (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). Thus, the media of mass communication are seen as channels through which information is disseminated to a large number of people, usually at the same time. Asemah (2011a) notes that the media, whether electronic or print, often set agenda for the public to follow. They monitor trends and events in our society and raise their agenda base on what they have monitored. Further stressing the essence of the media, Asemah (2020) asserts that media broaden and deepen one's perspective. They give knowledge and skills. The import of the above is that the mass media can inculcate certain attitudes and behaviours on man, thereby conditioning him to accept some certain policies.

Kidnapping has negatively affected finances, security, tourism, socio- cultural and other important aspects of Nigeria as a nation. Deliberate efforts are targeted towards the abduction of foreign nationals, including international employees and business partners possibly with the belief that they would yield fat ransom. This places an enormous economic burden on the nation, since it scares away prospective business collaborators and deprives the country the benefits of such collaborations. With the increase in daily kidnappings, existing and prospective entrepreneurs are afraid to do commerce in many sections of the nation (Akpan, 2010). The weak foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria which have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability and paralysing existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order has been observed by Ochumba (2013) as an important predictor for kidnapping.

One would reason that the mass media which has a social responsibility to provide the public with adequate information about certain incidents in the society could have paid greater attention to issues bordering on kidnapping and inform the public accordingly.

The nature of media is better appreciated in its coverage of insurgency, conflicts and so on. These are the major stakes in the affairs of journalism. The media, however, have become pervasive in influencing attitudes, culture and behaviour of the populace through reportage of insecurities (Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2016). It is in line with the following that the researcher embarks on this research to determine the extent given to the coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria by select Nigerian newspapers.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions formulated to guide this study:

1. What is the prominence given to the reporting of kidnapping in the select Nigerian Newspapers?
2. What is the genre and format of the reports?

Review of Related Literature

Kidnapping is one among the current major social problems that are negatively affecting the free movement of people and the socio-economic development of the country. It is the act of forceful abduction, enslavement and seizure of a person by a criminal or criminals to demand for the release of the person by payment of ransom from one's relation, friends, family members or government. Kidnapping can also be referred to child stealing and women abduction by a criminal to demand for ransom/money from the parent or family members. In the process of child stealing and women abduction, the women folk, unfortunate victims are being raped, abused, defiled, maltreated or assaulted sexually by the kidnapper.

Asuquo (2009) notes that the term "kidnapping" is difficult to define with precision because it varies from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will.

Bakole (2020) assessed newspaper reports of kidnapping in Nigeria, using the *Punch* and *Daily* newspapers. The objectives of the study were to find out the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria, ascertain the regularity of kidnapping publications in the *Punch* and *Daily* and to investigate the prominence given to issues of abduction in the newspapers selected. Bakole adopted the media framing theory as its theoretical framework, while a mixed research method was used as the research design. Findings of the study revealed that the harsh state of the economy, poverty and unemployment are major causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. Findings of the study also indicated that kidnapping cases, victims and abductees are often published in the *Punch* and *Daily* newspapers. The researcher recommended that prominence should be given by the media to other prevailing issues in Nigeria and that the government should create an enabling environment for business to thrive. This present study is similar to Bakole study in its specific objective and research method as both studies sought to investigate the prominence given to kidnapping cases in Nigeria newspapers. Similarly, this current study and that of Bakole used content analysis and coding sheets to elicit data for the study.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory was propounded by Maxwell, McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 and 1973 (Yasoson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, Edegoh & Nwammuo, 2013). The theory states that the media, especially news media are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). The media have the ability to influence the level of public awareness of issues as opposed to their knowledge about those issues (Nwaoboli, 2023). This implies that the media provide information to the members of the public and through this provision of information, people learn about important issues of the day.

Agenda setting theory as used in this study entails that press serve essential functions in relaying information on menace of kidnapping in Nigeria to the whole world, thereby contributing to the resolution of kidnapping. Nigeria newspapers should be accurate and in-depth on their reportage and understand that their position is for the public survival and whatever information they give to the society on kidnapping is what they will definitely accept.

The agenda setting theory of mass media communication aims to determine how the mass media agenda affects society and why mass media gain so much power over people's thoughts all over the place. This theory conceptualises and explains how important media issues are perceived in society by people and their various forces (Brynin, 2004). Agenda setting theory as noted by Ikpe (2012) metamorphosed from hypothesis to a theory and the rule has changed from agenda setting to agenda building. The major assumption of the theory is that the media set agenda for the public to follow. The theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media (Asemah & Asogwa, 2012; Edegoh, Asemah & Udeh-Akpe, 2013; Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). Guided by this theory, media are to monitor happenings in the society and report it to the society just as they appear. There should not be any form of alteration in the message. As purveyors of information, Nigerian newspapers should ensure what they are giving to the public is nothing but the truth. This is because whatever they give to the public helps shape their ideology and interest towards that matter of interest. As a matter of fact, favouritism must not exist in their reportage.

Methodology

Content analysis method was used to execute the study. Content analysis is a research method used to systematically analyse and interpret the content of various forms of communication, such as written text, audio recordings, images, videos, or social media posts (Illah, Ogwo & Asemah, 2012; Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023; Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023). This study analysed the contents of the *Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers from March 2021 - February 2023. On the basis of daily publication, the total edition covered from March 31st 2021 to February 31st 2023 is 730 each for the two national dailies (*Punch* and *Vanguard* newspapers) making the total population of the study 1460. The sample size of the study was calculated with Taro Yamane sample size determination formula where

N = population of the study
n = desired sample
1 = theoretical constant
e = margin of error (0.05)
Hence,

$$n = \frac{1460}{1 + (1460 \times 0.05)(1460 \times 0.0025)}$$

$$n = 1460 \div 4.65$$

$$n = 314$$

The sample size for the study is, therefore, 314. To get the accurate copies for each of the select newspapers (*Punch* and *Vanguard*), 314 was divided into two to get 157. This indicates that 157 copies each of the select newspapers were analysed. The researchers employed simple random sampling. The editions of *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers were randomly selected.

Content Categories and Units of Analysis

Prominence: This was measured by the position occupied by news item in *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers. Front Page- Most prominent. Back page- Prominent. Inside Page- Least prominent. The units of analysis were straight news, features and interview formats of newspaper reporting.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Showing the Prominence Given to Issues on Kidnapping Cases by the Selected Newspapers

Variables	*Punch*	*Vanguard*	Frequency	Percentage
Front page	48(30%)	51(33%)	99	31%
Inside page	112(70%)	101(66%)	213	68%
Back page	0	2(1%)	2	1%
Total	160	154	314	100%

Table 1 reveals the level of prominence given to kidnapping stories by the two select national dailies. The data in table 1 show that most of the stories published by *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers on kidnapping cases appeared on the inside pages.

Table 2: Showing Frequency of Coverage of Kidnap Cases by the Select Newspapers Based on Genres of Stories

Variables	*Punch*	*Vanguard*	Frequency	Percentage
Straight news	82(51%)	78(51%)	160	51%
Editorials	13(8%)	14(9%)	27	9%
Features	52(33%)	48(31%)	100	31%
Others	13(8%)	14(9%)	27	9%
Total	160	154	314	100%

Table 2 above indicates the genre of reportage used by the two newspapers in reporting stories on kidnapping cases. The data presented reveal that the two newspapers were able to reach the audience using mostly, straight news genre, which accounted for 51% of the entire stories published. A considerable number of stories were also published by the newspapers using other genres of reportage such as features, editorial, and other news formats, which are veritable news formats for providing in-depth information and emphasis on the issue.

Table 3: Showing the Direction of Coverage of Kidnapping Cases by the Select Newspapers

Variables	*Punch*	*Vanguard*	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	28(18%)	22(14%)	50	16%
Negative	122(76%)	122(79%)	244	78%
Neutral	10(6%)	10(7%)	20	6%
Total	**160**	**154**	**314**	**100%**

Table 3 shows the direction of coverage of kidnapping by the select newspapers, *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers. It can be said that the direction of reports and coverage from both newspapers were negative. This is because a considerable amount of stories were written in a negative direction.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that issues on kidnapping were not given considerable prominence by the newspapers studied as more than an average (63%) of the total stories published by the newspapers were published on the inside pages, instead of the front page of the newspapers. It is necessary to note that the prominence given to each story or any editorial is a measure of the importance attached to it by the editors or gatekeepers. Ajibade (2001) says this is also likely to have an effect on audience perception as they may not take these issues seriously since little importance is attached to it. This is in line with Grabber (1989), cited by Anyanwu (2004, p. 4) who contends that ''besides calling attention to matters of potential public concern, the media also provide cues to the public about the degree of importance of an issue.'' Matters covered prominently by the media on the front page, with big headlines and pictures are likely to be considered most important by media audiences. Matters buried on the back pages are far less likely to be perceived as important coverage.

Since most stories featured in the inside pages rather than the front page, this is a clear indication that the media did not attach significance to stories on the issue of kidnapping. The implication is that by not giving the desirable prominence to stories on kidnapping in Nigeria, curtailing this issue becomes an issue to contend with.

The findings also showed that *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers did not give a detailed report on kidnap stories. Although quite a number of kidnapping stories were published by the newspapers using feature genre, more than half (51%) of the total stories published by the newspapers were straight news, reported as they happened. The editorial, which could have served as the voice of the newspaper on a topical issue like the coronavirus were very few with a percentage of 9%. The implication of the result is that the newspapers did not provide enough details on issues reported within the period studied; hence, they failed to go the extra mile in breaking the ice and providing understanding to issues surrounding this issue.

The findings showed that a greater portion of the stories on kidnapping had a negative slant. This is shown from the news reports which indicated that a total of 244 stories, representing 78% of the total publication were written in a negative direction. Thus, the implication of the data analysed is that while trying to inform the public, the reports of the newspapers studied were negative and had latent elements embedded in it reports. Although, the intention is not to cause fear mongering. However, through repeated coverage of negative stories, a latent meaning is transcended.

Conclusion

The findings and analysis of data collected represent the generality of media coverage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that the two newspapers did not give adequate coverage to the issue of kidnapping in Nigeria as most of the stories on the issue were buried on the inside pages of the select newspapers; thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. More of investigative and interpretative reporting on kidnapping and other insecurity cases should be carried out by journalist to ensure critical and in-depth interpretation of the story.
2. Media reporters should also commit themselves to feature articles, editorials and interviews. This will allow the society express their views and concerns towards the subject matter.
3. More media practitioners should be trained in the area of crime journalism. Only few journalist practices this area of journalism.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

ANALYSIS OF *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPER ONLINE COVERAGE OF IKE EKWEREMADU'S ORGAN TRAFFICKING CRISIS

Jibrin Umar Omachi; Thomas Anomoaphe Alemoh & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

According to the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, Nigeria ranks 120th out of 180 countries in the freedom index, indicating that the country's media landscape still faces challenges in terms of freedom and independence (UNODC, 2019). Despite this, the mass media have played a critical role in exposing corruption and other forms of misconduct in Nigeria.

Organ trafficking and related crimes have been a concern in Nigeria, with reports of illegal organ harvesting and trade. In 2018, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reported that Nigeria was a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, including organ trafficking (US Department of State, 2020). The involvement of a prominent Nigerian politician such as Ekweremadu in the alleged organ harvesting plan is, therefore, a significant scandal and controversy, drawing attention to the issue and elevating public and media interest in the story.

Reporters use different ways and techniques to gather their information and some of the ways they use are tips, press releases, conferences, exhibitions, political campaigns and witnessing an event (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). The media in Nigeria play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah, 2009; Asemah, 2011a). It has been instrumental in uncovering instances of corruption and other forms of misconduct perpetrated by government officials, such as the case of Ike Ekweremadu. Ike Ekweremadu was a Nigerian Senator and former Deputy President of the senate who, in July 2022, was arrested in the UK for allegedly planning to bring a Nigerian boy to the UK for organ harvesting to transplant the organ into their daughter who has a kidney disease (NewsWireNGR, 2022). The incident sparked major controversy and criticism of Ekweremadu in Nigeria and gained wide media coverage.

There have been concerns about organ trafficking and related crimes in Nigeria; hence, the involvement of a prominent Nigerian politician such as Ekweremadu in the alleged organ harvesting plan is a major scandal and controversy, elevating the media and public interest in the story. The study of the *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of this issue is essential because it provides insights into the role of the media in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions. As the mass media have a critical role to play in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance in Nigeria, analysing the media's coverage of this issue is crucial in understanding how the media can fulfill this role effectively.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the frames of the *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis.

2. Find out the slants of the *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis.
3. Ascertain the sources used in the *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking crisis.

Conceptual Review of Organ Trafficking

According to Columb (2015), the act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving persons is one of the key components of the illegal practise of organ trafficking. These actions are considered to be the defining characteristics of human trafficking. UNODC (2019) sees organ trafficking as a kind of organised crime that includes obtaining agreement from a person in control of another person by the use of force, abduction, fraud, deceit, abuse of power or vulnerability or the exchange of cash or benefits for the aim of exploitation through the removal of organs for transplantation.

Organ trafficking can also be defined as the use of physical force, deceit, strategic maneuvering, misuse of authority or taking advantage of a vulnerable state and capitalising on the circumstance (Dix, 2007; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Organ trafficking, as defined by the US Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) as cited in O'regean (2021), involves the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of living or deceased persons or their organs through the use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability or the exchange of payments or benefits to gain control of the potential donor for the purpose of exploitation through organ removal for transplantation.

This definition encompasses a range of illegal practices, including the unauthorised retrieval of organs from both living and deceased individuals, as well as the illicit commerce and transplantation of human organs (Clare, 2004). Organ trafficking is a severe violation of individual rights and can result in significant negative consequences for those involved, including long-term physical and psychological trauma, as well as enduring health complications (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Victims of organ trafficking may suffer from a wide range of physical and emotional injuries, including infections, organ failure or even death as a result of the illegal removal of their organs. Additionally, individuals may experience a loss of autonomy, a breach of trust, and a sense of betrayal, leading to long-term emotional and psychological effects.

Ike Ekweremadu Organ Trafficking Crisis

Ike Ekweremadu, a renowned legal practitioner and prominent political figure originating from Enugu State, Nigeria, was born on May 12th, 1962 (Imo, 2023). According to Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023), he served as the representative for Enugu West in the Nigerian Senate for a period of twenty years, beginning from June 3, 2003 and ending on May 5, 2023. Ekweremadu held the position of Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate for three consecutive terms, spanning the 6th, 7th and 8th Senate, while being affiliated with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) (NewsWireNGR, 2022). In June 2022, Ekweremadu, accompanied by his wife, daughter and Dr. Obinna Obeta, was accused of colluding to aid the transfer of a 21-year-old man from Lagos to the United Kingdom with the objective of organ harvesting. According to Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023), the defendants were charged with purportedly planning to extract and transplant the kidney of an unsuspecting young man to Ekweremadu's daughter. On March 23, 2023, Ekweremadu, accompanied by his spouse and Dr. Obinna Obeta, was found guilty of a criminal offence. Prison sentences of nine years and eight months and ten years were respectively imposed

on Ekweremadu and Dr. Obinna Obeta. Mrs. Ekweremadu has received a sentence of four years and six months of imprisonment for her involvement in the aforementioned conspiracy.

Media Framing of Organ Trafficking Crises

The complex and sensitive nature of the problem of organ trafficking has resulted in significant media coverage in recent years (Imo, 2023). This is one reason the subject has received so much attention. A research on how the media in Australia reported incidents of organ trafficking was carried out by Khorana, Garcia-Garcia & Venkatapuram (2016). Khorana *et al* found that the media depicted the issue mostly as a criminal activity, rather than as a complex social and economic problem with many facets. In addition, Khorana *et al* found that news organisations usually rely on permitted sources of data, such as governmental and law enforcement authorities, rather than independent sources. Jansson, Arnesen & Norberg (2015) found that media coverage had an effect on the policy response to organ trafficking, which led to an increased emphasis on measures connected to law enforcement and the criminal justice system. The research done by Siegrist, Cvetkovich & Roth (2016) showed that the media portrays organ trafficking as a problem that primarily affects developing countries, rather than as a problem that affects people all over the world. According to Siegrist, Cvetkovich & Roth (2016), news sources have depicted organ trafficking as a problem that primarily affects impoverished countries, rather than as a phenomena that has international repercussions.

Both Khorana *et al* (2016) and Jansson, Arnesen & Norberg (2015) recognised that the media has the power to impact public opinion and government action surrounding organ trafficking via the selective focus it places on certain aspects of the problem and its reliance on authoritative sources of information. According to the findings of the aforementioned research, the framing of the problem of organ trafficking in the media has a significant impact on the development of public opinion as well as public policy. This finding is in agreement with the findings of other studies, such as the ones conducted by Yousaf & Purkayastha (2016) and Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021). Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) that the potential of news organisations to impact the public's view of a particular problem and the related policy actions highlights the need of providing exact and equitable reporting on incidents of organ trafficking.

Sources of Frames in Online News Sites Coverage of Organ trafficking Crisis

The issue of organ trafficking is a complicated and important one that has recently received a lot of media attention (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). It is interesting that the mass media have significant impact on how the public views organ trafficking (Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the origins of organ trafficking discourses on digital news platforms in order to develop efficient countermeasures for this illegal occurrence. Nobile & Carroll (2017) argue that law enforcement officials and people who had been the victims of organ trafficking were the main sources cited in the media coverage of organ trafficking. The evidence reveals that when reporting on instances of organ trafficking, the media often turn to reliable sources and firsthand accounts from those who were harmed.

Moniruzzaman’s (2019) study showed that organ trafficking emerged through social media and internet news sources in India. The findings showed that whereas social media coverage mostly depended on social media users as sources, online news coverage

primarily relied on journalists and news organisations as sources. The remark implies that while reporting on organ trafficking, the media could lean more heavily on conventional sources, but social media platforms might provide up chances for non-traditional sources, such citizen journalists, to participate in the conversation (Moniruzzaman, 2019).

Glik (2007) conducted a thorough analysis of media representations of the illegal activity of organ trafficking in the UK. The findings showed that the media often use government officials, medical experts and human rights groups as their major sources of news coverage. The aforementioned remark implies that while covering the topic of organ trafficking, the media may make an effort to identify sources with a high level of expertise and dependability. Glik (2007) further suggested that these sources may have a significant influence on how this issue is covered in-depth in the media. Surette (2013) examined media coverage of the issue of organ trafficking in Germany. It was found that media outlets often used academic experts and non-governmental groups as the key sources for news reports. The statement implies that media outlets may seek opinions and advice on the subject of organ trafficking from reliable people and organisation. Additionally, these organisations could have a big influence on how this topic is portrayed in the media.

According to De Vreese (2005), the contextual and geographic aspects of the reporting determine the diversity in the sources of narratives about organ trafficking in digital news channels.

Empirical Review

Smith (2022) examined media coverage of organ trafficking. The objectives of the study were to compare the media coverage of organ trafficking in United States of America and to identify any differences in the way the issue is framed, the language used and the sources cited. The researcher conducted a content analysis of news articles on organ trafficking published in major newspapers in each of the USA between 2018 and 2021. A total of 100 articles were analysed, with 20 articles from the country. The findings showed that the media coverage of organ trafficking varied significantly. The issue was primarily framed as a human rights violation and the language used in the articles also varied, with more emotive language used in the articles. In terms of sources, the findings showed that the US articles relied more heavily on government officials and NGOs for information. The researcher recommended that journalists covering organ trafficking should strive for objectivity and accuracy in their reporting, and avoid using sensational language that could stigmatise victims or perpetuate stereotypes.

Popescu (2021) examined representations of organ trafficking in the media. The objectives of the study were to compare the representations of organ trafficking in the media in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey and to examine how the issue is framed, the language used and the sources cited. The researcher conducted a qualitative analysis of news articles on organ trafficking published in major newspapers in each of the three countries between 2019 and 2020. A total of 60 articles were analysed, with 20 articles from each country. The findings showed that the media coverage of organ trafficking in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey was similar in many respects. The issue was framed primarily as a criminal problem, with less emphasis on the human rights aspects of the issue. The findings showed that the articles relied heavily on law enforcement officials and medical professionals for information, with fewer quotes from victims or advocates. The researcher that journalists covering organ trafficking should strive to include a range of perspectives in their reporting, including the voices of victims and advocates.

The perspectives of Twitter users with regard to the public relations strategies used by the Nigerian government in response to the organ trafficking situation involving Ike Ekweremadu were investigated by Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023). In order to analyse the effectiveness of the government's public relations methods in resolving the situation, the researcher investigated Twitter users' perspectives on how the government reacted. The framing theory served as the study's theoretical foundation. Questionnaire was used as the study instrument and survey as research design, respectively. The findings showed that as a result of the Ike Ekweremadu organ trafficking issue, the Nigerian government's public relations strategies were deemed insufficient by Twitter users. The researchers recommended that in order to guarantee prompt and accurate information transmission to the public during crisis circumstances, the Nigerian government should enhance its crisis communication tactics. Social media platforms like Twitter may be employed to this end.

The studies by Smith (2022) and Popescu (2021) examined media coverage of organ trafficking in different countries, which could provide a comparative context for the analysis of *Vanguard* newspaper's coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis. The study by Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) examined public perceptions of the Nigerian government's response to the crisis, which could be useful for contextualising *Vanguard* newspaper's coverage.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on framing theory. Framing theory is a concept in communication studies that explains how media coverage of an issue can influence the way people perceive and understand it (Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). The theory suggests that the way an issue is framed in the media can influence how people think about the issue, what opinions they form and how they act in response to it. The theory was first introduced by Erving Goffman in his 1974 book, "Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience." However, it was later developed and popularised by communication scholars like George Lakoff, Robert Entman and Dietram Scheufele.

According to the framing theory, the mass media have the power to influence how people perceive and understand an issue by focusing on certain aspects of the issue and ignoring others (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). The theory suggests that the media can frame an issue in different ways, such as emphasising the personal or societal consequences of the issue, highlighting the causes or solutions to the issue or presenting the issue as a conflict between different groups or interests.

In analysing *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis, the framing theory can be applied to understand how the newspaper presented the issue and how it may have influenced readers' perceptions and opinions. For example, the newspaper may have framed the issue as a personal tragedy for Ekweremadu, emphasising the emotional impact on him and his family. Alternatively, it may have framed the issue as a societal problem, highlighting the broader implications of organ trafficking for public health and safety. The newspaper may have also framed the issue as a conflict between different groups or interests, such as the victims and the perpetrators of organ trafficking.

Methodology

Methodology deals with techniques used by researchers to carry out a study (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpananchi, 2017). In this study, a content analysis research design was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for investigating the framing of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis in *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage. The research instrument used in the study was coding sheet which was designed to capture the news frames, sources of messages and slant used in the articles. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample of news analysed from *Vanguard* newspaper online. The samples were selected by searching for the keywords "organ trafficking" and "Ike Ekweremadu" in *Vanguard* newspaper online. To ensure a comprehensive and representative sample, the researchers analysed all the articles related to the organ trafficking crisis involving Ike Ekweremadu that were published by *Vanguard* newspaper online during the data collection period from March 23, 2023, to May 10, 2023 and as such the sample size was 73.

The unit of analysis for the study were news stories of the crisis on *Vanguard* newspaper online. Frames used in analysing the crisis include the crime frame, which portrays organ trafficking as a criminal act that should be punished; the human interest frame, which highlights the personal stories and experiences of those affected by the crisis, the health frame, which focuses on the health implications and risks associated with organ trafficking; the legal frame and the politicisation frame, which emphasises the role of government and political leaders in addressing the issue and the economic frame, which highlights the financial incentives that drive the illegal trade.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Frequency of Reports of Ike Ekweremadu's Organ Trafficking case according to Unit of Analysis

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
News reports	54	73.9%
Opinions/features	16	21.9%
Editorials	3	4.1%
Total	**73**	**100**

Table 1 shows that out of the 73 reports analysed, news reports accounted for the highest frequency with 54 reports (73.9%), indicating that the majority of the coverage was in the form of news articles. In all, the data suggest that the majority of the coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case in *Vanguard* newspaper online coverage was in the form of news reports, with fewer opinion pieces and editorials.

Table 2: Frames of Reports of Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Frames	Frequency	Percentage
Crime	20	27.3%
Human interest	10	13.6%
Health	12	16.4%
Politicisation	13	17.8

Legal	9	12.3
Economic	9	12.3%
Total	**73**	**100**

Table 2 shows that the coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case in *Vanguard* newspaper was framed in multiple ways, with the crime frame being the most frequently used. The use of multiple frames indicates that the issue was viewed from different perspectives, providing readers with a more comprehensive understanding of the crisis.

Table 3: Slant of Reports of Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Slant	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	5	7%
Neutral	22	30%
Negative	46	63%
Total	**73**	**100**

Table 3 shows that the majority of the coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case in *Vanguard* newspaper was negative in tone. This indicates that the newspaper's coverage of the issue was critical or unfavorable, possibly reflecting the seriousness of the issue and the negative impact it had on individuals and society.

Table 4: Sources of Reports of Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Security personnel	7	9.6%
Religious leaders	9	12.3%
Health practitioners	14	19.1%
Political/opinion leaders	18	24.7%
Activists	6	8.2%
General public	19	26.0%
Total	**73**	**100**

Table 4 shows that the coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case in *Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage was drawn from multiple sources, including political and opinion leaders, health practitioners and the general public. Religious leaders, security personnel and activists were less frequently used sources, appearing in 9, 7 and 6 reports, respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed important insights into the nature of the coverage, the frames used, the slants and the sources of the reports. Firstly, majority of the coverage was in the form of news reports, indicating the newspaper's focus on reporting the facts and events of the crisis. This is consistent with the role of the media as a primary source of information for the public (Asemah & Amah, 2021; Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). Secondly, the use of multiple frames in the coverage, with the crime frame being the most frequently used suggests that the issue was viewed from different perspectives. This approach provided readers with a more comprehensive understanding of the crisis. The use of the human interest and health frames also highlights the personal and health implications of the crisis,

while the politicisation, legal and economic frames provide insights into the broader societal and political implications of the issue.

The findings also showed that majority of the coverage had a negative slant, reflecting the seriousness of the issue and its negative impact on individuals and society. This is consistent with prior research on media coverage of crime news, which suggests that the media tend to focus on negative news stories (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). It was also discovered that the newspaper relied heavily on political and opinion leaders, health practitioners and the general public as sources of information and analysis. This approach provided a diverse range of perspectives on the issue, reflecting the newspaper's commitment to providing comprehensive coverage of the crisis.

The data are closely related to the framing theory in media studies. Framing theory suggests that mass media have the power to shape the way people interpret and understand events by selecting certain aspects of an issue and highlighting them over others. In this study, the use of multiple frames, including the crime, health, human interest, politicisation, legal and economic frames, indicate that the newspaper was attempting to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue from different perspectives. By including these frames, the newspaper was able to highlight the different aspects of the crisis and provide readers with a more nuanced understanding of the issue which is one of the roles of the media according to Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah (2022a, 2022b) and Ovie & Nwaoboli (2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the findings of the content analysis of *Vanguard* online newspaper coverage of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking crisis showed that the newspaper provided comprehensive and informative coverage of the issue. The newspaper used multiple frames, with a focus on the crime frame and a negative slant to highlight the seriousness of the issue. The use of diverse sources of information and analysis also provided readers with a comprehensive understanding of the crisis. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Media outlets should strive to provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of social issues, using multiple frames and diverse sources of information.
2. The use of diverse sources of information and analysis should be encouraged to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of social issues.
3. Media outlets should be aware of the potential influence of framing on public opinion and strive to provide accurate and unbiased coverage of social issues.
4. Journalists should be trained to use variety of frames and perspectives to avoid the potential negative consequences of framing issues in a particular way.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

NAMES AS CHANNELS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA

Adédèjì Fred Aríjeníwà; Ibituru Iwowari Pepple & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Before the introduction of exogenous means of communication and information dissemination in Africa, communication has been taking place in all African societies and cultures. To assume that communication began in Africa with the advent of mass media is to subscribe to the idea that Africans have no civilisation, until the arrival of the 'white man.' This is because as surmised by Asemah (2022), communication is central to human life; hence Africans have been communicating and disseminating information through different means, channels and tools that are generally recognised, acceptable and understandable within the context of a specific African society or culture (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah & Joda, 2021). These tools, media and/or channels, which are endogenous in nature, have been termed Indigenous Communication Systems (ICS) Indigenous Channels of Communication (ICC), African Communication Systems (ACS), African Traditional Communication Systems (ATCOMS) among others, by scholars and experts (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1998; Akpabio, 2003; Ogwezzy, 2008; Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). The nomenclature might differ, but the central idea remains the same.

Indigenous communication has been described as a form or system of communication that utilises cultural elements such as signs, symbols, colours, objects, rituals, festivals, languages and institutions which are peculiar to a specific cultural entity as a channel of communication and information dissemination. In line with this, Asemah *et al* (2021) note that indigenous communication systems are organised processes of information production and exchange that is domiciled and managed by the local communities. However, these channels have been classified into many categories; one of these channels is a name. So, what's in a name?

In Africa, a name serves more than just as a form of identification. According to Mensah (2017), African names have a long history of ideology anchored in institutions and culture, which are contextualised as practises and social activities within the context of a specific African setting. Mensah (2017) observes that African names reflect and capture cultural characteristics such as gender kinship, class, personalities and preferences, as well as indexing links that determine socio-cultural meaning and roles. By this assertion, names as channels of indigenous communication have functions that expand beyond the realm of identity to other areas such as communicating events at the time of birth, family situations and circumstances, religious beliefs, occupation, positions in the society, wealth and influence, amongst other social realities in an indigenous society (Asemah *et al* 2021). Names in Africa, therefore, are culturally-relevant as it represents experiences, circumstances or situations with historical significance that is ingrained in the fabric of the society.

In indigenous/traditional African societies, having a child ushers in great joy for both the new parents, the immediate and extended families and the community. In line with this assertion, Oladipupo (2014) notes that in every culture around the world, giving name to child is as indispensable as birthing the child because without a name, identification becomes a problem. However, some indigenous names appear to be losing their meanings,

relevance and effectiveness as a channel of indigenous communication as a result of westernisation and/or total neglect of indigenous names. The meanings and communication role of most indigenous names are becoming obsolete and some, completely eroded, due to various reasons such as cultural commodification, cultural neglect and westernisation/globalisation. From the foregoing, it can be seen that indigenous channels of communication, arguably, represents the most efficient and effective channel of communication in Africa. Therefore, in Nigeria, names are indigenous communication channels.

Therefore, this paper examines the imperatives of names as channels of indigenous communication in Nigeria by examining the communication functions and extent of effectiveness of names as a channel of indigenous communication in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting as Nigeria.

Understanding Indigenous Communication

Indigenous system of communication is seen as an admixture of social conventions and practices which have become sharpened and blended into veritable communication modes and systems and which have almost become standard practices, modes of speech and social organisations whose chief concerns may not be with communication, but with other activities (Wilson, 1997, cited in Edegoh, Kenechukwu & Asemah, 2013). Indigenous communication (IC) or indigenous communication systems (ICSs) entails the totality of traditional channels of disseminating information, beliefs and values across generations within the context of a specific African setting (Asemah, Nwammuo & Edegoh, 2013; Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2016). This is because as noted by Ayangunna & Oyewo (2014), before formal and organised channels of disseminating information, there are traditional communication tools regarded as ICSs. Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998, p.3) likened indigenous communication to:

> Any form of endogenous communication system, which by virtue of its origin from, and integration into a specific culture, serves as a channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilisation of the values, symbols, institutions and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes.

Similarly, Singh & Mandal (2016) define ICSs as traditional forms of communication derived from customs, convictions and rites that are firmly established in the traditions that defined the existence of individuals in indigenous environments and Nwanne (2006) notes that ICSs employ signs, beliefs and cultural organisations to enhance the diversity as well as efficacy of communications within traditional African communities. Furthermore, Nwanne (2006) emphasises that ICSs are seen as vehicles that everyday individuals employ for expressing messages, such as traditional music, folk texts, traditional theatre or folk art. Therefore, these channels constitute a vital element of African culture through which the traditions and ancient civilisation of the indigenous people are preserved, shared and handed down from one generation to another in the society.

Names and Naming Practice in Nigeria

A distinctive trait that differentiates people from animals is their system of personal identity; that is, a name. A name is simply an expression meant for identifying an element to an outside spectator. They can uniquely or contextually distinguish a group or set of

items or a single entity (Asemah *et al* 2021). The name of an entity in particular may be referred to as a proper name (Mensah, 2017). According to Ukpong (2007), in most African settings, naming practices are identical. He adds that most African societies use patronymic naming style for their children. That is to say, child may be named after a departed male figure or ancestors in the family. For instance, a child named "*Babatunde*" (the father has returned) among the Yorubas is invariably named after a departed patriarch of the family. However, Sanusi (2012) emphasises that naming customs differs from culture to culture in Africa.

In Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria, they believe that a child should not be named with giving serious considerations to the philosophy of a child's lineage. This philosophy is captured in the common adage that; "*Ile laa nwo kaa to s'omo l'oruko*" (one pays attention to the family before naming a child). As a result, children naming procedure is thorough with peculiar and varying interests taken into account. According to Oladipupo (2014), the Yorubas have names for each circumstance and sometimes, an entirely novel name emerges to address the situation at hand. As a result, for the Yorubas, names are more than just identification tags; they are an essential component of the human experience. In other words, Yoruba names reflect the people's worldview and etymology. Thus, Yoruba names reflect philosophical questions and significance of those involved while also highlighting the relevance of a practical experience, occurrence or conditions (Fasiku, 2006). Yoruba names are typically assigned to infants on the seventh day after birth, with the intention that parents will have debated over the names to be given.

In the Igbo tradition, Mbonu (2010) notes that a name is in line with stories and historical nuances. She explains that in Igbo culture, a given name embodies a family's past and history, but a taken name emphasises an individual's current situation. She emphasises further that in Igbo tradition, names are potent words and they are symbolic in that they are markers. Similarly, Nwigwe (2001), cited in Onumajuru (2016) adds that market day names in Igbo culture (Afor, Nkwọ, Eke, Orie/Oye) are divinely derived and as such, any child born on these market days, as a matter of tradition, usually adopt the names of such market day as his/her given name. However, he further clarifies that other names given to such child born on a market day are even more meaningful and relevant for the child's kith and kin; hence, names are selected carefully in Igbo culture as a means of documenting and incorporating the situations and events that surrounds the birth of a child.

Communication Functions of Names in Indigenous Communication

According to Odunola & Segun (2009, p.11), "in most Nigerian traditional societies, the situation in the family and those surrounding the birth of a child in particular has a great influence in the choice of name to be given to the child." Therefore, communication functions of names are highlighted below:

1. **Function of Identity:** Names are vital for distinguishing one individual from another. It provides a way to identify an individual from someone else and to call addresses. It is used to address, call and to identify the person who bears it. A name predates whatever status anyone attains in society, which is why Oladipupo (2014) emphasises that the bearer of a name ought to become mindful that he has an identity to safeguard.

2. **Historical Function:** Names are given as a reminder to a person's family of previous occurrences. Certain names were given to act as a continual reminder of anything good, terrible, or memorable took place some times in the past. Thus, name serves a living record keeper, that is, it helps to preserve events and ideas that are of historical relevance. That is why it is usually said that names are stories; for example, Kubundè among the Tiv (Death has been cancelled) tells the circumstances that surrounds their birth.

3. **Information and Expressive Functions:** Names function as effective means of conveying ideas, feelings or states of mind. It serves as a vehicle through which our thoughts are expressed. Information that one might not be willing to share directly with other people are indirectly expressed through the names given to one's child. For examples names like, Adekanbi (Is it my turn to wear the crown), Nwakaego (child surpasses money), Aondovèr (God has blessed) reflect information that mirrors the thoughts of the parents.

4. **Function of Appreciation:** Name function as a channel by which individuals appreciate God, deity, or a supreme being. It is the medium of showing gratitude for what has been done for the parent of the child. For examples, Oluwatobi (God is great), Mmesomachukwu (The kindness of God).

5. **Class and Status Function:** The name given to a child serves as status classification. It differentiates one class of people from others. For instances in Yoruba and Igbo land, the names of the prince, princess and other people from royal family differentiate them from other members of the community. Through naming, one can easily identify different people from different social cadre in the community. For instance, names like Adedeji (the Crown has become two) Adewale, (the crown has come home), Adaeze (king's daughter), Adaobi (Daughter of the palace) among others are from royal family.

Implication of Names as a Channel of Indigenous Communication

A name in Africa is much more than just a means of identification as it has the capacity to communicate –essentially, names, as channels of indigenous communication is embedded with messages and meanings that are culturally-relevant within the context of a specific setting. A name has been described as personal identity of a person and/or the means through which they identify themselves in social interactions in the society. According to Oladipupo (2011), a name gives a person a unique character and creates a connection and unity between an individual and the society. Hence, Maduabum (2012), cited in Oladipupo (2014) conceptualises names as a form of unique identity as well as sharing cultural and historical significances within the context of the indigenous community of origin. This implies that irrespective of culture, ethnicity or tribe, a name is what different cultures have in common as there is no individual without a face and by extension, a unique identity to present and maintain.

In the meantime, in Western societies, names are regarded to have little significance or meaning other than to serve as an identification label. Names are thought to only recognise or distinguish the person who bears the name; thus, they exclusively refer to the

individual concern (Mensah & Rowan, 2019). Names, on the other hand, do not fit into this label-only role within African cultural setting since they possess both meaning and values (Mensah & Rowan, 2019). As a result, the meaning of African names is not primarily grammatical or linguistic in nature, but instead encompasses an extensive range of eccentricities that must be thoroughly situated and appreciated through social, religious and cultural viewpoints (Mensah, 2015). As a result, the significance of African names lies in the way they mirror and embody cultural characteristics which include family ties, gender roles, group, personal interests and tastes, as well as links that determine cultural and social activities and significance (Mensah & Rowan, 2019). Therefore, names in traditional African civilisations are thus culturally significant, representing events and situations with profound historical meaning. These names represent an archive of wisdom that encompasses the broad spectrum of African culture, including its language, past, religion, philosophy, and perspective (Asemah *et al* 2021). Similarly, names reflect trends of a society's traditional and social structure and points to a variety of persons and circumstances which were significant at the period of the baby's conception (Suzman, 1994, cited Mensah & Rowan, 2019).

Therefore, names are communicative vehicles in indigenous communication systems that tell stories about the past, family-related conflicts and the struggle with the supernatural, which are fundamental to the idea of individual identity and uniqueness. Names, in Africa, are symbolic instruments for transmitting the memories, expectations and beliefs of one's family. They have expressive content which is also reflective of different situations and circumstances.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic Interactionism Theory (SIT)

Asemah & Omosotomhe (2016) state that theories are statements that help in explaining societal issues. This study is hinged on the symbolic interaction theory. Asemah, Ogono & Jumbo (2022) note that symbolic interaction theory is one of the theories under socialisation theories. According to Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2022), the theory was propounded by Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead. Symbolic interaction theory suggests that people are stimulated to react based on meanings they give to things, situations and people (Asemah, 2009b; Asemah 2011a). Furthermore, Asemah (2011a, p. 189) surmises that in SIT, meaning:

> ...is created in the language that people use both with others and in private thought. Language allows people to develop a sense of self and to interact with others in community. Symbolic interaction comes from the socio-cultural perspective in that, it relies on the creation of shared meanings through interactions with others.

Therefore, this theory explains how individuals and groups derive meanings in their social interactions (Asemah, 2009a; Asemah, 2011b). This might clarify why, according to Folarin (2002), the SIT is dependent on having the presence of a socialiser and a socialisee, both of whom impact and are impacted due to the atmosphere within which their conversations evolve; thus, the socialisee strengthens the socialiser's values and the other way around (cited in Asemah, 2011a). However, according to Baran, as cited in Yaroson & Asemah (2008), the theory originated from the discipline of psychology. As a result, it

is predicated on the premise that symbolic meanings are acquired by means of discussions and then mediated.

The relevance and applicability of this theory to our study is that African names are symbolic; hence African societies place high value on names. However, the potential of names to perform other culturally-significant functions beyond a means of identity means to effectively enhance communication between two or more parties is hinged on the premise that there must be significant level of knowledge eand understanding that, in indigenous African culture, a name is more than just an identity.

Empirical Review

Oladipupo (2014) examined the communicative role of Yoruba names. The objective of the paper was to examine the concept and meaning of select names among Yorubas. The paper employed the library research method and consulted secondary sources for relevant data. Findings of the study revealed that amongst the Yorubas, there is strong connection between a name and the significant values and virtues associated with it. The researcher concluded that meaning of the names can to a large extent, prevent and indeed, end many of the social vices that are currently plaguing our contemporary society. The researcher recommended that there is need to encourage the youth to shun the habit of customisation of their names in the names of globalisation and modernisation. This study is related to the present study in terms of exploring the communication roles of names among the Yorubas. However, it differs in scope in that this present study examines the subject of discourse among other ethnic groups in Nigeria, which is the gap this present study seeks to fill.

Amadi, Efetobor & Nwaubeta (2017) investigated the ethnology of names as communication channels in Nigeria. The rationale for the study was to evaluate the exogenous and endogenous forces affecting names as ethnological communication mode. The researchers employed the survey research design. Major findings from the study revealed that indigenous names are being grossly cannibalised and is on the verge of dying in Nigeria. The findings also showed that at one point or the other, people changed their names which are usually due to some exogenous and endogenous factors such as religion, mass media, spirituality, modernity, among others. Therefore, the researchers recommended that native or traditional names should be an integral aspect of communication studies. Both studies are related in terms of exploring names as a means of communication in Nigeria; however, it differs in methodology in that this present study is exploratory in nature, while the reviewed study was a survey, hence, this will expand the literary base of future studies on the communication functions of names as ICSs in Nigeria.

Similarly, Okon, (2017) investigated name as a vehicle of communication among the Efiks of Nigeria's Cross River State. The rationale was to examine the Efik naming system and how it communicates the cultural and genealogical identity of the Efik people of Cross River State, Nigeria. Anchored on Bormann's symbolic convergence symbolic theory (SCT), the researcher adopted the in-depth interview research design and discussion carried out in a descriptive form. Findings showed that almost all Efik names do not have literary meanings, as some communicate to the society where the bearer of a name comes from or to communicate their bearers' family affiliation, among others. The researcher concluded that name among the Efik people has the capacity to communicate the identity, place of origin, genealogy and ancestry of its bearer. This study is relevant to the current study because it investigated the communication function of names among the Efiks, but

the researcher, however, did not examine other ethnic groups in Nigeria; the current study will address this.

Mensah, Alexander & Ayeni (2022) investigated the ethnopragmatic functions of Owe and Tiv personal names in Nigeria. The rationale for the study was to present an account of the ethnopragmatic functions of personal names in Owé (Kogi State) and Tiv (Benue State). The researchers adopted the ethnopragmatics framework and qualitative research approach, using participant observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that African indigenous personal names are tools of interaction that have implied meanings beyond what they literally communicate in practical situations. The researcher concluded that names and naming practices are embedded with enormous cultural scripts that enable cultural insiders to understand and interpret cultural experiences. This study is also related to the current study because it investigated the communication function of names among the Owes and Tivs, the researchers did not examine other ethnic groups in Nigeria; the current study addresses this.

Methodology

The study is a qualitative analysis of name as an indigenous channel of communication in Nigeria. The researchers adopted the library research design. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, (2012) note that library research is a data collection technique that involves learning and understanding data that are relevant to the subject matter from specialised secondary archival sources. Nwaoboli (2023) and Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya (2022) add that this method basically relies on generating data from available library and archival materials on the subject of discourse and also providing explanations. Therefore, this method is justified since the study at hand is qualitative in nature.

Discussion

Empirical and scholarly evidence show that names in Africa function beyond just for identification of the bearer (Oladipupo, 2014). Studies have shown that names as a means of indigenous communication is symbolic; hence, embedded with meanings and such meanings are related to different aspects of African societies (Asemah *et al* 2021; Amadi *et al* 2017; Okon, 2017; Mensah, 2015, Mensah & Rowan, 2019). Therefore, in traditional African families and communities, the naming of the new-born is usually precipitated and determined by the events and scenarios that occurs before and during conception as well as at the birth of the child; hence children are named to communicate series of situations and events around the children to their larger community and society in a given cultural setting. Therefore, a name is an embodiment of meanings. This is why Onumajuru (2016), notes that in Igbo culture, a name simply communicates the story or oral tradition of a people by providing the key details or situations around the child at the moment of their conception.

The communication functions of names are diverse and to a large extent, name performs communicative functions. These functions include: identification, historical significance, information and expressive, appreciative, to communicate status or class, to unify people with common heritage and to appeal, warn or instruct. For instance, African names have been identified as useful in reflecting and interpreting feelings, because a name can reflect the personality and idiosyncrasies of the bearer (Mensah, 2015). A child named *Òbìagérìakù* (She Comes to Enjoy Wealth) in Igbo speaks of the affluence circumstance that surrounds the birth of such child. Similarly, *Danjuma* (Born on Juma'a) signifies that

the child is born on a Friday which is religious or Historical functions as it documents the day the person is born. African names seem to influence the way their bearers behave, process information and feel, as well as the way others behave and react to them. In this regard, African names serve as important gateways into African culture, traditions, history, rituals and belief systems. African names can also be used to communicate spiritually, especially with ancestral people and underworld beings (Mensah, 2015). This is captured by Handler & Jacoby's (1996) cited in Mensah, (2017) notion that 'ritually essential information' is encoded in a person's name. Names, in this context, give their bearers a new sense of belonging while also sustaining continuity and movement that ties those who are alive with the deceased, who constitute the foundation of ancestral custom and continuity.

In this era of globalisation, the trends of giving children indigenous names are at the verge of dying in favour of Western names as parents, do not give traditional names or in cases where children are given, does not call them by such names. It is now commonplace to hear a Nigeria being called names such as Kingsley, Martha, Frederick and Linda as their personal or given names. This is in tandem with Amadi *et al's* (2017) findings that Nigerians in our present generation do not fancy identifying with indigenous names. Similarly, people, especially the youth, changed their names at one point or the other and this change is usually as a result of religious conversion, media exposure (television books, social media, internet and films (Asemah, Ekhareafo & Olaniran, 2013; Asemah & Edegoh, 2014) and religion and spirituality constitute exogenous or external variables affecting the change of name and, consequently, its communication-related functions while contemporary culture, education, peer pressure and the environment constitute the endogenous or internal variables shaping changing one's name and consequently, affecting the functions of communication as well as the efficacy of names in our modern society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no gainsaying that a name, within the context of a specific African setting, goes beyond mere identification. It is a veritable means of communication in Nigeria and by extension, other African societies. An indigenous name is capable of identifying an individual's identity, day of birth, hometown, ancestry and accomplishment, characteristics, past events, situations and predecessors' connection. Therefore, there is need for a bearer of an indigenous name to understand that he/she is not just wearing a "label" or a "tag" but an embodiment of the culture and tradition of an entity. In line with this, the following are recommended:

1. Nigerians should respect and maintain indigenous names and naming traditions so as to ensure cultural continuity and survival for future generations.
2. Nigerians should bear and answer their indigenous names. They should feel confident of their indigenous names because they represent their cultural inheritance and uniqueness.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FAKE NEWS AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Jessica Ajokpeoghene; Ibituru Iwowari Pepple & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Technology used to reach an enormous audience is referred to as mass media. It is the main method of communication deployed in reaching a large proportion of the general audience (Asemah, 2009a; Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, 2022). Radio, television, newspapers, magazines and the Web are the channels for mass media that are used the most frequently. There is a lot of change in the journalism industry. More than at any other time in human history, new digital platforms have freed creative journalism practises, enabling unique forms of communication and a wider global audience. However, on the other hand, fake news (a combination of misinformation and hoaxes) is speeding and changing how people see current events. On websites and new media platforms, the circulation of false information has reached alarming proportions. Many people now see fake news as an imminent danger to global stability, tranquilly and harmony (Olise, 2021).

Fake news is any article or piece of information that is sensationalised and contains untruths. In order to accomplish a certain goal of the sender, it is intended to stir up the political climate at the same time as the audience's behaviours or apathy. Junk news and pseudo-news are other terms for fake news. According to Olorunyomi (2018), fake news is a form of propaganda or yellow journalism made up of deliberate misinformation or fabrications disseminated through conventional media outlets (print, broadcast or online social media). 'War of the Worlds' on radio in 1938 is credited with popularising fake news in its early years. This might be the first instance of fake news ever, albeit it was not labelled to be so at the point in time (Olorunyomi, 2018). Welles produced a radio dramatisation of the 'War of the Worlds' that reimagined the Martian attack through fictional news bulletins on October 30, 1938. The show allegedly caused a widespread panic, causing many listeners to evacuate their homes in fright, according to many modern publications (Jared, 2018). This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate how fake news dissemination serves as a hindrance to the development of the media in Nigeria.

Understanding Mass Media

The word "medium" is pluralised as "media" which widely refers to all forms of communication, from written words to digital data (Asemah & Omosotomhe, 2016). Any kind of information that is able to reach or affect people is considered media, including radio, television, publications and the internet. It also includes news, art and instructional materials (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam–Uwaoma, 2021). Mass media are means of communication that help the spread of information from a sender to numerous audiences at once. It describes a wide variety of media devices that use mass communication to reach a sizable audience (Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). Newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet are the most popular mass media platforms. Most of the time, the general population looks to the media for information on news, entertainment, politics, health and other important topics (Asemah, 2022).

According to Ciboh (2019), the media contribute in social life of society at large by carrying out their traditional functions of editorialising, information, correlation and socialisation. The definition of "mass media" given by McQuail (2010) is means of

communication which function on a broad spectrum, encompassing and impacting almost everyone in a society to a higher or lower degree. It is an expansive media. A conduit or instrument used to transmit or carry something (such as information, messages, or signals) is referred to as a medium. The plural version of this word is media (Asemah, 2011b).

Each mass media has its own distinct business structures, creative artists and content genres. For instance, the internet has a variety of technologies developed on top of the basic distribution network, such as forums, podcasts, websites and more. The fourth and fifth, radio and TV, are referred to as broadcast media, while the sixth and seventh, the internet and mobile devices are referred to together as digital media. Some contend that video games have evolved into a unique mass media form (Ciboh, 2019). Therefore, mass media communicate to a large audience (Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, 2021).

Conceptualising Fake News

The word "fake" refers to something that is not authentic, but is intended to be considered authentic, whereas the word "news" refers to information about current events. Thus, one may figuratively state that fake news is information or news that is not true, but is presented as true and supposed to be believed as such. However, this definition could appear overly simplistic and limited, so we look through the literature to find additional experts' perspectives on the idea of false news from other backgrounds. McGonagle (2017) defines fake news as information that has been generated and circulated with the purpose of misleading people into believing untrue statements or rejecting verified truths. In this sense, misinformation is what is presented as news or is most likely to be taken that way.

Fake news, according to Alawode, Olorede & Azeez (2018) is defined as news stories that are blatantly, demonstrably incorrect and have the potential to mislead readers. According to the writers, fake news is information that can be verified as false and was created with the dishonest intention of deceiving readers. According to Spohr (2017), false news is a sort of propaganda or yellow journalism that involves purposeful misinformation or hoaxes disseminated through offline media or online social media.

According to Blenkler, Faris & Robert (2018), propaganda, disinformation and misinformation have always been part of human communication, but there has never been a technology to spread them so quickly. The creation and spread of news, both real and false, were significantly aided by Johann Gutenberg's invention of a portable printing press in 1450. Therefore, according to Standage (2017), since the invention of printing, fake news has become widely acknowledged. In order to gain customers and readers, printers produced pamphlets or news books in the 16th and 17th centuries that provided in-depth accounts of monster animals or extraordinary events. According to Posetti & Mattews (2018), the development of TV and radio stations led to the emergence of ironic news. Finally, the arrival of the global web in the late 20th century, subsequently followed by the development of social media in the 21st century, significantly raised the hazards of dissemination of false information, slander and hoaxes. However, Ogbette (2019) lists some main types of fake news thus:

a. **Parody or Satire**: This has the potential to fool without intending to do harm.
b. **False Connections**: It is the use of news stories, images or subtitles that contradict the subject matter.
c. **Deceptive Content**: It has to do with using facts to portray someone or something in a misleading light.
d. **Imposter Content**: It impersonates real sources using fake and made-up ones.
e. **Altered Content**: It is the actual data or images that have been doctored to trick.

f. **Fabricated Content**: When news information is completely untrue and intended to damage or deceive.

The aforementioned elements demonstrate that fake news can be either ineffective or dangerous. Discussing fake news as a social vice requires this understanding. As a result, we describe fake news as material that has been meticulously spread that has been purposefully altered or created in order to cause fear, commotion, instigation, or damage on either an individual or a collective level.

Fake News and Media Development in Nigeria

One aspect of media development is enhancing organisations' or people's capacities in the fields of media diversity and variety, open ownership of media outlets and freedom of expression. The growth of social media have had an impact on journalism (Blumler, 2016). News is important for online traffic that generates revenue in addition to its meaning of recently noteworthy happenings for the general public (Bettag, 2000). In the past, journalists played an active role as censors, selectors and makers of news. The recipients or consumers were viewed as passive players in the logic of traditional media (Harcup & O'Neil, 2017). Anyone can provide information on social media and receive it. As a result, social media have facilitated the rapid generation and dissemination of misleading information (Benkler *et al* 2018). Additionally, social media involvement is crucial for news values today as research has highlighted the significance of so-called news shareability, even for media institutions with a high reputation (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). The general availability of platforms, in the form of specific features on multiple social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter, has aided in hastening the dissemination of produced content. Users frequently have a tendency to neglect the specifics of how the material was created while exploring on social media in an atmosphere of online content congestion or information spill over, with time as an essential resource. They recall their emotions towards a bit of information opposed to its actual significance or accuracy (Lazer Baum, Benkler, Berinski, 2018).

In addition to imitating an authentic journalistic framework, fake news also has two other crucial qualities. These have a poor degree of veracity and are intended to mislead (Tandoc, Lim &Ling 2018). Fake news simply resembles news media in terms of form; the organisation process that results in its production is completely different (Lazer *et al* 2018). Low facticity is linked to fraudulent, deceptive, fake and impostor content (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019). Particularly, when it comes to contentious matters, reality is substituted by mysticism and emotional triggers while the material appears genuine. The impacts of fake news are amplified by emotions and repetitions (Pennycook, Cannon & Rand 2018).

Fake News as a Problem for the Survival of Mass Media

The existence of mass media is seriously threatened by fake news. According to Alawode *et al* (2018), the quick dissemination of information through social media and the web has contributed to the rise of fake news. For mass media organisations and their ability to uphold credibility and audience confidence, this phenomenon presents a number of issues (Adeleke, 2016). According to Asemah (2015), fake news has the potential to harm the advertising revenue that is a major source of income for the mass media. Advertisers could be reluctant to link their brands to publications that are viewed as being unreliable or involved in the propagation of false information. It may be more difficult for mass media organisations to maintain their operations if advertising revenue declines as a result

(Asemah, 2015). Misinformation and public discourse are a different area where fake news can have a serious negative impact on both democratic processes and public debate. Misinformation can sway public opinion, affect elections and impair citizens' ability to make well-informed decisions (Jared, 2018). The ability of mass media organisations to properly carry out their crucial function of providing reliable and accurate data to the public is hampered by the existence of false news (McGonagle, 2017).

Approaches to Combating Fake News in Nigeria

Fake news not only undermines public confidence and diminishes global awareness, but it also threatens national security (Mosseri, 2017). To address the danger presented by fake news, all relevant parties such as the media, libraries, other information specialists and educators, have a responsibility (Mosseri, 2017). Additionally, telecommunications companies should provide new technologies to monitor and limit the dissemination of incorrect information on their respective platforms. Relevant stakeholders should with assistance from other groups, create a clearer understanding of the impact of propaganda and misinformation on democratic processes, the freedom of expression, media and social environments, as well as appropriate reactions to these occurrences. The government must find a way to advertise its main conventional means in order to get recognition through social media. Nigeria specifically needs to ensure its local media outlets and television channels are profitable if it is to continue practising excellent journalism that the people would embrace and prefer (Okogba, 2018).

The fact that political power is having a negative impact on the vast majority of media sources in Nigeria has made it necessary to rebuild faith with conventional media. As a result, most Nigerians now believe that every piece of news is either openly fake or fake with some element of real. Additionally, the United Nations trained Mandate on Liberty of Expression and/or Media (2017) recommends taking steps to promote media and digital proficiency as part of the fundamental curriculum in schools as well as cooperating with organisations from civil society and other participants to raise consciousness about the issue of fake news. Denise (2018) asserts that libraries have an extensive record of promoting information literacy among their users and that the fake news phenomenon is merely the most recent manifestation of this effort. The larger fake news panorama displays a complex issue that underlines the undeniable importance of critical and evaluative thinking. Regarding this, the proliferation of false information has presented libraries and librarians with a challenging, but rare chance to engage their user communities in a thorough discussion on the topic of critically and analytically thinking in light of their resource-seeking conduct in the modern digital environment. Hence, improving knowledge of information for other obligations must continue to be a top priority.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Rumour Transmission

This theory was propounded by H. Taylor Buckner in 1965 (Buckner, 1965). The theory helped provide understanding on how fake news spreads on social media. According to Buckner (1965), in researching rumour transmission, it is irrelevant whether the rumour is true or not. A rumour must be unsubstantiated at the moment it is transmitted and must be spread from one individual to another in order to qualify as a rumour. Based on Buckner's

theory of rumour transmission, social media users fall under one of the three orientations or situations which Buckner referred to as sets. They are critical set, an uncritical set or a transmission set. If a social media user adopts a critical mindset, they are capable of using their critical ability to tell the difference between actual and incorrect information in fake news, possibly by applying fact-checking methods. The social media user lacks the capacity to apply "critical ability" to check the veracity of the bogus news if an unthinking set is accepted. The individuals' critical ability is seen as disrespectful in the transmission set, which is typically used in laboratory research. Therefore, in accordance with the hypothesis, the circumstances surrounding the propagation of the fake news on new media as well as the individual sets determine whether fake news gets more or less accurate as it spreads.

Source Credibility Theory

In 1951, Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss proposed this theory and later improved on by Hovland, Janis and Kelly in 1953. According to Asemah, Nwanmuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), the theory states that individuals or recipients are more likely to be persuaded when the information provider presents itself as reliable. Later on, Hovland (1953) and Weiss (1974) both explored the topic of resources in persuasion. To ascertain whether dependable sources may affect recipients' attitudes more than questionable ones, the study compared credible and unreliable sources while utilising the same compelling message (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2011; Asemah, 2009b; Asemah *et al* 2017). According to the study, reliable sources frequently have the desired effect on the audience. The theory of source credibility is extremely pertinent to the problem of false news and its effects on the media (Asemah & Ogwo, 2013).

People may be more likely to believe and spread misleading information when connected to fake news if it originates from sources they consider reliable. For instance, if a fake news report is spread via a credible-looking website or a well-known person, people may be more likely to believe it and spread it without questioning its veracity. However, the propagation of false information can also damage the credibility and public perception of traditional media outlets. People may become sceptical and have a lower opinion of the reliability of traditional media organisations if they learn that they have accidentally published or spread inaccurate material.

Empirical Review

Kayode-Adedeji, Ike, Ogungbemile & Amao (2022) looked at the spread of fake news on social media viz-a-viz a population data assessment of audience participation. The study was conducted with the intention of exposing the demographics of Nigerians who transmit misleading information most frequently. The researchers used the survey research method and applied cluster and systematic sampling techniques. The main finding of the study was that adults between the ages of 21 and 35 and 36 and 50 distributed misleading data on social media sites as well, and individuals in the older age bracket would not check before publishing on Facebook and WhatsApp. The researchers recommended, among others, that the general public must be taught on information verification. This study is similar to the present study in terms of subject-matter in that it focuses on fake news dissemination; however, the authors only evaluated the subject matter in terms of its spread on social media and not how it hinders media development in Nigeria. The present study fills this gap.

Isah & Ainakhuagbor (2022) examined social networking sites as tools for disseminating fake news during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The study's goals were to ascertain social media's involvement in information distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The questionnaire was utilised as a data gathering tool while survey methodology was employed. The results showed that social media were useful tools for spreading false information. Thus, the researchers came to the conclusion that social media are real means for spreading fake news. This study shares similar with the present study in that it focuses on fake news dissemination; albeit on social media alone. However, the authors only assessed the subject in terms of using social media as a fake news dissemination tool and not how they hinder media development in Nigeria. The present study addresses this gap.

Habib & Akila (2021) also looked into Nigerian media practices and online fake news. The purpose of the study was to assess Nigeria's fake news and journalistic practices utilising the opinions of Plateau State journalists and media scholars. The researchers adopted in-depth interview using purposive sampling. Thematic research was used as the primary method of data analysis. The study's findings showed that there was no disagreement among media experts and journalists about the legitimacy of false news. The researchers thus made several recommendations, including the need for sanctions against offenders, increased gatekeeping on the part of all registered and licensed media organisations and registration for bloggers and other media-related entrepreneurs. The similarity with the present study lies in the fact that it focuses on fake news dissemination; albeit, on online media and its influence on media practice in Nigeria. However, the researchers did not capture how fake news dissemination, whether through online or traditional media, hinders media development in Nigeria. The present study addresses this gap.

Methodology

The researchers used library research method. This method entails gathering facts and data from earlier works of literature (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo, Okpanachi, 2022). The researchers made no barefoot measurements nor did they gather any data from any specific population sample. Therefore, the information was gathered from secondary sources. The majority of the information were obtained from books, journals, periodicals and online resources which according to Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah (2022a; 2022b) are the primary sources of library research approach.

Discussion

Social media have made it easier for millions of individuals to get news and information across borders and countries. Social media are affordable, rapid, regular and accessible and this aligns with studies such as Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021; 2023) and Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022). However, people have recently abused, misused and utilised social media to spread false information and specious news items that are meant to mislead the public. With the rise of fake news which has become epidemic, people now seek to distribute information without first validating it. People actually struggle to decide which version of the information to believe by the point they distribute it and the accurate version of it is revealed. In most situations, it has been established that many stories shared on social media are untrue. How citizens are supposedly spreading false information is a terrible trend. Most people have a tendency to believe information from social media more so than

information from the mainstream. In doing so, they are essentially impeding the advancement of the media. This is because it will be difficult for you to believe whatever you hear from the mainstream media once you stop believing in the media. This is in tandem with the studies of Isah & Ainakhuagbor (2022); Kayode – Adedeji, Ogungbemile & Amao (2022), which all found that social media are at the thrust of fake news dissemination in Nigeria.

Fake news continues to spread like wildfire. The majority of people regularly encounter false information. According to the survey, fake news is often seen to be more credible than media news. These results support those of Wasserman & Madrid-Morals (2019). They discovered that the perceived exposure to bogus news is high among media audiences. Even though their study concentrated on social media misinformation, a strong correlation between higher levels of the dissemination of fake news and a lower degree of media trust was also discovered. People's trust in the media and potential responses to fake news in new media may both be influenced by how much fake news they encounter on social media. The foundations of the theory of rumour transmission which maintains that rumour spreads in the form of fake news and leads to disinformation and misinformation are further supported by these findings.

Media development is negatively impacted by fake news in several forms. The erosion of trust is one of these methods. The public's confidence in media organisations is damaged by fake news. Widespread dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information raises doubts about the accuracy and dependability of news sources. The legitimacy of reliable news sources is hampered by this erosion of confidence which may result in fewer readers or viewers. Another effect of fake news is credibility crisis. The predominance of fake news undermines the credibility of the media as a whole. People find it hard to tell the difference between correct and incorrect reporting when they are constantly exposed to false information. For the long-term survival and sustainability of conventional media organisations, this problem may have serious repercussions.

Additionally, the democratic processes are being threatened by fake news. Misleading or false information has the potential to influence public opinion, influence election outcomes and threaten the credibility of democratic systems. The basis of democratic societies is weakened when citizens are not sufficiently informed or subjected to a variety of opinions. Misinformation, another detrimental effect of bogus news is amplification. The spread of fake news may contribute to the spread of incorrect information. False information can easily gain momentum and be taken as a fact when it is extensively disseminated on social networking sites or other digital platforms. This spread of fake news can obscure reliable reporting which makes it more difficult for the public to become informed. Collaboration between media outlets, internet companies and fact-checking groups can also help to identify and combat fake news, give consumers trustworthy information sources and encourage responsible sharing behaviours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the spread of fake news poses serious obstacles to the development of the media in the current digital era. Rapidly disseminating false material on social media platforms and other digital platforms undermines public confidence in traditional media institutions, causes a credibility crisis and makes it difficult for high-quality journalism to be financially viable. Fake news fuels polarisation and division which stifle productive debate and enlighten the public while endangering democratic processes. From the foregoing, the following recommendations are given:

1. Fact-checking, media literacy training and ethical reporting practices must all be given top priority. In order to restore trust, media outlets must make sure their reporting is accurate, transparent and accountable.
2. The Federal Government should use its departments like the Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to scale up its campaigns against fake news in Nigeria, particularly when it concerns national security.
3. Promote user accountability. Encourage social media users to act responsibly. Encourage people to check information before sharing it, to be aware of their prejudices and to refrain from disseminating inaccurate or sensationalised information.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

USE OF NEWS TICKERS IN TELEVISION PROGRAMME PRODUCTION

Unity Osamuyimen Aibangbee; Emeke Precious Nwaoboli & Adeline O. Nkwam-Uwaoma

Introduction

Television is a broadcast media that is used for transmitting both audio and visual messages. Television combines sound, visuals and motion. On television, we hear people, we see them and they move (Asemah, 2008; Asemah & Asogwa, 2016). Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that ‘‘with a very broad and diverse audience, television is an audio-visual medium used to disseminate information from a source.’’ Television, a major component of the media industry is preferred by many people because of its audio-visual nature (Asemah, 2022). Due to this obvious preference, television broadcasting has taken a new technological dimension so as to meet up with the need to satisfy the quest for news of its audience (Nwabueze, 2012). Television can also be seen as a telecommunication medium for moving pictures and sound. It is a widely used medium of communication and entertainment that allows viewers to access a variety of content, including news, shows, documentaries, sports events, and movies, among others (Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah. 2013; Nwaoboli, 2023; Edegoh & Asemah, 2023).

Television is, therefore, a mass medium for advertising, entertainment, news, sports and lots more (Asemah, 2009a; Asemah & Omosotomhe, 2016; Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). To achieve this feat without necessarily breaking the flow of its programmes, the television industry has introduced a relatively new concept known as news ticker. It is also known as news bar or ‘craw message’ which provide information, ranging from hard news, to updates in various human interest report. Thus, news tickers are considered very important as many viewers go to news channel just to scan the main news of the day or of that hour and they get it from the tickers. As the tickers are running continuously, one does not need to follow the clock and hit the channel at the beginning of the hour. News tickers are often located at the lower part of the screen, provides viewers with the headlines while they are watching report on related or non-related events (Keefe-Feldman, 2007).

Researchers have over the years shown different opinions on the exact origin of different opinions on the exact origin of news tickers (Keefe-Feldman, 2007; Nwabueze, 2012). News tickers today take their titles from ticker tape, a technology invented by Edward A Calahin in 1863.

Today, TV broadcast stations use tickers on occasional basis primarily on news programmes to show updated news stories. On other programmes, a ticker may be used solely on breaking news stories or for text advertisements. News ticker component sized pieces of information. Most tickers are traditionally displayed in the form of scrolling text running from right to left across the screen laying more emphasis on the news being aired in such a way that viewers get to know what the news is all about. Some news tickers have syndicated news stories posted largely on websites of broadcasters or by other independent news agencies.

Presently, news ticker has become a permanent feature in virtually all television stations in Nigeria and the globe (Nwabueze 2012; Osuagwu, 2012; Blain &Meeds, 2004).

However, this innovation which has existed in Nigeria for some years is still facing visible resistance and variations in viewer's perception. To some viewers, a news ticker gives them more insight about the main stories while to others, it is seen as a distraction as it sometimes shows viewers' information not related to the main story; thereby attempting to compete for viewers' attention. In this vein, it may hinder their comprehension of the main story (Keefe, Feldman 2007; Nwabueze, 2012; Osuagwu, 2012). If the news ticker reinforces the main story, then it could be said that the case of information overload would be unworthy.

Statement of the Problem

News tickers have become regular features on television screen of both local and international stations. As a result of this, television viewers tend to have different perceptions about news tickers. Television news tickers, also known as news crawls or news scrolls are a common feature during television news broadcasts. These continuously moving horizontal bars display headlines, breaking news or other information at the bottom of the TV screen. Numerous studies have explored various aspects of television news tickers, including their effects on attention, distraction, recall, emotional engagement and perceived credibility. However, the findings from these studies have often been contradictory, leading to confusion about the overall implications of using news tickers during news programming.

Some studies have suggested that news tickers can enhance viewers' ability to recall key news headlines, leading to better information retention (Johnson & Lee, 2019). Conversely, other research has indicated that news tickers have a distracting effect on viewers, drawing their attention away from the main news content and potentially reducing comprehension (Smith, Johnson & Williams, 2018). Therefore, there is a need to investigate the extent of exposure to and functions of news tickers on TV in this era of zapping by television viewers. This is because while some studies have shown that tickers displaying breaking news updates or emotional keywords can enhance audience engagement (Johnson, Smith & Davis, 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to examine audience perception of the use of news tickers in television programme production in Benin City

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which Benin residents are exposed to television news tickers.
2. Find out the perception of the main function of news tickers in television news reports.

Conceptual and Literature Review

In 1963, newspapers surpassed television as the primary news source, prompting an inquiry into the significance of cable news which witnessed an increase in viewership while broadcast news has fragmented and declined (Ray, 1999, citing Roper Statistics Project for Excellence in Journalism, 1998). Television is now one of the most significant forms of communication in society. Asemah (2011) and Asemah (2020) define communication as the exchange of information, viewpoints and ideas. Television attracts viewers of all ages, literacy levels and social strata, making it the largest media audience. People play a critical

role in communication because they decide what to read, how to interpret information and what to do next (Asemah, 2011).

Following the events of September 11, 2001, news tickers became a permanent feature and eventually evolved into a news portal (Phan, 2003). MSNBC briefly removed its ticker after the chaos of 9/11 subsided, but quickly reinstated it when other cable news outlets declined to follow suit (Romano, 2002). Blain & Meeds (2004) explain that the ticker is generated using a character generator that runs continuously, with a producer selecting which story summaries will appear on the screen. According to Ortiz (n. d), tickers are used to complement what is being said on the air and ensure it is accurate and consistent with broadcast reporting (McCuellean *et al* 2001). After 9/11, the frequency of reinforcing tickers on television news outlets decreased and tickers now seldom have anything to do with the topic being covered by the anchor or reporter. Local news stations have implemented their own tickers, offering news on various themes, including weird news (Keefe-Feldman, 2007).

During the 9/11 attacks, both the main screen and the ticker at the bottom of the screen were providing information related to the current news story, with nearly all news items presented on cable news channels being related to the main story (Blain & Meeds, 2004). It is, therefore, more likely that the ticker will reinforce the information being shown on the television screen.

Television News and News Tickers

News tickers have become popular and common among major television stations in the United States because they allow viewers to process multiple simultaneous streams of information from audience consumption. The management of the three major news channels in the nation believed in the effectiveness of news tickers and it is essential to understand which media work best for a specific human need (Johnson, 2019).

The emotional involvement of the audience is one of the key things that television news has accomplished well or at least, more quickly than other news media. Smith, Johnson & William (2018) argue that the news ticker can defeat one of television news's benefits by including information that would seem jarring if stated aloud in the middle of important events. The issue is whether the news ticker might reduce television news' emotional impact by diverting a viewer's attention. In addition to providing opportunities for people to unite through shared experiences, television may have the power to inspire individuals about important public events (Fouhy, 1995). This often happens when major news breaks.

News Tickers: The Nigerian Experience

When the media over the world added the news ticker to their news programmes, Nigeria was not left out. The Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) started using news tickers because as the state of television started changing all over the world, NTA dived into the modern trend of providing news information to viewers and also, comply with the modern way of news reporting (Atere, 2011). Channels television and Africa Independent Television (AIT) were the first media stations to use news tickers in their media concept. They started using this concept in the early 2000 and when they started, other stations like Silverbird Television (STV), Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), Independence Television (ITV), others followed suit.

Images successfully draw attention in the media, whether via conventional media or online. Images strengthen and increase the impact of a message. To encourage viewers

to follow information and enhance its reception, news producers enhance media communication via news tickers. The memory of a story's substance increases when it is accompanied with still or moving graphics (Blain & Meeds, 2004). Tickers are a useful tools for delivering breaking news without cutting off the video content that is still playing. That is maybe the reason the global trade centre attacks in 2001 marked the beginning of a new era of frequent information tickers.

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory is the foundation of this work. According to this idea (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021a, 2021b; Cohen, 2002; McQuail, 2005; Pachari & Mendelson, 2007), personal factors are important. However, Yaroson & Asemah (2008) point out that the audience's capacity for discrimination determines the value of media type and content for the overall population. Elihu & Katz were the ones who first developed the uses and pleasure hypothesis. Early in the 1970s, Katz, together with his two colleagues, Jay Blumler & Michael Gurevitch, proceeded to develop the viewpoint. This uses and gratifications theory of the media is one of the theories of mass communication that call attention to what people do with the media, rather than what the media do to the people (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2009b; Edegoh, Asemah & Nwammuo, 2013; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017; 2022)

The relevance of the theory to the study cannot be over emphasised. This is because this theory emphasises motives and self- perceived needs of audience members. In real terms, uses and gratifications theory provides viral insight about viewer's choice of television and television programmes, but typically ignores major areas that would provide more comprehensive explanation of exposure to television.

Empirical Review

Smith *et al* (2018) conducted a study to investigate the impact of news tickers on viewers' attention. They found that news tickers had a significant distracting effect, drawing attention away from the main news content. This distraction was particularly pronounced when tickers contained visually attention-grabbing elements, such as flashing colours or rapid movements. However, Johnson & Lee (2019) reported contrasting findings, suggesting that news tickers could enhance audience attention and recall of key news headlines. The conflicting results highlight the need for further research to explore the factors that mediate the relationship between news tickers and audience attention.

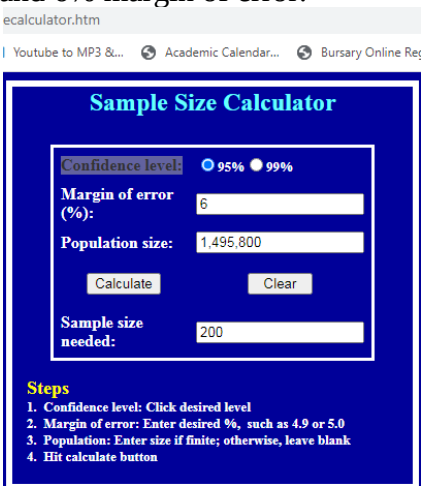
The ability of news tickers to enhance audience recall and information retention has also been a subject of investigation. Johnson & Lee (2019) found that news tickers improved viewers' ability to remember key news headlines, contributing to better information retention. However, this effect was observed only when the ticker content was directly related to the primary news story being discussed. The implications of news ticker content relevance on information retention warrant further exploration to optimise the use of tickers as a memory-enhancing tool. The perceived credibility of television news sources can be influenced by the use of news tickers. Smith *et al* (2018); Johnson & Lee (2019); Chen &Wu (2020) examined how news tickers affected the credibility of news sources among viewers. They found that the presence of a news ticker did not significantly influence perceived credibility when the ticker content aligned with the main news story. However, contradictory or unrelated ticker information led to decreased perceived

credibility of the news source. This highlights the importance of maintaining consistency between ticker content and the primary news narrative to preserve the trust of the audience in the news outlet.

This empirical review provides a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on the audience's perception of the use of news tickers in television programme production. The findings of Smith *et al* (2018); Johnson & Lee (2019) and Chen &Wu (2020) demonstrate that news tickers can have both positive and negative effects on the viewing experience, impacting audience attention, distraction, recall and perceived credibility of television news sources. However, these studies were not conducted among Nigerian audience; hence, this present study will addresses this gap.

Methodology

Survey research approach was used in this study. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) point out that this approach chooses and examines samples taken from the population in order to determine the relative occurrence, distribution and interrelationships of sociological and psychological factors. The survey approach was deemed to be the most suitable for this study since it is an audience research project that calls for taking views, attitudes, motives and individualism into account. As a result, a questionnaire was used in this research to collect data from the respondents from which conclusion was formed. The population of this study includes all the residents of Benin City, Edo State. According to the National Population Commission (NPC), the total population of Benin City stands at 1,495,800 (one million, four hundred and ninety-five thousand, eight hundred) from the 2016 EAD Figures. The sample size was arrived at through Wimmer & Dominick's sample size calculation formula at 95% confidence level and 6% margin of error.



Multi-stage sampling technique was used in administering questionnaire to the 200 respondents from the total population. This sampling technique, as Asemah *et al* (2022) affirmed, involves using more than one sampling technique in selecting a sample size to ensure precision and thoroughness. In the first stage, the city was stratified into four zones; following the four (4) major local government areas domiciled in the city, which include Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Ovia North-East and Egor local government areas. In the second stage, four areas were purposively selected from the four local government areas. They include King's Square, Uselu, Ugbowo and Ikpoba-Hill, as they constitute some of the

major axis of the city. In the third stage, simple random sampling was then employed to select 50 respondents from each of the sectors, making up a total of 200 respondents selected for this study. Out of the 200 copies of questionnaire administered, 191 copies, representing 95.5% were returned and found usable.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Benin Residents' awareness of Television News Tickers

Variables	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	66	34.6
Agree	99	51.8
Undecided	26	13.6
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	**191**	**100**

Data from table above show that majority of the respondents (86.4%) agreed that they are aware of television news tickers. The import of this data is that there is a general consensus amongst the respondents on their awareness of news tickers usage in television programming.

Table 2: Extent of Viewers' exposure to Television News Tickers

Variables	Frequency	%
Very high	55	28.8
High	77	40.3
Medium	39	20.4
Low	13	6.8
Very low	7	3.7
Total	**191**	**100**

It can be seen from table 2 above that all the respondents affirmed that they have varying degrees of exposure to television news tickers; although, majority of the respondents (69.1%) affirmed that their extent of exposure was high. This implies that there is significant level of awareness and exposure to television new tickers by Benin residents.

Table 3: Benin Residents' Perception of Main Function of News Tickers in Television News Reports

Variables	Frequency	%
Summary of main news casts	57	29.8
Provides additional information not in the news report	36	18.8
eautifies the television screen	18	9.4
Provides update on major stories and breaking news	48	25.1
Gives foreknowledge of items in news casts	27	14.1
Others	5	2.6
Total	**191**	**100**

Analysis of respondents' views presented in table 3 above shows that majority of the viewers (29.8%) affirmed that the primary function of news tickers in television news

reports is to summarise the key points in the news reports. Other respondents also identified functions such as provision of updates and breaking news as well as additional information not in the news reports, among others. The import of this is that the respondents have divergent views on the primary function of news tickers in television programmes, the primary being to summarise news reports.

Table 4: Extent to which News Tickers perform the aforementioned Functions

Variables	Frequency	%
Very high	67	35.1
High	89	46.6
Undecided	19	9.9
Low	7	3.7
Very low	3	1.6
Total	**191**	**100**

As presented in table 4 above, it can be inferred that majority of the respondents (81.7%) are of the view that news tickers significantly perform the aforementioned functions in table 3. This implies that the use of news tickers by television station serves some functions that can be said to be functional, aesthetic and stylistic in nature.

Table 5: Viewers' Main Perception of News Tickers usage during Television News Reports

Variables	Frequency	%
Serves as distraction during news casts	27	14.1
Amounts to information overload	41	21.5
Complements verbal and pictorial elements	53	27.7
Affects comprehension and recall rate of main stories	31	16.2
Gives prominence to select news stories	37	19.4
Others	2	1
Total	**191**	**100**

In table 5 above, majority of the respondents (27.7%) perceived news ticker as a complementary tool to the verbal and pictorial elements in the news reports in the positive light, while some others perceived it to be a form of information overload and distraction during news cast. The implication of this perception is that the respondents differ in their perceptions of news ticker usage during television news reports, although the prevailing perception is positive.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that majority of the respondents affirmed that the extent of awareness and exposure to television news tickers is high. This could be attributed to the fact that television is a household furniture among urban residents such as Benin City; hence, the extent of awareness and exposure. However, television news tickers are obvious on most television stations that it would be difficult not to be aware of their existence and exposed to it at the same time. This finding is in agreement with Nullriver (2011) who observes that news tickers help to increase viewership amongst viewers with the ability to process

multiple simultaneous streams of information for audience consumption. This also mirrors the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) that the value of media type and content a media presents to the audience, will determine how much exposure the audience will afford that medium.

The findings also showed that television viewers have different perception of the main function of news tickers in television news report as majority of the viewers affirmed that the primary function of news tickers in television news report summarises the key points in the news reports, while others see news tickers as additional information that is not in the main news. To further buttress this fact, it can be taken that news tickers significantly serve some functions that can be said to be functional aesthetic and stylistic in nature as seen in table 4. Johnson & Lee (2019) investigated the influence of news tickers on audience recall and information retention. Surprisingly, they discovered that news tickers improved viewers' ability to remember key news headlines. The constant repetition of information on the ticker seemed to reinforce memory and facilitate better recall among the audience. However, this effect was only observed when the ticker content was directly related to the primary news story being discussed. This is also in line with Mitchell & Olson (1981) who observed that news ticker/image support the main media with an emotional element and that is why they can significantly influence the interpretation of the message conveyed through verbal channel. Furthermore, the findings showed that television viewers perceived news ticker as a complementary tool to the verbal report, while others perceived it to a form of information overload as seen in table 5. This is in contrast to the study by Smith *et al* (2018) which found that news tickers had a significant distracting effect on viewers, drawing their attention away from the main news content.

It can be seen that audience perception of television news tickers is a complex phenomenon, with both positive and negative effects observed. While news tickers can enhance information recall and emotional engagement when used judiciously, they also have the potential to distract viewers and reduce overall comprehension of the news content. The context and content of the tickers are critical factors that influence audience perception, with consistent and relevant information generally having a more positive impact.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be said that television news tickers play a very important role in television programming, especially, going by the fact that it provides additional information about the news story for proper understating among other functions. Based on the findings and conclusion, the foregoing recommendations are hereby given:

1. Television stations that feature news ticker should endeavour to provide a tight summary of news stories in the news ticker. This is because the short duration of tickers on screen requires only a few words for the story not constitute information overload.
2. With the increased use of the news ticker in television news, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should extend its attention to news ticker contents with a view to monitoring adherence of stations to broadcasting regulations regarding content of news tickers.
3. News broadcasters should carefully consider the design and implementation of news tickers to strike a balance between engagement and distraction, ensuring a positive viewing experience for their audiences.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BENIN CITY RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS ON IKE EKWEREMADU'S ORGAN TRAFFICKING CASE

Sunny Duke Okosun; Agnes O. Ezeji & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

A noteworthy incident that has received extensive attention and debate on various social media platforms is the organ trafficking case that involved Ike Ekweremadu, who served as the Deputy Senate President of Nigeria. The case shed emphasis on the terrible issue of organ trafficking which is a worldwide issue that impacts thousands of individuals on an annual basis. Organ trafficking involves the illegal trade of organs, tissues or cells from living or deceased donors, often involving vulnerable individuals who are coerced or exploited.

Organ trafficking is a complex issue that involves a range of actors, including traffickers, recipients and healthcare professionals (Clare, 2004). The organs are often sold to wealthy individuals who need them for medical treatment, while the donors are often poor and vulnerable individuals who are lured into the trade with promises of money or other incentives. The issue of organ trafficking is particularly prevalent in developing countries, where poverty and lack of access to healthcare make individuals more vulnerable to exploitation (Clare, 2004).

The opinions expressed on social media surrounding this matter seem to be mostly motivated by political allegiances and ideas, with some netizens expressing support for Ekweremadu while others expressing criticism of him. However, beyond the political opinions expressed through comments, there were subtler socio-psychological and ideological positions that reflected the diverse perspectives of Benin City residents. These perspectives seem to have been shaped by factors such as religion, culture and personal experiences and they influenced how residents perceived and reacted to the organ trafficking case (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli. 2023).

For example, some residents may have viewed organ trafficking as a violation of cultural and religious norms and, therefore, condemned the act and those involved in it. Others may have viewed the issue through an ethical lens, considering the impact that organ trafficking has on vulnerable individuals and communities. Still, others may have focused on the economic and social factors that contribute to organ trafficking, such as poverty and lack of access to healthcare. To explore these underlying perspectives and their relationship with the political conversations that occurred on social media in the aftermath of the organ trafficking case involving Ike Ekweremadu, this study aims to examine the perceptions and reactions of Benin City residents to social media comments.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the widespread attention and discussion generated by the organ trafficking case involving Nigeria's former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, as well as studies such as Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) on the case, little is known about how Benin City residents perceive and react to social media comments on the issue. The political, religious, legal, health and public opinions expressed through comments on social media appear to

be largely based on beliefs, but there may be subtler socio-psychological and ideological positions that reflect the diverse perspectives of Benin City residents. Therefore, this study aims to explore the underlying perspectives and their relationship with the comments that occurred on social media in the aftermath of the organ trafficking case involving Ike Ekweremadu, in order to provide insights into the complex socio-cultural and ideological factors that shape public opinion and discourse around organ trafficking and related issues.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent of exposure of Benin City residents to social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case.
2. Determine the social media platforms through which Benin City residents were exposed to social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case.
3. Find out the perception of Benin City residents on social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case.
4. Find out the level of effects of the social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu.

Understanding Social Media Comments

Social media are simply described as online interactions platforms that allow people to quickly and easily quickly switch between the roles of author and audience. This process of switching is made possible with the help of social software, which is a general term used to refer to websites and activity on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or any other virtual hub (Asemah & Uye, 2012; Ugande & Asemah, 2014; Asemah, 2014). It is an irrefutable fact that social interaction in the twenty-first century has been significantly impacted by social media; hence, around the world, virtual communities are becoming more and more popular (Edegoh & Asemah, 2014; Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, 2023).

Technology advancements have impacted internet software, resulting in the emergence of chat rooms now popularly known as "social media." One may send and receive messages relatively, instantly using social networking sites (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013; Ajayi, Fatukasi & Asemah, 2021). Social media networks may be accessed using a laptop, cybercafé or other device. According to Heatfield (2013); Odero (2003); Edegoh, Ekanem & Asemah (2013), cited in Asemah *et al* (2013), these channels allow users to sign in to any of the numerous social media websites.

According to Zhang & Liu (2017), social media comments are user-generated contents that represent users' reactions, opinions and attitudes towards a particular topic, often posted in response to other content such as news articles, blog posts or social media updates. This definition emphasises the user-generated nature of social media comments and their function as a means of expressing opinions and attitudes towards a particular topic. The reference to comments being posted in response to other content highlights the interactive nature of social media and the potential for comments to drive discussion and engagement which are supported by Asemah & Nwaoboli (2022) and Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022).

Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon (2010) define social media comments as a form of public discourse that reflect the attitudes and values of online communities and that can influence

the formation of public opinion and policy-making. This definition, just like that of Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli (2022) focuse on the social and political impact of social media comments, suggesting that they are more than just individual expressions of opinion, but can also shape public discourse and policy-making. The reference to online communities highlights the importance of social identity and group dynamics in the formation of social media comments.

Conversely, social media comments can be defined as a source of data that can be analysed using computational methods to identify patterns and trends in user behaviour, sentiment and language use (Pang, Lee & Vaithyanathan, 2002). This definition highlights the potential of social media comments as a data source for research, suggesting that they can be analysed using computational methods to identify patterns and trends in user behaviour and language use. The emphasis on sentiment analysis suggests that social media comments can also be used to track changes in attitudes and emotions over time (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022).

Social media comments are a crucial component of online discourse, allowing users to express their opinions and engage in discussions with others on various topics. As such, the interactive, social and data-driven nature of social media comments has become an essential components of online communication and discourse (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a).

Organ Trafficking

Organ trafficking refers to the illegal trade in human organs, tissues and cells, usually for the purpose of transplantation. This trade involves the exploitation of vulnerable individuals who are often poor and desperate, as well as the violation of ethical and legal principles governing organ donation and transplantation (Budiani-Saberi & Delmonico, 2008). This definition highlights the illegal and unethical nature of organ trafficking, which involves the commodification of human bodies and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals. The reference to ethical and legal principles emphasises the need for regulation and oversight in the field of organ donation and transplantation.

Shimazono (2007) defines organ trafficking as organised criminal activity of buying and selling human organs, often involving a network of brokers, middlemen and medical professionals. This trade is driven by the high demand for organs and the limited supply of legally obtained organs, leading to a lucrative black market in illegal organs. This definition emphasises the criminal aspect of organ trafficking and the role of organised networks in facilitating the trade. The reference to the high demand for organs and the limited supply of legally obtained organs highlights the systemic issues that contribute to the problem of organ trafficking.

Organ trafficking can also be defined as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that involves a range of social, economic and political factors, including poverty, globalisation and the commercialisation of healthcare. It is both a consequence and a cause of social inequality and injustice, with the most vulnerable populations being the most affected (Scheper-Hughes, 2000).

Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Ike Ekweremadu, a well-known legal practitioner and prominent political figure from Enugu State, Nigeria, was born on May 12th, 1962 (Imo, 2023). He served as the representative for Enugu West in the Nigerian Senate for 20 years, from June 3, 2003, to

May 5, 2023 and held the position of Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate for three consecutive terms (NewsWireNGR, 2022). During this time, he was affiliated with the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

In June 2022, Ekweremadu and his family, along with Dr. Obinna Obeta, were accused of colluding to facilitate the transfer of a 21-year-old man from Lagos to the United Kingdom for organ harvesting purposes. Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) note that the defendants were charged with planning to extract and transplant the kidney of an unsuspecting young man to Ekweremadu's daughter.

On March 23, 2023, Ekweremadu, his wife and Dr. Obinna Obeta were found guilty of criminal charges related to organ trafficking. Ekweremadu received a sentence of nine years and eight months in prison, while Dr. Obinna Obeta received a sentence of ten years. Meanwhile, Mrs. Ekweremadu was sentenced to four years and six months in prison for her involvement in the conspiracy. This case highlights the serious issue of organ trafficking which involves the exploitation and commodification of vulnerable individuals for profit. It also underscores the importance of enforcing regulations and ethical principles governing organ donation and transplantation to prevent such illegal activities.

Impact of Social Media on Perception of Crime and Justice

Social media have become an important platform for communication and information-sharing in modern society (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2009; Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). One area where social media has had a significant impact is the field of crime and justice (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022b). Social media platforms allow for the rapid dissemination of information about crimes and legal proceedings, as well as providing a space for public discourse and debate. Social media have the potential to shape public opinion about crime and justice in several ways. The widespread availability of information on social media platforms means that individuals can quickly access news and updates about crimes and legal proceedings, even in real-time (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a, 2022b). Social media also provide a space for individuals to express their opinions and engage in public discussions about these issues. As a result, social media can influence public perceptions of crime and justice, either by reinforcing existing beliefs or by introducing new perspectives (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021).

Studies have shown that social media can significantly impact public opinion about crime and justice; for example, a study by Brossard, Scheufele & Kim (2013) found that social media exposure to news about crime and justice can affect attitudes towards the fairness of legal proceedings, with exposure to negative news leading to more negative perceptions of the justice system. Similarly, a study by Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) found that social media can influence public perceptions of the severity of crimes, with more sensationalised coverage leading to more negative perceptions.

Social media can also impact media coverage of crime and justice. Social media platforms are often used by journalists and news organisations to source and share news stories and social media conversations can influence the topics and angles covered by the media. As a result, social media can affect the tone and focus of media coverage of crimes and legal proceedings, potentially shaping public perceptions of these issues.

Research has shown that social media can affect media coverage of crime and justice. For example, a study by Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya (2022) found that social media conversations can influence the framing of news stories, with social media users often prioritising topics and angles that differ from those prioritised by traditional news outlets. Similarly, a study by Zhang & Liu (2017) found that social media

can influence the level of attention given to specific crimes by news organisations, with crimes that receive more social media attention receiving more coverage in traditional media outlets.

The impact of social media on perceptions of crime and justice can also extend to legal proceedings. Social media conversations can potentially influence the fairness of legal proceedings by introducing biases or prejudicial information or by affecting public perceptions of the guilt or innocence of individuals involved in legal proceedings (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022, Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Studies have shown that social media can have a significant impact on legal proceedings. For example, a study by D'Agostino, Elia, Russo & Di Sanzo (2019) found that social media exposure to prejudicial information about a case can influence juror decision-making, potentially leading to unfair trials. Similarly, Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021) found that social media conversations can influence public perceptions of the guilt or innocence of individuals involved in legal proceedings, potentially affecting their chances of a fair trial.

Organ trafficking is a serious global problem that affects many people, particularly those from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and social media have become an important platform for individuals to express their opinions and views on different issues, including organ trafficking.

Studies have shown that exposure to social media comments about organ trafficking can increase individuals' awareness and concern about the issue. For instance, D'Agostino, Elia, Russo & Di Sanzo (2019) found that social media comments positively influenced participants' attitudes and willingness to take action against organ trafficking. This suggests that social media can play a crucial role in raising public awareness and promoting action against this issue. However, it is important to note that exposure to negative social media comments about organ trafficking can have a detrimental effect on individuals' attitudes towards the issue. Yoo, Kwon & Lee (2019) found that exposure to negative social media comments decreased participants' willingness to take action against organ trafficking.

Social media can also facilitate discussions and debates about organ trafficking which can help to raise awareness and promote action against it. Brossard *et al* (2013) found that social media can play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes towards controversial issues. Social media can facilitate discussions and debates about organ trafficking which can help to shape individuals' attitudes towards this issue. In this way, social media can serve as a powerful tool for engaging and mobilising individuals to take action against organ trafficking. Moreover, social media comments can impact individuals' emotional responses to organ trafficking. Exposure to negative social media comments about organ trafficking can increase feelings of anger, fear and anxiety in individuals. Conversely, exposure to positive social media comments can increase feelings of hope, optimism, and empowerment. Zhao, Liu, Wang, Zhang & Liu (2018) found that exposure to negative social media comments about organ trafficking increased participants' emotional responses to the issue. However, it is important to note that social media comments are not always accurate or reliable sources of information. The spread of false or misleading information on social media can create confusion and undermine efforts to combat organ trafficking.

Empirical Review

Smith (2022) carried out a study titled- media coverage of organ trafficking in the United States of America. The researcher did a content analysis of news articles on organ trafficking published in major newspapers in each state between 2018 and 2021, analysing

a total of 100 articles, with 20 from the US. The findings showed that the media coverage of organ trafficking varied significantly, with the issue framed primarily as a human rights violation and the language used in the articles also varied, with more emotive language used. The researcher recommended that journalists should strive for objectivity and accuracy in their reporting, avoid using sensational language that could stigmatise victims or perpetuate stereotypes and diversify their sources.

Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) investigated Twitter users' perspectives on the Nigerian government's public relations strategies in response to the organ trafficking situation involving Ike Ekweremadu. The researchers used questionnaire as the instrument and survey as research design. The findings showed that the Nigerian government's public relations strategies were deemed insufficient by Twitter users and recommended that the government enhance its crisis communication tactics, utilising social media platforms like Twitter for prompt and accurate information transmission during crisis circumstances.

Similarly, Popescu (2021) examined representations of organ trafficking in the media in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, analysing news articles to identify differences in the way the issue was framed, the language used and the sources cited. The findings showed that the media coverage of organ trafficking in the three countries was similar in many respects, with the issue framed primarily as a criminal problem, less emphasis on the human rights aspects of the issue and a tendency to use medical terminology, rather than lay terms. The researchers recommended that journalists should strive to include a range of perspectives in their reporting, including the voices of victims and advocates and be more proactive in reporting on the human rights aspects of the issue.

These studies provide a comparative context for analysis on the current study and offer useful insights into public perceptions of the issue and media coverage of organ trafficking in different countries. They can help to contextualise the current study and provide a broader understanding of the social and political context surrounding the issue.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on the social identity theory. Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel & John Turner in the 1970s (Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). It posits that individuals derive their sense of self from their membership in social groups and that group membership influences how they perceive themselves and others. Social identity theory suggests that individuals categorise themselves and others into groups based on shared characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender or nationality (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017).

According to social identity theory, individuals seek to maintain a positive social identity by comparing their group favourably to other groups. This can lead to intergroup conflict and prejudice, as individuals may view members of other groups as inferior or threatening. Social identity theory also suggests that individuals may engage in social identity management, such as by accentuating the positive qualities of their own group or downplaying negative qualities (Asemah *et al* 2017).

In this study on Benin City residents' perceptions of social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu Organ Trafficking Case, social identity theory could be used to examine how individuals' group affiliations (e.g. cultural, religious, or political) influenced their perceptions of the issue. The study could explore how individuals' group membership

affected their perception of the social media comments, and whether they were more likely to agree or disagree with comments made by members of their own group.

Methodology

The researchers made use of survey design to collect data on the perception of Benin City residents regarding social media comments on the Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case. Structured questionnaire was used as research instrument. The population for the study was all residents of Benin City which according to the National Population Census (2016) Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD) Data is 1,496,000. The researcher used random sampling technique to select participants based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The sample size for the study was 384 and it was derived using Cochran sample size determination formula. The researchers used Google form to distribute the questionnaire to participants. Participants were invited to complete the survey through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. The survey was available for a period of two weeks and participants were asked to complete the survey within that time frame. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Sequel to the filling of the questionnaire, 355 copies were filled while 29 copies were not.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent of exposure of Benin City Residents to Social Media Comments on Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	317	89.3%
High	38	10.7%
Neutral	0	0%
Low	0	0%
Very low	0	0%
Total	**355**	**100%**

The data in the above show that the respondents were highly exposed to the organ trafficking case as majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 2: Social Media Platforms through which Benin City Residents were exposed to Social Media Comments on Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	86	24.2%
Twitter	99	27.8%
Whatsapp	74	20.8%
Instagram	40	11.3%
Youtube	32	9.0%
Tik-Tok	9	2.5%
Others	15	4.2%
Total	**355**	**100%**

The data show that social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp were the popular sources of information and discussion concerning the organ trafficking case.

Table 3: Impacts of Social Media Comments on Ike Ekweremadu's Organ trafficking Case

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Empathetic with Ike Ekweremadu and wife	90	25.4%
Frustration with the Nigerian government	79	22.3%
Fear of wide spread organ trafficking	10	2.8%
Support for stricter laws and regulations	50	1.4%
Hope for positive change in the health Sector in Nigeria	66	18.6%
Sympathy with the trafficked boy	60	16.9%
Total	**355**	**100%**

Data in table 3 suggest that social media comments on the organ trafficking case involving Ike Ekweremadu have had a range of emotional and cognitive impacts on Benin City residents. The most commonly reported impacts were empathetic with the implicated individuals and frustration with the Nigerian government.

Table 4: Extent to which the Social Media Comments adversely influenced Benin City Residents towards Ike Ekweremadu

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	184	51.8%
High	101	28.5%
Neutral	6	1.7%
Low	44	12.4%
Very low	50	14.1%
Total	**355**	**100%**

The data suggest that social media comments on the case have had a significant negative impact on the public perception of Ike Ekweremadu in Benin City.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study reflect that majority (89.3%) of Benin City residents were highly exposed to social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case and this suggests that the case generated considerable interest among residents of Benin City. This high level of exposure to social media comments on the case may be attributed to the widespread use of social media in Nigeria, particularly among the youth and the ability of social media to amplify and disseminate information quickly. The findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown that social media have become an important source of news and information for people worldwide, especially during the time of crisis and when traditional media sources are limited (Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023). Social media have also been found to play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and discourse on various issues (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023).

The findings also showed that Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp were the most commonly used social media platforms for accessing social media comments on the case.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that have shown that Twitter and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms for accessing news and information (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2019). The finding that Whatsapp was also a popular platform for accessing social media comments on the case is noteworthy since it highlights the role of private messaging apps in facilitating the spread of information and opinions.

The findings further revealed that social media comments on the case have had a significant adverse impact on the public perception of Ike Ekweremadu. Majority of the respondents reported feeling negatively towards Ike Ekweremadu due to social media comments on the case. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that social media can have a negative impact on individuals and organisations, particularly when negative information spreads rapidly and widely on social media (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021).

The social cognitive theory suggests that individuals learn and form attitudes and beliefs through observation and social interactions. The findings from the study support this theory as it reveals that social media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and discourse on various issues, including the organ trafficking case involving Ike Ekweremadu. The high level of exposure to social media comments on the case among Benin City residents suggests that they are learning and forming attitudes and beliefs about the case through social media. Additionally, the adverse impact of social media comments on Ike Ekweremadu's reputation highlights the influence of social media on individuals' attitudes and beliefs. The findings also revealed the importance of private messaging apps, such as Whatsapp, in facilitating the spread of information and opinions, which can further influence individuals' attitudes and beliefs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that social media had a range of emotional and cognitive impacts on Benin City residents' perception of Ike Ekweremadu's organ trafficking case. The most commonly reported impacts were empathetic with the implicated individuals and frustration with the Nigerian government. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Social media users should exercise caution when sharing or commenting on information, particularly if it involves sensitive issues such as allegations of criminal activity.
2. Social media platforms should also consider implementing measures to reduce the spread of false or harmful information.
3. Political stakeholders, health and legal practitioners should use social media platforms as campaign mechanisms to promote awareness and education on issues such as organ trafficking.
4. Despite the significant role of social media in shaping public opinion and discourse, traditional media sources such as television, radio and print media should not be overlooked. Traditional media sources can provide a more balanced and in-depth analysis of issues and can reach audiences that may not have access to social media.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ADDRESSING FAKE NEWS AND MISINFORMATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH BLOCK CHAIN-ENABLED SOLUTIONS

Timothy Omobude; Ambrose Uchenunu & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Journalism serves as a watchman who never sleeps. We are constantly surrounded by information in this new digital era; the majority of which is verifiable and the majority of which cannot be verified. As a result, separating fact from fiction has become an impossible endeavor (Asemah & Asogwa, 2012), Digital media are actually a rapidly and broadly expanding source of news, entertainment, information, shopping and social contact (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Because of its characteristics and expressions, citizens, development professionals and other stakeholders have expressed worry about the predominance of disinformation in modern politics. The potential for rapid dissemination and difficulty in reversing misinformation, its rise in popularity in international politics, its ability to distort the truth renders it useless and replaces it with false information.

Santas & Asemah (2021) note that one of the critical problems that is currently plaguing most democratic states around the world is the menace of fake news. Also, Adeniyi (2019) notes that recent changes in the media landscape have given rise to fresh worries about how easily fake news can infiltrate democratic countries and how little the general public can do to stop it. In today's media ecosystem, especially across social media platforms, information spreads quickly and this helps fake news as a kind of misinformation. Because there are so many information sources available online, people tend to rely largely on heuristics and social cues to evaluate the reliability of information and establish their opinions which are then very challenging to change or correct. Real-time detection algorithms are challenged by the relatively small, but dynamic number of sources that provide false information on social media; they are also given hope for more focused socio-technical interventions. It is important to note that the pursuit of the truth, social responsibility and the public good are the three guiding principles of journalism (Asemah, Edegoh & Ezebuenyi, 2013).

Temileyin (2009) opines that fake news is a sort of propaganda or yellow journalism that is made up of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes that are disseminated through social media or traditional print and broadcast news outlets. Fake news has returned and is being used more frequently thanks to digital news. The news is then frequently repeated as false information on social media, while it also occasionally appears in the mainstream media.

In order to attract readers, sensational, dishonest or downright invented headlines are frequently used in fake news which is written and published with the purpose to deceive in order to harm a company or a person. The term "fake news" or "false news" refers to information that has been fabricated with the intent of misleading or deceiving the general audience. These seek to mislead, further a political goal or sway the public's opinions on many subjects. Fake news is not a recent occurrence.

Social media and the internet rule the modern era (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021, 2023; Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). Smolla (2009) asserts that social media and the internet have increased the vigour of our public conversation. Every person with a connection can speak. The gatekeepers of agendas are

no longer the major media organisations. There are few entry hurdles, almost universal access and (for those who choose it) anonymity in this era of democratisation. The way news is disseminated has changed dramatically with the advent of the internet. Our daily newsfeed used to come from reliable sources like journalists and media outlets in the past. These have to adhere to a stringent code of conduct. However, there are few restrictions or editorial standards for news and information that is accessible online (Asemah, 2014).

Through internet-based social media, communication and conversation are also exploding (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). As a result, there can be less consideration, contemplation and focus on factual accuracy. There is always a chance that a channeling trend in which like-minded people converse with like-minded people with less exposure or genuine conversation with those who are on different wavelengths will occur.

Blockchain is a decentralised and distributed ledger technology that records transactions across several computers linked in a peer-to-peer network. The technology's key features such as transparency, immutability and decentralisation make it an attractive solution for fake news and misinformation. Blockchain technology can be employed in various ways to counteract the spread of fake news in Nigeria. Solutions include the use of blockchain for news verification, establishing digital identity and creating transparent advertising. Blockchain can be used to verify the authenticity of news items. News stories can be time-stamped and stored on the blockchain, making it easy to trace their origin and verify their authenticity (Manski, 2017). This approach can deter the spread of fake news by making it easy to identify and discredit unverified stories. Also, blockchain can be used to create immutable digital identities. This can prevent anonymous entities from spreading false information and making it easier to hold those responsible for disseminating fake news accountable. By utilising blockchain, it becomes possible to track the origin of information, ensure tamper-proof records and validate the accuracy of news articles, thereby mitigating the spread of misinformation.

The news media is typically viewed as a reliable source of a genuine account of what occurs throughout the world (Motsaathebe, 2011). Journalists use a variety of sources when reporting the news in order to validate or give the information they present credibility. Fake news (the art of fabricating tales from your bedroom because you have a smart phone with inexpensive data) is quickly taking over the media (Kolawole, 2017). It is not new, though. This current social media generation did not invent it. For the most of our lives, we have been exposed to phoney news. The aforementioned claims highlight how fake news has an impact on society as well as the media. The problem of fake news is spreading like wildfire; thanks to digital media and it is clearly having a negative effect on well-known online newspapers. According to Allcot & Gentzkow (2017), the rise of false news may be both a cause of and a result of the waning faith in traditional media. If false news has an influence on traditional media, just image what it will do to large internet publications.

Although, there have been several efforts to curb the spread of fake news in Nigeria, but it is obvious that these efforts have proven to be abortive; as fake news still thrive. It is based on the above that the researchers were motivated to assessed blockchain-enabled solutions in addressing fake news and misinformation in Nigeria.

Fake News: An Overview

Fake news refers to intentionally false or misleading information presented as genuine news, often disseminated through various platforms, including social media, websites and

traditional media outlets. The term "fake news" gained prominence during the 2016 United States presidential election, where false information and propaganda spread rapidly across social media platforms. However, the phenomenon of spreading misinformation is not new (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Historically, propaganda, hoaxes and misinformation have been used to manipulate public opinion. What sets fake news apart today is its unprecedented reach and speed of dissemination.

According to Allcott & Gentzkow (2017), fake news refers to intentionally fabricated or misleading information presented as genuine news. It is characterised by its deceptive nature, aiming to deceive and misinform readers or viewers. Fake news can take various forms, including false headlines, manipulated images or videos, misleading quotations and fabricated stories. The dissemination of fake news often occurs through digital platforms, such as social media, where it can rapidly spread and reach a wide audience.

Fake news can have severe consequences for individuals and institutions. It can influence election outcomes, incite violence, damage reputations and undermine public health efforts as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies have shown that exposure to fake news can shape individuals' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, amplifying divisions and fueling conspiracy theories. Addressing the issue of fake news is complex and multifaceted, presenting several challenges. The digital age has democratised information dissemination, allowing anyone to create and spread content easily. This poses a challenge in terms of regulating and monitoring the vast amount of information shared online.

Concept of Blockchain Technology

A revolutionary idea, blockchain technology has the potential to completely transform a number of industries, including finance, supply chain management, healthcare and more. It is a decentralised, distributed ledger system that makes sure that digital transactions are transparent, immutable and secure. Blockchain technology, according to Ayinde (2019), is a digital, decentralised ledger that keeps track of transactions across numerous computers or nodes. Transparency, immutability and peer-to-peer consensus are its guiding principles. Through the use of cryptographic hashes, each transaction or block, is connected to the one before it to build a chain. A tamper-proof and auditable history of transactions is provided by this structure.

According to Aniche (2020), some of the key features and components of blockchain technology are:

a. **Decentralisation:** By using blockchain technology, transactions can be verified and validated without the requirement for a central authority (like a bank or government). Instead, it depends on a network of dispersed nodes, each of which keeps a copy of the blockchain and so eliminates any possibility of a single point of failure.

b. **Transparency and Immutability:** All transactions recorded on the blockchain are transparent and accessible to all participants in the network. Once a transaction is added to the blockchain, it becomes immutable, making it extremely difficult to alter or manipulate historical records.

c. **Smart Contracts:** Smart contracts are self-executing contracts with predefined rules encoded on the blockchain. They automatically facilitate, verify or enforce the

performance of contractual agreements without intermediaries, enhancing efficiency and reducing costs.

It should be noted here that blockchain technology enables faster, secure and cost-effective cross-border payments, eliminates intermediaries in remittances and facilitates the issuance and management of digital assets like crypto currencies. It also enhances transparency in auditing and regulatory compliance.

Effects of Fake News and Misinformation in Nigeria

Fake news and misinformation have the power to stir up social strife and division in Nigerian society (Adagba & Ukah, 2019). False information spreading on social media, messaging apps and websites has exacerbated already existing tensions and sparked the development of new fault lines. Misleading narratives, hate speech and altered images have contributed to ethnic and religious conflicts, community violence and intergroup antagonism. The social divisions that ensue weaken social cohesion and damage national unity, impeding development.

In Nigeria's political manipulation and election procedures, false information and news stories are a major factor. Political actors use fake information to spread false narratives, damage the reputations of rivals and sway public opinion (Anifowose, 2020). Such strategies damage the democratic process' credibility and diminish public confidence in institutions. Additionally, the spread of false information during elections can result in violence, voter apathy and a distorted perception of candidates' positions, impeding the nation's progress towards democracy. The impact of fake news and misinformation on Nigeria's economy is significant. The dissemination of false information regarding economic policies, investment opportunities or business activities can cause panic, uncertainty and a decline in investor confidence. This can discourage foreign investments, stifle economic growth and impede job creation.

Roles of Blockchain Technology in Addressing Fake News and Misinformation in Nigeria

The spread of false information in recent years has become a serious problem everywhere, especially in Nigeria. The spread of false information can have severe consequences, impacting social cohesion, political stability and economic well-being. However, emerging technologies such as blockchain offer potential solutions to tackle this pressing issue. Some of the roles of blockchain technology in addressing fake news and misinformation in Nigeria are:

a. **Immutable and Transparent Record-keeping:** According to Durusu & Köse (2020), one of the primary strengths of blockchain is its ability to create an immutable and transparent record of information. By storing news content on a blockchain, it becomes nearly impossible to alter or manipulate the information without consensus from the network participants. This transparency ensures accountability, as every modification or addition to the content can be traced back to its source, reducing the likelihood of fake news dissemination.

b. **Decentralised fact-checking and verification:** Blockchain-based platforms can facilitate decentralised fact-checking and verification processes. Liang (2017) notes that

through the use of smart contracts, a decentralised network of validators can collaborate to assess the accuracy of news articles and verify their credibility. This approach reduces reliance on centralised authorities and promotes a community-driven effort to combat misinformation, enhancing the reliability of news sources.

c. **Reputation and Content ranking:** Blockchain technology can enable the creation of reputation systems and content ranking mechanisms to combat fake news. By incorporating user feedback and ratings into a blockchain-based system, the credibility and trustworthiness of news sources and individual journalists can be assessed and ranked. This approach empowers users to make informed decisions about the reliability of news content, discouraging the spread of misinformation (Zhang, 2018).

d. **Secure Data sharing and Collaboration:** Blockchain technology can facilitate secure data sharing and collaboration among media organiSations, journalists and fact-checking agencies. By leveraging blockchain's cryptographic protocols, data can be shared in a tamper-proof and encrypted manner, preventing unauthorised modifications and ensuring data integrity. This secure collaboration enhances the efficiency and accuracy of fact-checking processes, minimising the dissemination of fake news.

Challenges of Blockchain Technology in Addressing Fake News and Misinformation

While blockchain technology offers promising solutions in combating fake news and misinformation, its implementation in Nigeria faces several challenges. Understanding these challenges is essential to effectively harness the potential of blockchain in addressing the spread of false information. Some of these challenges are:

a. **Limited Technological Infrastructure:** Nigeria faces infrastructural challenges, including limited internet connectivity and access to technology in certain regions (Komiti & Asemah, 2021; Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023). Unequal access to technology and the internet may hinder the widespread adoption of blockchain-based platforms, limiting their effectiveness in combating fake news and misinformation across the country.

b. **Low Digital Literacy Rates:** Digital literacy rates in Nigeria vary, with a significant portion of the population lacking the necessary skills to navigate and utilise blockchain technology effectively. Insufficient digital literacy poses a challenge in educating the public about blockchain-based solutions and encouraging their adoption to combat misinformation.

c. **High Energy consumption:** Blockchain technology, particularly in its most commonly known implementation (proof-of-work consensus mechanism), requires significant computational power and energy consumption. Nigeria's already strained energy infrastructure may pose challenges in supporting the energy-intensive nature of blockchain, making it less sustainable in some regions.

d. **Governance and Regulation:** The governance and regulation of blockchain technology present challenges in ensuring responsible use and preventing the misuse of blockchain-based platforms. Establishing clear regulatory frameworks that address issues such as content moderation, privacy and accountability is crucial to harnessing the potential of blockchain in combatting fake news and misinformation.

Review of Empirical Studies

In a study by Adeoluwa (2020) titled 'Blockchain and fake news mitigation in Nigeria,' it was noted that blockchain-enabled solutions exhibit significant potential in tackling the pervasive issue of fake news and misinformation in Nigeria. By leveraging the immutable and transparent nature of blockchain, it becomes possible to trace the origin of news items and authenticate their sources. Omotayo & Alade (2021) focused on the preliminary impact of blockchain-enabled solutions on misinformation in Nigeria. The findings showed that these solutions could have a profound effect on the dissemination of fake news. The transparency and trust inherent in blockchain technology potentially allows for a higher level of accountability in news distribution.

Olugbenga, Muyiwa & Oluwafemi (2019) carried out a study titled **'**blockchain solutions in Nigeria: Addressing the fake news phenomenon.' They found that blockchain technology has been hailed as a potential antidote to the spread of fake news in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the technology acceptance model. This is a widely recognised model in the field of information systems research that aims to explain how and why individuals accept or reject technology. Fred Davis first put forth the model in 1986 and since then, it has been expanded upon and improved by other researchers.

According to the paradigm, users' attitudes towards technology are influenced by their perceptions of the technology's usefulness measured by how well it helps people perform their jobs or complete their tasks. The model also suggests that users' attitudes towards technology are influenced by their perceptions of the technology's perceived ease of use which relates to how much work the user believes is necessary to learn and utilise the technology properly. In the context of blockchain-enabled solutions for combating fake news and misinformation, assessing the perceived usefulness of the technology is crucial. Users need to perceive the benefits and advantages of blockchain such as enhanced transparency, data integrity and decentralised verification, in combating the spread of false information. Studies can evaluate users' perceptions of how blockchain can contribute to trustworthiness, accuracy and credibility in news dissemination, shaping their acceptance and adoption of such solutions.

The theory recognises several factors that influence technology acceptance. These factors, such as subjective norms, perceived credibility and perceived risks, can also be applied to the assessment of blockchain-enabled solutions in combating fake news and misinformation. Users' perception of the credibility and reputation of blockchain-based platforms, social influences and concerns about privacy and security can shape their acceptance or rejection of the technology. The theory emphasises the iterative nature of technology assessment. Assessing blockchain-enabled solutions in combating fake news and misinformation requires continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement. The theory provides a structure to assess users' acceptance, identify challenges and refine the technology to enhance its effectiveness in addressing the issue.

Discussion

According to Zhang (2018), the effectiveness of blockchain-enabled solutions in detecting and preventing the dissemination of fake news and misinformation is a topic that requires comprehensive research and evaluation. He notes that blockchain-enabled solutions have been effective in detecting and preventing the dissemination of fake news because it can

provide a transparent and tamper-resistant platform for storing and verifying information. By recording data in a decentralised manner, it becomes difficult for malicious actors to manipulate or alter information without consensus from the network participants. This can enhance the integrity of news and information shared within the ecosystem.

Implementing blockchain technology as a solution to address fake news and misinformation in the Nigerian context faces several challenges and limitations. According to Osho (2020), one of the primary challenges is the level of technological awareness and infrastructure readiness in Nigeria. Blockchain technology requires a certain level of technical expertise and infrastructure to be effectively implemented. Ensuring widespread access to reliable internet connectivity and the necessary technical skills for both users and developers is crucial. Widespread adoption and integration of blockchain technology into existing digital information ecosystems can be a challenging task. It requires cooperation and collaboration from various stakeholders, including government agencies, media organiations and technology providers. Convincing these stakeholders to adopt blockchain solutions and integrating them seamlessly into their existing platforms may face resistance and require significant coordination efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the discourse, it can be concluded that fake news and misinformation in Nigeria can be effectively addressed through Block Chain-Enabled Solutions. Thus, it is recommended that to effectively combat fake news and misinformation using blockchain, it is crucial to foster collaboration among key stakeholders. Government agencies, media organisations, technology companies and civil society groups should work together to establish standards, guidelines and protocols for implementing blockchain solutions. Mores so, user adoption and awareness are critical for the success of any blockchain-based solution. Thus, there is need to prioritise public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives to inform citizens about the benefits and functionalities of blockchain technology in combating fake news and misinformation.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE WITH DIGITISATION IN NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, BENIN NETWORK CENTRE

Osaro Favour Osasenaga; Safiya Kaka Muhammad Dagaci & Festus Prosper Olise

Introduction

The advent of digital technology has revolutionised the way we consume and access media content. In Nigeria, the government has made significant efforts to digitise the country's television broadcasting system with the aim of improving the quality of transmission and expanding the reach of television programming. Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is one of the country's largest television networks, with several regional stations across the country, including the Benin Network Centre (Nwaoboli, 2023). Digitisation of the Nigerian television broadcasting system will bring about a significant transformation in the way media content is produced, distributed and consumed in the country. One of the key benefits of digitisation is the improved quality of transmission, which ensures that viewers can access high-quality content with minimal disruptions (Adejumo, 2017). Additionally, digitisation has expanded the reach of television programming, as more viewers can access content through multiple devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets (Iyoha, 2017).

The implementation of digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre has been ongoing for several years, but the level of compliance among stakeholders remains a topic of interest. The process of digitisation involves the adoption of new technologies, processes and systems to facilitate the transmission of television signals. The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing the implementation of digitisation in the Nigerian television industry (Joint Information Systems Committee, 2015). The NBC has at several times set deadline for the completion of the DSO process, which is expected to improve the quality of television broadcasting in the country significantly.

Compliance to digitisation involves the adoption of new technologies, processes and systems to ensure seamless transmission of television signals (Ademola & Olokundun, 2018). NTA Benin Network Centre has adopted new technologies such as digital transmitters and set-top boxes to facilitate the transition. The level of compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre has implications for the overall quality of television broadcasting in Nigeria. However, the level of compliance among stakeholders in the process of digitisation remains an area of concern. Stakeholders in the process of digitisation include NTA management, programme producers, advertisers and viewers. Therefore, it is essential to identify the challenges and opportunities that exist in the process of digitisation to enhance compliance and improve the overall quality of television broadcasting in Nigeria. It is on this premise that this study examined the level of compliance to digitisation in Nigerian Television Authority, Benin Network Centre.

Statement of the Problem

The limited level of compliance to digitisation in Nigerian media houses can be attributed to several issues, including inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, limited public awareness, resistance to change and inconsistent regulatory enforcement (Nwaoboli, 2023). These issues pose significant challenges to the adoption of new digital technologies,

which can slow down the compliance process and create an uneven playing field for broadcasters. Despite the mandatory deadline for the digitisation of broadcasting in Nigeria and several researches on media digitisation in Nigeria such as Ademola & Olokundun (2018), there is still lack of clarity on the level of compliance to this directive by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Benin Network Centre. This raises concern about the extent to which the NTA is prepared to meet the demands of the digital age. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the level of compliance to digitisation at the NTA Benin Network Centre. This study thus seeks to address the question: what is the level of compliance to digitisation in Nigerian Television Authority, Benin Network Centre?

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent of adoption of digital technologies by NTA Benin Network Centre in the process of digitisation.
2. Assess the level of compliance among stakeholders involved in the process of digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre.
3. Examine the challenges hindering compliance to digitisation at the NTA Benin Network Centre.
4. Find out the impacts of non-compliance to digitisation on the operations of the NTA, Benin Network Centre.

Conceptual Clarification of Digitisation

Digitisation is the use of digital technology to create, store, process and communicate information (Webster & Watson, 2002). This means that digital technology is not only used to convert analogue information into digital format, but also to create, store, process, and communicate information. Digitisation in this sense is seen as a transformative process that enables new forms of knowledge creation and communication in various domains, including education, healthcare, and entertainment (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b).

Deegan & Tanner (2002) define digitisation as the process of creating digital surrogates of analogue materials (such as books, manuscripts, photographs and audiovisual recordings) for the purpose of preservation, access and dissemination. This definition focuses on the preservation aspect of digitisation, which involves creating digital surrogates of analogue materials to ensure their long-term survival and accessibility. Digitisation, in this sense, is seen as a means of mitigating the risks of physical deterioration and obsolescence of analogue materials, while also enabling broader access and dissemination of cultural heritage and other forms of information.

Joint Information Systems Committee (2015) sees digitisation as the process of transforming information into a digital form that can be easily accessed, searched and analysed using digital technologies. This definition highlights the potential of digitisation to enable new forms of information management and analysis. Digitisation in this sense involves transforming information into digital form, which can be easily accessed, searched, and analysed using digital technologies. This enables new forms of data-driven research and decision-making in various domains, including business, science, and government.

In sum, digitisation can be defined as the process of converting analogue information into digital format for the purpose of improved storage, processing and

transmission. The aim of digitisation is to improve the storage, processing, and transmission of information, making it easier to access and share with others (Asemah, 2022). Digitisation has become increasingly important in the digital age, as it enables the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, scientific knowledge and other forms of information (Nwaoboli, 2022).

Conceptual Clarification of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is the government-owned national television network in Nigeria. The network has several regional stations across the country, including the Benin Network Centre which serves the Edo State and neighboring states. NTA was established in 1977 as a merger of the former Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), the Eastern Nigeria Television (ENTV), and the Northern Nigeria Television (NTV) (Nwaoboli, 2023). The Benin Network Centre of NTA is one of the major regional stations which was established in 1981 (Nwaoboli, 2023). The station operates from its headquarters in Benin City, the capital of Edo State. The Benin Network Centre serves a population of over 10 million people across Edo, Delta, and parts of Ondo, Kogi, and Anambra states (Nwaoboli, 2023).

The Benin Network Centre of NTA has played a significant role in the broadcasting industry in Nigeria, providing news, entertainment and educational content to millions of viewers in the region. The station has produced several popular television programs, including news and current affairs programs, drama series, and variety shows. Over the years, the Benin Network Centre of NTA has undergone several transformations, including the adoption of new technologies to improve the quality of transmission and expand the reach of television programming. The implementation of digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre has been ongoing for several years, with the station adopting new technologies such as digital transmitters and set-top boxes to facilitate the transition.

Relevance of Media Digitisation

Media digitisation offers a range of benefits that make it an essential aspect of modern technology. One of the primary advantages of media digitisation is the improved accessibility of information (Nkwam-Uwaoma & Asemah, 2020; Oladele & Asemah, 2022; Orah & Asemah, 2023). Digital media allow for information to be accessed from anywhere, at any time and on any device, making it easier for people in remote or rural areas to access information (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). Additionally, digitisation makes it easier for people with disabilities to access information, as digital media can be adapted to meet their specific needs.

Another significant benefit of media digitisation is the preservation of cultural heritage (Asemah, Ekhareafo & Olaniran, 2013). Digitisation can help preserve fragile and irreplaceable analogue media, such as printed documents, images and audiovisual content, by converting them to digital format (Ogundele, Adebayo & Olojede, 2017). This ensures that important cultural artefacts are not lost to time, physical deterioration or other forms of damage. Cultural institutions such as museums, archives and libraries can use digitisation to preserve and protect cultural heritage.

Media digitisation also enables the efficient distribution of information to a large number of people. With digital media, content can be distributed through multiple channels such as websites, social media, and mobile applications. This makes it easier for content

creators to reach their target audience and for consumers to access the content they need (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). Digital media also enables the integration of multimedia content, such as videos, images, and audio, into digital platforms, making the content more engaging and interactive. Digitisation of media makes it possible to analyse large amounts of data quickly and efficiently. With digital media, it is possible to collect and analyse data such as audience engagement, user behaviour and content performance. This data can be used to improve content creation and distribution strategies and to understand audience needs and preferences.

Furthermore, digital media allows for information to be accessed from anywhere, at any time, and on any device, making it easier for people in remote or rural areas to access information. Additionally, digitisation makes it easier for people with disabilities to access information, as digital media can be adapted to meet their specific needs (Asemah, Nwaoboli &. Beli. 2022). Media digitisation can be cost-effective in the long-run. While the initial cost of digitisation can be high, the long-term benefits such as increased efficiency, improved accessibility and enhanced data analysis can result in cost savings (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). For instance, the storage and replication of digital media is generally less expensive than that of analogue media such as printed documents, film and audio recordings.

Challenges hindering NTA, Benin Network Centre from full digitisation

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Benin Network Centre has been working towards the goal of fully digitising its operations for a number of years now. The move to digital broadcasting is being undertaken in Nigeria with the goals of enhancing the level of transmission quality and increasing the number of people who can access television content. However, several challenges hinder the level of compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre which include:

a. **Lack of awareness and understanding of digitisation:** One of the significant challenges hindering compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre is the lack of awareness and understanding of the process and its benefits among stakeholders. Adejumo (2017) avows that many programme producers and advertisers in NTA Benin Network Centre had limited knowledge of digitisation and its implications for their work. This lack of understanding can lead to resistance to the adoption of new technologies and processes, hindering compliance to digitisation.

b. **High cost of digitisation:** The cost of digitisation is another significant challenge hindering compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre. The high cost of acquiring and maintaining new technologies and systems required for digitisation can be a barrier for some stakeholders, particularly small-scale programme producers and advertisers (Nwaoboli, 2023). Oyetunji (2015) found that the high cost of digitisation was a significant challenge to the adoption of new technologies in the Nigerian broadcasting industry, including NTA Benin Network Centre.

c. **Lack of Technical Expertise and Skills:** The lack of technical expertise and skills among stakeholders is another challenge hindering compliance to digitisation in

NTA Benin Network Centre. The successful implementation of digitisation requires the adoption of new technologies and processes, which may require technical expertise and skills. A study by Iyoha (2017) found that the lack of technical expertise and skills was a significant challenge to the adoption of new technologies in the Nigerian broadcasting industry, including NTA Benin Network Centre.

d. **Limited Infrastructure:** The limited infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, is another challenge hindering compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre. The successful implementation of digitisation requires the availability of adequate infrastructure such as digital transmitters, set-top boxes and high-speed internet. Oyedemi & Akinbode (2018) note that the limited infrastructure was a significant challenge to the adoption of new technologies in the Nigerian broadcasting industry, including NTA Benin Network Centre.

e. **Resistance to Change:** Resistance to change is another challenge hindering compliance to digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre (Nwaoboli, 2023). The adoption of new technologies and processes required for digitisation may require changes in the way stakeholders work, which may be met with resistance. A study by Ademola & Olokundun (2018) found that resistance to change was a significant challenge to the adoption of new technologies in the Nigerian broadcasting industry, including NTA Benin Network Centre.

Empirical Review

Ogundele, Adebayo & Olojede (2017) assessed the level of digitisation of television broadcasting in Nigeria. The objective of the study was to assess the level of digitisation of television broadcasting in Nigeria and to identify the factors influencing the adoption of digital broadcasting technologies in the country. Diffusion of innovation theory was utilised for the study, descriptive survey was utilised as research design and a structured questionnaire as research instrument. The findings showed that the level of digitisation of television broadcasting in Nigeria was low due to various factors such as inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise and infrastructural challenges. The findings also showed that the adoption of digital broadcasting technologies was influenced by factors such as perceived advantages, complexity and compatibility. The researchers recommended that the government should provide more funding for the digitisation of television broadcasting in Nigeria and also encourage partnerships between stakeholders in the industry to promote the adoption of digital broadcasting technologies.

Omojola (2018) assessed the impact of digitisation on radio broadcasting in Nigeria to determine the factors that influence the adoption of digital technologies in radio broadcasting. Technology acceptance model, descriptive survey research design and a structured questionnaire respectively served as the research theory, design and instrument of data collection. The researcher found that the impact of digitisation on radio broadcasting in Nigeria was significant, with digital technologies enhancing the quality of radio broadcasts and improving audience engagement.

Onabajo & Oyeweso (2018) examined the role of the government in the digitisation of broadcasting in Nigeria and to identify the challenges hindering the adoption of digital

broadcasting technologies in the country. Political economy of communication theory was utilised for the study. Qualitative case study served as research design while In-depth interviews and document analysis were the research instruments. The researchers found that the government had played a significant role in the digitisation of broadcasting in Nigeria, with policies and regulations promoting the adoption of digital technologies. It was, therefore, recommended that the government should provide more funding for the digitisation of broadcasting in Nigeria and also encourage partnerships between stakeholders in the industry to promote the adoption of digital broadcasting technologies.

The three empirical reviews and the current study are related in their focus on digitisation in Nigeria's broadcast media industry, but differ in their specific research questions and scope. The three studies examined the adoption of digital technologies in the industry as a whole, while the current study focuses specifically on compliance to digitisation in a particular network centre. The current study aimed to identify the level of compliance, challenges faced, and measures taken to achieve compliance.

Theoretical Framework

Theories play significant functions in research (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008). This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM is a model that was developed in the 1980s to explain how users come to accept and use technology (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The model was initially proposed by Fred Davis, a researcher in the field of management information systems, in his doctoral dissertation. The model is based on several tenets, including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards using the technology, behavioral intention, and actual use.

Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular technology will improve their performance or productivity (Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023). According to the model, users are more likely to accept and use technology if they perceive it to be useful. Perceived ease of use is the user's perception of how easy it is to use a particular technology (Asemah *et al* 2017). According to the model, users are more likely to accept and use technology if they perceive it to be easy to use. Attitude towards using the technology is the user's overall attitude towards using a particular technology (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). According to the model, users are more likely to accept and use technology if they have a positive attitude towards it. Behavioural intention is the user's intention to use a particular technology. According to the model, users are more likely to accept and use technology if they have a strong intention to use it. Actual use is the user's actual usage of a particular technology. According to the model, actual use is influenced by the user's perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards using the technology and behavioural intention (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a relevant and appropriate theoretical framework for the current study because it can explain why users may or may not comply with the digitisation process and what factors influence their acceptance or rejection of digital technologies. The TAM's focus on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards using technology, behavioural intention and actual use can provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence compliance to digitisation. Also, the use of TAM can provide a theoretical basis for understanding user acceptance and adoption of digital technologies in the broadcast media industry.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey and the research instrument was close-ended questionnaire. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that survey design is useful when conducting research that has to do with a large population. The method of data collection for the study was self-administered questionnaire distributed in person. The respondents were given three days to complete the questionnaire and return it to the researchers.

The population for the study was all staff members working in the Nigerian Television Authority, Benin Network Centre which according to the administrative department of the media house is approximately forty (40). The census technique which involves sampling the entire population was utilised. Census sampling was chosen because of the small population of the study and to ensure statistical significance of the findings. As such, the sample size for the study was 40 staff members of NTA, Benin. This sample size was deemed to be sufficient to provide a representative sample of the population. After the retrieval of the copies of questionnaire, 9 copies were either not returned or filled. The researchers used purposive sampling technique to select the respondents. This is based on the fact that the respondents were in a better position to provide answers on the subject matter.

Data Presentation and Analysi

Table 1: Extent of adoption of Digital Technologies by NTA Benin Network Centre in the process of digitisation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	1	3.2%
High	8	25.8%
Neutral	1	3.2%
Low	9	29.0%
Very low	12	38.7%
Total	**31**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that NTA, Benin Network Centre has not fully adopted digital technologies in the process of digitization.

Table 2: Level of compliance with digitisation in NTA Benin Network Centre

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	0	0%
High	7	22.0%
Neutral	0	0%
Low	12	38.7%
Very low	12	38.7%
Total	**31**	**100%**

Table 2 indicates that the level of compliance with digitisation in the NTA Benin Network Centre is low, with 38.7% of respondents reporting low and very low levels of compliance.

Table 3: Challenges hindering compliance to digitisation at the NTA Benin Network Centre

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of technical expertise	4	12.9%
Resistance to change	3	9.7%
Inadequate funding	4	12.9%
Poor Power supply	5	15.1%
Interference from regulatory agencies	1	3.2%
Lack of management support	8	25.8%
All of the above	6	19.4%
Total	**31**	**100%**

Table 3 highlights the challenges that are impeding NTA Benin Network Centre's compliance with digitisation. The most frequently reported obstacles are lack of management support, poor power supply, and inadequate funding and technical expertise. Resistance to change is also a significant challenge. On the other hand, interference from regulatory agencies is reported to be less of an issue.

Table 4: Impact of non-compliance to digitisation on the Operations of the NTA, Benin Network Centre

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Reduced audience reach	3	9.7%
Reduced revenue	5	15.1%
Inadequate data analytics	4	12.9%
Poor fidelity	7	12.4%
Reduced operational efficiency	5	15.1%
All of the above	9	29.0%
Others	0	0%
Total	**31**	**100%**

Table 4 shows the impact of non-compliance to digitisation on the operations of the NTA Benin Network Centre. The most significant impact include reduced revenue, inadequate data analytics, reduced operational efficiency and poor fidelity of broadcasts. Reduced audience reach was also reported as an impact.

Discussion of Findings

The findings presented in tables 1 to 4 suggest that the NTA Benin Network Centre is facing significant challenges in complying with digitisation. The extent of adoption of digital technologies and the level of compliance with digitisation are both reported to be low, with only a minority of respondents reporting high or very high levels of adoption and compliance. The challenges identified in table 3 are diverse and complex, with technical, organistional and regulatory factors at play. The impact of non-compliance to digitisation identified in table 4 are also significant, with reduced revenue, inadequate data analytics and reduced operational efficiency being the most frequently reported impact.

These findings are consistent with the works of other researchers who have highlighted the challenges faced by media organisations in the process of digitisation; for example, researchers have noted that media organisations face significant challenges in adapting to the new digital environment due to a lack of technical expertise, inadequate

funding and resistance to change (Omojola, 2018). The challenges identified in table 3, including lack of management support and poor power supply, have also been highlighted in other studies as significant barriers to digitisation (Onabajo & Oyeweso, 2019).

The impact of non-compliance to digitisation identified in table 4, including reduced revenue and operational efficiency, have also been highlighted in the literature. For example, researchers have noted that media organisations that fail to embrace digital technologies risk losing revenue opportunities and audience engagement (Picard, 2014). Inadequate data analytics, which was also identified as an impact in table 4, has been highlighted as a significant challenge facing media organisations in the digital age, as it limits their ability to make data-driven decisions and engage with their audience effectively (Wambui, 2019).

The findings presented are relevant to the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains the factors influencing the adoption and use of technology. The low level of adoption of digital technologies and compliance with digitisation at the NTA Benin Network Centre, as highlighted in table 1 and table 3, could be due to a low perception of usefulness and ease of use of digital technologies which are key factors in the TAM. The challenges identified in table 3, such as lack of technical expertise, inadequate funding and resistance to change, could contribute to this perception. The impacts of non-compliance to digitisation identified in table 4, such as reduced revenue and operational efficiency, are consequences of low perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital technologies. Addressing the challenges identified in table 3 could help improve the perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital technologies and increase compliance with digitisation, which is consistent with the TAM.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that there is a low level of compliance to digitisation in Nigerian Television Authority, Benin Network Centre as the medium is facing significant challenges in complying with digitisation. The low levels of adoption and compliance with digitisation, as well as the challenges identified reflect a complex and diverse set of technical, organisational and regulatory factors. The impacts of non-compliance to digitisation are also significant, with reduced revenue, inadequate data analytics and reduced operational efficiency being the most frequently reported impacts. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that:

1. The NTA Benin Network Centre should invest in developing the technical expertise of its staff members to improve their ability to use digital technologies effectively.
2. The NTA Benin Network Centre should secure adequate funding to support the adoption and use of digital technologies.
3. Management support is essential for the successful implementation of digitisation initiatives. The NTA Benin Network Centre should provide adequate support and resources to staff members to encourage their adoption of digital technologies.
4. The NTA Benin Network Centre should engage with regulatory agencies to address any barriers that may impede compliance with digitisation.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

PERCEPTION OF BENIN RESIDENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF TIMOTHY ADEGOKE'S MURDER

Anthonia Okpomini; Daniel O. Ekhareafo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Social media are applications that enhance interaction among people and build social webs that increase social capital. Social media serve as an example of how writers can use their messages to reach hundreds and thousands of people, motivating them to develop lasting and trustworthy collaboration and firm devotion (Santas, Inobemhe, Leman & Asemah, 2021). Social media, especially Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram and Telegram, have an undeniable impact on every aspect of society; thanks to their expanding influence and impact on modern lifestyles. Even in the absence of a media trial, social media improve policymakers, managers and citizens' access to information, as well as the speed with which new information is collected, evaluated and communicated, allowing it to play a greater role in crime prevention (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). A crime may be exacerbated or aided by the media. Despite this, the media's function in every crime, including social media users' trials and dialectics, cannot be over emphasised (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022).

Murder case has been an issue of concern in the nations of the world and this action has been carried out for different purposes such as rituals, taking revenge, desperation and many others. Despite its great effect on society, only few researches have been done on media's role in crime management (Iyomih, 2019; Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013). It is worthy to note that none of these studies focused on social media coverage on Timothy Adegoke's murder case. This is the gap this study fills.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent to which social media created awareness on Timothy Adegoke's murder case.
2. Find out the social media channels through which Benin City residents got the information about Timothy Adegoke's murder case.
3. Ascertain the perception of social media users in Benin City on Timothy Adegoke's murder case.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on agenda setting theory. The agenda-setting theory can be traced back to Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion, which was released in 1922 (Nwaoboli, 2023; Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). According to Lippmann, the mainstream media are the fundamental means for connecting world happenings and public perspectives (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Asemah & Amah, 2021). In 1963, Bernard Cohen quoted Lippmann and stated that while it might not be a successful process sometimes in informing individuals

what to think, it is stunningly possible in telling people what to think about." According to Cohen, "the globe do appear differently to various individuals, depending on the map that the penman, editors and publishers of the newspaper want to draw their attention to.

In 1922, Walter Lippmann's book on Public Opinion set the standard for the theory of agenda setting by arguing that the news media can devise our view of the globe. The theory on agenda setting by the media holds that the topics that are covered by the media have a big impact on the kinds of problems that people discuss, consider and worry about (Dominick & Wimmer, 2000, cited in Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). This suggests that if the news media choose to focus the most time and attention on HIV/AIDS coverage, this issue will become the most important one in the minds of the audience. The applicability of this theory to the study demonstrates how social media can influence how viewers perceive events by disseminating them at particular time. This will directly or indirectly create in the minds of social media users a pattern of thinking that will make them know how cruel individuals can be and also being security conscious.

Literature Review

Internet-based social media programmes make it simpler to exchange and produce user-generated material (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). According to Kaplan & Haelein (2010), it was first utilised in 1979 when Jim Ellis and Tom Truscott of Duke University developed Usenet, a forum for worldwide discussion that unrestricted remarks from internet users. The first publicly acknowledged social networking platform was Usenet (Nwaoboli, 2022; Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). The usage of social media channels to build online communities where individuals can share knowledge, ideas, private messages and other sorts of content has grown quite popular. People can create online communities through social media, also known as electronic communication, where they can share information, messages in private, ideas and a variety of other things (including websites) (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022).

Murder is regarded as a horrible crime in every human society. The criteria for a crime to qualify as murder are outlined in Section 316 of the Nigerian Criminal Code. These include the offender's desire to harm the deceased person or another person; the offender's intent to do something to the deceased person or another person; death brought on by a deed committed in furtherance of an illegal purpose is likely to put human life in peril; the perpetrator intends to cause some people great harm person with the intention of aiding in the commission of an offense, whereby the offender may be without a valid warrant (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022. Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). Death brought on by the administration of any astonishing or overwhelming substance for either of the aforementioned purposes, death brought on by purposefully stopping breathing for either of the aforementioned purposes or death brought on by aiding in the escape of a criminal who has committed or attempted to commit any such crime (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022).

Perception can be defined as a means of understanding or the consciousness of sensory message (Nwaoboli, 2022). The Latin word ‘perceptio,’ which means receiving, gathering activity of taking possession and apprehension with the mind or senses, is where the word "perception" comes from (Rao &Narayan, 2015). This Latin term served as the

basis for the English word "perception." The process of becoming aware of or understanding sensory data is called perception. Quick & Nelson (2017) define it as the act of processing information about another person or circumstance. This definition has made it very clear that the opinions we make about other people or things rely on the amount of information that is available to us and how effectively we are able to understand the information that we have. To put it another way, even if you and a group of other people are given the same set of information about a specific event, person or group of people, you may still reach different conclusions because of individual differences in how you all interpret the data. Consequently, perception is the process through which we construct judgements about the characteristics and personalities of other individuals. According to Rao & Narayan (2018), the elements of perception are:

a. Our environment has an impact on how we pay attention, feel and behave.
b. Perception aids in gathering information from your environment, processing it and giving it meaning.
c. It can be challenging to distinguish the information from the activity in perception.
d. It basically entails a process of mental understanding.

The act of seeing something may be broken down into three stages: selection, organisation and interpretation. Perception aids the perceiver in gathering, processing and using the information.

Nwaoboli & Asemah, (2023) carried out a study on the perception of social media trial of Chidinma Ojukwu's alleged murder case among select Edo residents. Survey research method was adopted. The findings showed that the respondents had high and significant level of awareness on the alleged murder case due to their level of accessibility to social media and the regularity of update on stories that centre around it. The findings also showed that the murder case was shaped by prevailing mood and emotions on social media, personal prejudices as well as moral, ethical and religious inclinations and not based on evidence or hard facts supporting the alleged murder case. Thus, the researchers recommended among others that social media users should verify the authenticity of crime-related stories on their timeline through fact-finding alternatives before forming opinion of such stories to avoid being misled without credible facts on pending court cases.

Methodology

The researchers used survey researcher and questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareofo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), surveys are useful in studies that are large. Therefore, this approach was chosen and adopted in order to obtain objective, balanced and reliable result. The population of the study comprises residents of Benin City Edo, state which stands at 1,495,800 (National Population Commission, NPC, 2016).The sample size for the study is 384, using the Cochran sample size determination formula.

The researchers adopted multistage sampling technique. This sampling technique, as Asemah *et al* (2022) affirmed, involves using more than one sampling technique in selecting a sample size to ensure precision and thoroughness. In the first stage, the city was stratified into four zones; following the four (4) major local government areas in the city;

these include Oredo, Egor, Ovia North- East and Ikpoba-Okha local government areas. In the second stage, Ekenwan Road, Sakponba Road, Ugbowo Road and Ikpoba-Hill were purposively selected because the researchers considered the areas to be such that reliable data could be obtained. In the third stage, the process of randomisation was used to distribute the 384 copies of questionnaire. The researchers randomly distributed 96 copies of questionnaire in each of the areas. Following this process, the researchers distributed a total of 384 copies of questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent to which Social Media created awareness on Timothy Adegoke's Murder

Variables	Frequency	%
Very high	145	27.2
High	125	51.7
Neutral	61	16.1
Low	29	3.4
Very low	19	1.6
Total	**379**	**100**

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents affirmed that social media created awareness on Timothy Adegoke's murder at a significant level (n=196, 51.7%). The implication of this is that the coverage of the issue was to a great extent on social media and as such Benin City residents on social media were highly aware of it.

Table 2: Social Media Platform through which Respondents were aware of Timothy Adegoke's Murder

Variables	Frequency	%
Facebook	108	28.5
Twitter	58	15.3
Instagram	88	23.2
YouTube	21	5.5
TikTok	37	9.8
WhatsApp	67	17.7
Others	0	0
Total	**379**	**100**

Data in table 2 presented above indicated that all the respondents were aware of Timothy Adegoke's murder via different social media platforms. Specifically, majority of the respondents indicated that their medium of awareness of the trial was Facebook (n=108, 28.5%). The implication of this data is that there was high volume of stories on the case on different social media platforms and that Facebook still remains a dominant social media platform.

Table 3: Social Media coverage on Timothy Adegoke's Murder helped in the demand for Justice

Variables	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	105	27.7
Agree	177	46.7
Neutral	68	17.9
Disagree	18	4.7
Strongly disagree	11	2.9
Total	**379**	**100**

Responses of the respondents as presented in table 3 show that majority (n=177, 46.7%) perceived that social media coverage on Timothy Adegoke's murder helped in bringing the culprits to justice. The import of this data is that social media coverage helped in advocating for judgement to be meted out on the accused, which was achieved at the end.

Table 4: Social Media coverage on Timothy Adegoke's Murder gave the trial Social Prominence in the Society

Variables	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	139	36.7
Agree	209	55.1
Neutral	18	4.7
Disagree	10	2.6
Strongly disagree	3	0.8
Total	379	100

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (n=209, 55.1%) affirmed that the level of social media coverage of Timothy Adegoke's murder trial gave the trial prominence in the society. The implication of this data is that social media platform steady circulation and promotion of stories on the murder case resulted in significant level of interest among both the citizenry and netizens in Benin City.

Table 5: Perception on Timothy Adegoke's Murder was based on Public Outrage and Emotions

Variables	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	127	33.5
Agree	198	52.2
Neutral	36	9.5
Disagree	11	2.9
Strongly disagree	7	1.8
Total	**379**	**100**

Table 5 shows that social media coverage on Timothy Adegoke's Murder was based on public outrage and emotions (n=198, 52.2%). The import of this data is that majority of respondents' perception on the murder case were based on the public emotions and personal prejudices which fuelled their drive towards ensuring continuous updates and coverage of the trial.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that social media raised awareness of the murder case of Timothy Adegoke. This implies that social media created awareness to a high extent and the respondents were exposed to social media platforms. This high degree of awareness can be linked to the increasing number of social media users in Nigeria, especially amongst young people who constitute the largest demography of social media users in the world, due to the active role of social media use in information gathering, processing and dissemination; social media offer that speed-up information exposure and awareness amongst users (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

The results also indicated that majority of respondents use social media in respect to the murder case and the case received a lot of exposure on social media due to the high number of respondents who affirmed that they were aware of the murder case. This supports the assertion of Nwabueze & Ebeze (2013) that ordinary citizens may use social media to expose criminality and raise public awareness about terrorist attacks. It was found that the degree of exposure on the part of the majority of the respondents is closely linked to the fact that Twitter, Instagram and Facebook constituted the major social media platforms where the respondents were exposed to stories giving details of his murder case and these stories come mostly in comments, pictures, tweets and video forms, which are the major information dissemination tools of the social media platforms the respondents were exposed to.

The findings also revealed that social media coverage of Timothy Adegoke's murder helped in bringing the culprit to justice and also the medium used in advocating for judgement to be meted out on the accused was achieved at the end. Findings in this study also indicated that the view of Benin City residents on social media coverage of Timothy Adegoke's murder case was shaped by prevailing mood and emotions on social media and personal prejudices which fuelled their drive towards continuous update and coverage of the trial. It was found that the respondents showed considerable level of interest towards Timothy Adegoke's murder case as disseminated via the various social media platforms which was predominantly due to the linked to the prominence and popularity given to the issue. Therefore, prominence helps in shaping the perception of the respondents on the deceased murder case.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers discovered that the respondents were exposed to the murder case of Timothy Adegoke through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube and Tiktok. This underscores the popularity of social media platform over mainstream conventional media like television, newspaper, radio and magazines. In addition, the degree of exposure to the murder case also influenced the perception of the respondents to the social media case on the murder. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that the media, most especially social media should be used as a great tool in advocating for perpetrators of evil, such as murder cases to be brought to book, not considering their social status. More so, social media platforms can be leveraged on and also give opportunity to those that do have a voice to seek for justice.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

NOLLYWOOD PREMIERES, PUBLICITY AND THE CULTURE OF MOVIE CONSUMPTION IN NIGERIA

Glory Ugbotor; Adeline O. Nkwam-Uwaoma & Blessing Ajirioghene Omoevah

Introduction

Premiere simply means first performance of first viewing. It is a platform for stakeholders and critics with particular art works to preview such works of art before they are distributed to the general public. Nonetheless, the essence of movie premiere is to add value to the content of any work of art produced and the entertainment industry; generally, in this way, the premiere culture is fast taking prominence in "Nollywood" (Aladi, 2005). For many years, Nollywood movies have provided an ideal past time for people around the world in terms of entertainment, education, social enlightenment and empowerment. It has evolved over the years, from the colonial era in the 80s when Lebanese and Indian businessmen invested in the construction of cinema houses and theatre troupe performances, to the advent of television programmes (one cannot talk about movies without talking about television as neither can exist without the other. The relationship between film and television became closer in the 1960s as movies and soap operas made expressly for TV shown on network television, soap opera and film production and has grown beyond this to movies premiere which have become big events that are celebrated in great pump and style. Movie premiere, which is popular with the western culture, plays a major role in commercialisation of movies, both locally and internationally, in terms of production, exhibition and distribution and in recent years, has become a big source of revenue for both the industry and the country, influencing other sector and industries in the economy such as entertainment industry, corporate organisations and the educational sector.

In Nigeria today, the cinema which has evolved from the colonial era, has adopted the home video format, merging the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa cinemas which churn out new movies on a weekly basis (Ogwo, Asemah & Ottah, 2013). Other ethnic cinemas such as the Benin cinema are beginning to spring up, especially in their locality. The media, social media and information technology (ICTs) are also active structure and channels in the promotion and publicity of Nigeria movies. According to Okhakhu (2008, p.56):

> The video film format of film making is new and highly popularised in Africa by Nigerian businessmen- turned producers. Up till now, perhaps no other African country has produced as many video films as the Nigeria film sector. Therefore, any discussion of the video film format in Africa without overt reference to Nigeria is not plausible.

It is within this premise that this work seeks to examine the economy and social factors responsible for the growth of this art form (movie premieres) in Nigeria, its effect on Nollywood and its audience and the publicity of Nigeria movies.

Overview of Premiere as a Form of Movie Publicity

The premiere has been defined as the first viewing of any art work. The place of movie premiere in the Nigeria movie market must not be underestimated. Premiere in the Nigeria movie industry has contributed immensely to the changes in movie publicity in Nigeria. Nollywood movies have always been a platform to educate, entertain and inform its

audience, though through an exaggerated portrayal of characters and stories. According to Bittner (1996), the film really began in the minds of people who came long before the film pioneers. Movie publicity in Nigeria has evolved from strictly television advertisements and overcrowded posters of movies to the new media and social media, which have proven to be effective platforms for the publicity of movies in Nigeria all over the world. Movie premieres, although western in origin, can be seen as a form of reinforcement in the minds of the audience. That is, it creates an expectation in the mind of the movie audience concerning a particular movie, making them want to watch it, especially with the great fan-fare involved when promoting it.

Movie premiere cannot be successful without adequate publicity and promotion of the movies involved. Along this line, Dominick (2012, p. 222) states that "in promoting a film, the first week that a film is in release is crucial; in fact, since most films open on a weekend, the first three days are even more crucial. Films that open badly seldom do well." Consequently, a good deal of promotion, marketing and advertising is targeted to getting people into theatres for that opening weekend. Dominick (2012) further adds that the most common strategy is to launch a media blitz that touts the film weeks before it opens. In essence, without effective use of various media and consistence in publicity, movies and premiere do not stand a chance. It is the various commercials and advertisement in the magazines, newspapers, television, radio or internet that helps reach out to the movie audience. It helps to create awareness in the minds of the audience concerning a particular movie, especially if the producer and director have done a good job in creating a mind blowing story. In as much as premieres are a form of movie publicity, the mass media and new media also play important roles in publicising Nollywood and have also evolved over the years in their respective functions.

Nollywood and the Mass Media in Nigeria

The video film industry is an important private sector player in the Nigerian economy. Apart from oil and gas, telecommunication and perhaps, the banking sector, it is the largest employer of labour, providing job opportunities for thousands of professionals such as directors, producers, actors and actresses, costumiers, editors, camera men and supporting other ancillary industries such as marketing and distribution firms and video rental shops (Tasie, 2013, cited in Asemah & Edegoh, 2014). The Nigerian movie industry and its mass media are dependent on one another and play important roles in the publicity and exhibition of movies (Nwaoboli, Arijeniwa, Oviasuyi. & Tiekuro, 2021). One cannot do without the other. Colourful advertisements are placed in the newspapers and magazines, creative and entertaining advertisements are aired on television for the audience to visualise clips from the movie, jingles on the radio and of course, the movie posters. Television has been contributing a lot in the discovery, promotion and encouragement of the movie industry. According to Akeh (2008), television propelled the origin of Nollywood in Nigeria via the obnoxious policies which the federal government under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced. Most notable are Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), which has a station NTA2 strictly for entertainment, as well as Silverbird Television, Lagos Television (LTV), especially for Yoruba films, Galaxy station acclaimed to be the best movie promoter for many years and other state television stations in Nigeria. As a result of the NBC policy for television stations to make all their programmes to at least, contain 60% of our local programmes and the strict law on the syndication of foreign films,

Nollywood films have filled the gap. There are previews and reviews of Nigeria movies and interview sessions and a critical look at some of the films.

According to Hall (1973), cited in Xie, Yasin, Alsagoff & Ang (2022), because some of the media produce materials which are often impartial and serious, they are accorded a high degree of respect and authority. However, in practice, the ethics of the press and television are closely related to that of the hegemonic establishment providing vital support to the existing order. Therefore, he says, independence is not a mere cover, it is central to the way power and ideology are medicated in the societies like ours.

Television allows their audience; especially the low income earners, the middle-income earners, have the opportunity to be released. The advertisers are not left out; they use these stations and programmes to advertise and promote their brands and the movie industry. Also present at the movie premiere and Nollywood movie exhibition are the media. Reporters from television stations, radio stations and the print media are present to cover this event and take interview of the cast and crew, which makes for publicity and news stories of the movie.

Audience as Market

Theorists have argued that the media use is now central and that the audience is viewed as a more or less active and motivated set of media users or consumers who are in charge of their media experience, rather than passive 'victims.' The media need audiences in order to realise their potential for meaning; hence, audiences are vital in communication in relation to the media (Asemah, 2022). It is for the audience that the media are constructing and conveying information, and if it were not for the audiences, the media would not exist. According to Schramm (1955), the word' audience' is very familiar as the collective term for the receivers in the simple sequential model of the mass communication process (source, channel, message, receiver, effect) that was deployed by pioneers in the field of media research. Audiences are both a product of social context (which leads to shared cultural interests, understandings and information needs) and a response to a particular pattern of media provision.

This is hinged on the uses and gratifications theory as propounded by Jay Blumber & Elihu Katz which looks at how people use the media to gratify a range of needs-including the need for information, personal identity, integration, social interaction and entertainment. This theory describes the audience as active with power over the media. For instance, if people do not watch a television programme, it would not rate and it will be taken off air. Asemah (2011) and Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) note that uses and gratifications theorists examine what people do with the media and maintain that the best way to find out is by asking the audience. Social media have proven to be adept at getting feedback from the audience. Bloggers can raise particular issues on the website and the audience begin to give comments concerning it, giving their opinions. Recent studies have shown that audience research has become more influential in the movie business because of the tremendous cost of movie making.

The press and firm are already established as very profitable businesses when broadcasting made its uncertain appearance on the scene in the 1920s. The radio and television audience rapidly developed into an important consumer market for hardware and software. As the media have become bigger business, the term 'market' has gained currency. It can designate regions served by media, social-demographic categories or the actual or potential consumers of particular media services or products. It may be defined

as an aggregate of actual or potential consumers of media services and products, with a known social-economics profile; although, some argued that the view of the audience as market is inevitably the view from the media as the people in the audience do not normally have any awareness of themselves as belonging to markets. In other words, the audience is a key factor in the production, exhibition and distribution of any movies. Nollywood movies tend to conform to the rave of the moment as regards the Nigeria society; for example, when mobile phone brand, BlackBerry became popular in Nigeria, movies like *BlackBerry Babes* (2009) were produced and distributed, making it safe to say that the Nigerian audience give the movie producers what to think and create in their stories. Logan (2009) asserts that Nollywood movies provide an alternative or different angle to the African story to renowned and professional African filmmakers and artists.

Review of Empirical Studies

Giwa (2014) conducted a study on Nollywood as a case study of the rising Nigerian film industry in content and production. The rationale for the study was to examine the changing trends of the Nollywood film industry. The researcher employed mixed methodology of content analysis of selected films and a survey on audiences. The researcher found that people within the country love Nollywood films and the growing diaspora of Nigerians has led Nollywood to be accessible on multiple platforms. Also, the researcher found that the content and quality of films is noticeably improving. The researcher concluded that Nollywood film industry is gaining recognition on an international scale due to the fact that Nigerians are migrating to places like the UK and US, hence establishing the fact that Nollywood movies abroad are just as significant as they are in Nigeria. While this study provides foundational understanding to the present discourse in terms of content, quality and acceptability of Nollywood movies, it does not incorporate other variables such as publicity strategy and premieres of Nollywood movies; the present study fills this gap.

Dekie, Meers, Vande Winkel, Van Bauwel & Smets (2015) examined Nollywood online between the individual consumption and communal reception of Nigerian films among African diaspora. The rationale was to ascertain the consumption and reception of Nigerian films on the internet among African diaspora of Nigerian, Ghanaian and Cameroonian origin in the cities of Antwerp and Ghent, Belgium. The researchers adopted a media ethnographic approach, including fieldwork and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The researchers found that online Nigerian films are most often watched individually by the respondents. However, the reception of the films remains a social practice of shared meaning-making. The researchers concluded that the increase in online film consumption may change audiences' engagement with films and viewing practices. While this study focused on individual consumption and reception of Nollywood films online among diaspora residents, it did not capture the publicity and premières of Nigerian films; this is addressed in the current study.

Onuzulike (2016) examined audience reactions to the different aspects of Nollywood movies. The researcher juxtaposed two audiences-Nigerians in Nigeria and Nigerians in South Africa in order to ascertain how they perceive favourite aspects and disliked aspects of Nigerian movie productions, popularly known as Nollywood. The researcher employed the qualitative research design and open-ended interview approach. The results indicated that the two groups favoured the depiction of Nigerian/African cultures over other themes; yet, Nigerians in South Africa disfavour the reality of Nollywood movies. The researcher also found that for those living outside of Nigeria,

nostalgia leads them to seek movies that allow them to escape into a Nigeria that never was. The researcher concluded that the geographical location of Nigerian audiences impacted the tastes and choices of their movies. The researcher recommended that additional research is encouraged in fostering the relationship between Nollywood and audiences with respect to preserving African cultures. While this study focused on comparative analysis of movie consumption among Nollywood audience, it did not focus on how publicity can influence movie choice. The current study addressed this gap.

Elinwa (2020) examined audience readings and meaning negotiation in the film viewing space viz-a-viz an ethnographic study of Nollywood's viewing centre audiences. The rationale for the study was to investigate the social experiences of Nigerian film audiences in viewing centres and examine the possibility that social experiences are a potent influencer of the meaning construction process in the film viewing space. The study was conducted among other existing studies of the Nigerian film audience and it took on a performative approach by using ethnographic method and unstructured interviews. Key finding of the study revealed that viewers developed interpersonal understanding of each other's similar relevant social situations through self-identification and then used this understanding in the interpretative process of meaning production. The researcher concluded that audiences' negotiations of meaning were birthed from their perception of their social world and the relationships fostered among them as members of the same social group. While this study dwells on audience activeness in films, it does not capture the factors that necessitate movie consumption of the audience. The current study addressed this gap.

Theoretical Framework

This discourse is anchored on the agenda-setting theory and the uses and gratifications theory. The agenda setting theory emerged from communication studies and focuses on mass media influence on setting agenda for public discourse, as propounded by McCombs & Shaw in 1972 (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). According to Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), by comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs & Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determine public opinion. The thrust of the theory is that most of the images we have in our heads, most of the things we meditate or think about, most of the issues we discuss, are hinged on what we consumed in different mass media (Asemah & Asogwa, 2012; Asemah, Edegoh & Nwammuo, 2013; Edegoh, Asemah & Udeh-Akpe, 2013; Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). Asemah *et al* (2017) added that the agenda setting theory argues that the media may not tell us what to think, media may tell us what to think about.

Therefore, in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping public agenda. Thus, readers not only learn about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to the issue by the amount of information in a news story and its position (Anwumabelem & Asemah, 2021; David & Asemah, 2021; Omoevah, Oladele & Asemah, 2022). The agenda-setting theory of McCombs & Shaw (1972) cited in Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah (2022) establishes that the mass media could influence their audiences. Therefore, agenda setting theory can help to create awareness, educate, enlighten and mobilise the people regarding a particular issue in the country by the kind of coverage or report given to it by the media.

The relevance of this theory to this study is based on the fact that the relevance the media give to an issue such as the entrant of a new movie or its première, will directly or indirectly have an influence on the audience and movie consumers; hence, influence them to start thinking of such movie(s) thereby increasing their consciousness and desire to watch Nollywood movies.

The uses and gratifications theory is a communication theory that focuses on the active role of audiences in selecting, using and interpreting media content to fulfil specific needs and desires (Asemah, 2009). Developed in the mid-20th century, this theory emphasises that individuals are not passive consumers of media, but make conscious choices based on their motivations and expectations. The uses and gratifications theory of the media is one of the theories of mass communication that call attention to what people do with the media, rather than what the media do to people (Edegoh, Asemah & Nwammuo, 2013). Asemah *et al* (2017) note that the theory originated in the 1970s as a reaction to traditional mass communication research, emphasising the sender and the message; stressing the activeness of the audience and user instead of relegating the audience as passive. Asemah *et al* (2017) add that Elihu Katz first introduced the uses and gratifications theory when he came up with the notion that people use the media to their benefits. Later, Katz and his two colleagues, Jay Blumler & Michael Gurevitch continued to expand the idea leading to the formulation of the theory in 1974. According to Asemah *et al* (2017), the UGT posits that people consume media for specific reasons, often to fulfil psychological or social needs.

Therefore UGT assumes that individuals are active participants in media consumption, seeking content that aligns with their motivations. The theory also assumes that people have agency in selecting media options and that they are capable of reflecting on their media choices (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah *et al* 2017).

The uses and gratifications theory can be applied to explain the appeal of Nollywood premieres, publicity strategies and movie consumption in Nigeria. This is because audiences actively seek out Nollywood content to fulfil various needs, including cultural identification, entertainment, information and social interaction. Nollywood's portrayal of Nigerian life and values provides viewers with a sense of belonging and validates their cultural experiences. This theory offers valuable insights into understanding how people engage with media in the contemporary digital landscape, guiding research on audience preferences and media effects.

Methodology

The researchers used library research method in this study. This, according to Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah (2022a, 2022b), Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah (2021) and Nwaoboli (2023) consists of the use of secondary sources of information like books, newspapers, magazine and online materials. No form of primary source of information was used.

Discussion

In this study, there were some kernel and central idea of the subject-matter that are worthy of discourse. To start with, Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, has grown into a cultural phenomenon not just within Nigeria, but also across the African continent and beyond. The strategies for premieres, publicity and movie consumption in Nigeria have evolved over

the years, reflecting the unique cultural, social and technological landscape of the country. Nollywood, as one of the world's most prolific film industries, has a unique approach to premieres and publicity that reflects the industry's evolution and the cultural nuances of Nigeria. Nollywood premieres have become grand events characterised by glitz and glamour. They serve as platforms for showcasing the talent of Nigerian filmmakers, actors and actresses. These events are marked by red carpet appearances, media coverage and celebrity interactions, creating a sense of anticipation and excitement among fans.

Therefore, premieres are significant events that serve as opportunities to generate buzz, create anticipation and attract attention to new films. These events often feature red carpet appearances, media coverage and interactions with the cast and crew, creating a sense of excitement akin to Hollywood premieres. Therefore, publicity strategies for Nollywood films have undergone significant changes with the advent of technology and social media. While traditional methods like billboards, posters and TV commercials still play a role, social media platforms have become essential tools for reaching and engaging audiences. This online engagement has amplified the reach of Nollywood films beyond traditional promotional methods. Nollywood personalities, including actors, directors and producers, use platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook to share trailers, behind-the-scenes content and interact directly with fans. This shift to digital publicity has allowed for wider reach and more direct engagement, bridging the gap between creators and their audience. Therefore, premieres and publicity campaigns provide information about upcoming films, casting details and behind-the-scenes insights. People engage with Nollywood premieres and publicity materials to gather information and share it with their social circles. This corresponds to the gratifications of information-seeking and social interaction needs of the UGT (Blumler & Katz, 1974) and the agenda-setting theory that the media might draw public attention to certain events in the society which could spur on members of the society to want to know more about such events (McCombs & Shaw, 1991).

One of the key reasons for the popularity of Nollywood films is their relatability. Many movies address themes that resonate with local audiences, such as family dynamics, social challenges, cultural practices and everyday life. This relatability fosters a strong emotional connection, allowing viewers to see their own experiences mirrored on screen and reinforcing their cultural identity, leading to heightened engagement; hence, audiences attend premieres and consume Nollywood movies to strengthen their cultural identity, connect with their roots and see their own experiences represented on screen. This aligns with the gratifications of personal identity and cultural connection needs proposed by the uses and gratifications theory. Furthermore, Nollywood movies offer entertainment, emotional engagement and an escape from daily life. Audiences attend premieres and consume these films to experience a range of emotions and temporarily escape from their routine. This, again, aligns with the gratifications of entertainment and escapism needs of the UGT. In addition, the culture of communal movie consumption in Nigeria, whether through open-air screenings or video clubs, fosters a sense of social integration. People attend these events to connect with others, discuss the films and engage in shared experiences, fulfilling social integration needs highlighted by the UGT. Again, Nollywood actors and celebrities often become role models for many Nigerians, hence, fans attend premieres and engage with media coverage to fulfil their needs for personal identity and aspiration, looking up to these figures as examples to emulate.

Furthermore, the digital age and the advent of digital platforms has also significantly revolutionised how Nigerians consume Nollywood contents. Video-on-demand platforms and online streaming services provide convenient access to movies, allowing viewers to watch films at their own pace and convenience. This technological shift caters to the preferences of modern audiences and demonstrates the industry's adaptation to changing consumption patterns. Specifically, it reflects the influence of technology on entertainment preferences and offers a more personalised movie-watching experience. Therefore, by understanding the motivations behind Nollywood premieres, publicity efforts and the culture of movie consumption in Nigeria, we can see how the uses and gratifications theory and the agenda-setting theory help explain why individuals actively choose to participate in these activities and engage with Nollywood content.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, Nollywood premieres, publicity strategies and the culture of movie consumption in Nigeria showcase the industry's ability to blend tradition with modernity. The industry's ability to adapt to changing technological landscapes while retaining its cultural essence has propelled it to global recognition. Nollywood's communal movie-watching experiences, relatable storytelling, and strategic use of social media converge to create a unique and enduring cinematic phenomenon that resonates with diverse audiences. Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. While Nollywood has embraced social media for publicity, there is potential for further engagement. Production companies and artists could consider interactive online events and virtual premieres to create a deeper connection with global fans. This would harness the power of digital platforms to expand the reach and impact of Nollywood content.
2. Nollywood's strength lies in its representation of Nigerian culture and society. To maintain this authenticity, filmmakers should continue producing films that address relevant social issues while also exploring new genres and narrative styles. This will ensure that Nollywood remains a reflection of Nigerian identity while evolving to cater to changing tastes.
3. Strengthening collaboration between Nollywood stakeholders, government bodies and cultural institutions can further elevate the industry's profile. Investing in infrastructure, offering training programmes for aspiring filmmakers and supporting film festivals could contribute to fostering innovation, talent development and quality improvements across the sector.

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PART TWO
MEDIA, POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS, HEALTH COMMUNICATION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

CHAPTER TWENTY

ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS DURING THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Dominic Odion Okidi; Comfort A. Ogwo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

New media worldwide have transformed government institutions, political communication, electoral competition and citizens' involvement. This transformation is evident in Nigeria's 2023 Presidential election where social media played a crucial role (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). According to Vonderschmitt (2012), the goal of political campaigns is to establish effective communication with the public and present a favourable perception. Social media platforms have become essential for candidates and parties to reach and engage voters at an unprecedented scale (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010, as cited in Morah & Uzochukwu, 2020). Social media transformed the 2023 Presidential election, shaping strategies and voter engagement. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok played pivotal roles in political mobilisation, connecting candidates with voters and offering cost-effective alternatives to traditional media channels. Morah & Uzochukwu (2020) are of the view that:

> The use of the new media technology in delivering campaign messages to voters during elections is not only critical to political parties and candidates, but also in the election campaign process as social media is now affecting political campaigns. It plays a crucial role in informing the public about politics, campaigns and elections. Social media also influences what issues voters should care about in elections and what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates. In the past, traditional media in the forms of newspapers, TV, radio, billboards and printed material, such as pamphlets and letters were indispensable tools for delivering credible forms of political campaign messages despite their shortcomings of direct communication.

The significance of social media in political campaigns lies in their roles in information dissemination, grassroots mobilisation and voter engagement (Mohammed & Ogwuche, 2021). Candidates can leverage social media to communicate policy positions, share campaign updates and gather feedback from constituents. This transformative era of political engagement has impacted countries worldwide, including developing nations. Social media empower voters, enabling them to express their political opinions effectively through participatory communication (Mohammed & Ogwuche, 2021). During election campaigns, social media offer advantages for personalised engagement between political actors and voters, fostering a stronger connection and authenticity.

In the 2023 presidential election, candidates employed various strategies to maximise their social media presence and leverage their potentials. Therefore, after a sequence of notable events in the party primaries, a group of eighteen (18) candidates emerged as winners in their respective party primaries (Egobiambu, 2022). Akintaro (2022) asserts that from among the 18, five (5) candidates garnered increased popularity as a result of their active presence and following on three key social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. During the election, candidates employed diverse tactics to optimise their social media presence and harness the potentials. These platforms played a

crucial role in shaping their campaign strategies and amplifying their visibility and outreach to the voting public.

Candidate	Twitter followers	Facebook Followers	Instagram Followers
Atiku Abubakar (PDP)	629k	1.4m	629
Bola Tinubu (APC)	2.1m	640k	634,303
Peter Obi (LP)	3.7m	1.1m	988k
Rabiu (NNPP)	251,252	258, 739	21,833
Yele Sowere (AAC)	937,156	414.309	226,815

The transformational effect of social media on political activity is the issue under discussion. Mohammed & Ogwuche (2021); Momoh (2019) underlined the importance in facilitating effective political speech and one-on-one contacts between candidates and voters during elections. Social media platforms have transformed into theatres of public opinion during the 2023 presidential elections; although, misleading tactics (such as bots, sponsored influencers and deep fakes) facilitate in the spread of false information.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide the study:

1. To what extent did political candidates adopt social media platforms during the 2023 Presidential Election?
2. What social media channels did political parties use for political campaigns during the 2023 presidential election?
3. To what extent did the political campaigns via social media influence the choice of candidates among Benin electorate?

Conceptualisation of Social Media and Political Campaigns

Social media, since inception, have been defined in numerous ways by both scholars and users alike. According to Olise (2014, p. 28), cited in Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022); Edegoh & Asemah (2014), social media refer to digital communication phenomenon encompassing online platforms that allow users to create and share content, fostering social interactions and virtual communities. Riaz (2007); Inobemhe, Santas, Asemah & Igyuve (2022) note that social media are powered and driven by internet technology. Asemah & Nwaoboli (2022) observe that these internet-based technologies enable individuals to engage in real-time communication, exchange user-generated content, and connect globally, transcending geographical boundaries.

Thus, we see social media as works of user-created video, audio, text or multimedia that are published and shared in a social environment, such as a blog, Facebook, Twitter or photo and video hosting site (Ugande & Asemah, 2014). Social media are online media that expedite conversation as opposed to traditional media (newspaper, magazine, television, and radio) which deliver content, but do not allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation or development of the content (Ward, 2013, cited in Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013; Edegoh, Asemah & Ekanem, 2013; Asemah, 2014).

Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021) see social media as online platforms and tools that enable people to create, share and exchange content, ideas and information with each other. According to Nwaoboli & Asemah (2022), social media platforms allow users to connect with one another and build virtual communities based on shared interests, experiences or goals. Some examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. Social media have become important part of modern communication

and have revolutionised the way people interact, share information and access news and entertainment (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023).

In the realm of political campaigns, Cahyono (2016), cited in Moekahar, Ayuningtyas & Hardianti (2022) defines them as organised efforts by individuals, political parties or interest groups aimed at influencing election outcomes and promoting specific candidates or causes. Jensen (2016); Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah (2013) emphasise the critical role political campaigns play in democratic societies as they provide citizens with information about candidates, policies and important issues, ultimately encouraging voter participation and engagement in the political process. While social media represent a diverse digital communication phenomenon, political campaigns encompass organised endeavours to influence elections and promote candidates or causes within democratic societies.

Academic studies explored the relationship between emerging media platforms and democratic processes (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). Supporters argue that new media characteristics enhance politician-voter communication, especially in elections (Oladele & Asemah, 2022). Openness and accessibility of new media overcome limitations of traditional media, while affordability has made it beneficial for political actors and participants (Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013; Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). Notably, adoption of social media in Nigeria has transformed grassroots political movements; thanks to more affordable access options and increased internet penetration (Muzaffar, 2019) which were previously hindered by limited internet availability and high costs of data (Rasmus, Nielsen, Cornia & Kalogeropoulos, 2016). Today, organisers can use platforms like social media to effectively engage supporters and mobilise them for rallies and protests (Takaragawa & Carty, 2012 in Manzoor, 2019).

Okusaga (2018) claims that social media sites like Facebook and Twitter first became popular in Nigeria in the early 2000s, when they were mostly utilised for social interaction and amusement. However, social media started to play a big part in political discourse as connection improved and internet access became more widely available. Social media platforms were essential instruments for organising political movements and spreading awareness of social and political concerns in Nigeria from the late 2000s to the early 2010s. For instance, the "Enough is Enough" movement mobilised Nigerian youth, using social media in 2010 to call for free and fair elections and decent administration (Azzimonti & Fernandes, 2022; Kente & Ternenge, 2022; Rasmus, Nielsen, Cornia & Kalogeropoulos, 2016).

According to Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022) and Shenk (2022), the emergence of social media platforms in Nigeria has given people more power and the ability to work as citizen journalists and activists. Bypassing conventional media gatekeepers, these platforms enable the real-time sharing of news, photographs and videos, hastening the exposure of political and social injustices. In particular, grassroots political organisations and campaigns across the nation have benefited greatly from the use of social media (Manzoor, 2019; Matthes, 2022). Although, social media improve political activity in Nigeria, Shenk (2022) also points out that they have hazards, such as the dissemination of misinformation (Piazza, 2021). Fact-checking and digital literacy are crucial since this false information exacerbates division and social tensions (Azzimonti & Fernandes, 2022). These sites' biased and misrepresented information can influence voters' opinions and influence their voting choices.

Social media use in political campaigns involves strategically employing different social media platforms and tools to promote, communicate and interact with the public throughout electoral campaigns (Chunav, 2023). Chunav (2023) in his LinkedIn page

submitted that the connection between social media and political elections is intricate and diverse and that the advent of social media platforms has brought about significant changes in the political arena, impacting the manner in which elections are carried out, campaigns are managed and voters interact with political information. Political players have increasingly embraced social media platforms as an integral part of political communication, particularly evident in the 2023 presidential campaign. This shift can be attributed to the various advantages offered by these new communication channels, as outlined by scholars such as Riaz (2007); Chunav (2023); Jensen (2016); Kente & Ternenge (2022); Saud (2018):

a. Interactive Engagement: Social media enable two-way communication, fostering a sense of community and strengthening relationships between content creators and their audience.
b. Real-time Updates and Transparency: By promptly sharing relevant information, social media promote transparency, building trust and credibility.
c. Accessibility and Inclusive Participation: Making content and platforms accessible cultivates an inclusive environment, reaching a broader audience and promoting diverse participation (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022).
d. Amplified Reach and Visibility: Social media platforms, search engine optimisation and targeted advertising expand content visibility and connect with a wider demographic.
e. Dissemination of Information and News: Social media enable real-time updates on significant events, keeping the public well-informed (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022).
f. Targeted Messaging and Micro-Targeting: Micro-targeting tailors messaging to specific niche audiences, increasing engagement and conversion rates.
g. Viral Campaigns and Grassroots Movements: Engaging, shareable content drives viral campaigns and mobilises grassroots movements for social or political change (Omociboh & Omobude, 2021).
h. Transparency and Accountability Campaigns: Social media empower activists and concerned citizens to demand transparency and drive meaningful change.

Asemah & Edegoh (2012) did a study on the use of new media and political advertising in Nigeria, their findings revealed limited utilisation of platforms like the internet and GSM by political parties. The researchers identified the potential to reach a broad audience as a prospect, but highlighted the challenge of consistently delivering messages through new media channels. The paper recommends prioritising the use of new media to effectively disseminate political activities in Nigeria. Momoh (2019) also did a study on the influence of election campaign in Nigeria's 2019 general elections and discovered that platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube enabled direct candidate-voter interactions, facilitating quick information dissemination. However, the researchers also identified challenges with unreliable newsfeeds and "fake news," suggesting the involvement of fact-checkers to combat misinformation. Largely, the research highlighted the positive impact of social media on campaigns while emphasising the need for caution and verification to address misinformation.

Theoretical Framework

Asemah (2011, p. 345) highlights the applicability of theories to various texts and analyses, enabling explanation, clarification and prediction of central phenomena. The researchers

adopts the agenda setting and technological determinism theories to enhance comprehension. The agenda setting theory suggests that the media determine the public agenda, influencing thoughts, concerns and issues (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2011, p. 176; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000, cited in Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Political parties in Nigeria can use traditional and new media platforms to shape public agenda.

On the other hand, the technological determinism theory was formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964 (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; 2023). According to this theory, the media serve as extensions of the human body, not only influencing the surrounding environment, but also altering the very messages they convey. As noted by Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), cited in Arijeniwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola & Uwuoruya (2022), the theory posits that technology, particularly new media, significantly shapes individuals' thoughts, emotions, actions, as well as the organisation and operation of societies. The relevance of this theory to the study cannot be overstated. Since new media can influence people's behaviour, it follows that political parties in Nigeria can explore new media channels to sway the populace's perceptions and attitudes towards their political activities.

Methodology

The researchers utilised survey research design and a self-administered questionnaire for data collection. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), a survey involves gathering data to assess the prevailing attitudes, perceptions and views of a population. This method was justified in the present study, as it aimed to measure the general perception of social media users in Benin. By employing this approach, the researchers drew inferences about the relationships between the variables being investigated. The target population for this study is the residents of Benin City. Based on available statistics, Benin City's population is 1,682,200 (One million, six hundred and eighty-two thousand and two hundred) people (https://citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/NGA012__edo/).

To determine the sample size, the researchers used the Roger & Wimmer sample size calculator, resulting in 306 (95% confidence level and a 5.6% confidence interval). Multistage sampling technique was adopted. In the first stage, the city was divided (stratified sampling) into local government areas; namely: Egor, Ikpoba – Okha, Oredo and Ovia North-East. In the second stage, areas with high population density were randomly selected: Uselu area for Egor, Sakponba road for Ikpoba – Okha, King Square for Oredo, and Ugbowo area for Ovia North-East. In the third stage, residents who were social media users were purposefully selected. Finally, in the fourth stage, the researcher randomly administered 306 copies of questionnaire to the respondents. A total of 300 valid copies of the questionnaire were returned and then presented and analysed using simple percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Responses on the Extent of exposure to Political Campaign Messages during the 2023 Presidential Election

Response	Very high	High	Can't tell	Low	Very low	Total
Frequency	129	162	7	2	0	300
Percentage	**43%**	**54%**	**2.3%**	**0.7%**	**0**	**100%**

The data in the above table show that the extent of exposure was high as majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 2: Responses on the Social Media Channels of accessing Political Campaign Messages during the 2023 Presidential Election

Response	Facebook	LinkedIn	YouTube	Twitter	Insta-Gram	Tik-Tok	Pinterest	WhatSapp	Reddit	Quora	Total
Frequency	77	1	11	99	8	87	0	17	0	0	300
Percentage	25.7%	0.3%	3.6%	33%	2.7%	29%	0	5.6%	0	0	100%

The data in table 2 reveal the preferred social media channels used to access political campaign messages during the 2023 presidential election. Twitter emerged as the most popular platform, with 33% of respondents using it.

Table 3: Responses on the Political Party Messages mostly received via Social Media during the 2023 Presidential Election

Response	PDP	NNPP	APC	Labour Party	Others	Total
Frequency	74	29	79	104	14	300
Percentage	**24.7%**	**9.7%**	**26.3%**	**34.6%**	**4.7%**	**100%**

Table 3 shows the responses on the social media channels through which the electorate mostly receive campaign messages. The Labour Party led with the highest engagement, representing approximately 34.6% of all responses.

Table 4: Responses on the Extent to which the Political Campaign Messages influenced the Choice of Candidates

Response	Very high	High	Can't tell	Low	Very low	Total
Frequency	123	168	6	2	1	300
Percentage	**41%**	**56%**	**2%**	**0.7%**	**0.3%**	**100%**

The data in table 4 data highlights the substantial role played by campaign messages in shaping voter decisions. The data show that the extent to which the campaign messages influenced was very high.

Discussion of Findings

The results showed that respondents were exposed to political campaign messages on a significant scale and mostly through Twitter, TikTok and Facebook, with other social media platforms having a very minor impact The data emphasised the significance of social media as platforms for political communication, political parties, supporters, individuals and groups demonstrating a strong presence and potential influence on public opinion during the 2023 presidential election. Labour Party was particularly active on social media, demonstrating its significant presence and power to shape public opinion.

The findings showed that the campaigns positively influenced voters' behaviour during the 2023 election campaigns. These findings highlight the significance of social media as vehicles for political communication and demonstrate how well they can be used to reach and influence voters thereby validating the position of Santas, Inobemhe, Leman & Asemah (2023); Shenk (2022); Vonderschmitt (2012); and Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) that social media platforms play significant role in political communications.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social media gained widespread acceptance and popularity during the 2023 presidential election. The researchers conclude that social media campaign positively influenced the voting behaviour of Edo electorate during the 2023 elections in Nigeria. Thus, there is need

to enhance media literacy which will in the long-run improve voters' media literacy to enable them to critically assess and validate information on social media; more so, there is need to create a set of ethical guidelines for political parties and candidates to ensure transparency, integrity and accuracy in their social media campaigns. This will encourage responsible practices and maintain public trust.

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CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

NAME-CALLING AS A PERSUASIVE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY DURING ELECTIONS

Uwomano Sophia Oduokpe; Tsegyu Santas & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Name-calling is a common phenomenon in political discourse worldwide and Nigeria is no exception. The 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria witnessed a significant amount of name-calling, as politicians and their supporters engaged in verbal attacks, employing derogatory language to undermine opponents (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Name-calling is the use of offensive or derogatory names about someone to win an argument or to induce rejection or condemnation of the person without properly considering reasonable facts about the person. Name-calling, also known as mudslinging, is aimed at defaming and slandering the character of a person; hence it can be classified as defamation. Fogam & Acqua Dadzie (1987), cited in Asemah (2022) define defamation as any article or broadcast which exposes a person to hatred, ridicule or contempt, lowers him in the esteem of his fellows, causes him to be shunned or injures him in his business or calling.

Over the years, politicians in Nigeria and other nations of the world have used name-calling as a campaign strategy against their opponents, all in a bid to appear more decent and gain the votes of the electorate. Although, name-calling during electoral campaigns has fast become a norm in Nigeria, it is an unhealthy way of campaigning.

The 2023 presidential election was a tough one as Nigerians experienced a shift in the political affairs of the nation. During previous elections, it was always the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All People's Congress (APC) that produced the major contestants. But for the presidential election of 2023, the Labour Party (LP) was introduced and it became three major different parties and candidates running for the presidential seat of the country (Nwaoboli & Ajibulu, 2023; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, brought a new way of campaigning and changed the pattern of political campaigns in the country. In previous years, politicians would, instead of attending public debates where their capability to rule the country will be tested by intellectual questions from the electorate, organise huge rallies where they would force false campaign promises down the throats of the electorate. Politicians were also used to using money and mediocre publicity stunts to relate with persons of low repute in society and of course, name-calling as their only political campaign strategies. They use these methods majorly because as stated by Asemah (2019), the spirit of service is lacking in most African politicians. They go into government just for one cardinal purpose- to amass wealth and not to serve much to the utter neglect of the masses or electorate who voted them into power. Worse still, they display annoying contentious lifestyles and intimidate the masses with their newfound power.

The coming of Peter Obi into the political space made the two other major contestants- Atiku Abubakar of The People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), subject themselves to public scrutiny during their campaigns and this public scrutiny birthed some name-calling to the extent that the presidential candidate of the APC, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, stated in one of his

interviews that he no longer checks social media because of the insults and names he is being called on social media. Every debate, interview and rally embarked upon by the presidential candidates birthed a new name for some presidential candidates. Names carry readily accessible information about their bearers. For instance, nicknaming and name-calling are often descriptive and provide retrievable information about the name-bearer (Aleksiejuk, 2015, p-33, in Ṇendauni, Sadik & Baloyi, 2020, p-14).

Name-calling became a strategy for both the contesters and their supporters to use against the candidate that they are not in support of and in some cases, jingles were made with name-calling about a presidential candidate. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to examine name-calling as a persuasive campaign strategy during elections.

Statement of the Problem

Name-calling has always been a constant feature in political campaigns in Nigeria (Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013; Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2013). Since most political candidates do not have tangible and concrete policies and manifestoes to present to the electorate, they resort to verbal attacks on their opponents in a bid to rubbish their person in the eyes of the electorate and gain their favour. The political terrain in Nigeria, especially during an election is often characterised by emotional blackmail, character assassination and exhibition of name-calling (Okeya & Asemah, 2013). The concept of name-calling in politics, especially during campaign rallies, campaign speeches or political campaign advertising are constructed in such a way that it can manipulate, persuade or appeal to the emotions of citizens negatively. The contents of these speeches or campaigns are created in such a way that can affect the social status of the name-bearers by attracting long-term negative descriptions and qualities. Therefore, it is expedient that the meanings, lines of attack and persuasive strategies of such bestowed name-calling constructs be examined. This study, therefore, seeks to examine name-calling as a persuasive campaign strategy during the 2023 presidential election.

Theoretical Framework

The researchers anchored this study on the cognitive dissonance theory proposed by Leon Festinger (1957) and the elaboration likelihood model proposed by Richard Petty & John Cacioppo (1979/1986). Both theories are associated with persuasion and attitude change (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). Asemah (2010) notes that theories lend themselves to various texts and analysis, such that the phenomena central to the research get explained, clarified and predicted as the case may be.

Anaeto & Anaeto (2010), cited in Asemah *et al* (2017) see cognitive dissonance as a feeling an individual has when they receive two contradictory ideas at the same time. Politicians during political campaigns use name-calling to disorganise a person's original stance. So it keeps the individual in a confused state, why or not to revert one's stance. If not guarded, the persuasion that comes with name-calling can influence the electorate to change their mind or attitude. The cognitive dissonance theory explains how human beings often have conflicting beliefs about actions they take or other beliefs they have. Simply put, attitude change takes place where there is a cognitive dissonance. Asemah *et al* (2017).

According to Asemah *et al* (2017), the elaboration likelihood model aims to explain the different ways of processing stimulus, why they are used and their outcomes on attitude change and the theory proposes that there is the central route and the peripheral route. In

the central route, a person will likely be persuaded after careful consideration of the advantages of the information presented in support of an advocacy. In this route, the message elaboration is high such that the attitude change will be relatively enduring and predictive (Asemah *et al* 2017). Yocco (2014), cited in Asemah *et al* (2017) says that the elaboration likelihood theory attempts to explain how attitudes are shaped, formed and reinforced by persuasive arguments. He further states that when an audience cares more about a message, they will pay more attention to scrutinise and strengthen the arguments and form attitudes from it which can counter other arguments.

Politicians who engage in a political campaign can influence the attitude of the electorate using the technique of name-calling to discredit, defame or assassinate the personality of a candidate, to dissuade the electorate from thinking of that candidate in a good light. Both theories explained above apply to political advertising and political public relations (Asemah, 2012) and persuasive campaign strategy; so, they apply to this study. Name-calling which is intended to shape and form the opinion of electorate is a persuasive campaign strategy as it seeks to persuade voters to dislike a particular candidate and vote for another. Name-calling when used by politicians during campaigns can leave the electorate confused as to who to or who not to vote for.

Methodology

The researchers relied on library research approach. This approach involves an extensive examination and analysis of existing published materials and resources available in libraries, databases, and academic journals. Instead of conducting primary data collection through surveys, experiments or interviews, the library research approach relies on secondary sources of information (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a; 2022b; Nwaoboli, 2023). The researchers used both primary and secondary sources, which include newspapers, videos, social media messages and textbooks.

Concept of Name-calling

Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2020), citing Miller (2020), observe that "name calling can include a large number of targets, including denouncing values, putting down ideas or laughing." When one product disparages another by claiming that theirs is better in some manner, the advertising industry engages in name-calling (Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, 2023). Propagandists use name-calling as a campaign strategy (Smith, 1995). They use name-calling techniques to create fear and arouse prejudice by using negative words (bad names) to create an unfavourable opinion or hatred against their opponents (Smith, 1995). This method calls for a conclusion without examining the evidence (Vincent, 2016). It is important to note that name-calling is generally considered a negative and unproductive tactic in political campaigns as it tends to focus on personal attacks, rather than substantive policy discussions in a bid to influencing the decision of the electorate. Asemah & Nwaoboli (2022); Alawode & Adesanya (2016); Nwaoboli (2021) observed in their study that mass media campaigns influence people's attitudes to issues campaigned about. Name-calling is used in political campaigns to discredit opponents, manipulate the emotions of electorate, deflect criticisms and polarisation and mobilisation.

A persuasive campaign strategy is a style of campaign aimed at making people make choices without their personal proper reasoning. A persuasive campaign strategy that employs the use of name-calling uses a set of tactics designed to reach the emotions of

electorate, influence and persuade them to dislike an opponent. The primary objective of a persuasive campaign is to shape attitudes, beliefs and behaviours through strategic communication and messaging techniques. Presidential elections are often significant events in a country's political landscape as they can shape the direction and policies of the nation. This election allows citizens to express their political preferences and participate in the democratic process by choosing their leader.

Consequences and Impact of Name-calling

Name-calling during the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria had significant consequences, both for the individuals targeted and the wider political landscape. While some politicians may have seen short-term gains by employing such tactics, the long-term implications for trust, unity and democratic discourse are concerning. Name-calling reinforces negative stereotypes, deepens divisions along ethnic and religious lines and undermines public faith in the electoral process (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

The impact of name-calling extends beyond the elections themselves. It sets a dangerous precedent by normalising the use of derogatory language in political discourse which can erode the civility and respect necessary for healthy democratic participation as attention is diverted to personal attacks, rather than addressing the pressing issues faced by the nation. Name-calling strategies can be counterproductive in the long-run, as they often alienate undecided voters and contribute to a negative political climate. Voters generally respond more favourably to candidates who focus on presenting their vision, policy proposals and qualifications, as was the case with the Labour Party Candidate, Peter Obi, rather than engaging in name-calling or personal attacks.

Name-calling as a Political Campaign Strategy

A political campaign is an endeavour to achieve certain political aims. Politics is a game that is played almost everywhere, whether in organisations or academics (Okeya-Olayinka & Asemah, 2021; Onwubuoyaa, Gaba & Ezeji, 2023). Name-calling is a political campaign strategy that involves using derogatory or insulting language to attack opponents or their positions. It is often employed to discredit or undermine the credibility of political opponents in an attempt to gain an advantage. Name-calling can take various forms, including personal insults, mocking nicknames or exaggerated characteriSations. Political advocacy, lobbying, and communication are all part of media campaigns (Asemah, 2011).

While name-calling has been used throughout history in political campaigns, it is generally considered a negative and divisive tactic. It can distract from substantive policy debates and appeal to emotions, rather than rational arguments. Name-calling often aims to appeal to the base instincts of voters or to reinforce preexisting biases. However, it can also backfire and harm the credibility and likability of the candidate who engages in it. It is worth noting that respectful and civil discourse is generally preferred in political campaigns, as it allows for a more constructive and substantive discussion of ideas and policies. However, in practice, name-calling or negative campaigning can sometimes be seen as effective in swaying public opinion or energising a candidate's base.

This strategy is used when political opponents have begun to see themselves as rivals, rather than fellow contesters for an important position. Such a scenario becomes vile and unhealthy as candidates can, in a bid to be at the top of their game, seek unhealthy ways to discredit their opponents. This is known as incivility in politics. Instead of

politicians focusing on themselves and how they can sell their manifestos to the electorate, they resort to seeking how to run each other down with names.

Though name-calling may be a turn-off to voters, politicians often use it to better their chances in elections. Voters become frustrated and begin to lose interest when politicians focus their time and energy attacking their opponents instead of promoting their policies. Name-calling makes fun of an opponent, intends to do damage, makes the audience suspicious, creates uneasy feelings and is often used by politicians and companies. Name-calling normally displays characteristics like stereotyping, insulting language, personal attacks, emotional manipulation, lack of constructive content, negative impact on communication and breakdown of respectful discourse.

Review of Some Rhetorics of Name-calling used during the 2023 Presidential Campaign Elections

The rhetorics used during the 2023 presidential elections were aimed at defaming the character of the political candidates and manipulating the emotions and overall decisions of the electorate.

Sick drug Lord

During the presidential election, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress was called a *sick drug lord*, who is suffering from dementia and is unable to rule a country like Nigeria.

Ethnic and religious Bigot

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi was referred to as an ethnic and religious Bigot. Nigeria is a country of different tribes and religions, a political candidate who would want to project his tribe and religion over others is seen as one whose aim is to cause division in the country.

Disgraceful and incompetent Politician

The presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party, Atiku Abubakar was called a disgrace and an incompetent politician by the Presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress in a campaign rally.

Analysis of Name-Calling as a Persuasive Strategy employed in the 2023 Presidential Election

It is saddening to note that instead of finding ways of contributing to the development of democracy in the country, the political class have been known to constitute nuance that worsen democratic governance in the nation (Ojenamah, 2023). One way through which the political class have continually ridiculed democracy in Nigeria is name-calling. In the 2023 presidential elections, name-calling as a political strategy was used by political candidates and their supporters. The Labour Party supporters popularly called Obedients called the APC presidential candidate names such as "shaky shaky daddy," "agbado," "emilokan," "drug lord." He was even said to have dementia and at some point, there were rumours about his death.

Peter Obi and the Labour Party were constantly referred to as a 'structureless man and party.' Name-calling in the 2023 presidential elections was so much that it became a

battle of tribes. The three top presidential candidates are each from the three major different tribes of Nigeria; hence, some of their supporters turned it into a clash of tribal interests, not minding that each candidate had supporters from different tribes in the country and the tribe of the political candidates did not determine the tribe of his supporters. Some Nigerians even went as far as stating that the country should be divided and the three major candidates should take over and rule over their tribesmen.

Another instance of name-calling, as reported by the Cable online newspaper (November 2022), was when the APC presidential candidate flagged off his campaign in Plateau and he called the PDP candidate "wrong theory" and Peter Obi "disobedient." While speaking at the rally in Gbaramatu, which had Oboro II, the Pere of Gbaramatu, in attendance, Tinubu described himself as one of "a few" presidential candidates still in the race. He also stated in that rally that to mention the name of Atiku is a disgrace.

Name-calling from the Labour Party supporters also was so intense that the party candidate Peter Obi had to take to his Twitter handle to state that it is not OBIdients that are behind the name-calling, but some persons employed by the opponents to rubbish the OBIdients movement. Peter Obi was also constantly called a religious and ethnic bigot and in one such instance, Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani of the PDP was the one who called Peter Obi such derogatory names and he had to respond. In his words:

> "I am really surprised that you, as my dear elder brother, would go out of the way in the exercise of your fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression as enshrined in our law to go into saying what you know is not true. I find it very shocking that you had to label me as an ethnic and religious bigot and as one who indulges in a campaign of hatred."

OBIdients on Twitter and Facebook always coined names for Bola Ahmed Tinubu; there was a jingle composed that became a song on the lips of many Nigerians:

Hand dey shake
Leg dey shake
Baba Wen nor well e dey shout emilokan

Bola Ahmed Tinubu was called names to the extent that he declared in one of his interviews that he no longer comes online on social media because the insults and curses placed on him on social media have become too much for him to bear. Aside from the jingle, several cartoon depictions portrayed Tinubu as a sick and very ugly man who is not mentally and physically fit to be a presidential candidate or a president of the country (Gado, 2022).

Atiku Abubakar was called incompetent by Nigerian political analysts because he was the Vice President of Nigeria under Olusegun Obasanjo and that administration was said to have plunged Nigeria into debt. Atiku of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was also accused of looting public funds to have his establishments in Dubai and it was said during the campaigns that because he had so many investments in Dubai, he would not be able to manage the economy of Nigeria as he would be more interested in managing his establishments in Dubai.

Implications of Name-calling for the Career of Candidates contesting Election

Name-calling in the context of election campaigns can have various implications for the careers of candidates. It sometimes leaves an effect that would take time to clear. Names function not only as markers of personal identity, but they also index the sociological

structure of a person. In other words, personal names are associated with an individual's uniqueness, as well as with various elements of the social and cultural environments in which they are embedded (Miller, 1927; Neethling, 2005, cited in Asemah, 2011). Name-calling can cause:

a. **Damage to Reputation:** Name-calling can tarnish a candidate's reputation, especially if derogatory or defamatory language is used. Such behaviour can lead to a loss of trust and credibility among voters and the general public.

b. **Negative Perception:** Name-calling can create a negative perception of the candidate's character, professionalism and ability to hold public office. It may lead voters to question the candidate's maturity, judgement and suitability for the position they are seeking.

c. **Distracting from the Issues**: Engaging in name-calling can shift the focus of the campaign away from important policy matters and relevant issues. Instead of discussing substantive topics, the campaign may become mired in personal attacks, diverting attention from the candidate's actual qualifications and ideas.

d. **Alienating Voters:** Name-calling can alienate potential supporters and undecided voters. It may be seen as divisive and disrespectful, potentially driving away individuals who value civility and constructive political discourse (Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

e. **Mobilising Opposition:** Name-calling can energise the opposition and motivate them to mobilise against the candidate. It can unite rival factions and encourage them to work together to counter the negative tactics employed by the candidate engaging in name-calling.

f. **Media and Public Perception:** Name-calling can attract significant media attention, but it is more likely to be negative coverage, rather than positive. The media may focus on the controversy surrounding the name-calling rather than the candidate's message, resulting in unfavourable coverage and public perception.

g. **Long-term Consequences:** The impact of name-calling may extend beyond a single election. If a candidate develops a reputation for engaging in personal attacks, it can affect their future political prospects and professional relationships. It may also hinder their ability to build coalitions and work effectively with colleagues if elected.

Name-calling is used to discredit other opponents and gain the support and vote of the electorate. Name-calling makes an impact by affecting the choice of candidates that citizens vote for and smearing the reputation of political candidates. Some of the persuasive strategies associated with name-calling constructs include emotional manipulation, exaggeration, dehumanisation and stereotyping. These strategies are often used to bestow name-calling on political opponents and influence the voting decision of the electorate.

Politicians are skilled communicators who influence public opinion (Asemah & Ogwo, 2013). When name-calling is often used by politicians on other politicians, it affects

that politician, the party of that political candidate and sometimes, other candidates from that party. A political candidate who is constantly called names will have to spend more money and time doing name repair and damage control. It leaves a negative impact on the reputation of a candidate and would cause a dent in the credibility of a candidate in the eyes of the electorate. Credibility is a critical factor in the selection of opinion leaders (Asemah & Ogwo, 2013). Candidates who engage in name-calling may also be seen as cantankerous, lacking professionalism and credibility. It can make them appear desperate or unable to address substantive issues, which could turn off potential supporters.

Name-calling which mostly employs the use of violent rhetoric causes candidates who use it as a strategy and those it is used on to shift focus and be distracted from policy discussions and important issues. Instead of talking about their plans and vision for the country, candidates may find themselves defending against personal attacks or responding in kind, which can hinder meaningful political discourse. The use of violent rhetoric is also where politicians use frames or extended metaphors to disparage or describe targeted groups or individuals. These metaphors influence how people make judgments and interpret situations (Kalmoe 2014, 2017; Kalmoe, Gubler & Wood 2018; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008, in Zeitzoff, 2020). Name-calling can also draw backlash and criticism from others who value civility and respectful debate. This can lead to negative media coverage and damage the candidate's standing in the eyes of undecided voters.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Elections generally are usually marked by a significant level of name-calling, reflecting the highly competitive and often contentious nature of politics and democracy. However, it is crucial to recognise the damaging effects of name-calling on the democratic process. The use of derogatory language in political discourse not only undermines the integrity of the elections, but also hampers the development of a healthy political culture based on respect, constructive debate and the exchange of ideas. The following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Political parties should take responsibility for promoting a culture of respect and dignity within their ranks, discouraging the use of derogatory language by their members and candidates. Party leaders can set guidelines and codes of conduct that prioritise issue-based campaigns and discourage personal attacks.
2. Media organiations and journalists prioritise fact-checking, responsible reporting and the provision of balanced coverage that focuses on policy issues, rather than sensationalism. By holding politicians accountable for their statements and actions, the media can contribute to a more informed electorate and discourage the use of name-calling as a political tactic.
3. Law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies on election campaigns should step up their game in levelling fines on defaulters of existing laws concerning defamatory and malicious statements used during elections.

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CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

INFLUENCE OF PROPAGANDA ON VOTER'S CHOICE OF CANDIDATES DURING THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Amanda Chichi Anwumabelem; Obele Kayiobari Obe-Nwaka & Jesse Okedi

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

The Nigeria 2023 elections played substantial role in the nation's democratic progression. Elections play a fundamental role in democratic systems by allowing citizens to exercise their voting rights and shape the trajectory of their country's governance. The significance of elections lies in their capacity to facilitate the non-violent transition of power and political leadership, thereby fostering continuity and stability within Nigeria's democratic structure (Sarker *et al* 2023). The process above functions as a medium through which individuals within a society can articulate their political inclinations, aspirations and requests, enabling them to engage actively in the decision-making process and influence the nation's trajectory (Chando, 2021). Election is important in solidifying democratic principles and institutions anywhere in the world. The foregoing underscores the significance of upholding the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance, which serve as essential foundations for advancing a robust democratic system (Adeoluwa & Adedayo, 2023).

The Nigeria 2023 elections provide opportunity for the nation to effectively tackle urgent socio-economic issues and actively pursue a path of comprehensive and inclusive development. Citizens can express their expectations for efficacious policies and reforms that enhance their living standards through voting (Kekana, 2023). The electoral process presents a valuable occasion to cultivate national solidarity and social integration as it enables individuals from various backgrounds, geographical areas and ethnic groups to unite and engage in a collective democratic undertaking, thereby surpassing societal divisions (Isah, Kadiri & Asemah, 2022; Ballard & Hamman, 2019). The 2023 Nigeria elections served as a crucial avenue through which citizens could exercise their rights to hold political leaders responsible for their actions, decisions and commitments. According to Jafar, Aziz & Shukur (2021), the electoral process enables citizens to assess the performance of previous leaders and make well-informed decisions for the future. The election significantly impacts the nation's global reputation and diplomatic ties. According to Hyde & Samet (2023), a robust and transparent electoral system plays a crucial role in enhancing Nigeria's democratic standing, thereby facilitating the influx of foreign investments and promoting cooperation with international stakeholders.

The occurrence of successful elections enhances the trust and confidence placed in democratic institutions, thereby strengthening the belief held by citizens in the effectiveness of democracy as a governing system (Asemah, Anum & Ogwo, 2012; Asemah, 2013; Asemah & Ogwo, 2013; Asemah & Umoro, 2022). This phenomenon can result in heightened civic engagement, proactive involvement and personal investment in the nation's progress (Shi &Yao, 2019). The Nigeria 2023 election assumes a pivotal role in determining the nation's future trajectory. According to Ojogiwa (2021), the outcome of the leadership selection process in Nigeria has significant implications for the formulation of policies, implementation of programmes and decision-making procedures. These outcomes have far-reaching effects on the nation's socio-economic development, security, and overall welfare.

Previous studies have explored the impact of media coverage and interpersonal communication on voter behaviour during political campaigns. For instance, Nwaoboli & Ajibulu (2023) carried out a study titled- a content-analytical study of *The Vanguard* newspaper's online coverage of the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election. Asemah, Anum & Ogwo (2012) investigated the advantage of interpersonal communication in political campaigns. However, limited research has been conducted on the influence of propaganda on voter choice of candidates in the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria. Thus, the researchers were motivated by the need to determine the influence of propaganda on voters' choice of candidates during the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent of exposure to propaganda messages in the 2023 electioneering.
2. Determine the propaganda techniques employed during the 2023 presidential election.
3. Find out the impacts of propaganda on voting behaviour in the 2023 presidential election.

Conceptualisation of Propaganda

Propaganda is a term that has been used to describe various forms of communication aimed at influencing people's attitudes and behaviours. Levitt (2021) defines propaganda as the dissemination of information, ideas or opinions with the aim of promoting a particular agenda or manipulating public opinion. Propaganda can take many forms, including posters, leaflets, speeches or social media posts. It has been used by governments, political groups and other organisations to promote their interests and to shape public discourse. Ojo (2020) describes propaganda as a deliberate attempt to shape public opinion by presenting information in a biased or misleading way. Propaganda can be used to manipulate people's beliefs and attitudes and to create a distorted view of reality. It is often used in political campaigns, advertising and media coverage of events. The use of propaganda can have far-reaching implications for society, as it can shape public opinion, influence policy decisions, and impact social norms.

Price & Allen (1990) identify opinion spirals as a mechanism that can reinforce the effects of propaganda. Opinion spirals occur when individuals adopt the views of those around them in order to conform to the group's norms. Propaganda can exploit this tendency by creating an illusion of consensus or by presenting a particular viewpoint as the dominant one. Propaganda can be spread through various channels, such as mass media, social networks or interpersonal communication. The authors emphasised the importance of understanding the dynamics of small group communication in order to better understand the effects of propaganda on public opinion.

Uche & Ojiaku (2019) view propaganda as a tool used by political actors to manipulate public opinion through music. They argued that music can be used to convey political messages and to evoke emotions that can influence people's beliefs and attitudes. Propaganda can be used to mobilise support for political candidates, promote a particular ideology or create a sense of unity among a group of people. The use of propaganda music in political campaigns can be particularly effective in creating a sense of identity and belonging among supporters.

Overview of Nigeria Political Landscape leading to 2023

The 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria was influenced by a multitude of factors that impact the nation's democratic process and governance. A reference to the fallout of the 2011 elections that saw deploying abuse as a language to effect change of government (Asemah, 2020). Nigeria has experienced a sequence of democratic transitions subsequent to the cessation of military rule in 1999, thereby instituting a multi-party framework (Igwe & Amadi, 2021). According to Yagboyaju (2021), the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) are the two prevailing political parties in Nigeria. Historically, these political parties have exerted considerable influence and have been responsible for the election of previous presidents.

In addition to the APC and PDP, the political landscape in Nigeria includes various smaller parties and regional parties that advocate for specific interests and represent distinct regions within the nation. Political parties have a significant impact on the formation of electoral campaigns, the mobilisation of support, and the communication of their policy agendas to the voting population (Elarshi *et al* 2021). Nigeria encounters a range of socioeconomic and developmental obstacles that exert an influence on the political milieu. The nation's economic stability is heavily contingent upon the revenue generated from the oil industry, rendering it susceptible to the volatilities inherent in global oil price fluctuations (Hassan, 2023). The reduction of reliance on oil through economic diversification is a significant focal point for political parties and candidates. Moreover, Nigeria is confronted with significant levels of poverty and income inequality, characterised by disparities among various regions and social cohorts (Asemah, Nwammuo & Edegoh, 2014; Ojo, 2020). The prioritisation of addressing these socioeconomic challenges has been identified as a key focus for political parties (Wei *et al* 2022).

The political landscape in Nigeria is also influenced by security concerns (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 222a; 2022b). Information exchange can influence individuals to comply because of the prevalence of hate speech, fake news and harmful information (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). The occurrence of insurgency and terrorism, specifically attributed to the Boko Haram faction in the north-eastern region, has resulted in the displacement of individuals, loss of human lives and socio-economic disturbances. The government and political parties continue to prioritise counterterrorism efforts (Levitt, 2021). In addition, it is worth noting that the occurrence of inter-communal conflicts and confrontations between farmers and herders not only presents significant security risks, but also, places a considerable burden on social cohesion. Resolving these conflicts is paramount in ensuring stability and facilitating peaceful electoral processes.

The combat against corruption constitutes a noteworthy facet within the realm of politics. Corruption remains an enduring obstacle in Nigeria, exerting its influence across multiple sectors and impeding the advancement of socio-economic development (IIoh, Opara & Agbo, 2022). According to Juwono (2020), political parties and candidates emphasise the implementation of anti-corruption measures and the pursuit of good governance reforms. Citizens express a strong desire for accountability and transparency in the allocation of public resources, as well as the promotion of the rule of law and the preservation of democratic principles.

The population of youth in Nigeria also exerts significant influence in shaping the political landscape (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). According to Schwiertz & Steinhilper (2021), individuals' involvement and advocacy significantly impact the political dialogue

and strategies employed during campaigns. The utilisation of digital platforms, specifically social media, has emerged as a significant means for the mobilisation of individuals, the articulation of viewpoints and the establishment of political leaders' responsibility (Barbeito & Iglesias, cited in Asemah & Gambo, 2016). Comprehending the intricacies of the political environment is of utmost importance when examining the intricacies of the electoral process and the influence of propaganda on voters' candidate preferences (Uche & Ojiaku, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on agenda setting theory. The agenda-setting theory is a widely used theoretical framework that explains how media, including propaganda, influences public opinion and the decision-making process of voters. Asemah (2011) says that McCombs & Shaw (1972) proposed the theory, which suggests that the media play a crucial role in shaping the prominence of issues and subjects within the public consciousness. The theory asserts that the media agenda influences the public's perception of salient issues. Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) note that most of the things that the members of the society think and worry about are based on what the mass media report.

Lippmann (1922) suggests that propaganda can manipulate public opinion by emphasising or omitting information, thereby influencing the agenda. In electoral campaigns, propagandists can establish agendas and influence voters' perceptions of candidates' strengths, weaknesses and policy stances through the strategic construction and promotion of specific narratives. The media's dissemination of propaganda messages can influence the public's perception of candidates and their policy agendas, potentially shaping voters' beliefs and preferences.

The agenda-setting theory is relevant to this study because it suggests that the media, including propaganda, shapes the prominence of issues and subjects within the public consciousness, impacting voters' preferences for political candidates.

Empirical Review

Ojogiwa (2021) examined the use of religion as a tool for political messaging during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns. They employed a survey design to gather data from a sample of 250 individuals selected randomly from various regions of Nigeria. The findi ngs showed that the use of religious appeals had an impact on voters' candidate selection and suggested that detaching religion from politics would enable voters to choose candidates based on their competence, capacity and track records. Maweu (2019) examined the use of social media platforms for the dissemination of disinformation and cyber propaganda during the 2017 Kenyan general elections. The researcher used a qualitative content analysis approach to gather data from selected social media texts and found that the surge in online activity was accompanied by the widespread dissemination of disinformation and cyber propaganda.

Chando (2021) examined the use of cyber propaganda by the pro-Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance during the 2018 Zimbabwe election. The researcher used a qualitative interpretive methodology to examine cyber-propaganda disseminated via WhatsApp and found that it primarily centred on discrediting the electoral procedure by suggesting that any outcome declared by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) that did not validate Nelson Chamisa's triumph would not accurately represent the population's desires. Jafar *et al* (2021) conducted a study on the impact of election propaganda during the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election. The findings showed that politicians employed

partially accurate falsehoods to sway voters through media channels, shaping electoral outcomes.

The above studies relate to the current one in that they provide insights into how propaganda can shape voter attitudes and preferences and potentially influence electoral outcomes. However, the studies were conducted in different countries, at different times and in different contexts, which may limit their generalisability to the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Elections as the current study specifically focuses on the use of propaganda in the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Elections and its impact on voter's choice of candidates.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research design using questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. Survey research as Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note is useful in conducting researches with large population. Oredo, Igueben and Akoko-Edo Local Government Areas, with population estimates of 374,515, 297,441 and 262,110 respectively (City Population, 2021 cited in Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023) served as the research population. Overall, the study had a total of 934,066 (nine hundred thirty-four thousand and sixty-six) population.

The sample size for this research is 384. This was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula. The researchers adopted multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, the researchers used ballot system to randomly choose one local government from each of the three senatorial zones in the state. The researchers compiled a comprehensive list of the local government areas in each senatorial zone, organising them into several categories. The researchers then selected the local governments in a random manner from a document. Consequently, Oredo, Igueben and Akoko-Edo were picked. In the second stage, the researchers opted to choose wards that were heavily inhabited from the selected local government areas. The researchers opted to choose the Ogbe, Afuda, and Ewan wards from the twelve wards of Oredo LGA, the fourteen wards of Igueben, and the 10 wards of Akoko-Edo. In the third stage, the researchers randomly distributed copies of questionnaire to ward members. Out of the 384 copies of questionnaire that were administered, 362 which was 96.87% of the sample were successfully filled and returned, while the remaining 3.13% were invalid. Thus, the presentation was based on the 362 copies returned.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent of exposure to Propaganda Messages during the 2023 Electioneering

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	109	30.2
High	120	33.3
Neutral	0	0
Low	49	13.6
Very low	25	6.3
Total	**360**	**100**

Table 1 shows that a significant proportion of the respondents were exposed to propaganda messages during the 2023 electioneering. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents (63.5%) answered in that direction.

Table 2: Strategies of Propaganda employed during the 2023 Presidential Election

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Disinformation	77	20.5
Stereotyping	127	33.8
Emotional appeal	33	8.8
Fear mongering	135	35.9
Others	4	1.1
Total	**360**	**100**

The implication of the data in table 2 is that stereotyping and fear mongering were the most commonly used propaganda strategies during the 2023 presidential election.

Table 3: Impact of Propaganda on voting Behaviour during the 2023 Presidential Election

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Made you vote for a specific candidate	40	11.1
Reinforced your perception about voting for a political party and its candidate	43	11.9
Discouraged you from voting	79	21.9
Undermined your trust in the electoral process	157	43.6
Others	41	11.4
Total	**360**	**100**

Table 3 suggests that while some respondents reported that propaganda influenced their decision to vote for a specific candidate or reinforced their existing perceptions, a significant proportion of respondents reported negative impacts.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that propaganda had a significant impact on voting behaviour during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. The data in table 1 indicates that a large proportion of the respondents were exposed to propaganda messages, with a combined 63.5% of respondents reporting "very high" and "high" extent of exposure. This suggests that propaganda was a pervasive and influential factor in shaping voter behaviour during the election and is consistent with the implications of political digital advertising discussed by Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023).

The findings further showed that the most commonly used propaganda strategies during the election were stereotyping and fear mongering. These strategies tapped into people's emotions and biases and influenced their perceptions and decisions. These findings are consistent with Gackowski's (2013) argument that political image is the substance of political communication in the era of post-politics. It was also discovered that the impact of propaganda on voting behaviour during the 2023 presidential election was not uniformly positive. This suggests that propaganda can have both positive and negative impacts on voter behaviour, depending on the content and nature of the propaganda messages. This finding is consistent with Gentzkow & Shapiro's (2011) findings that

exposure to ideologically homogeneous media can lead to polarisation and decreased trust in opposing viewpoints.

The findings of the study are related to the agenda-setting theory, which suggests that the media can influence the salience and importance of issues in the public agenda. In the context of the study, propaganda messages disseminated by political parties and candidates can be seen as a form of media content that seek to influence the public's perception of political issues and candidates.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that propaganda was indeed employed as a strategic instrument in during the 2023 Nigeria presidential election. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they were influenced by the diverse tactics of propaganda, albeit to varying extents. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. In order to safeguard democracy in Nigeria, it is imperative to scrutinise electoral candidates to ensure they refrain from employing propaganda tactics that may have adverse effects on the unity of the nation.
2. Political parties and candidates should be mindful of the potential impacts of propaganda on voter behaviour. They should use propaganda responsibly and ensure that their messages are not misleading or divisive.
3. Given the pervasive nature of propaganda, media literacy education should be promoted as part of civic education initiatives. This will help individuals to identify and resist propaganda messages and make informed decisions during elections and beyond.

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CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

EXPOSURE TO POLITICAL ADVERTISING MESSAGES AND VOTER'S CHOICE OF CANDIDATES DURING THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN EDO STATE

Isah Abdulazeez; Daniel Toochukwu Ezegwu & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

In Nigeria, political leaders are selected at four-year intervals through elections. Nigerian elections are contentious, with candidates and parties often resorting to dishonest means (such as misleading media campaigns) to win over voters. During elections, politicians often resort to political advertising in an effort to win over voters. Even in democratic Nigeria, the pervasiveness of political advertising mirrors that of other democracies. Political advertising is one of the subfields of human communications and commercial practices (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). The main purpose of political advertisements is to influence voters' decisions (Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). This is achieved through the use of persuasive language. To put it in another way, politicians resort to techniques like advertising in order to win over voters. Political campaigns are increasingly being marketed to the public like consumer goods in an effort to garner votes. This means that political advertisements are essential in today's political climate. Advertisements for political candidates, ballot initiatives and political activism are all included in the broad category of "political advertising," as defined by Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Campaign advertisements were used extensively by political parties and candidates in the 2023 general election in Nigeria. Politicians were marketed to the voting public using digital and analogue channels alike.

Over the past two decades, political advertising has become increasingly prevalent in Nigeria as a means of rallying support among voters (Egulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023, Nwaoboli, 2023). Before and after the 2023 elections, political parties in Nigeria heavily advertised their agendas and candidates to garner support from them. Given the hostile political climate in the country before the elections, it was hard to tell if the meticulously designed political advertising messages had a significant impact on the voting patterns of the people. The unique selling features touted by political advertising campaigns also remained a mystery in terms of their impact on voters' final ballot choices. The majority of Edo State voters who cast ballots during the election may or may not have been influenced by the advertisements they saw. In addition to the foregoing, numerous studies have been done to examine the effect of political advertising on voters' choices. Asemah & Edegoh (2012), for instance, conducted research in 2012 on the advantages and disadvantages of using new media in political advertising. However, there has been surprisingly little thought given to how political advertisements can influence voters' decisions in the 2023 election. This is the gap this study fills.

Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to:

1. Determine the extent of Edo electorate's exposure to political advertising messages.

2. Find out the channels through which Edo electorate were exposed to political advertising messages.
3. Find out the influence of political advertising messages on the voting behaviour of Edo electorate during the 2023 elections.

Literature Review

Advertising is defined as "any paid communication given to a target audience through various mass media, such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, movies and the internet" with the primary objective of promoting a product or selling a candidate. Advertising, then, is the practice of making people aware of something by bringing it to their attention. To get the word out about a product, service, commodity, object or political candidate, one must resort to advertising, which is both distinctive and uncommon. Advertising is any form of communication whose primary purpose is to promote the sale or use of a product or service (Jumbo, Belli & Asemah, 2020; Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023). Art and action come together in advertisements, which are a form of deliberate communication. Individuals and governments alike exert effort to spread the word about the goods and services they offer (Asemah, 2011). Any form of paid promotion of a political candidate, political party or political ideology that is disseminated to a targeted audience by any of a number of mass media outlets falls under the above definition.

To win over voters, political parties increasingly present their candidates in a branded package. Therefore, political advertising is essential, yet lacking in today's politics. Political advertising encompasses any form of promotion that seeks to rally voters in favour of a certain political candidate, ballot initiative and political activity. Since the advent of the World Wide Web (WWW), any successful political campaign will need harnessing the potential of social media, political email advertising and search engine marketing.

According to Olujide, Adeyemi & Gbadeyan (2010), political advertising is the process through which political candidates use the media to increase their profile among voters. Politicians no longer make personal campaign stops as they did 50 years ago; instead, they rely heavily on broadcast media such as television and radio. The most common strategy is the spot commercial, which promotes one candidate while criticising another. It helps the candidate interact with supportable subsets of the community and communicates their stance on key subjects (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012).

Discussions of political advertising can be found in the canonical works of the subfield of social marketing known as "political marketing" (Achor, 2002). The subjects of political science, management, communication, marketing, public relations and even traditional advertising are all significantly borrowed from the realm of political advertising (Kenechukwu, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). All of this knowledge is based on the idea that political advertising influences attitude and behaviour and serves as a tool for mobilising the electorate to participate in politics or political processes, such as supporting or voting for a certain political candidate during elections.

Political advertising is a potent tool for swaying public opinion and shaping voters' preferences for a certain politician or political party (Edegoh, Asemah & Okpanachi, 2013; Asemah, 2020; Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). The political advertiser (candidate, political and party) will use professional political communicators to craft the message in an effort to alter public opinion or win over voters. Commercials for political candidates can be

shown on television, radio, and the internet (Asemah, 2009). The message is filed away in one of the voter's three cognitive compartments: acceptance, rejection or indecision. The message in each section is tailored to the individual voter and is meant to sway their vote in favour of a particular candidate. A voter's opinion of "candidate A" can shift drastically or be reinforced in response to a political message. As a result, voters cast ballots for or against candidates according to how closely their views align with those of the evaluator. However, this is not the case if the message is consistent with the voter's notions of apoliticism and the voter has the option to reject this.

When a voter determines that a politician's message is within the range of non-commitment, but does not resonate with any of their accepted opinions or held values, they are less likely to vote for that candidate or to continue supporting them. Because of this, Isah, Olley & Kadiri (2022) note that voters' critical thinking skills are not the only thing that takes in the messages from political advertisements. Voters' exposure to political advertising messages has been the subject of extensive study and evaluation with the goal of determining the range of possible outcomes.

Empirical Review

Asemah & Edegoh (2012) examined the possibilities and limitations of using new media for political advertising in Nigeria. This research was motivated by the emerging importance of new media in disseminating political activism. The purpose of the research was to identify the advantages and disadvantages of new media. The researchers employed survey research strategy, with the questionnaire serving as the primary data collection instrument. The use of new media in Nigerian political advertising was shown to have advantages and disadvantages. Using new media has the potential to reach a large audience, but it also presents unique challenges when it comes to conveying information on a regular basis. The researchers concluded that the political parties in Nigeria make minimal use of digital platforms. As a result, it was advised that they place a greater emphasis on making use of new media in order to spread their political activities.

Okpara *et al* (2016) looked at the effects of political advertising on voters' preferences in the 2015 governorship election in Imo State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the divisive political climate in the state leading to the gubernatorial election, which occurred because the incumbent governor had defected to an opposing party and other candidates were determined to unseat him. The survey approach was used, with the questionnaire serving as the tool for data collection. The major results showed that voters' preferences in the 2015 gubernatorial election in Imo State were heavily impacted by the distinctive selling propositions presented by the candidates in their political advertisements. Voters' ability to make well-informed decisions at the polls was largely attributed to the variety of message dissemination tactics that were used. Even though the message content of some political advertisements and the style in which they were presented differed greatly across advertising medium, voters' choice of candidate for an election significantly changed when supplied with more believable information by the opponent's advertising message. The researchers recommended that voters should evaluate the content of political advertisements and compare the results to what they can see about a candidate and their party before making a final decision about who to support.

Asemah, Nwammuo & Edegoh conducted research in 2014 to find out how residents of Jos felt about media coverage of the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Plateau State. The researchers employed quantitative research design. The findings showed that

the Plateau State-controlled PRTVC, Jos paid more attention to the gubernatorial election campaigns than the Nigerian Television Authority, Jos. The findings showed that PRTVC gave substantial coverage to the campaigns for governor. The researchers concluded that the Plateau State governorship elections in 2011 was covered by state-owned broadcast media, but that more coverage was given to the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Based on its findings and conclusions, the researchers recommended that the media make an attempt to treat political parties involved in any particular election equitably.

Isah *et al* (2022) conducted research on how social judgement theory affected political advertisements. The study's overarching objective was to track the fate of the communications once they were delivered to participants. The research relied heavily on a review of the relevant literature. The results of the survey indicated that people do not passively consume political advertising. According to the findings, political advertising messages are pre-processed based on voters' openness to either accepting or rejecting them.

Theoretical Framework

This study relies heavily on the social judgement theory. In 1961, Muzafar Sherif, Caroline Sherif & Carl Hovl published the first version of what would become known as the social judgement theory. How people feel about a topic and how they interpret a message both play a role in how they react to it. Social judgement theory states that whether or not a message is accepted depends on the cognitive map and ego involvement of the recipient (SJT). According to the SJT, there are three distinct parts of the mind where an individual stores information about themselves and their perspectives. Among these are the options to accept or decline an offer and to hold off on making any firm promises (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017, pp.76-77). Since we have a great deal of leeway in deciding whether or not to act on the evidence presented to us, when we are persuaded, we evaluate whether or not we should accept it using our prior judgement categories. The recipient will benefit from either option they choose (Isah, 2022).

The social judgement and engagement theory helps explain why individuals can have such divergent interpretations of the same message. This means the theory can be used to explain how political advertising messages influence people's perceptions and their voting behaviour. The notion is compelling and it can account for abnormalities in curvilinear connections. Some of the factors are one's resistance, contrast and adaptability. The diversity of opinions held by Edo voters on the impact of political advertising on their voting behaviour in the 2023 election lends credence to the theory's applicability to the study. It is possible for two people to be exposed to the identical political advertising messages, but have different reactions, depending on the communication's latitude. This lends credence to the assumption that the identical message will elicit contrasting reactions from two intelligent persons.

Methodology

The researchers relied on survey research design. In order to comprehensively describe events, a survey is a type of empirical study that collects data using questionnaire. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) state that questionnaire plays a crucial role in the field of communication studies. Participants were drawn from three different local governments in Esan Central, Oredo and Etsako West. The projected population of Oredo is 374,515, Etsako West is 245,469 while Esan Central is 154,366 people. Thus, the population of the study is 774,350. A sample

size of 495 was using the Cochran sample size determination formula.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. The researchers originally divided the state into three senatorial districts (Edo North, Edo Central and Edo South). The researchers used the Fishbowl method to randomly select three municipalities from the senatorial districts (Etsako West, Esan Central and Oredo Local Governments). In the second stage, a random selection process was used to select two towns from each of the local governments. For Oredo (New Benin and Orogo), Esan Central (Irrua and Ewu) and Etsako West (Auchi and Uzairue) municipal administrations. In the third stage, the fishbowl method was used to choose municipalities from each of the local governments under consideration, which helped to reduce bias. Given the constraints of time and resources, the decision was reasonable. Furthermore, in the fourth stage, 10 wards/streets were picked from the select towns (10 towns) and 49 copies of the questionnaire were delivered to them, with Ekehuan Road receiving five extra copies due to its relatively higher population density. Auchi/Uzairue (Igbei/Iyekhei/Jattu), Irrua/Ewu (Afuda/Eguare) and Irrua/Ewu (Jattu) were the other three levels (1stEvborhan Lane, New Oguanogbe Street, Ekehuan Road and Eweka Lane.). Finally, surveys were sent out to everyone over the age of 18 using a convenience or availability sampling approach. There were originally 495 copies of the questionnaire, but they were all used up.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 495 copies of questionnaire that were administered, four hundred (400) were filled and returned and found useable.

Table1: Response on Exposure to Political Advertising Messages during 2023 Elections

Variables		**Frequency**	**Percent**
Valid	Strongly agree	182	45.2
	Agree	95	23.8
	Undecided	33	8.3
	Disagree	71	17.8
	Strongly disagree	19	4.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

It is clear from the data in the above table that during the 2023 presidential election, political advertising was presented to the population of Edo. This is due to the fact that 69 percent of respondents acknowledged having been exposed to political advertising throughout the 2023 presidential election campaigns.

Table 2: Response on extent of Exposure to Political Advertising Messages during the 2023 Election

Variable		**Frequency**	**Percent**
	Very great	125	31.3
	Great	129	32.3
	Can’t tell	69	17.3
	Low	51	12.8
	Very low	26	6.5
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

Data in table 2 clearly show that Edo voters were exposed to a lot of political advertising during the 2023 election. This is due to the fact that 63.6 percent of respondents were exposed to political advertising messages during the general election, indicating that they were aware of the various political parties and candidates' political advertising messages.

Table 3: Channel of Exposure to Political Advertising Messages

Variables		Frequency	Percent
	Radio	43	10.8
	Television	53	13.3
	Newspaper/ magazine	89	22.3
	Social media	102	25.5
	All stated media	113	28.3
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

Table 3 listed the media that voters were exposed to when receiving political advertising messages. The result shows that political advertising messages were disseminated to the electorate via radio, television, print media and social media.

Table 4: Response on whether Political Advertising was used to promote Candidates and Political Parties during 2023 Election

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	132	33.0
	Agree	47	11.8
	Undecided	91	22.8
	Disagree	120	30.0
	Strongly disagree	10	2.5
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

The information in the table above revealed that during the 2023 elections, political advertising was utilised to support political parties and political candidates. This is due to the fact that 44.8% of respondents firmly felt that political advertising was utilised to advance political parties and candidates.

Table5: Response on whether Political Advertising was used to Solicit for Votes during the 2023 Election

Variables		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly agree	165	41.3
	Agree	73	18.3
	Undecided	10	2.5
	Disagree	97	24.3
	Strongly disagree	55	13.8
	Total	400	100.0

The data in the above table show that political advertising was a strategy utilised by politicians during the 2023 election to solicit votes from the voters.

Table 6: Responses on whether Political Candidates and Political Parties were known through Political Advertising

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	129	32.3
	Agree	120	30.0
	Undecided	47	11.8
	Disagree	55	13.8
	Strongly disagree	49	12.3
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

According to the data in the above table, political advertising helped political parties and their candidates gain notoriety.

Table 7: Response on whether Respondents voted during the 2023 Election

		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly agree	93	23.3
	Agree	187	46.6
	Undecided	0	0
	Disagree	55	13.8
	Strongly disagree	66	16.5
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

The question in table 7 sought to determine whether the respondents cast ballots in the election of 2023. The data show that the respondents participated in the 2023 election. This is due to the fact that majority (69.9%) of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 8: Responses on Political Advertising influencing Voters' Choice of Candidates

Variables		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly agree	105	26.3
	Agree	199	49.8
	Undecided	29	7.3
	Disagree	39	9.8
	Strongly disagree	28	7.0
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

The data in the above table show that the political advertising campaign influenced voters' choice of candidate during the 2023 elections.

Discussion of Findings

The study's primary objective was to ascertain the level of exposure to political advertising messages among Edo electorate in the run-up to the 2023 elections. The findings showed that the people of Edo were exposed to political advertisements during the 2023 presidential election. This is owing to the fact that 69% answered in that direction. This demonstrates that Edo voters paid close attention to the media during the campaign to catch the most important statements made by the candidates running for president. Political parties and candidates used advertising to reach out to voters and solicit their support,

which is in line with the findings of Okpara, Amuforo & Achor (2016). Based on the foregoing, it seems likely that politicians would make heavy use of advertisements in order to win over voters throughout the election campaign.

The second objective was to determine which forms of media were used to reach Edo voters with political advertisements. The findings showed that advertisements were disseminated over radio, television, print media and social media. This suggests that political advertisements were aired during news broadcasts. The ultimate objective was to analyse the impact of political advertisements on the voting behaviour of Edo electorate in the 2023 presidential election. The results of the 2023 presidential election demonstrate the influence of paid political advertising on voters. Political advertising spread the word about candidates and their policies, helping them acquire support and visibility.

Results showed that 199 respondents (49.8% of the sample) believed that the messages they were exposed had an impact on their decision to vote for a certain candidate. This suggests that political advertisements played a major role in deciding the outcome of the 2023 election. This suggests that the messages of political advertising during the 2023 election were taken in and assimilated within the latitude of acceptability, as predicted by the social judgement theory on which this research is based. Given that over half of the sample (498 people) believes that the political advertising messages they were exposed to influenced their vote. Evidence like this suggests that political advertisements played a major role in deciding the outcome of the 2023 Edo election. Asemah, Nwammuo & Edegoh (2014) claimed that voters in Edo were swayed by political advertisements during the 2023 presidential election.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, we can infer that political advertising played a significant role in the 2023 presidential campaign. Candidates and parties used both traditional and social media to reach out to voters throughout campaign season. Voting patterns and voter behaviour were affected by the political advertising and campaign rhetoric that voters were exposed to in the months leading up to the presidential election. Based on the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Voters should always assess the content of advertising messages and compare the results with the observable characteristics of the candidates.
2. Candidates and political advertisers alike should focus their unique selling propositions on important facts rather than unimportant details.

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CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE CANDIDACY OF PETER OBI DURING THE 2023 POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Chukwuemeka C. Nwachukwu; Daniel O. Ekhareafo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The 2023 presidential election in Nigeria was a highly contested one; with several candidates vying for the top position. One of the candidates, Peter Obi, garnered significant support from his followers who are called "Obidients." According to Asemah & Nwammuo (2017) and Ogunleye & Adeleke (2023), over the last decade, political parties have increasingly used social media to help shape the public's perceptions of candidates. Social media are an online communication network which allow the public to produce original content through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to mention a few (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). While each platform offers the public various means of expression, all platforms are centred around the idea of social networking (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). Because of the great success in utilising social media during political campaigns and the rise in the interest of voters, candidates have begun to normalise the use of social media in political campaigns (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

Nadler (2016) observes that the media often give the public what they want to hear to gain recognition of their news network from the public, causing the candidates to come forward and respond to false messages that have been relayed in the news. Those responses need to be straightforward, honest and factual responses and are often best constructed by professional communicators.

The digital approach to marketing is growing among all industries, ultimately causing social media to be a strong force for marketing political information such as campaign messages (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). According to Frantzich (2016), the journalistic approach of marketing is focused on the consumers' feedback, driving the actions of news producers, including how they present and portray current events, products and initiate discussion in the media. This demand-driven approach leaves journalists with both an opportunity and problem at hand, as the feedback of consumers is nearly unpredictable. While the concept of social media marketing was adapted into politics from the world of business, there has been a turnaround. Researchers have begun to discover that businesses can now learn from how political campaign teams are implementing the use of digital media in brand development (Canel &Voltmer, 2014). While the 2023 Nigerian presidential election has ended, Peter Obi, who was one of the presidential aspirants to a large extent campaigned and was massively campaigned for by his supporters (obidients) on social media. On this premise, the researchers examined the perception on the use of social media for shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 political campaigns.

Statement of the Problem

Social media have made an incredible impact among every industry over the course of the last decade (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). In the midst of what is known as the digital age, society relies on the social media to gather all information regarding current events. Political campaign managers have adapted the use of social media marketing and have

seen great success in doing so. Social media are changing the game for candidates and expanding the scope of politics (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Candidates and voters are directly engaging more than ever before, but at the cost of their judgement and perceptions of one another.

Despite this advancement in the use of social media for campaigns, a few studies such as Ogundele & Adeleke (2023) have been carried out to evaluate the use of social media in creating awareness in presidential elections in Nigeria, but none of these studies have examined such impact in the context of the 2023 presidential election. This void in literature is what this study covers by examining the perception on the use of social media for shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 political campaigns.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the frequency of Edo State residents use of social media in shaping public opinion on the candidacy of peter obi during the 2023 political campaigns.
2. Examine the social media platforms Edo State residents used in shaping public opinion on the candidacy of peter obi during the 2023 political campaigns.
3. Find out the extent of exposure of Edo State residents to Peter Obi's 2023 presidential election campaign messages on social media.
4. Examine the influence of social media campaigns of Peter Obi's 2023 presidential election by Edo State residents voting behaviour.

Concept of Social Media

Social media is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of internet-based applications and services that allow users to create, share and modify user-generated content. Social media platforms allow users to connect with friends and family, as well as to connect with others who share their interests (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). Social media have become an integral part of our lives and used for a variety of purposes, including communication, entertainment, news and commerce. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media are internet-based applications that allow the creation and sharing of user-generated content.

Aral & Walker (2011) see social media as online platforms that facilitate the creation, sharing and modification of user-generated content. Boyd & Ellison (2007) define social media as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system and update their profile status and/or share content.

One of the most common types of social media is social networking sites and according to Nwaoboli & Asemah (2023), these platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, allow users to connect with friends and family and to connect with others who share their interests. Users can share updates, photos, and videos and engage in conversations with others. Another type of social media is microblogging platforms. These platforms, such as Twitter and Tumblr, allow users to share short messages or "tweets" with their followers (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). Image-sharing platforms, such as Instagram and Pinterest, are another type of social media. These platforms allow users to share photos and videos with their followers. Users can also browse through other people's

posts and discover new content. Image-sharing platforms are a great way for people to showcase their creativity and connect with others who share similar interests.

Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex (2022) observe that video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, are also popular social media platforms. These platforms allow users to share videos with their followers. Social news and bookmarking sites, such as Reddit and Digg, are also popular social media platforms. These platforms allow users to share news articles and other web content with their followers (Nwaoboli, 2022a, Asemah, 2022b). Users can upvote or downvote content which determines how popular it is on the platform. Social news and bookmarking sites are a great way for people to discover new content and stay up-to-date on current events.

Political Campaigns

A political campaign is a planned and organised effort by a candidate or political party to persuade voters to support their candidacy or policies. This typically involves a variety of activities, such as holding rallies, fundraising events and debates, as well as advertising through various media channels like television, radio, social media and print (Norris, 2002). According to Thurber &Nelson (2000), a political campaign is a strategic and coordinated effort to influence public opinion and gain support for a particular issue or cause, such as a ballot initiative or a policy proposal. This may involve mobilising grassroots activists, engaging with the media and lobbying elected officials and other decision-makers.

A political campaign is a competitive and often intense process of seeking elected office or political power (Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2022; Asemah, Ekhareafo & Santas, 2022). This can involve running for office as a candidate, working as a campaign strategist or consultant or volunteering for a political party or interest group. Political campaigns can vary widely in terms of their goals, tactics and outcomes and can have a significant impact on the political landscape of a community, region or country (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

Political campaigns are an essential part of democratic societies involving a range of planned activities aimed at persuading voters to cast their ballots in favour of a candidate, a political party or an interested group (Gamson, 2004). These activities may include voter registration, fundraising, advertising and public events. In recent years, social media have become increasingly important tools for political campaigns, allowing them to reach a large audience and target messages to specific demographics. Social media can also be used to build relationships with voters and generate excitement and enthusiasm for the campaign.

However, the use of social media in political campaigns also poses some challenges. One of the most significant challenges is the spread of fake news which can mislead voters and damage the reputation of the campaign. Trolls and bots can also be a problem as they can spread misinformation and disrupt the campaign. In addition, social media algorithms can create filter bubbles that prevent users from seeing content that they disagree with, making it difficult for campaigns to reach voters who are not already supportive of their message.

Notion of Public Opinion

According to Canel &Voltmer (2014), the concept of public opinion pertains to the collective attitudes, beliefs and perspectives of a specific group of individuals regarding a particular subject or matter. According to Gamson (2004), the shared understanding held by members of a particular society or community with respect to a particular issue or

phenomenon is referred to as collective perception. The formation of public opinion can be shaped by a multitude of factors, such as individual experiences, societal customs, mass communication, academic instruction and political beliefs (Heath, Fisher & Smith, 2005).

The significance of public opinion in democratic societies lies in its ability to influence the formulation of public policy and steer the decision-making process of elected officials and other leaders. According to Heath, Fisher & Smith (2005), it has the potential to impact the conduct and operations of both individuals and organisations. The measurement of public opinion can be conducted through diverse techniques, including surveys, polls and focus groups. The phenomenon in question may be subject to a range of influences, such as those stemming from media outlets, political campaigns, interest groups and social movements. The media have a crucial impact on shaping public opinion through the provision of information and the construction of narratives that steer public discourse. Canel &Voltmer (2014) assert that political campaigns and interest groups endeavour to sway public opinion by disseminating their agendas and messaging to prospective adherents.

According to Gamson (2004), the influence of public opinion on society can be substantial, as it has the potential to impact political results, mould cultural standards and propel social transformation. Furthermore, it has the potential to function as a mechanism for ensuring that leaders and institutions are held responsible for their actions and decisions. The notion of public opinion is multifaceted and constantly evolving, serving as a pivotal force in moulding the fabric of society and exerting an impact on the process of decision-making (Ugwuoke, 2017).

Factors that motivated Electorate's Support for Peter Obi's Candidacy in the 2023 Election

During the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, many electorate and social media users were motivated to support Peter Obi candidacy for several reasons. Peter Obi's track record as a former governor of Anambra State was an important factor in motivating his supporters. His achievements in education, healthcare, infrastructure and agriculture were instrumental in motivating his supporters during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Peter Obi's policies were also a significant factor in motivating his supporters. His policies were focused on promoting economic development, improving healthcare and education and fighting corruption.

Peter Obi's integrity was another important factor in motivating his supporters. Many people were impressed by his reputation for honesty and believed that he was a man of his word (Ogunleye & Adeleke, 2023). His leadership style was also an important factor in motivating his supporters. They believed that he was a unifier who could bring people together and build consensus around important issues. The "obidients" were also motivated by a desire for change in Nigerian politics and saw Peter Obi as a leader who could bring about positive change. Finally, Peter Obi's youthful energy and enthusiasm were an important factor in motivating his supporters.

As governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi implemented policies and programmes that had a positive impact on the lives of Anambra residents. He focused on improving education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, among other areas (Ogunleye & Adeleke, 2023). Peter Obi's policies were focused on promoting economic development, improving healthcare and education and fighting corruption. He recognised the importance of engaging with stakeholders and building consensus around important issues. He believed that this approach was critical for promoting good governance and achieving

positive change. Peter Obi's youthful energy was reflected in his approach to governance. He recognised the importance of engaging with young people and promoting their participation in politics and governance.

Influence of Social Media on the Support of Peter Obi's Candidature in the 2023 Presidential Election

The influence of social media on the support of Peter Obi's candidacy in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election cannot be overstated. The Obidients (Peter Obi's supporters) used social media platforms to amplify his message, mobilise voters and counteract smear campaigns against him. They recognised the power of social media in shaping the narrative around an election and used it to their advantage. One of the ways in which social media influenced the support of Peter Obi's candidacy was through voter mobilisation (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The Obidients used social media platforms to engage with voters and encourage them to support Peter Obi. They used hashtags such as #Obi2023, #ObiForPresident and #Obidients to generate online buzz and create a sense of community around their candidate. They also used social media to provide voter education and remind voters about the election date and location of polling stations (Okoro & Nwammuo, 2023). Social media helped the Obidients to reach a wider audience and increase voter turnout among Peter Obi's supporters.

Social media also played a significant role in amplifying Peter Obi's message. The Obidients used social media platforms to share information about Peter Obi's track record as a former governor and his plans for Nigeria's future (Okoro & Nwammuo, 2023). They used social media to create a positive image of Peter Obi and present him as a strong and viable candidate for the presidency. Social media helped the Obidients to reach a wider audience and increase Peter Obi's popularity among voters. Counteracting smear campaigns against Peter Obi was another way in which social media influenced the support of his candidacy (Ogunleye & Adeleke, 2023). The Obidients used social media to respond to negative propaganda with facts and evidence. They also used social media to create a positive image of Peter Obi and counteract negative propaganda. Social media helped the Obidients to present a positive image of Peter Obi and protect his reputation from negative propaganda.

Social media played a significant role in youth mobilisation (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The Obidients recognised that young people constitute a significant portion of the Nigerian population and that their support was critical to Peter Obi's success. They used social media platforms to engage with young voters and share information about Peter Obi's policies and track record. Social media helped the Obidients to mobilise young voters and create a groundswell of support for Peter Obi among young people.

Empirical Review

Eze & Madichie (2020) evaluated the use of social media in creating awareness of elections. The objectives were to investigate the impact of social media on political participation in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the factors that influenced young Nigerians' engagement with social media platforms and their impact on political participation. The researchers adopted survey research design, using a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from a sample of young Nigerians who engaged with social media platforms during the 2019 general elections. The researchers employed the theory of reasoned action. The researchers found that social media were effective in promoting political participation among young Nigerians. It was recommended that

political actors in Nigeria should continue to leverage social media platforms to engage young Nigerians and promote political participation.

Fayoyin & Olayide (2019) evaluated the effectiveness of Facebook campaigns in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The researchers adopted a qualitative research design, using semi-structured interviews to collect data from political actors who engaged with social media platforms during the 2019 general elections. The researchers employed the agenda-setting theory to explain the influence of social media on political campaigns and awareness. The researchers found that social media were effective in political campaigns and creating awareness of elections among young Nigerians. The researchers recommended that political actors in Nigeria should continue to leverage Facebook to engage young Nigerians and create awareness of electoral processes and procedures.

Ogunleye & Adeleke (2023) examined the impact of Obidients use of social media on political participation in the 2023 presidential election. The objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of Obidients use of social media on political participation in the 2023 presidential election. The researchers used a quantitative approach in collecting survey data from Obidients social media followers and analysing the data using statistical methods. The social identity theory was the used in the study and the findings of the study suggested that Obidients' use of social media had a positive impact on political participation, particularly among young people and first-time voters. It was, therefore, recommended that political candidates and parties should prioritise social media in their political campaigns and use it as a tool to engage with citizens and encourage political participation.

The studies mentioned in the previous response provided insights into the use of social media in political campaigns and their impact on political participation and awareness. These studies are relevant to the perception on the use of social media for shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 political campaigns as they provided evidence that social media can be effective tools for political campaigns and can have a significant impact on political participation and awareness, which can shape public opinion on a candidate's candidacy.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory is one of the media effect theories used in mass media and political communication researches. The development of the agenda-setting theory is credited to Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw based on their study published in 1972 (Asemah, 2011; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). There are generally two levels of agenda-setting: salience of objects and the salience of attributes (McCombs, 2005).

The first level- salience of objects - which was the dominant focus of early studies on agenda-setting theory refers to how the media beam attention on certain public issues (objects). Salience of attributes being the second level is a further step to the first level; here, the media not only focus on 'objects' (issues, topics, events and people- of public concern) but also highlight traits, aspects or characteristics of the particular object in focus (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Asemah, Illah & Edegoh, 2013). Aspects of an issue are not usually accorded equal attention by the media; while an aspect may be more emphasised, some get irregular attention and some others are altogether neglected. It is this propensity

of the media to emphasise certain attributes of an issue that shapes how the public perceive, understand and form their opinions concerning such issues (Asemah *et al* 2017).

The two levels of the agenda-setting theory come to the fore when the mass media are involved in calling attention to the new and major issues of the day and influencing agreement about what the priorities of these issues; thus, intersecting the surveillance and the consensus functions of the media (McCombs, 2005).

In the context of this study, agenda-setting theory applies in several ways. First, Obidients' use of social media to support Peter Obi's candidature in the 2023 presidential election can be seen as an attempt to set the agenda for the election by highlighting certain issues that they deem important. Second, the mainstream media may pick up on the issues that Obidients are highlighting on social media and amplify them, thereby setting the agenda for the election.

Methodology

The research design for the study was a descriptive survey design which according to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) is appropriate for perception studies. The primary instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions. The population of the study comprised Oredo, Esan Central and Owan-East Local Government areas which respectively had a population of 374, 515; 154, 366; and 154,385, according to City Population (2021). The population of the study was, therefore, 683,266 (six hundred and eighty-three thousand, two hundred and twenty-six).

The researchers adopted the Cochran sample size determination formula and the sample size was 384. The researchers utilised a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the researchers purposively selected the three senatorial zones in Edo State - Edo South Senatorial Zone, Edo Central Senatorial Zone and Edo North Senatorial Zone- to ensure a representative view of Edo State residents on the subject of discourse. In the second stage, the researcher employed the fishbowl system to randomly select one local government from each of the three senatorial zones.

Specifically, Oredo Local Government Area was chosen from Edo South Senatorial Zone, Esan Central Local Government Area was selected from Edo Central Senatorial Zone and Owan East Local Government Area was chosen from Edo North Senatorial Zone. In the third stage, the researcher selected densely populated wards from the select local government areas. GRA Ihiama was selected from Oredo LGA, Ekpoma was selected from Esan Central Local Government Area, and Otuo was chosen from Owan-East Local Government Area. The rationale for selecting these locations was based on resource limitations and the need to collect a representative sample of the study population. Finally, in the fourth stage, the researchers randomly distributed 382 copies of the questionnaire in the select wards using random sampling technique; however, 369 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved while 13 copies were lost.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Frequency of Edo State Residents' use of Social Media in shaping Public Opinion on the Candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 Political Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	160	43.4
High	141	38.2

Can't tell	0	0
Low	41	11.1
Very low	27	7.3
Total	**369**	**100**

Table 1 shows that social media likely played an important role in shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 political campaigns in Edo State. The majority of respondents were frequent users of social media, suggesting that social media were significant platforms for political campaigns to reach and influence potential voters

Table 2: Social Media Platforms Edo State Residents used in shaping Public Opinion on the Candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 Political Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	85	23.0
Twitter	68	18.4
Instagram	38	10.3
Youtube	21	5.7
Whatsapp	91	24.7
Tik-Tok	15	4.1
Others	51	13.8
Total	**369**	**100**

Table 2 shows that Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter were the most popular platforms Edo State residents used in shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi during the 2023 political campaigns. This perhaps was because of the popularity of the social media platforms against other platforms.

Table 3: Extent of exposure of Edo State Residents to Peter Obi's 2023 Presidential Election Campaign Messages on Social Media

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	158	42.8
High	188	50.9
Neutral	5	1.4
Low	11	2.9
Very low	7	1.9
Total	**369**	**100**

Table 3 disclosed that social media were significant platforms for Peter Obi's 2023 presidential election campaign in Edo State. This suggests that social media can be powerful tools for political campaigns to reach and influence potential voters.

Table 4: Influence of Social Media Campaigns of Peter Obi's 2023 Presidential Election on Edo State Residents voting Behaviour

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Made me vote for Peter Obi	196	53.1
Made me not to vote for Peter Obi	3	0.8
Made me undecided about voting for Peter Obi	3	0.8
Made me aware of Peter Obi's achievements	91	24.7
Made me aware of Peter Obi's policies	76	20.6
Total	**369**	**100**

Table 4 shows that majority of respondents reported that the social media in the 2023 presidential election made them vote for Peter Obi, indicating that social media were effective tools for political campaigns to influence potential voters. Social media were also effective in educating Edo State residents about Peter Obi's background, achievements and policy positions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study provide important insights into the role of social media in shaping public opinion and influencing voting behaviour during political campaigns. The findings showed that social media played a significant role in shaping public opinion on the candidacy of Peter Obi in Edo State as majority of the respondents were frequent users of social media. This finding is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the significant impact of social media on political communication and public opinion in addition to the fact that social media can also provide a space for political campaigns to reach out to potential voters and persuade them to support their candidate or party (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023).

The findings further revealed that Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter were the most popular social media platforms used by Edo State residents to shape their opinions on Peter Obi's candidacy. This is consistent with global trends as these platforms are among the most popular social media platforms worldwide (Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2023). This is consistent with the agenda setting theory which suggests that the media can influence what topics or issues are considered important by the public by selectively highlighting certain issues or topics.

The findings further showed that a significant proportion of Edo State residents were exposed to Peter Obi's campaign messages on social media, highlighting the potential impact of social media as tools for political campaigns to reach and influence potential voters. This finding is consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of social media in political campaigns. For example, Egbulefu &Nwaoboli (2023) found that social media can provide political campaigns with a cost-effective way to reach a large number of potential voters and to tailor their messages to specific audiences.

The findings revealed that social media played a significant role in influencing Edo State residents' voting behaviour in favour of Peter Obi. The majority of respondents reported that the social media campaigns made them vote for him, indicating that social media were effective tools for political campaigns to influence potential voters. Overall, the study provides evidence that social media played a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing voting behaviour during the political campaigns in Edo State, which is consistent with the agenda setting theory.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that social media were highly used to shape public opinion about Peter Obi’s candidacy in the 2023 presidential election. This was majorly done through Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter and this campaign motivated many people to vote for Peter Obi in the 2023 presidential election. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Political campaign managers should prioritise their social media strategies and tailor their messages to popular social media platforms to effectively reach and engage with potential voters.

2. Political campaigners should use social media responsibly and consider the potential impact of their messages on all segments of the population.
3. Political campaigners should consider investing in social media analytics tools to better understand their audience and measure the impact of their social media campaigns.
4. Policymakers should consider regulating social media to ensure that it is used responsibly and to prevent the spread of misinformation and propaganda during political campaigns.

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CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ON EDO ELECTORATE'S CHOICE OF CANDIDATES DURING THE 2023 NIGERIA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Francis Azuka Mordi; Faith Ozikor Amah & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The realisation that politics has a root in forming part of the society has made it an element with proper and important consideration. Political participation is when people are involved in choosing their leaders for effective governance. Participation involves voting, participating in rallies, running for positions (Nwaoboli, 2023). Itek & Ogaruku (2020) see political campaign as the model through which those seeking election pass their aspirations, policies and attributes to the people who equally use those information for informed political actions. It is also imperative to note that most political campaigns are carried out by the media. This is why Asemah (2011a) observes that social media have created a space on the internet that has received popularity over the years. Asemah (2011b) observes that part of the aim of the media is to understand feelings and give expression.

It has been argued that in politics, the media are often a tool to build the image of the candidates and influence public support and opinion, pointing out that the media create images of the political candidates (Fadhkurrohman & Purnomo, 2020). It is in this regard that the researchers sought to evaluate the degree of influence political campaigns had on Edo electorate's choice of candidates during the 2023 presidential election.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Find out the extent to which electorate in Benin accessed political campaigns during the 2023 presidential election.
2. Determine the channels through which Benin electorate accessed political campaigns.
3. Ascertain the effectiveness of the political campaigns.
4. Find out the extent of influence of political campaigns on Benin electorate's choice of candidates during the 2023 presidential election.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on source credibility theory and information processing theory. Source credibility theory is an offshoot theory developed from Aristotle's work on the rhetoric which broke down the route to persuasion from the ethos, pathos and logos stand point. Source credibility theory as propounded by Carl Hovland & Walter Weiss in 1951 believed that the right source can increase the effect of a message. Selecting an effective source to speak for idea, one is essentially using the propaganda device. Credibility as stated by Asemah & Ogwo (2013) is completeness, trustworthiness, believability and accuracy of information. Yaroson & Asemah (2008) and Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) posit that the acceptance of a message is dependent on perceived

credibility of the communication source. This means that people are more likely to support a cause if the initiator is perceived to be credible by the people.

According to Williams J. McGuire's information processing theory, which was introduced in 1968, changing one's attitude comprises six processes, each of which serves as a prerequisite to the next. They are a persuasive message must be delivered, the recipient must pay attention to the message, the recipient must comprehend the message, the recipient must submit to and be persuaded, the newly chosen stance must be maintained and the recipient must exhibit the desired behaviour. The central tenets of source credibility and information processing theory are manifested in the level of campaign influence on Edo electorate choice of candidates during 2023 presidential election. The Edo electorate's perception in the credibility, character and integrity of the various choices are due to the leadership antecedence of the candidates and the credibility of the communication process. This can also be crowned with the fact that there was need to birth a new Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Political campaign is an organised activity which seeks to influence actions in a specific group. Democratically, political campaigns refer to electoral campaigns, in which representatives are chosen (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). Norris (2000) notes that parties are in the position of constantly campaigning. They have become experts by introducing a systematic use of opinion polls and focus groups in the arrangement of their political message.

Political campaign can be defined as a set of organised activities designed to gain public support and acceptance for a political cause (Umoro & Asemah, 2022; Asemah, 2019; Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013). Political campaign involves all forms of campaigns targeted towards winning elections or seeking political influence. They are meant to get people's support through persuasive messages to influence policy in their favour. The major aim of a political campaign is to influence. This explains why serious-minded politicians who want to win an election in this new age make serious efforts to have a social presence.

Political communication is various ways by which political messages are shared with the voters in order to get support for a candidate for the purpose of winning an elective position (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Chudi-Oji (2013) opines that for one to embark on the task of electing leaders, public must be mobilised in order to be enlightened through enlightenment campaigns and sensitisation programmes targeted at community leaders, age brackets, opinion leaders, to increase their awareness and foster attitude change towards active participation in politics.

Goodman (2011) posits that democracy cannot be sustained or become firm without a free press while press freedom cannot be possible without democracy. In summary, political communication is seen to be the connection between masses and politics and the interaction modes connecting these groups together. It is also concerned with how information moves and influence policy makers and citizens. Political communication is best understood through political persuasion and its presence in the media. Political figures understand the role of the media in gaining the acceptance of voters.

Political mobilisation refers to ideas intended to persuade a sizeable population to voice or reflect their opinions and take a certain political position. These are activities that are geared towards compelling sizeable number of organised or unorganised people to

engage in a particular political activity in order to advance political objectives. In most cases, political mobilisation becomes a key factor before participation can occur (Nwaoboli, 2022). It is also a way in which citizens manage others to mount pressure on their political representatives. This movement can end in a change of policy. Alawole & Adesanya (2016) posit that mobilisation remains an important prerequisite for most forms of political participation and engagement. Participants must be informed and recruited to be able to participate.

James (2014) carried out a research on the influence of mass media on voting pattern in rural areas of Nigeria. The study was anchored on two step flow of information and agenda-setting theory. Findings showed that rural dwellers in Nigeria were not adequately informed on the political process and development like their urban counterparts. The researcher recommended an establishment of community radio station in rural areas for political mobilisation and information. This relates to the study in area of sensitisation and influence in election process.

Kasirye (2021) conducted a research using social media for political campaign and its impact on political polarisation among Ugandian youth. Findings revealed that youth in Uganda use WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter while looking for political-related messages to help them decide on who to give support in an election.

Freie (1997) carried out a research on effects of campaign and political attitudes. The study adopted the survey method and it was revealed that campaign does result in greater attitudinal shift that leads to action. Ayeni, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Ogunyemi (2023) carried out a research on the influence of "Obidatti" online campaign on political behaviour of youth in Benin during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. The study was anchored on public sphere theory and social presence theory. The researchers recommended that the youth should sensitise others that are offline as to enable them get exposure and make informed voting decisions. It is of importance to this study because it deals with 2023 presidential election. It can also be noted that the study is limited to online campaign, not considering campaign using other media of communication. It is for this reason that this study sought to evaluate the extent of influence of political campaigns on Edo electorate's choice of candidates during 2023 Presidential elections. This relates to the study because it studied the political behaviour of youth in Benin and this is as a result of influence of the Obidatti online campaign.

Methodology

The researchers used survey method. Survey research method focuses on a representative sample gotten from the general population of study and was adopted as the quantitative design. Babbie (1973), cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) say survey research is necessary when a researcher intends to collect data on occurrences that may not be observed directly. Thus, the survey research design was. Asemah *et al* (2012) note that survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people; their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour.

Asemah *et al* (2017) note that when a population is so complex, a researcher will need more than one sampling technique to select his sample and will resort to sampling in stages. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in this study. In the first stage, the researchers divided the state into three senatorial districts (Edo North, Edo Central and Edo South). The researchers used the fishbowl method to randomly select three local

governments (Etsako West, Esan Central and Oredo Local Governments) from the select senatorial districts. In stage two, two towns from each of the local governments were selected through simple random sampling technique. For Etsako West Local Government (Auchi and Uzairue), Esan Central (Irrua and Ewu) and Oredo (New Benin and Orogo). In the third stage, the fishbowl method was used to select the towns from each of the studied local governments to avoid being bias. The justification for the selection was based on time and resources. In the fourth stage, it was from the select towns (10 towns) that 10 wards were selected and 49 copies of questionnaire were distributed to them, except Ekehuan road that had five extra because it is relatively more populated than the other areas. Auchi/Uzairue (Igbei,Iyekhei and Jattu), Irua/Ewu (Afuda,Eguare and Iduwele) and New Benin/Orogo (1st Evborhan Lane, New Oguanogbe street, Ekehuan road and Eweka Lane).

In the final stage, availability or convenience sampling technique was used to share questionnaire to any adult who possesses voter's card (evidence of participation). A questionnaire was utilised to collect data in this study. Four hundred and ninety-five (495) copies of questionnaire were sent out to potential respondents. In a total of 495 administered questionnaire, 490 copies were retrieved and usable.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent of Exposure to Political Campaigns during the 2023 Presidential Elections

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high	206	42.1%
High	204	41.6%
Can't tell	30	6.1%
Low	50	10.2%
Very low	0	0%
Total	490	100%

Table 1 shows the extent of exposure to political campaigns during the 2023 presidential elections. The findings showed that the level of Edo electorate's exposure to 2023 presidential election campaign was high enough to guide them on making informed decisions as regards the right political actions.

Table 2: Responses on the Channels of exposure to the Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Radio	80	16.3%
Television	200	40.9%
Newspaper	50	10.2%
Social media	100	20.4%
Indigenous media	60	12.2%
Total	490	100%

Table 2 shows that television communicated the campaign the more. This is because majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 3: Extent of Effectiveness of the Various Media in projecting the Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage%
Very high	352	71.8%
High	98	20.1%
Can't tell	10	2.0%
Very low	10	2.0%
Low	20	4.1%
Total	**490**	**100%**

The data in the above table show that the extent of effectiveness of the campaigns was high as majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 4: Extent of Influence of Political Campaigns on Edo Electorate's Choice of Candidates during the 2023 Presidential Election

Variable	Frequency	Percentage%
Very high	473	96.5%
High	17	3.5%
Can't tell	0	0%
Very low	0	0%
Low	0	0%
Total	**490**	**100%**

The data in the above show that majority of the respondents (96.5%) agreed to the fact that the 2023 presidential election campaign had a very high influence on their choice of candidates.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that Edo electorate had a high level of exposure to political campaigns during the 2023 presidential elections. Majority of the respondents answered to that effect (42.1%). This suggests that Edo electorate paid key attention to campaigns during the 2023 presidential election. This finding aligns with that of Isah, Kadiri & Asemah (2021) that Edo residents have very high exposure to media messages. The mass media in this regard are source of political information that the people besiege for possible political solution when there is a need.

The findings of this study showed that Edo electorate were mostly exposed to the television messages during the 2023 presidential election. This finding further stressed the sayings of Asemah (2013) that exposure to television advertising has a way of influencing voters' choice of candidates. Further findings showed that political campaigns through the various identified media were very effective. The findings of this study also showed that political campaign had very high influence on Edo electorate’s choice of candidates during the 2023 presidential election. Okeke, Chinonye & Obi (2016) observe that giving exposure to political campaigns makes people to match their feelings about related attitudes. The above implies that political campaign and communication have a way of influencing individuals or electorate’s choice and perception in taking a political stand.

This is in line with the source credibility theory which assumes that the source of a message determines whether the audience will be persuaded or not

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shown that political campaign during the 2023 presidential election have very strong influence on Edo electorate's choice of candidates. The findings showed that the electorate were mostly influenced from the political messages through the television. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Media organisations should keep up the stand in projecting political messages so that the masses will form the public opinion on the right political action.
2. Since political campaign influences electorate's choice of candidates, future leaders should imbibe the character of communicating their right minds other than deceptive messages.

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CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

INFLUENCE OF HATE SPEECH ON THE CHOICE OF CANDIDATES AMONG EDO ELECTORATE DURING 2023 NIGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Isah Abdulazeez; Johnson Aleogho Nasamu & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The election of former President Olusegun Obasanjo as the first democratically elected leader of the fourth republic marked the return of democracy to Nigeria as a whole in 1999. This followed a long period of military control brought by coups and countercoups. The political and electoral systems in Nigeria are set up so that the political parties run aggressive campaigns to win over the electorate. This is done in an effort to promote their candidates, platforms and manifestos in an effort to change how the electorate vote. This indicates that party politics are the foundation of Nigerian democracy, just as they are in the majority of democracies around the world.

Politicians use a variety of techniques to campaign during elections (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Political communication entails utilising tactful language to spread political messages or inform the electorate. Nigerians have gone through a number of election campaigns over the years that have led to political unrest. In addition to employing filthy language, hate speech can target political opponents based on their ethnicity, religion or nationality. During electioneering, hate speech is frequently heard in the Nigerian political environment. Politicians make up and concoct all kinds of tales to portray their rivals in an unfavourable and disparaging light (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah, 2012).

The major political parties' campaigns for the 2023 election practically followed hate speech guidelines. Biases based on race, religion, culture and morality were exposed during the struggle against development issues that directly impact the populace. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, a candidate for the People's Democratic Party, for example, was accused of being a Cameroonian who wants to sell off the country's assets to his cronies and colleagues. Instead of focusing on topics, this was a very loud campaign issue that overshadowed the campaigns of the other candidates. On the other hand, the opposition parties' campaigns were dominated by the origin, identity, source of wealth and quality of life of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the All Progressive Congress candidate who ultimately won the election. Other political parties have accused Labour Party candidate, Mr. Peter Obi of being an apologist for the Independent People of Biafra and an ethnic and religious bigot and they have even asserted that he cannot win even a single voting unit.

It goes without saying that these campaigns had no challenges at all and that the media and social media were ideal platforms for the campaigns' divisive rhetoric to proliferate during the 2023 election. In light of this, the study looked at how the electorate of Edo state perceived the impact of hate speech on the outcome of the 2023 presidential election.

Statement of the Problem

Hate speeches dominated the 2023 elections, but there were no problems that would have impacted the nation's progress. To purposefully misinform, mislead and disinform the electorate, they use hate speeches. During the 2023 elections, hate speech was spread via social media and the news media. It was, therefore, necessary to ascertain the degree of

hate speech usage and the general public's perception of it. It also looked at whether citizens of Edo State were influenced by hate speech before casting their ballots.

Research by Ajani, Arikewayo, Lukuman, Muhammad, Imam, Mahamood, Manaf & Hassan (2021) demonstrated that hate speech affected the 2019 election's results. Studies on the impact of hate speech on democracy include those by Oloyede (2013) and Ajani (2013). The perception of Edo citizens on the impact of hate speech on the outcome of the 2023 presidential election, however, has received little or no attention. This is the gap this study fills.

Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure of Edo State electorate to hate speech during the 2023 election.
2. Find out the medium through which Edo residents were exposed to hate speeches during the 2023 election.
3. Determine the perception of Edo State residents of the use of hate speech during 2023 elections.
4. Find out the extent to which hate speech influenced the voting pattern of Edo state electorate during the 2023 elections.

Review of Related Literature

The term "hate" typically refers to extremely unfavourable attitudes and viewpoints that society holds regarding a certain group of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. According to the Council of Europe's Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, hate speech refers to all comments and expressions, whether verbal or nonverbal, that promote racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other types of hatred based on intolerance. Hate speech is any form of communication, verbal or nonverbal, that promotes hostility toward a particular racial, ethnic, or political group by disparaging them or displaying any form of bias toward them (Neisser, 1994; Asemah, 2011a; Inobemhe, Salisu, Santas, Udeh & Asemah, 2022). According to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2013, p. 4), hate speech includes the following:

a. Any form of concept distribution that promotes hatred or claims of racial or ethnic supremacy.
b. The promotion of bias against members of a group based on their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
c. Threats or calls for violence against individuals or groups in light of the reasons in (b) above.
d. When it obviously amounts to inciting hatred or discrimination, the expression of insults, ridicule or defamation of individuals or groups or the justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above.
e. The involvement in groups and activities that support and encourage racial discrimination.

Neisser (1994, p. 337) defines hate speech as "any messages (verbal, written, symbolic) that insult a racial, ethnic and political group, whether by implying that they are inferior in some way or by signalling that they are disliked or not welcome for any other reasons." On the other side, hate speech is described as "war perpetrated on others by means of words" by Kayambazinthu & Moyo (2002). The use of words and symbols are the main characteristics of online hate speech (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah, 2011a).

Many academics have identified various motivators for hate speech online, including a lack of tolerance, political conflicts, prejudice, animosity and the transparency of social media. For example, even before social media became popular, Spiegel (1999, p. 375) projects that racists and "hate-mongers" would use the internet as another means of communication to promote their messages, while Nemes (2002, p. 193) thought it was a crucial route for those using it to spread hate. Nevertheless, Witschge (2008, p. 75–92) offered a more nuanced analysis of the Web's potentials for political communication. He supports Brant's (2008) views that the internet is "horizontal, open and user friendly," giving people opportunities for greater participation in public life. On the other hand, he agrees with Dalhberg's (2001) counterarguments that the Web might encourage abusive postings and even help to silence some voices.

The process by which information and persuading messages are disseminated by society's political institutions through the media to the people to whom they are ultimately accountable is described by political communication theory (Olayiwola, 2016). Language has a significant influence in voter mobilisation and vote-counting in a democratic environment because campaigns and the pursuit of power are largely determined by the capacity to persuade and earn popular support. In order to win over voters during campaigns, political actors and parties rely on rhetoric to convey the views, ideologies and promises of their political party (Virginia & Olanrewaju, 2017 Asemah, 2009).

High level politicians have been known to make speeches with racist and bigoted language. In the Nigerian setting, politicians frequently promote their divisive views without consequence; therefore, this is not uncommon because they eventually justify discrimination, segregation, exclusion and hate crimes and hate speech from high-level officials is especially destructive. (Asemah, Anum & Ogwo, 2012). Most politicians do not run issue-based campaigns during elections. All they do is slander and verbally insult one another. The three main political parties were at each other's throats throughout the 2023 election, which provided ample evidence of this.

A study conducted in 2019 in Kwara State, Nigeria, by Ajani *et al* was based on the agenda-setting theory and it was centred on the impact of hate speech messages on voters' choice of candidate. A single cross-sectional research method was utilised in the study's survey research design. The findings showed that there was high level of exposure to hate speech messages through social media during the 2019 Kwara State gubernatorial election. The findings also showed that the use of hate speech diminishes the significance of political candidates. It was also discovered that the use of hate speech during elections caused 82 percent of voters to switch their support from one candidate to another.

Inobemhe, Mohammad, Santas, Udeh &Asemah (2021) did a discourse on the impact of hate speech on Nigeria’s democracy. The study focused on the effects of hate

speech on Nigeria's democracy in order to examine how political communication and national security interact in the digital age. The researchers emphasised the risks associated with political discussion that contains hate speech which is exacerbated by new media platforms. It advocated, among other things, the required actions for navigating the challenging political environment brought about by cutting-edge technology and made much worse by the use of strong political language and tone.

A study on textual analysis of select social media hate speech messages against Clergymen in Nigeria was carried out by Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022). The study's goals were to look at the frequency of hate speech towards specific Nigerian clergymen, the context in which such hate speech was expressed and the effects of such hate speech on Nigerian Clergymen on social media. The study's conclusion demonstrated that hate speech is a misuse of press freedom and is harmful to both individual and group rights as well as religious stability. The researchers came to the conclusion that there are numerous hate statements directed at clergymen on social media, particularly on Facebook between January and July 2021. According to the findings, it was advised, among other things, that no hate speech, regardless of whether it contains proof, should be expressed on social media since hate speech could diminish the value of the person who generated it.

Theoretical Framework

Social Judgement Theory

The social judgment theory was first presented in 1961 by Muzafar Sherif, Caroline Sherif & Carl Hovland. Social judgement theory explains how a message is perceived by an audience (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). They assert that the social judgement hypothesis originated from early social psychology assessments on attitudes and persuasion. Examining internal processes of people in relation to messages delivered. To put it another way, the concept focuses on how people interpret signals and how it influences how they feel (Asemah, 2015). The way that a message is perceived and how people react to it depends on how they feel about the subject being discussed. According to the social judgement theory (SJT), a message's acceptance or rejection depends on the recipient's cognitive map and ego involvement (Nwaoboli, 2022). The SJT states that people have three unique cognitive compartments that they can store knowledge they have learned about themselves and their own attitudes in. This group includes all of the latitudes for acceptance, rejection and non-commitment. According to Asemah *et al* (2017, pp. 76–77), the theory's cornerstones are:

a. People employ a set of established criteria to assess persuasive communication. There are many various positions that can be chosen when forced to choose a choice.

b. When we are given persuasive information, we utilise our judgement categories to determine which category it fits into because there is a large range of latitudes within which we can accept, reject or not commit to the information that is offered to us. The one that the recipient accepts will be advantageous to them (Edegoh & Asemah, 2014).

c. The size of the latitudes is impacted by one's level of ego-involvement with a particular scenario, which in turn impacts how big the latitudes are. Ego-involvement is the term used to describe how significant a problem is to our sense of self.

d. In order to fit our preconceived notions about the world, humans have a propensity to change or distort the information that is presented to us.

e. People accept persuasive messages that are closest to their anchor and within their acceptable range of acceptance, adapting them to create a new point of view. People are more prone to accept knowledge and assume it has always been true when their anchor is closer to the knowledge. We won't pay attention to messages that are too far from the anchor (Asemah *et al* 2017).

The relevance of the theory to this article is predicated on the divergent perceptions and opinions of Edo residents regarding the usage of hate speech during the 2023 election and its outcome. In light of the foregoing, this theory is pertinent to the study because it asserts that viewers will not just accept hate speech and act on it in isolation of their processing latitude. That is, before taking action in response to hate speech messages, they are given room to process them.

Methodology

The researchers used survey research design. The survey was chosen because it was thought to be the best strategy. A survey is a kind of empirical study that gathers information using a questionnaire with the aim of thoroughly describing occurrences (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2017; Nwaoboli, 2023; Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, 2023). Surveys are a major part of communication studies research. Residents of Oredo Local Government, Etsako West Local Government and Esan Central Local Government made up the study's population. Oredo is has a population of 374,515, Etsako West has a population of 245,469 people and Esan Central has a population of 154,366 people. The three towns under examination has a combined population of 774,350. Using the Cochran sample size calculation, a sample of 495 people was selected from the general population.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in this study. The state was initially divided into three senatorial districts by the researchers (Edo North, Edo Central and Edo South). From the chosen senatorial districts, the researchers employed the Fishbowl approach to randomise the selection of three local governments (Etsako West, Esan Central and Oredo Local Governments). Two towns from each of the local governments were chosen at the second step using a straightforward random sampling procedure. For the local governments of Oredo, Esan Central (Irrua and Ewu) and Etsako West (Auchi and Uzairue) (New Benin and Orogo). To eliminate bias at the third stage, the towns from each of the local governments under study were chosen using the fishbowl approach. The choice was justified by the time and resources available to complete the investigation. Additionally, at the fourth stage, 10 wards/streets were chosen from the select towns (10 towns) and 49 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to them, with

the exception of Ekehuan road which received five extra copies because it is comparatively more populated than the other areas. The other three stages were Auchi/Uzairue (Igbei, Iyekhei and Jattu), Irrua/Ewu (Afuda, Eguare (1stEvborhan Lane, New Oguanogbe Street, Ekehuan Road and Eweka Lane.). In the end, a convenience sampling strategy was utilised to distribute questionnaire to all adults who are at least 18 years old. A total of 495 copies of the questionnaire were distributed.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 495 copies of the questionnaire administered, 400 were returned and found useable.

Table 1: Edo State Residents' exposure to Hate Speech during 2023 Elections

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	199	49.8	49.8	49.8
Agree	48	12.0	12.0	27.5
Undecided	47	11.8	11.8	39.3
Disagree	44	11.0	11.0	50.3
Strongly disagree	62	15.5	15.5	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table one shows the response on Edo State residents to hate speeches during the 2023 elections. Data show that Edo State residents were exposed to hate speeches during the 2023 election. This is because 49.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that during the course of the election, they were exposed to hate speeches.

Table 2: Extent of Exposure to Hate Speech Contents During 2023 Elections

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very low	55	13.8	13.8	13.8
Undecided	69	17.3	17.3	31.0
To an extent	64	16.0	16.0	47.0
To a great extent	212	53.0	53.0	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The data in the above table show that hate speech was used as major political campaign strategy during the 2023 elections in Nigeria. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 3: Medium of Exposure to Hate Speeches during the 2023 Elections

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Radio	62	15.5	15.5	15.5
Television	53	13.3	13.3	28.8
Newspaper	69	17.3	17.3	46.0
Magazine	57	14.3	14.3	60.3
Social media	57	14.3	14.3	74.5
All of the above	102	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The data in the above table show that the respondents were exposed to hate speeches through different channels.

Table 4: Response on whether Hate Speeches were Positively used during the 2023 Election

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	58	14.5	14.5	14.5
Agreed	48	12.0	12.0	26.5
Undecided	54	13.5	13.5	40.0
Disagree	50	12.5	12.5	52.5
Strongly disagree	190	47.5	47.5	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The result on how hate speeches were used showed that 47.5% who accounted for 190 respondents strongly disagreed that hate speeches were positively used during the elections. This means that hate speeches were principally used during the election negatively.

Table 5: Response on whether Hate Speeches were Negatively used during the 2023 Elections

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	164	41.0	41.0	41.0
Agree	62	15.5	15.5	56.5
Undecided	54	13.5	13.5	70.0
Disagree	61	15.3	15.3	85.3
Strongly disagree	59	14.8	14.8	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The result as shown indicates that 41% strongly agreed that the speeches were negatively used during the 2023 election. This suggests that hate speeches were used as instrument to launch political attacks at opponents leaving out issues.

Table 6: Response on whether Hate Speeches influenced Choices of Candidate during 2023 Elections

Options	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	54	13.5	13.5	13.5
Agree	47	11.8	11.8	25.3
Undecided	53	13.3	13.3	38.5
Disagree	44	11.0	11.0	49.5
Strongly disagree	202	50.5	50.5	100
Total	**400**	**100**	**100**	

The implication of the data in the above table is that the electorate already had their mind made up even before the elections, hence; hate speeches reinforced the decisions they had already taken.

Table 7: Hate Speech heated up the Polity during the 2023 Elections

Options	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	232	58.0	58.0	232
Agree	36	9.0	9.0	42.0
Undecided	42	10.5	10.5	33.0
Disagree	47	11.8	11.8	22.5
Strongly disagree	43	10.8	10.8	100.0
Total	**400**	**100.8**	**100.0**	

The implication of the data in the above table is that hate speeches heated up the polity during the elections.

Discussion of Findings

Finding out how much of the electorate in Edo State was exposed to hate speech during the 2023 election was the study's primary goal. The results showed that political actors used hate speech as a major tactic during the campaigns leading up to the general elections in 2023. For instance, table one revealed that 49.8% of respondents strongly agreed that they were exposed to hate speech throughout the election. This was further supported by data from table 2 which showed that 212 respondents or 53 percent, had been exposed to hate speech to a significant degree. This is consistent with the findings of Ajani, Arikewayo, Muhammad, Imam, Mahamood, Manaf and Hassan (2021) who investigated how hate speech messages influenced voters' choice of candidate in Kwara State, Nigeria in 2019. They discovered that with 72% of voters in a given election, the use of hate speech diminished the significance of political candidates.

The foregoing suggests that during the 2023 election, issues that directly affected the electorate were minimised and campaigns were limited to simple criticism of rival candidates. Without any doubt, trivialising the campaign will not help the public form a complete opinion of the political candidates and their platforms. The nation's leadership is ultimately chosen by political mediocre candidates as has always been the case since the fourth republic.

The findings further showed that hate speech was used across all media types (social and conventional media). For instance, table 3 shows that a significant portion of the respondents firmly agreed that hate speech dominated the media campaigns (radio, television, newspapers, magazines and social media). Through these channels, attacks were made on rivals' religions, tribes, personalities and affiliations. This proves that during electioneering, the politics of slander, insult and filth are welcomed while the concerns about development are minimised. The results further showed that hate speech was employed negatively. This is consistent with the findings of Inobemhe *et al* (2021) and Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2022) who discovered that hate speech has the potential to undermine the security and unity of the nation. This suggests that hate speech in all its forms is the evil offspring of an evil parent who, if not properly and quickly put down, is capable of destroying the country.

The nation should be concerned about this since hate speech has done more harm than good to the nation's precarious unity, security and peace. The likelihood that Nigeria will remain a single entity in the near future is small if this trend continues. The findings

also showed that hate speeches had little or no influence on how electorate voted because they already knew who they would support before electioneering ever got underway. This shows that hate speech used during the elections merely served to reinforce voter positions already held prior to the polls. This supports the stance of the social judgement theory which forms the basis for this study. According to the hypothesis, audiences' responses to persuasive communication are influenced by their capacity for judgement. They initially assess and analyse messages when they are received. Messages that conflict with their preexisting beliefs are discarded and only those in line with their pre-existing attitudes are accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study lead to the conclusion that political actors seriously employed hate speech during the 2023 electioneering. However, despite the widespread use of hate speech, voters' decisions regarding the candidates for president were not influenced or determined by hate speeches. This indicates that factors other than hate speeches had an impact on or moulded the choice of the electorate; thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. The section of the election legislation barring hate speech during political rallies or campaigns should be strictly enforced, according to the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This will serve as a guide for politicians on how to act or behave while campaigning.
2. As part of their social obligation to the community, media organisations should make sure that only issue-based campaigns are included in their content and avoid providing space to pointless nonsense like hate speech. Politicians will inevitably stop using hate speech during campaigns if they notice that it is being minimised in the media.
3. During election seasons, media control bodies should impose strong sanctions against media outlets discovered to be supporting hate speech.

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CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

INFLUENCE OF DELTA BROADCASTING SERVICE (DBS) HYPERTENSION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON HEALTH BEHAVIOUR OF RESIDENTS OF UVWIE AND WARRI SOUTH IN DELTA STATE

Chidinma N. Nwokolo; Safiya Kaka Muhammad Dagaci & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure is popularly known as a major public health challenge and has severe impact on the quality of life of an individual. This challenge has great financial and economic burden, either directly or indirectly on such individual. Ranked as one of the cardiovascular medical illness most frequently diagnosed among elderly Nigerians, research has it that it is one of the most common causes of sudden unexpected natural death in Nigeria. With rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, many communities are challenged with poor awareness and weak capacity for reliable prevention and management programmes. Communication through the mass media remains a viable vehicle through which messages on hypertension can spread to the masses.

Mass media is simply the use of broadcast, print, new media or community media to relay information, education and entertainment to the public (Edegoh & Asemah, 2013; Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021). The role of the media in shaping the society cannot be underestimated, the media play a key role of setting agenda on how any society should function (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). Orewere (2006), cited in Asemah (2011) notes that the mass media by way of raising awareness about issues, sets agenda for the public. Due to its persuasive nature, can also be used for campaign. Asemah, Edeghoh & Ogwo (2013) state that the media usually design, package and presents campaign messages strategically to convince the target audience to support their arguments.

Health communication is the use of various media tools by the diverse mass media to inform and educate the general public about diseases, wellness and healthy lifestyle. Ghanta (2012) states that the mass media spread information about health and creates awareness, which goes ahead to prevent the continuous spread of several diseases.

Health communication is the act of passing health-related information to the public with the aim of creating awareness towards a positive compliance. Nwabueze (2010) states that health communication is the process of adopting communication strategies to educate and inform the public on health related subject in other to create positive impacts. The use of indigenous communication systems can also be organised to process and exchange health related information among rural communities (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021).

Health communication comprises of several areas, this includes but not limited to health campaigns, hospital and media partnership, media advocacy, health information, education and entertainment, risk communication, organisational communication, social communication, interpersonal communication, health journalism and social marketing. There is a popular saying that health is wealth, a healthy society is a happy and prosperous society. It is, therefore, important to note that for a society to be healthy, there is need to have access to adequate and accurate information and knowledge of healthy measures to curb diseases and health conditions. It is also important for the public to be aware of the several health care services and programmes initiated by the government such as

vaccinations, immunisations, measures against spread of several communicable and non-communicable diseases, different testing, and interventions against such diseases.

A society with poor communication network and lack of basic information facilities is headed for an endless queue behind societies with efficient information infrastructures (Moemeka, 1985, cited in Asemah, Edegoh & Anum, 2013). It, therefore, becomes important to determine the influence of delta broadcasting service (DBS) hypertension awareness campaign on health behaviour of residents of Uvwie and Warri South in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer news that the prevalence of hypertension in the world today is rapidly increasing. It is also worthy to note that it is one of the most common chronic diseases in the world today, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Research has shown that it is one of the most common causes of sudden death and also ranked the first most frequently diagnosed natural cause of death, especially among elderly Nigerians.

Aside from other risk factor that increases blood pressure like family history, low potassium, high salt intake, high calcium intake, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, high alcohol intake, aging and stress, lack of information and awareness is also a major challenge. According to Okunna (2002), communication to a target audience enhances positive changes in facilitating a healthy living condition. It also plays a central role in shaping our understanding of the natural world and the roles humanity should play (Kenechukwu, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023). This is possible when effective communication and mobilisation is targeted at creating positive and favourable behaviour and attitudes among the audience in which a development campaign or project is being executed for.

Hypertension is a leading cause of chronic health challenge like stroke, heart attack and death in the population today due to lack of awareness, information and health education, complications arising from late detection and poor blood pressure control. Information and health communication has proven to be an effective tool and strategy in the prevention and control of hypertension. Across the world today, report has it that there has been a progressive rise of hypertension as a result of poor detection, treatment and control. Though many paper work seem to have been done, there is yet to be a physical improvement towards controlling the spread among citizens. Ezenwa, Iheme, Okonkwo & Adeoye-Agomoh (2022) assessed the prevalence of hypertension and health-seeking behaviours of market women in Abia state Nigeria. Also, Suleiman, Amogu & Ganiyu (2013) investigated the prevalence and control of hypertension in Niger Delta semi urban community, Nigeria. Many researches focus on the causes, clinical manifestation, diagnosis, prevention and control of hypertension, but it is worthy to note that none of the studies delved into the influence of media campaigns on the audience. This has thus created a research gap in relation to hypertension, which this research seeks to bridge. Thus, the researchers were motivated by the need to determine the influence of Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) Hypertension campaign on the health behaviour of residents of Uvwie and Warri South Local government area in Delta State.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent to which residents of Uvwie and Warri South are exposed to Delta Broadcasting Service's Hypertension programme.

2. Determine the influence of DBS Hypertension messages on the health behaviour of Uvwie and Warri South residents.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Yale's persuasion theory which states that messages with more arguments are more persuasive than those with fewer arguments (Nwaoboli, 2022). This simply means that the more arguments in a message, the more likely it will seem to be true or the more likely that message will include at least, one or two arguments that will appeal to the audience (Aigbefoh, Obi & Asemah, 2022). The above factors would probably determine attitude change. Glik (2004), cited in Asemah (2012) notes that every planned message is designed to follow a specific strategy of placement in order to influence the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of the public.

Yale's attitude change was first studied under persuasive communication by Carl Hovland and his colleagues at Yale University in the 1940s and 1950s (Anonymous, 2016, cited in Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). This theory states that there are various factors that will influence the likelihood for change to occur after exposure to a message. This means the social psychology study of the conditions under which the public are most likely to change their attitude in response to persuasive messages. The theory also states six-step processes towards influencing people's attitude concerning an issue; the steps are: presentation, attention, comprehension, yielding, retention and behaviour. The presentation of the message is very crucial to a successful outcome, how persuasive is the message? The frequency and attention given to the message will aid how persuasive the message will appear to the public. The ability for the public to understand the message is very important. This means the media must know the audience and package the message to their various level of assimilation and this will further produce a desired outcome. Ability of the audience to remember and retain a message is determined by the simplicity, frequency and persuasiveness of such message. The application of all these as listed above will bring about the required positive behaviour.

Every communication or message is aimed at positively affecting the behaviour of the receiver; for a receiver to be persuaded, they must be convinced (Asemah, 2012). Cook (2012), cited in Asemah, (2022) says that any argument is more effective when both sides of that argument is presented to the receiver. This implies that the source or the person who is presenting a message can influence its persuasiveness. The relevance of Yale's persuasion theory to this study cannot be overemphasised as it encourages and persuades the masses to yield to positive health behaviour.

Concept of Behaviour Change Communication

Asemah (2009) defines communication as the process by which information, ideas and attitudes are shared. This involves active participation and interaction between the sender and the receiver to achieve common understanding. Behaviour change communication is simply communication messages aimed at transforming the attitude or behaviour of an individual or a group of persons. The main aim of behaviour change communication is to promote and encourage healthy behaviours and lifestyle as well as reduce unnecessary risk taking, through its invention programmes. This is achieved through a suitable combination of strategic communication, information and education which is targeted at ensuring a positive live for the people.

Broadcast Media and its Role in Health Communication

The mass media has huge abilities in raising public awareness on the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). It is important to characterise the nature of broadcast media which includes radio and television while understanding the role and function they ought to play in social context. Ashonibare (2014, p. 32), cited in Asemah (2011) notes that "what is emphasised by the media is what the society prioritises."

Asemah (2011) states that the persuasive nature of the media has made the media a reliable tool for health-related campaigns. The media through well planned and organised communication strategies can convince the public towards accepting a particular idea, either from private bodies or from government organisations. Through regular use of the existing media, such as radio, television and newspaper, mass media campaign has been a viable tool for the exposure of media messages to the larger proportion of the population (Noar, 2006, cited in Asemah, 2011).

Asemah (2012) states that the broadcast media have very crucial role to play in the promotion of health messages and lifestyles in the society, especially the rural communities. He also notes that the use of the mass media to spread or disseminate useful health information to the public increases knowledge and awareness of specific aspects of individuals and collective health as well as the importance of health in a country's development.

Asemah (2012) observes that the use of mass media, especially television to disseminate important health information to the public increases the importance of health in development and creates awareness of specific individual and collective health. Krishna (2013) also states that radio play a crucial role in creating people's awareness about communication and environment of natural resources.

Empirical Studies

Market women in Nigeria's Abia state were studied for their prevalence of hypertension and health-seeking behaviours by Ezenwa, Iheme, Okonkwo & Adeoye-Agomoh in 2022. According to the report, market women need to be given attention since hypertension is a leading cause of mortality for women throughout the globe. About 360 market women between the ages of 15 and 70 from eight different markets in the state were randomly chosen for the descriptive cross-sectional research and their blood pressure was taken using an Omron digital automated blood pressure monitor. Despite the fact that about 26.1% of the respondents had not recently visited the hospital, the study's findings showed that 33.5% and 33.4% of respondents rated their own health as excellent. More than half of the respondents—55.1%—had recently visited the hospital due to illness and about 48.9% had checked their blood pressure while there. A total of 43.5% of people said that market activity prevented them from getting quick medical care, while 77.9% of the respondents had normal blood pressure and 20.7% had hypertension, indicating that the majority of respondents were hypertensive.

Suleiman, Amogu & Ganiyu (2013) looked at the incidence and treatment of hypertension in a semi-urban community in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Despite the fact that hypertension is a global public health issue, it is unclear how common it is in Amassoma, a local government area in Southern Ijaw. The researchers used interviews and four (400) persons 20 years of age and older were chosen, using stratified random selection from among the different "AMA" compounds—units of settlement made up of extended families with similar ancestors. In addition, the respondents' height, weight, and blood

pressure were measured. The body mass index (BMI) was also computed and the results were properly examined. Results showed that the prevalence of hypertension in the semi-urban population was 15.0%, with pre-hypertension present in another 23.5% of the community. Previously hypertensive individuals had poor blood pressure management.

Methodology

Survey research design was used by the researchers. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012), survey research techniques are a way of gathering and analysing social data using a highly structured and detailed questionnaire as a tool to gather data from a sizable number of respondents and representatives of the target population of the study. The researchers used questionnaire as their research instrument in an effort to get correct answers to the study questions. The population of study comprises Uvwie and Warri South local government area. These local government areas and their projected population according to Delta state government are represented below:

Local Government Area	Male	Female	Population
Uvwie	125,146	126,119	251,265
Warri South	210,890	204,454	415,344
Total			**666,609**

Source: https://www.deltastate.gov.ng

From the above table, the total population of the study was 666,609. To obtain the sample size from the population of study, the Taro Yamane's (1973) formula was adopted as stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + NX\,(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size sough
N = population size
E = Error value $(0.05)^2$
I = Unity (a constant)

Thus:

$$n = \frac{666609}{1 + 666609\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{666609}{1 + 666609 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{666609}{1667.5}$$

$$n = 400$$

A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed respectively to respondents in Uvwie and Warri South Local government area in Delta state, 379 copies where returned valid and undamaged.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondents' awareness of Delta Broadcasting Station (DBS)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage
Valid	Very High	Nil	Nil	Nil
	High	365	96.3%	96.3%
	Can't tell	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Low	14	3.7%	3.7%
	Very low	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total			

The data contained in the above table indicate that a larger percentage of the respondents are aware of Delta Broadcasting Service's existence in the state. This was represented by 96.3% high awareness rate.

Table 2: Responses showing how frequent Respondents tune into DBS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage
Valid	Always	1	0.3%	0.3%
	Often	21	5.5%	5.5%
	Sometimes	47	12.4%	12.4%
	Rarely	310	81.8%	81.8%
	Total	379	100%	100%

The above table indicates that respondents rarely tune in to DBS as they are not active viewers or listeners to media content on DBS.

Table 3: Responses showing Respondents' exposure to Hypertension Programmes on DBS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage
Valid	Strongly agree	335	88.4%	88.4%
	Agree	44	11.6%	11.6%
	Undecided	0	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Total	379	100%	100%

The data in the above table show that a larger percentage of the respondents are exposed to hypertension programmes on Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS). This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect (88.4%).

Table 4: Responses showing if Hypertension Programmes on DBS have influenced Respondents positively

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage
Valid	Strongly agree	282	74.4%	74.4%
	Agree	29	7.6%	7.6%
	Undecided	1	0.3%	0.3%
	Disagree	67	17.7%	17.7%
	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Total	379	100%	100%

The data in the above table show that the programme has positively affected the attitude of the respondents. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that the respondents are aware of the existence of Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS). This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect. As seen in table 1, out of the 379 respondents, 96.3% responded in affirmation that they are highly aware of DBS. The data showed that respondents rarely tune into DBS. This is based on the fact that out of 379 respondents, 81.8% answered to that effect.

The findings further showed that the respondents are highly exposed to hypertension messages on DBS. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect. Audience exposure to mass media messages is a major step towards achieving a positive behaviour towards health awareness campaign. In other words, the more the audience are exposed to media messages, the more they tend to have positive behaviour towards that message.

The findings showed that the campaign positively influenced the behaviour of the respondents. This is in line with the social judgement theory which says that the interpretation people give to media messages will determine how they will react to the message. For the respondents to be persuaded positively, it shows that they gave the messages positive interpretation. This shows that the media messages are persuasive and strategically communicated to meet the target audience and get the required behaviour. This is also in line Yale's persuasion theory which states that persuasive messages will likely change attitudes in response to persuasive messages. Asemah (2011) is also of the view that the 'press' may not always be successful in telling the audience what to think about.

Asemah, David & Akpabio (2022) agree that the mass media have huge abilities and great potentials for raising public awareness on the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This can be seen through the Yale's persuasion theory, which shows that the goal of persuasive communication is strategically designed to create an awareness towards influencing people's mind and changing their health behaviour.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The finding showed that the respondents were highly exposed to campaigns on hypertension on DBS and that the campaign has positive influence on the behaviour of the respondents. Thus, the researchers conclude that the campaign on hypertension was effective. Thus, the following recommendations are given:

1. Health communication is an integral part of development; there must be deliberate effort by the mass media to package messages in a persuasive and understandable way to positively influence the health behaviour of the audience.
2. The media should give more prominence to issues that have to do with human health, especially hypertension that is currently on the increase.
3. The mass media should adopt the use of clear, simple and understandable message well-tailored to meet the target audience of different social class.

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CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

ADOPTION AND USAGE OF MOBILE HEALTH TECHNOLOGY AMONG MEDICAL DOCTORS IN FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTRE, BIDA, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

Gloria Eneh Omale; Victoria Ugbedeojo Ikani & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The health sector is one of the beneficiaries of advancement in technology. Apart from medical equipment which is a direct product of scientific innovations, mobile health technology (MHT) is more or less an application designed to facilitate effective health care delivery anywhere in the world. Just as it is one thing to have good health facilities, trained and qualified Doctors who possess medical expertise, it is another thing to provide effective and efficient services to the consumers who are referred to as patients in this study. MHT is a technology specially designed to aid medical services.

Furthermore, MHT is most times used as a communication channel between physicians and their patients and vice versa. It has made medical practice easy for Doctors. In fact, it will be very difficult to practise medicine in this era without the knowledge and application of this technology. With MHT for instance, patients who are being managed can carry out their tests or investigations in distant places and send their results through a digital platform to their doctors to review and in response, the doctor will make assessment, give the patient update on the health condition or probably prescribe medications for them. Olaniran (2018) attests to this when he said that ‘‘physicians can share a radiological investigation of a patient to consultants and get feedback of what his/her opinion is as to how to manage the patient.’’ All these will ease the stress of and hustle of moving from one place to the other. Furthermore, health information is currently widely available on digital platforms that most physicians have and update their knowledge through their mobile gadgets which they can easily access than carrying books or literatures around the place, which are voluminous due to the nature of the study and practice of medicine.

In terms of interdepartmental communication at hospitals, there can be ease of communication between the Doctor’s office and the health records office with just a click away on the gadget. Doctors can access patients’ records and also access results of investigations of medical test from the laboratory. Doctors can also send prescriptions to the pharmacy for the patient to simply go and access. All these are made possible through MHT.

In addition, MHT services help save time and energy, reduces unnecessary protocols at the hospital and ultimately save lives in terms of quick response to emergencies. Such that first aid treatment or prescriptions can be administered before detailed investigation of the patient can commence. Mobile health technology also aids communication and feedback between physician and patient as the case may be. Also, the technology makes patient monitoring easier and faster as posited by one of the doctors contacted at FMC Bida. If these be the case, then there is more to gain from the technology and the need to utilise it for efficiency in health care services. It is on this premise that the researchers sought to carry out a study on the adoption and usage of mobile health technology among medical Doctors in Federal Medical Centre, Bida, Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

A lot has been said by people; so many literatures have been written by authors and findings from researches abound on the benefits of mobile health technology to mankind. For instance, majority of Nigerians have access to mobile phones which is one of the cheapest ICT gadgets in the world today. As a matter of fact, it is the key tool needed as far as MHT is concerned. So many deaths of loved ones could have been averted if only this technology was optimally utilised by Doctors and their patients in the right way. With the use of the technology for instance, certain medical instructions from the physician could have helped saved a life before a one-on-one contact with the Doctor.

Similarly, a lot of surgical errors and wrong prescriptions could have been avoided if the utilisation of the technology were the practice among Medical Doctors and Consultants. This could afford the opportunity to share observation and opinion about certain medical conditions and to learn more from well experienced and knowledgeable colleagues rather than trial and error with human lives. Today, with ICTs, knowledge and information is just a click away

It is a surprise so to speak that despite these huge benefits that the technology has to offer as briefly highlighted in the introduction of this study, most times, avoidable mistakes and deaths still abound. What possibly could be the challenge confronting the adoption of health technology when it has so much to offer? It is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to find out the extent of adoption and usage of mobile health technology among Medical Doctors in Federal Medical Centre, Bida, Niger State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Ascertain the level of knowledge about MHT among physicians in FMC Bida.
2. Find out their level of adoption of the technology.
3. Determine the challenges associated with the application of the technology at FMC Bida.

Brief Overview of Mobile Health Technology

Mobile health technology is the utilisation of mobile devices like cell phones and tablets for the delivery of health care. It is an ongoing intervention to benefit and improve health services in both developed and particularly, underdeveloped nations of the world as far as health care is concerned (Asemah & Okeya, 202; Asemah, 2015; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). Recent mobile health studies tend to focus on M-Health for data collection and surveillance, rather than on actual patient care. The current use and development of Mobile Health (M-Health) applications is on the rise in the developing world. According to Chester & Kefiloe (2017), M-Health applications are being used in the developing world to improve health education and awareness, diagnostic treatment and support services, data collection and remote monitoring services, surveillance, emergency medical services and other healthcare services. The basic tool needed for this service is a mobile phone provided that electric power supply and good network service are in place.

Benefits of Mobile Health Technology

Apart from prescribing, follow up on patients and disease surveillance, MHT can also be used to help Doctors ease their work. There may be no need to queue up for long hours in other to see the Doctor as it helps eliminate unnecessary delays and waste of time. Chester & Kefiloe (2017) note that there are mobile apps online to this effect. All the patient needs to do according them is to register online, a token will be deducted as charges which is a fee payable to the Doctor or hospital online.

Review of Empirical Studies

Chester & Kefiloe (2017) conducted research on the utilisation of mobile health technology by medical Doctors in a health facility at Zimbabwe. The researchers examined the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of the technology. Survey method through the administration of questionnaire to selected respondents was adopted. The results showed that Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents indicated lack of knowledge and unawareness in using M-Health to support chronically ill patients. However, majority of the respondents (83.3%) actually believed that M-Health presented opportunities to improve health care delivery if adopted. The researchers concluded that knowledge about M-Health is generally lacking among medical Doctors at the health facility and therefore, recommended that successful use of the technology will require the institution to educate Doctors and other health team members on the benefits of the technology as well as advocating for the innovative use of same in health care practices. They further recommended that M-Health programme should be officially launched to ensure uniform usage of M-Health devices.

The phenomenon under study is similar in both works, but differs in location, health centres and theoretical framework, respectively. Both works also share similarity in research method adopted, but the research instrument differs. Furthermore, this research accessed not only utilisation of the technology, but also, the level of knowledge about the technology and the challenges associated with the use of the technology at the health facility.

Similarly, Olufunmilayo, Idowu, Raji, Gabriel & Onigbogii (2017) conducted research on MHT. The study was aimed at assessing the knowledge, attitude and willingness to use M-Health technology among Doctors at a semi urban hospital in Nigeria. One of the objectives was to examine medical management and patient follow-up by Doctors at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti. Survey method was used while questionnaire was the research instrument. Results showed that although, knowledge was high and attitudes of respondents ‘were positive, the willingness to adopt M-Health use was low. Hence, there is need to expand M-Health coverage in Nigeria. Further findings showed that Doctors with poor knowledge and negative attitude were the younger Doctors who were still in training. The researchers recommended among others that there should be an inclusion of M-Health in medical education curriculum as this will expose Doctors early enough to the benefits and cost-effectiveness of mobile health technology. Both studies are similar only in assessment of knowledge of the technology among Doctors, but differ a bit in objectives and research instrument adopted. Furthermore, while this study was hinged on a framework, the reviewed study was not hinged on any.

Also, Farahnaz, Morteza, Ali, Ali & Hesamedin (2017) carried out research on health information technology: Knowledge, attitude and practice among health care professionals and students in a teaching hospital in Iran. The study was aimed at encouraging students and professionals to use health information technology (HIT), find out their level of awareness and their perceptions of various aspects of the use of the technology. The research was a survey with questionnaire as instrument and administered to participants in the hospital. Findings showed that a high percentage of respondents had a good level of knowledge about HIT and positive attitude towards the technology. Both studies share similarity in the phenomenon under study, but viewed it from different perspective and context. In addition, both studies are similar in the adoption of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as framework for the study. This study also adopted the diffusion of innovation theory to provide further backing to the study.

Furthermore, Dafni & Lior (2016) conducted research on physicians 'attitudes toward the use of IoT (internet of things) medical device as part of their practice. It focuses on the attitudes of physicians toward adoption of IoT medical devices (IoT-MDs) and the impact these devices have on medical practice during patient visits. The study made use of questionnaire and personal semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were simultaneously transcribed. The results showed that concerning the reliability of IoT-MDs, majority of the respondents found such devices reliable, some view them as unreliable, while others are not sure. One of those interviewed explained that an approval of a broad variety of products would change Doctors' willingness to count on varied devices used by patients, while adding that processes in the medical field are very prolonged and can take many years. A total of 67.4% of respondents believed that IoT-MDs could substitute for existing medical products, but of these, only 68.8% would recommend that their patients obtain such devices. The researchers recommended that apart from awareness and attitudes of physicians about IoT-MDs, further research should be extended to IoT-MD challenges, security, privacy, regulatory barriers worldwide and handling of massive data which may also contribute to a better understanding of the results.

The last empirical review for this research was conducted by Reem, Aliki, Muhammad, Zahra, Pedro & Jennifer (2017). The research was concerned with the awareness and use of M-Health apps by pharmacists. It examined publics' perception of M-Health apps in general and the awareness and use of health apps by diabetic patients in particular. The objective of the study was to explore the scale of awareness of M-Health apps and their recommended use by pharmacists for the public, the features desired for such apps by those patients and how they perceived the role of the pharmacists and their care. The research was conducted using the survey method with questionnaire administered to select respondents. The result showed that 56% of the respondents were aware of health apps, 60% of which recommended them to patients. Over 76% of the individuals owned a smart phone. The types of applications that saw the most use from the general public were health and lifestyle apps (24%), social apps (19%), followed by news (18%).

Further findings from the study also revealed that although eight out of nine diabetic patients owned a smart phone, only three used diabetes apps. Diabetic patients also suggested an interest in using diabetes apps to aid in optimising care via the utilisation of

visual aids, reminders, recording patient data, social coaching and remote collaboration with healthcare professionals (HCPs), but time was seen as the biggest obstacle to using a diabetes M-Health application. The study is different from the current study because it was more of a discourse paper.

Theoretical Framework

Theories as noted by Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) are very important to research. Going by that principle, the study was hinged on Technology Adoption Model (TAM) and diffusion of innovation theory. TAM was propounded by Davis (1989). The theory was used to explain user adoption of technology and how it is used in various environments. Wixom & Todd (2005) posit that the basis of the theory was built on the premise that when users are presented with a new technology, (in this case MHT) three major factors are considered as determinants of key predictors that influences users' decision on how to and when they use it. These are: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEoU) and Attitude towards user (ATU).

- **Perceived Usefulness (PU)** is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular system would enhance his/her work or job performance. Davis (1989, p.320) considers what the users perceive and how easy their work will be improved when a new technology is used. It is the subjective probability that there will be improvement in the way users carry out their work when using a particular technology.
- **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)** "is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular technology or system would be free of efforts." It considers how a user perceives a system to be better than its substitute (Davis, 1989, p. 320).
- **Attitude towards Use (ATU):** Fishbein & Ajzen (1975, p.216) describe ATU as "an individual's positive or negative feeling about performing the target behaviour (e.g., using a system)."

This theory agrees with the fact that when users are presented with a new technology, they do not just automatically accept and get carried away using it. A number of factors influence their decision on whether to accept it, how and when they will use it. The model aims not only to explain key factors of user acceptance of ICTs, but also, to predict the relative importance of such factors. Davis (1989) states that TAM explores the factors that affect behavioural intention to use a particular technology and that, the information or computer systems have a causal linkage with how easy they find the usability of that system.

Matching this side by side, this theory is relevant to this study because it agrees with the fact that medical Doctors will develop a positive intention of using MHT if they find it easy to use and if the technology will enhance their job. This implies that, similarly users' (in this case, doctors) positive attitude toward a specific technology leads them to developing an intention to use the technology.

The study was also hinged on the diffusion of innovation theory as propounded by Ryan & Gross in (1943), later developed by Everett Rogers in (1962) and revised in (2003). The crux of the theory has to do with the introduction and adoption of new innovation such

that with time, people are quick in adjusting to the new technology and adopting it as a new and acceptable system. The theory is relevant to this study in the sense that, MHT is a relatively new technology which application in medical services is gradually delving into developing countries and with time, people will get used to it and adapt to it.

Methodology

The researchers adopted the interview approach. This method was adopted because of the nature of the study and the fact that it was almost impossible to adopt a focused group discussion (FGD) with physicians at FMC, Bida due to the busy nature of their work schedule. Qualitative data were obtained using in-depth interview as method of data collection. Cresswell (2012), cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhereafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general open-ended questions and record their answers. The population of study was 19 which comprised qualified registered medical Doctors who are Heads of Department at FMC Bida as at April, 2023.

Because the population is not large, the same figure was used as the sample size for the study and this is called census in research. It is against this background that the study arrived at a given sample for the study. Furthermore, purposive sampling technique was used to purposively select each of the Heads of Department at FMC Bida, for the interview session because they are in a better position to provide valid information for the study. However, where it was difficult reaching the Head, other medical Doctors within the department were interviewed. Only three departments were excluded because they were not manned by medical Doctor(s) nor have direct usage of the technology at the health centre.

Table 1: The Various Departments at Federal Medical Centre Bida

S/N	Departments	Respondents
1	Radiology	1
2	Obstetrics and Gynecology	1
3	Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)	1
4	Ophtalmic	1
5	Physiotherapy	1
6	Accidents and Emergency	1
7	Internal Medicine	1
8	Family Medicine	1
9	Community Medicine	1
10	Paediatrics	1
11	Surgery	1
12	Dental Surgery	1
13	Pharmacy	1
14	Chemical Pathology Lab	1
15	Microbiology Lab	1
16	Hematology	1

17	Nursing Services	1
18	Morbid Anatomy Lab.	1
19	Health Records	1
20	Work and Ethics	Nil
21	Finance	Nil
22	Administrative	Nil
Total		**19**

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Level of Knowledge about MHT among Medical Doctors in Federal Medical Centre Bida

Data from interview conducted on the subject matter showed that majority of the medical Doctors at Federal Medical Centre Bida, were adequately knowledgeable on MHT and conversant with the use of technology, but it is not deployed in practice with patients because majority of the patients in the locality are not technologically compliant. This implies that the actual utilisation of MHT may not be applicable at the hospital. Furthermore, very few of the respondents refused to grant the interview on the grounds that they have to search Google about MHT before they can comfortably speak on the subject at a rescheduled date because they would not like to talk about what they do not know about. This made the researchers to conclude that it is obvious from available data from the interview that only a few number of the Doctors in FMC Bida were not knowledgeable about MHT as it relates to healthcare and patient management.

Result from the interview conducted showed that awareness level about MHT was high (probably as a result of their personal research on it before the interview because they were pre-informed about the topic and purpose of the interview). Further response revealed that MHT was not the major practice in the management of patients at FMC, Bida. Specifically, Dr. Olaniran was optimistic that with progress, good management and political will, a lot can be done in terms of awareness creation. Further response from one of the Heads of Department revealed that in terms of creating awareness by management of FMC, Bida on MHT, there is a concept called Complete Care Initiative (CCI) which was inaugurated in May 2018 on Family Physicians Day. He noted that the concept is still at the early stage and hope to be fully blown; thereby creating more awareness about the technology.

This finding aligns with Olufunmilayo *et al* (2017) who note that although knowledge was high and attitude of respondents were positive, the willingness to adopt M-Health use was low. On the other hand, it is glaring that the Doctors in FMC Bida, Niger State, Nigeria are more knowledgeable about MHT than Doctors in Zimbabwe as could be seen in the study conducted by Chester & Kefiloe (2017). Their results showed that Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents indicated lack of knowledge and unawareness in using M-Health to support chronically ill patients.

Extent of Utilisation of Mobile Health Technology

A look at Dafni & Lior's (2016) research on physicians' attitudes toward the use of IoT (internet of things) medical device as part of their practice revealed that FMC Bida, Niger State, Nigeria is a step ahead of respondents in that study. This is because efforts of

management at FMC, Bida, in implementing the use of MHT is already in progress; specifically in three departments; namely: health records, HIV clinic and Tuberculosis laboratory, respectively out of the twenty-two departments at the health center. Further investigations revealed that some Staff of FMC, Bida were actually sent on training sometime in 2018 for the purpose of exposure to MHT after which they were expected to educate others; but for now, the utilisation of the technology at the centre is not fully implemented.

According to a source, during one of the interview sessions, "there is awareness on MHT, but as a hospital, we have not been able to come together to put down policies that would really benefit patients and Doctors who are major users of the technology." This implies that utilisation of MHT in FMC, Bida is yet to be fully implemented. Speaking on the level of utilisation, one of the interviewees rated FMC, Bida, three on a scale of ten. His reason for the rating was that, in terms of health care delivery, management investigations and exchange of patients' information among professionals, not all these levels are being utilised optimally in Federal Medical Centre, Bida.

Challenges associated with the Use and Application of MHT in FMC Bida

Response from one of the Doctors revealed that the use of MHT leads to an increase in workload for Doctors in terms of patients care. He stressed that adoption of the technology increases physical distance between the doctor and the patient which is against the ideal practice of one-on-one patient's examination. Further response from interview revealed that implementation of MHT at FMC, Bida will require huge logistics, huge technical knowhow and huge funding. But on a minimal scale, health professionals at the centre exchanged ideas concerning patient's information management and patients' investigation. Another challenge mentioned is the problem of low level of literacy among majority of patients in FMC, Bida environs who are majorly indigenes. This is contrary to the findings from research by Reem *et al* (2017) which showed that Doctors and patients are quite knowledgeable about MHT. Their result showed that 56% of the respondents were aware of health apps, 60% of which recommended them to patients. Over 76% of the individuals owned a smart phone. The types of applications that saw the most use from the general public were health and lifestyle apps (24%), social apps (19%), followed by news (18%).

Furthermore, response from physicians at FMC, Bida, revealed that age is also a major predictor of the adoption of the technology. The older people within the study area who are majorly illiterates are less likely to adopt new technology. This fact is supported by Chib *et al* (2008) when they posit that perceptions of technology also vary by age. According to them, this is as a result of their cognitive abilities, low awareness of the benefits of the technology, perceived competence and anxiety related to its use. They further opined that specific training for older or minority populations on the benefits of technology use and counseling on self-efficacy and anxiety for such groups can reduce these barriers and disparities.

Further responses from medical Doctors revealed that service networks in Bida is critically poor, unavailability of internet services and epileptic power supplies are a stumbling block. Other challenges include socioeconomic status of majority of respondents in the area as well as perception and attitudes toward technology. With respect to a few of

the challenges mentioned by respondents above, Chib *et al* (2008); Tamrat & Kachnowski (2012), suggested that a first step to resolving these socio-cultural barriers is adapting M-Health programmes to the local context, including language translation and addressing cultural perception and nuances. If this is implemented, it will go a long way to facilitating the practical application of MHT in FMC, Bida.

From one-on-one interactions with Doctors during the interview, the researcher concludes that physician's attitude towards the use of MHT at FMC, Bida, is largely influenced by the three major principles of the theoretical framework for this study which are: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU) and Attitude towards user (ATU) according to Technology Acceptance Model TAM by propounded Davis (1989).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that majority of the Doctors at the health centre possess adequate knowledge about the technology about MHT. However, the application of MHT in FMC, Bida, Niger State, Nigeria is very low. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. There should be steadier power supply and availability of internet service network.
2. There should be provision of functional and periodically upgraded computer, spyware, malwares and antiviruses should constantly be in place to avoid loss of medical record(s) to avoid putting patients care in jeopardy.

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CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL'S USAGE OF TWITTER FOR HEALTH COMMUNICATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Grace I. Okpongkpong; Daniel T. Ezegwu & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The emergence of an infectious disease occurrence such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic demanded careful communication of public health messages to diverse audiences (Vraga & Jacobsen, 2020; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021). All over the earth, people started scrambling for vital information about how to prevent themselves from the virus. Everyone desired to know the extent of the spread of the virus, the regions where it had higher mutuality rates, the government's response, among other things. People searched and used every media platform available to them to get as updated as they could about the pandemic (Nwaoboli, 2021; 2022). This triggered a need for effective and strategic health communication leading to the essentiality of health communication during the coronavirus outbreak.

Rural Health Information Hub (2018) defines health communication as the study and use of approaches to inform and influence individuals and communities' decisions that improve health. Individuals and groups are encouraged to adopt healthier choices by using verbal and written tactics that impact them. Additionally, health communication blends components of various theories and models in order to encourage beneficial changes in attitudes and behaviour (Ovie & Asemah, 2021; Ovie & Nwaoboli, 2023). It is the creation of activities and treatments aimed at changing people's attitudes toward a certain health concern (Asemah, 2021). When it comes to a contagious infection like coronavirus, it is important to evaluate the importance of health communication.

As in other forms of communication, health communication passes through the media to reach the intended receivers and consumers (Asemah, David & Akpabio, 2022). The media used in this form of communication, can either be traditional or modern. In the case of Nigeria during the outbreak, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) used more of the social media (Twitter especially) as one of its medium for health communication during coronavirus outbreak in the country (NCDC, 2020). Nigeria Centre for Disease Control is Nigeria's premier national public health institute. Its mission is to protect public health and safety in Nigeria through the control and prevention of communicable diseases (Sahara Reporters, 2019). As well as directing surveillance systems, the agency is tasked with providing the Nigerian community with data on diseases collected, analysed and explained. Coronavirus is the culprit here (Pulse, 2020; Sahara Reporters, 2019). Taking credence from past infection such as Ebola virus and Lasa Fever, at the outbreak of coronavirus disease, the NCDC launched several new ways of embarking on a health campaign aimed at tackling the virus. One of the campaigns include the #TakeResponsibility campaign, which was aired majorly on social media while creating over 150 jingles and commercials as well as a constant SMS to all Nigerians.

In all of this, what was noticeable was NCDC's use of social media in spreading information to the masses. Social media according Fayoyin (2016) have now become indispensable tools for health literacy and an overall improvement of health outcomes considering the number of users. Izah, Iniamagha & Sylva (2020) report that as of 2019, the number of social media users in Nigeria reached roughly 25 million; out of this, 50% use Twitter and with a large number of Twitter users in Nigeria, it is straightforward to assume that this platform will prove a veritable tool in the campaign for adherence to safety precaution to curtail the spread of the coronavirus.

The activities of NCDC on Twitter started with the outbreak of the coronavirus and were active and religious through the period even to the time of post COVID-19. The agency posted daily and weekly updates on their Twitter handle on the virus, symposiums and webinars were held nationally and internationally on the virus, and reports were posted on Twitter too. However, the major problem is not the use of the media by NCDC but the engagement of the intended audience of the message with the media. It is general speculation that Twitter is the media of the elites. The average Nigeria youth considers twitter difficult to use. They prefer to use other social media. Generally, twitter's level of engagement and participation is somewhat different from other simpler to navigate platform. It study perceives that even if other social media platform would yield the use rate of increase on the health literacy of Nigerians with the posts by NCDC, Twitter should be the least on the roll. This is the general assumption of the typical nature of Twitter from the average Nigerian youth.

Given the nature of Twitter and the active use of Twitter by NCDC, it is a great cause of concern to question the engagement of Nigerians with the information on this media. It is nothing to argue that communication is only effective when the receiving end engages with the message passed. This study, thus, seeks to assess the use of social media (Twitter specifically) for health communication by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) during the coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Ascertain the frequency of health tweets by NCDC during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Inspect the directions and the nature of the health tweets by NCDC during the COVID.19 pandemic.
3. Examine audience engagements of NCDC tweets on coronavirus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Review of Literature

Since the introduction of the internet in the late 19th century, the online world has been popularised with the overflow of social networking sites. These sites also commonly known as social media platform has transformed the way people communicate. Just like Asemah & Edegoh (2013) explain, communication on social media is only possible because of the internet. As opposed to previous communication pattern, the social media is a platform that is highly rated for its ability to deliver influx of information data with immediacy (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah &

Nwaoboli, 2023). Although social media are floored with various platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Tiktok, this study is, however, limited to Twitter.

During the pandemic season, Nigerians had access to a wealth of information through social media (Ajayi, Fatukasi & Asemah, 2021; Acheme, Amah, Ezeji & Asemah, 2021; Aboh, Amar & Asemah, 2021). The first coronavirus victim was disclosed on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms (Komiti & Asemah, 2021). Since Nigerians' use of social media has recently increased, sharing information on this platform has become easier and more convenient. NCDC and other Health Care Agencies then provided information on how many instances had been reported and how many people had been affected as a result (Aboh, Amar & Asemah, 2021). Their social media handlers let Nigerians know if they were positive, fatal or in recovery. When the Influenza pandemic season hit Nigeria, Nigerians had a much better chance of being completely equipped for COVID-19. It has been recorded that the colonial authority of Nigeria was only able to contain the disease in Lagos by sanitising houses, but the lack of knowledge led to a rapid spread of it throughout Nigeria (Adebowale, 2020).

On social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, data were constantly updated. As a result, the NCDC's Twitter and Facebook accounts were updated periodically. Services like MTN provide free internet connection to health organisations like the NCDC, Federal Ministry of Health, WHO and Presidential Task Force. Also, the NCDC sends out daily updates to the public via SMS so that they can be adequately equipped and educated in order to help combat the virus.

Nwala, Umor & Njoku (2020) studied the frequency of preventive measures of coronavirus reportage in Nigerian media. The findings from the study showed that articles linked to self-isolation of people were the most frequently reported concerning coronavirus. Mejia *et al* (2020) assessed the media and their informative role in the face of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). They explained how the media play a positive role in the dissemination of information on the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The study set out to assess the perspective of the media and their informative function in the face of COVID-19 epidemic. Using a validation process of questionnaire, the researchers measured and produced a scale to assess 30 experts (physicians, epidemiologists, among others) (physicians, epidemiologists, among others). Results from the study revealed the developed scale was able to validate the impression of how people acquire information from the media and its effect on the people.

Komiti & Asemah (2021) conducted a study on the "coverage of COVID-19 pandemic by select online Nigerian newspapers." The study was hinged on the media dependency theory. Using a content analysis method, the population for the study comprised 31 editions for each of the six mainstream online newspapers published between 29th April, 2021 and 29th May, 2021. Findings revealed that COVID-19 was not adequately reported by the select newspapers and that the media gave low coverage to COVID-19 in relation to coverage of other health-related areas in the post-lockdown COVID-19 era. However, the findings indicated that in the online newspaper sites, stories published have greater elements of permanency than the prints in that they are reflected in the days or weeks that follow after being published until they are moved to previous page(s).

Nwakpu, Ezema & Ogbodo (2020) analysed how Nigerian media portray the coronavirus pandemic and how the depictions impact people's perspective and response to the epidemic. The researchers used quantitative approach (newspaper content analysis and questionnaire). Four major national newspapers in Nigeria and China were used to conduct a content study of coronavirus coverage. There were a total of 1070 newspaper articles about the coronavirus outbreak in the four newspapers that were analysed. According to the findings, coverage of the epidemic dominated the mainstream media. Seven hundred and sixty-three (71.3%) of all the items were accounted for in this way.

Omaka-Amari, Aleke, Obande-Ogbuinya, Ngwakwe, Nwankwo & Afoke (2020) note that information from both online and print media coverage on COVID-19 were used to assess the issues. COVID-19 instances increased steadily from one on the 27thof February 2020, to 1,932 confirmed cases, 58 fatalities and 319 discharged individuals by the 30th of April 2020.

On the other hand Amzata, Aminu, Kolo, Akinyele, Ogundairo & Danjibo (2020) examined the early socio-medical response to COVID-19 in Nigeria during the first 100 days. It was observed that Nigerian coronavirus cases increased steadily, moving from imported cases to community transmission. A content analysis of tweets during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak by Yachao Li, Twersky, Ignace, Zhao, Purandare, Bennett-Jones & Weaver (2020) focused on "Constructing and Communicating COVID-19 Stigma on Twitter." The findings showed that when COVID-19 outbreaks began, there was a paucity of knowledge and a rapid global proliferation of new infections. According to the researchers, they looked through tweets relating to COVID-19 to determine whether they contained any misinformation or conspiracy theories. COVID-19-related tweets totalled 155,353 between December 31, 2019 and March 13, 2020, of which 7000 were manually coded. As a result, COVID-19 risk was the most often reported factor. An important conclusion of this study is that public health officials should be mindful that statements concerning covid19 can be unintentionally stigmatising to the population. Our research, however, focuses on the NCDC's tweets on Twitter. Since Twitter may be used for health risk communication, this research helps to provide light on how it can be used.

Theoretical Framework

Theories as noted by Asemah (2011) and Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) are very important in research. The study is anchored on health belief model. This model was created by Hochbaum, Rosenstock & Kegels, who worked for the U.S. Public Health Service in the late 1950s. This theory set out to examine patient behaviour and compliance with medical messages and treatments. This theory is predicated on the belief that the effectiveness of health information is based on the acceptability of a person. In this theory, it is assumed that a person will take action if it affects his or her well-being. In order to explain and predict health behaviours, this psychological model focuses on the attitudes and beliefs of people. This approach is based on the premise that all health-related behaviour is dictated by two main elements. People want to be healthy or get better if they are currently sick. Secondly, people believe that a specific health action will prevent or cure a disease if they follow it to the letter. In the end, an individual's course of action typically hinges on their beliefs of the benefits and challenges connected to health

behaviour (HerreUittenhout, 2012). As a result of this, the model predicts that media platforms and channels can be used to teach, educate and enlighten people about the seriousness of a disease like COVID-19. Audience acceptance of a specific method available to them to minimise the weakness or seriousness or lead to other favourable consequences in their health is highly likely as a result of this conduct.

Methodology

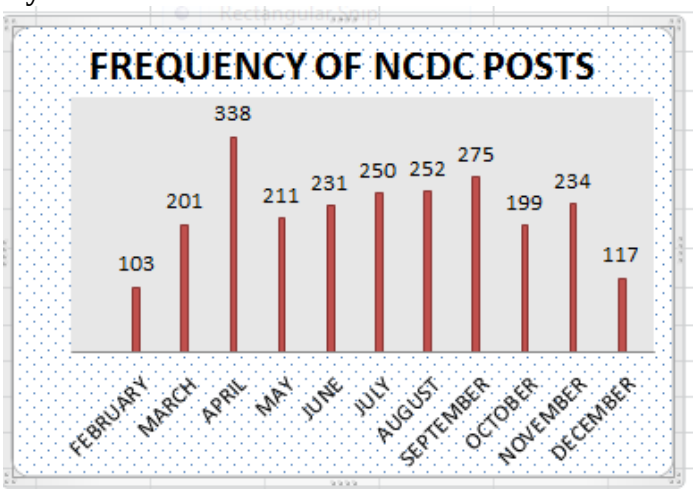
This study uses the quantitative content analysis approach. As noted by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), content analysis is the study of the manifest contents of documents. The population of this study included all tweets from within the period of the coronavirus outbreak and its first wave of spread in the country (ie. from 27th of February to 4th of December, 2020). The researchers, on NCDC Twitter handle, counted 2,891 tweets from health tweets on the official NCDC Twitter handled @NCDCgov from February 27th, 2020 to December 4th, 2020 when the lockdown was eased majorly in all parts of Nigeria. It was discovered that from this number, only 2411 health tweets were coronavirus related. Using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher coded all coronavirus related tweets made by NCDC as sample for the content analysis.

Given the objective of ascertaining the message direction and frequency of tweets, coding all tweets on the NCDC social media platform was necessary. This figure makes up the number of tweets was made in heat of the COVID-19 lockdown from February to December. Based on this, the researchers coded tweets/posts from NCDC along these categories from it unit of analysis: the frequency of heath tweets on COVID-19 and the message direction of health tweets on COVID-19. The type of health tweets was classified as texts, pictures and videos which were coded to ensure the frequency of tweets. However, pictures, videos and messages were coded separately; while the health tweets by NCDC was shared into six groups of similar messages. The message categories include event updates (EU), situation/ cases reports (CR), news reports (NR), safety precautions (health protocols) (SP), publications (PU) and general updates (GU).

A coding guide and coding sheet was prepared to collect data for the content analysis based on a global sample guide adapted from the Global Media Monitoring Programme (GMMP). The coding sheet according to Wimmer & Dominick are standardised sheet that allows coders to classify data and the coding guide are, however, set of rules and guidelines that help the coders. The researchers tested for frames like the frequency of posts and the direction of each message. Tweets/posts from NCDC were coded along these two broad categories from this unit of analysis: the amount of heath tweets on COVID-19 posted monthly and, the message of health tweets on COVID-19. The researchers adopted the inter-coders reliability to ascertain the reliability of the measuring instrument. The Holsti's 1969 formula was used for determining the reliability of nominal data in terms of percentage of agreement between independent coders. This ascertained the inter-coders reliability for this study.

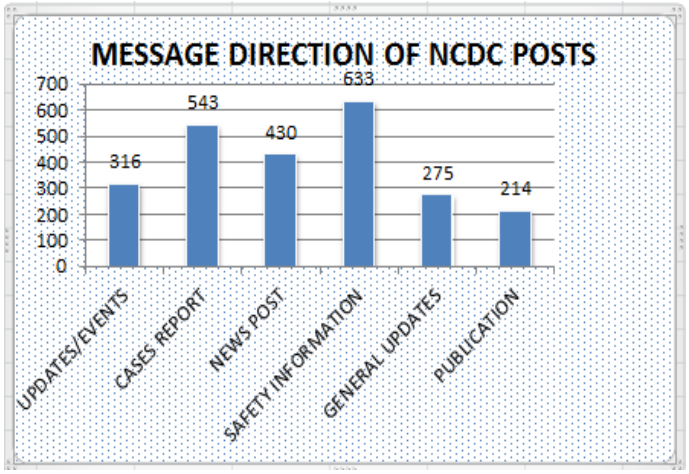
Data Presentation and Analysis

Chart 1: Frequency of NCDC Health Posts



The above chart showcases the number of tweets coded from the NCDC Twitter handle. The chart reveals that since the inception of the COVID-19, the NCDC has been highly functional in posting of update on their social media platform. With the month of April having 338 posts which represents about 14% of the posts made by NCDC in the year, 2020.

Chart 2: Nature and Direction of NCDC Tweets



The above chart shows the type of health posts made by NCDC during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. Of this figure, messages on safety ranked the highest with a total of 633 posts. This indicates that much of the health body concern was focused on ensuring the safety of the public. Following this order was messages on fresh cases and updates. The constant airing of this report was able to send a subliminal message of the growing virus and create awareness of the pandemic. Aside this, the data coded further revealed messages in other directions. This moves to prove that the objective of the NCDC was not limited to creation of awareness but also encompass other elements such as education.

Discussion of Findings

The frequency of health posts by NCDC during the CONVID-19 was measured using the totality of health posts made by NCDC on their Twitter handle. Considering the algorithm of Twitter which allows for data to be saved and easily retrieved no matter the time or place, this platform became relevant in checkmating the frequency of health posts made by NCDC on social media. To ascertain this fact the researcher coded all health tweets posted by NCDC from the period of the coronavirus first outbreak in March, 2020 down to December, 2020. This time frame was paramount to this study as it contains the phases for which the lockdown was enacted to the time the lockdown was eased in the major parts of the country.

From the content coded, it was observed that in the period for which coronavirus was first speculated in the country in February, 2020 to the time the lockdown was eased in October, 2020 the NCDC constantly posted on their social media platform. The researchers went on to check the remaining two months in the year 2020, this gave the researchers a total of 2,411 coronavirus related posts made by NCDC in the year 2020. From the data coded, it was noticeable that NCDC had a substantial amount of posts made on their social media platform. With the month of April having 338 posts which represents about 14% of the posts made by NCDC in the year, 2020. What this indicates is that NCDC understands the importance of social media in communicating health messages during a crisis.

This findings is in line with Fayoyin (2016) who says that recently social media has gained global recognition for its power in transforming various sectors of society, especially public health sector. It further agrees with Salmon & Arkins (2003) who substantiate that in providing health literacy, social media platforms have now become an indispensable tool. Thus, NCDC use of social media in combating the coronavirus is a most welcome development in Nigeria health communication during crisis. The results of this finding further agree with the health belief model for which this study is framed upon. The model predicts that the media through its platform and channels can inform, educate and enlighten the people about the seriousness of an illness.

Through, social media the NCDC has been able to inform the masses about the graveness of an infectious terminal disease such as COVID-19. This theory is of the belief that by informing the audience of an illness using a media they are most comfortable with, there is a high chance of the audience or masses to accept a specific strategy accessible to them that would lessen the weakness or seriousness or lead to other positive results in their health. Considering the number of social media currently in Nigeria, using this medium to inform the masses is a welcome positive development. From all this it was observed that NCDC was able to flood their social media platform with health messages to guide the people in the cause of the pandemic.

The findings revealed that NCDC posts on their social media handle were centred along the following directions: updates/events, cases report, news posts, safety information, general updates and publication. The researchers coded these health posts within this frame. Of this frames, it was observed that posts on safety information ranked highest with a total of 633 posts. These posts included posts pictures and videos. Following this is cases report health posts takes suit with 543. What this showcase is as much as

NCDC tries to inform the public of the preventive and precautionary methods to avoid and reduce the spread of the virus. They did not fail to update the public of the current rise in the number of victims.

From this awareness one can infer that efforts made by NCDC in their health posts about COVID-19 move to inform the masses that not adhering to the COVID-19 guidelines as given by the WHO, NCDC and other officially recognised health bodies could possibly lead to an increase in the number of people infected with the virus as seen in their posts. This action is in accordance to Hochbaum, Rosenstock & Kegels' health belief model which postulates that a person would take an action if it relates to his health and that social media can be utilised to coordinate health advancement and disease avoidance programmes. Through NCDC posts on social media, awareness about COVID-19 and its inherent dangers were made known to the public. It was also observed that information on safety was prioritised.

Conclusion

Health communication aids in all aspects of disease prevention and health promotion. More recently, users reach out to the internet to obtain health information, especially when they are challenged with a health problem. In no doubt, the social media have been able to promote physical and psychological health measures to people no matter their age group or location. In the current state of the virus, it is prerequisite to ensure public knowledge regarding social distancing; appropriate usage of face masks; proper guidelines for recognising, diagnosing and managing of the disease is made available. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The NCDC health risk communication pattern should be a continuum not just for COVID-19, but for other health issues.
2. Telemedcom, E-Health or M-Health should be embraced by Health bodies such as NCDC for all form of health messages programme with a comprehensive set of guidelines made available throughout the internet from a single health authority which has undergone several researches.
3. Social media Health messages should be crafted strategically to reduce fear and panic, following risk communication processes.

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CHAPTER THIRTY

ATTITUDE OF SELECT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN EDO STATE TOWARDS TIKTOK HEALTH TIPS

Gideon Timileyin Olaoye & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The world has come into a space of communication bound by binary digits which are composed in form of applications for the soul aim of communication. The rapid growth of social media has led to a distinct interaction in every aspects of the world. The usage of internet mobile phones and tablets has given enablement to social creators who in turn, shape their applications to a specific form of communication and social interaction. In today's era of mobile commerce and globally distributed teams, technology is rapidly changing to fit the needs of this fast-pace business world and society. As the mobile technology industry grows, consumers grow more and more dependent on this industry as it integrates into our daily lives (Idemudia & Batch, 2014). They are platforms facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, such as text, images, videos, and links, allowing individuals and organisations to engage in social networking, information sharing, and online communication (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; 2023; Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). Some researchers perceive internet-based communication as platforms wielding opportunistic interactivity, discriminatory self-presence in real-time interaction, targeting asynchronous audiences driven by online user-generated marketing content (Lund, 2019; Carr & Hayes, 2015; Rothschild, 2011).

Dzogbenuku, Doe & Amoako (2022) assert that with the advent of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the early part of 2020, the social life of people globally was disrupted, preventing them from gathering for any activity. As a remedy to augment lost academic time, various social media were adopted compulsorily or voluntarily as pedagogical changes to promote remote teaching (Stenman & Pettersson, 2020). Social media channels were apparently used for different purposes during the world lockdown which was a great advantage to the world at large. The different platforms established during this era gave the world a one-way form of close communication to one another. Information shared are gotten and all kinds of interactions through articles, pictures, videos, musical entertainment and cartoon and many more, were used to get the world together at the presence of the deadly virus spread over the world.

TikTok amidst other social applications like Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and many more, is one of the most popular apps on social media. This application is the world's prominent destination for creating short-form mobile videos in Asia, United States and other parts of the world (Badriya, Sadia & Arif, 2019). The influence of TikTok over the youth at large, has given a pace of learning, working, getting connected, getting popular and even creation of career following the successful Khaby Lame and many other influencers on the platform. Idachaba (2021) opines that the act of communicating, using art, words or any communicative tool, is a form of power which can generate meaning in varying degrees. There are so many reasons communication is

important; some of such reasons are to build trust, create awareness, provide clarity and direction and to prevent or solve a problem. Asemah & Edegoh (2013) note that social media like the traditional media, play different roles in the society; these roles may be positive or negative. Also, via the social media, people are informed, can make suggestions or complaints and can vote on local issues using the internet (Imnasenla, 2012, cited in Edegoh & Asemah, 2014). The effectiveness of these social platforms to some extent, has made the world of communication to its simplicity and freedom of communication expression of thoughts, ideas and observation. Edegoh & Asemah (2014) assert that social media are useful to everyone. Students, on their part, have massively adopted the use of social media because of the several opportunities they present to users. Thus, the researcher seeks to study the attitude of select university students in Edo state towards *TikTok* health tips.

Statement of the Problem

The universe today can celebrate its advancement in communication technology development which to a very large extent has created a close and smooth conversation around the globe with ease. The innovation of social media today has created a world of social community made-up of various individuals coupled by friendship, specific types of motives, common social and developmental interest, belief, business partners and many more. Diverse purpose is created for any social media platform which motives in all cases are to attract users all over the world to be a subscriber to their application. The benefits attached to these applications are majorly targeted at young, especially students and adults who are mostly users of today's internet world.

It is a common sight to see a student chatting in sensitive and highly organised places like the church, mosque and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the high way, they keep chatting (Asemah *et al* 2013). This implies that the social media aim is to attract the usage of the student which in turn can be used also in a positive way to get their attention into educating them on every spheres of life such as health education and many more. Scholars have argued on both positive and negative sides of social media impact on student/youth, but what remain paramount to various studies is that social media have its advantages and disadvantages. The invention of social media was to aid development and communication within and outside various continents in the world.

Health issues/matters happens to be a crucial issue in the world of humanity (old and young). And the aid of interaction amidst one another gave the power to communication on social media which happens to be a faster medium to seek for solution or advice. Unlike the contemporary way of communicating to doctors directly with all cumbersome activities attached to the hospital requirement, social media came with an ease of first hand communication between health practitioners and the society. Youth (students) on the other hand took a good use of this opportunity as it not only restricted them from negligence to their health matters, but the opportunity helped them keep in touch with every day-to-day details of information communicated on health via the social media they are exposed to. Education on genotype, diseases of all types, prevention are communicated via social media platform like TikTok, in details to enable an improved health stability of the

young once. Thus, it is on this premise that this study aims to determine the attitude of TikTok health tips on the knowledge and behaviour of select undergraduate students in Edo state.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure to TikTok health tips among select undergraduates in Edo State.
2. Find out the level of effectiveness of TikTok health tips on select undergraduates in Edo state.
3. Ascertain select undergraduates' perception towards health tips on TikTok.
4. Ascertain the extent to which select undergraduates adhere to TikTok health tips.
5. Find out the extent to which TikTok health tips influence the attitude and behaviour of undergraduates.

Overview of TikTok Health Tips

TikTok application is one of the most downloaded social media platforms over the years with over 2 billion downloads across the globe. The social media application was created for content creation, musical lip-synch and social entertaining participation across the world. According to McLachlan (2022), TikTok is a social media app centered around short videos. Many people think of it as a bite-size version of YouTube, with videos ranging between five and 120 seconds in length. TikTok call itself "the leading destination for short-form mobile videos" with a mission to "inspire creativity and bring joy." He also stated that, TikTok is an app where new creators and surprising content can go viral, thanks to an algorithm that promotes discovery and fosters a universe of unique challenges and trends.

Edegoh & Asemah (2014) assert that utilisation of these social media is expected to bring about significant improvement in the lives of the users, particularly heavy users. Heathfield (2013) cited in Edogoh & Asemah (2014) rightly avers that social media are the tools and platforms that people use to publish content and interact socially online. According to the author, user generated content includes conversation, articles, images or pictures, recipes and anything that an individual might share with others in their daily lives. Thus, social media platform like TikTok health tips now have the enablement to provide a voice to the voiceless society. This opportunity paves way for immediate responses and communication which are beneficial, especially when it's on health basis. Yoon (2000), cited in Asemah *et al* (2013) observes that the type of social media or network subscribed to by a teenager exerts influence on him or her to visit the internet. The active contents attached and uploaded to TikTok health tips attracts the attentions of students who in turn subscribe and follow such content creator, especially when it talks about cogent issues on health basis.

Kale (2020) asserts that before the coronavirus pandemic, TikTok was predominantly favoured by British teenagers, who posted prank videos or the latest trending dance routine on it. But since the lockdown, TikTok has become a seething leviathan of user-generated content, chewing down our boredom, our fatigue and our fear

and spitting them back at us in 15-second chunks, to be digested ad infinitum. The COVID-19 era gave birth to all formalities of the usage of social media to the core. TikTok usage in this period was used majorly to while away time and boredom and can be seen as a platform where health information such as restrictions and instructions are given because of its large usage around the world. At the start of the pandemic, the World Health Organisation started broadcasting advice via TikTok (Wardle, 2020). And now, with the thirst for medical knowledge at an all-time high, scores of doctors have joined the platform, keen to have their voice heard. From tips on boosting mental health to medical myth-busting, their videos have racked up millions of views. Take clinical psychologist Dr. Julie Smith, who has attracted 700,000 followers seeking psychological support as an important example on TikTok.

Review of Literature

The ultimate purpose of disseminating information is for safeguarding human race and continual existence. That is why Edegoh, Asemah & Ude-Akpeh (2013) opine in one of their research that the main reason for the media campaigns against HIV/AIDS is premised on the fact that the disease cannot be eradicated; so, efforts should be made to discourage behaviours that could increase chances of infection and spread of the scourge in society. The media, as noted by Singh (2006) cited in Asemah (2013, p. 5) have the potential to create widespread awareness on HIV/AIDS, which is an identified diseases in the society, to promote the positive attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS and influencing people to change high risk behaviour that make them vulnerable to the infection. That is, the media such as TV, radio, newspaper, magazine and social media, through health communication has a powerful role in the society to fight against identified diseases or virus which serve as a threat to the masses. In addition to this, Sharma (n.d.) cited in Asemah (2012) states that communication is at the heart of health care and health promotion. Thus, Asemah (2012) contends that mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media.

Apart from the World Health Organisation (WHO) having an account on social media platform like TikTok, users of various social media platform became actively campaign creators towards COVID-19 disease in which TikTok was used immensely by Doctors, Nurses, Professionals and various users on the platform, to communicate all preventions and daily information as disseminated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). At this pandemic era, the social platform became a community of renowned information in which the world became a user victim. In particular, (Rajabi 2020) states that students—suddenly trapped in quarantine spaces on college campuses to prevent the spread of the virus after a positive test—took to TikTok to narrate their experiences, to give testimony. From sharing their mundane daily tasks to expressing their deepest fears about being sick and alone, these young adults offered a window into the pandemic that was hard to see in mainstream news. However, information circulation on TikTok during the pandemic era was not only about the virus prevention but also about different content on daily living and keeping up to day-to-day activities, like: exercises, duet music, diet videos,

games, dance and many more that keeps the world users of the social application alive and up to task, making them not to fill trapped because of the world shut down.

The use of social media sites has shattered and evolved into various online platforms where people create attractive content, share it, bookmark it and network at a remarkable percentage. Emphasising on the strategic importance of health campaigns on social media, Zoelfakar (2022) studied usage of TikTok and anxiety among Egyptian teenagers and youth during COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher adopted survey research method. Findings of this study revealed that the motivations of escapism and fame seeking, in addition to the school economic level increased the level of TikTok usage. Also, the study revealed that there was a negative effect of users' age and there was no effect of anxiety level on both TikTok level of usage and on kinds of TikTok uses. It was concluded that TikTok usage did not negatively affect their Arab culture.

Ngilangi (2022) studied TikTok on SNSU Students' engagement and influence. The rationale behind this study is to determine the level of influence and engagement of TikTok on the students of Surigao del Norte State University (formerly Surigao State College of Technology). This study made use of a descriptive research design. Findings revealed that most SNSU students do watch TikTok videos regularly and they were influenced by the content, video quality, and music. Likewise, their engagement on TikTok was very influential, especially since they were entertained, and even take action in commenting and reacting on someone's TikTok. Thus, the researcher concluded that TikTok was very influential to the SNSU students. The researcher recommended that guidelines on using social media, particularly the use of TikTok should be crafted and implemented through a school campaign spearheaded by the Student Government Council.

Cagas (2022) studied the use of TikTok videos in enhancing the speaking and grammar skills of higher education students. The rationale behind the study was to look into how criminology students can use micro videos in the TikTok app to improve their speaking and grammar skills. The study adopted a pre-experimental design and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gather their data. Their findings revealed that, TikTok videos help students improve their speaking skills and grammar skills. Thus, they concluded that educational environment is not only limited with physical interactions, but also virtual interactions and further recommended that English teachers should use the TikTok app to make short videos to help their students improve their speaking and grammar skills. Students can improve speaking and grammar skills because of TikTok application.

Lewis & Gratham (2022) also carried out a study on analysis of trending #CovidVaccine content on TikTok: From fork hands to microchips. The researchers investigated the discourse about COVID-19 vaccination on TikTok by analysing 100 top TikTok videos that used the hashtag #CovidVaccine. The study was anchored on content analysis. Their findings revealed that an overwhelming number of the trending videos were created by citizens who did not identify themselves as professionals or experts, with a low contribution from mega-influencers compared with other influencer types. The researchers concluded and recommended that health communicators need to be well-vast in the logic and language of TikTok to gain visibility and influence on the platform when advocating public health responses.

Following the consecutive studies of various scholars on the positivity and negativity of TikTok social media application, what bounds and connects each argument in this reviewed works is that there is an essential value coordinating the students and their usage of TikTok social media application. Various scholars have in no doubt agree that the addictive usage of the platform is what affects the youth, but with adequate precaution and valued educative and informative contents, the society becomes developed.

Theoretical Framework

Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory explains online information. The theory was developed in 1992 by Joseph Waither (Asemah, 2011; Asemah, 2012) Social information processing theory is an interpersonal communication theory which suggests that online interpersonal relationship development might require more time to develop than face-to-face relationships, but when developed, it has the same influence as face-to-face communication. The term 'social information processing' can be attributed to the fact that at every level, a user divulges information and the receiver processes the information continuously and forms judgement on the basis of the verbal cues received. Asemah *et al* (2016) assert that the theory sees people as human beings capable of adopting and interpreting alternate methods to form impressions of others in the absence of cues present in face to face interactions. Instead of passively allowing the internet to influence and shape people's communication behaviours, people use the internet and the cues it provides to interpret and form impressions of others. That is, the usage of the internet by the people is for further emphasis of knowledge adopted from a particular online social community, to construc
other ideas or perception.

However, in the context of TikTok health tips among students, social information processing theory becomes important in viewing how much TikTok health tips practitioners have used the application/platform to engage the publics on various issues surrounding their health. The bond of communication derived on the platform has given health tips practitioners using the social platform upper hands in the society because they are easily reached and are very fast to respond to their call. Unlike the need for going to hospital on daily basis for checkup and other purposes, TikTok health tips has generated large amount of followers who in one way or the other has interacted with doctors directly on the platform and have created a bond of mutual communication to always follow health tips that are disseminated through the platform for their health benefit.

Social Judgement Theory

The theory was developed by Muzafer Sherif, Carolyn Sherif & Carl Hovland in 1961. Social judgement theory seeks to explain how an audience processes messages. The new information is compared to existing beliefs and a decision to accept or reject the information is made; it states that you have a statement or message and you accept it or reject it based on your cognitive map (Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013; Asemah & Nwammuo, 2017; Asemah & Osife-Kurex, 2018). That is, the scholar expressed how the theory showcases information as a decisive piece before having a deliberation on whether to believe or ignore.

The theory says that audience-members interpret and judge a message and take a position (Amah, Oladele & Asemah, 2022). The theory focuses on the inner processes of an individual's deliberation and judgement with relation to a communicated piece of information. Thus, the way we form opinions and thoughts on certain issues depends on our anchor point which is the altitude on which we process whatever messages we received and our ego which is always at play whenever we are to take a decision on any issue (Abah, Okoduwa & Asemah, 2021; Edesiri & Asemah, 2021; Umoro & Asemah, 2021). The central idea behind this theory in relation to this study is that receivers of a given information from a particular social medium like TikTok health tips buys an idea or take a stand only after it has been processed and interpreted within themselves. That is, information does not automatically have a direct meaning to an individual; hence it passes through a judgmental process of choice of decision and agreement. TikTok messages on health tips are further deliberated with feedbacks and comment to further process an information before passing their own judgment of belief or ignorance. The beautiful thing about social media is that it gives room for further processing of information in the place of enquiry and further consultations.

Methodology

The researchers employed survey research design to get an overview of the opinion of respondents. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that survey is an empirical study that uses questionnaire to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. The population of this study comprises the undergraduates of Glorious Vision University, University of Benin (UNIBEN) and Edo State University Uzaire. The estimated population of Glorious Vision University students is (283) based on the Registry unit of the institution population estimate for 2022/2023 session. University of Benin (UNIBEN) students' population is estimated at (75,650) students based on the Registry unit of the institution population estimate for 2022/2023 session and also Edo State University student's population is estimated at (3780) students based on the Registry unit of the institution population estimate for 2022/2023 session. The overall population of the select institution is 79,713. To arrive at a sample size, the researcher made use of the Krejcie and Morgan online calculator to determine the sample size of the study.

Formula for determining sample size developed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), cited in Asemah *et al* (2022).

$S = X^2 NP (1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)$

S = required sample size

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841)

N = the population size

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

The population of study is 79,713 which fall below 1,000,000. The sample size is, therefore, 384.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used in this study. According to Asemah *et al* (2022), multi-stage sampling requires the researcher to choose his samples in stages until he gets the required sample. It is the sampling method whereby the researcher uses a form of cluster sampling in which individual households or persons are selected. There are eight (8) universities owned by Federal, State and private in Edo state. Thus, due to the differences and ownership of Universities in Edo State. In the first stage, the researchers adopted the stratified sampling technique to select three (3) universities in Edo State which are Glorious Vision University GVU (A Private University), University of Benin UNIBEN (A Federal University) and Edo State University, Uzaire (A State-Owned University).

According to Asemah *et al* (2022), stratified random sampling method involves dividing your population into homogenous sub-groups and further taking a simple random sampling in each sub-group. Since the Universities in Edo State consist of both Federal, private and state owned, the researcher unanimously select the three (3) Universities above based on their ownership and region in the state. In the second stage, the researchers noted that GVU have four (4) Colleges namely: Colleges of Law, Humanity, Basic and Applied Sciences, Management and Social Sciences. Edo State University have six (6) Faculties; namely: Faculty of Engineering, Social and Management Sciences, Sciences, Law, Agriculture, Art and Education and one (1) College of Medicine. UNIBEN has sixteen (16) Faculties namely: Faculty of Arts, Agriculture, Basic Medical Sciences, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Environmental Services, Law, Life Science, Management Science, Pharmacy, Physical Science, Social Science, School of Medical Sciences, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

Thus, the researchers selected specific Colleges/ Faculties using purposive sampling. That is, choosing randomly from the select institutions with consideration of Colleges/Faculties with high population of undergraduates. The colleges are Colleges/Faculties of Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Colleges/Faculties of Science, Colleges/Faculties of Law. In the third stage, the researcher randomly selected different Department from the Colleges based on their student population in the select University, which are Departments of Mass Communication, Law, Accounting, Economics, Computer Science, Microbiology, Biochemistry and Business Administration. In the fourth stage, the researcher adopted the stratified sampling techniques to select 100 to 400 Levels undergraduate students from the select Departments, which have a projection of 18,789 students (100 to 400 Level). In the fifth stage, the researchers made use of the random sampling to select one hundred and forty (140) undergraduates from the select Departments in UNIBEN because of their high population among the select Universities and one hundred and twenty-two (122) undergraduates will be randomly selected from the select Departments in GVU and (122) for to make-up (384) which is the sample size of the study. Therefore, the researchers gave 140 copies of questionnaire to the select Departments in UNIBEN and 122 copies to GVU, likewise 122 to Edo State University.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected in the course of this study were presented descriptively, using frequency tables and percentages. A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents out of which three hundred and sixty-six (366) were collected back; thereby, amounting to the shortage of (34) copies of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Level of Exposure to TikTok Health Tips through Mobile Phones

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	213	58.2
High	133	36.3
Moderate	12	3.28
Can't say	1	3
Low	5	1.37
Very low	2	55
Total	**366**	**100**

This implies that the respondents are familiar with TikTok health tips content in the application. Also, the application transmission and dissemination of meaningful ideas and health messages could actually attract respondent's usage.

Table 2: Responses on Understanding the Context of Information disseminated on TikTok Health tips

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	223	60.92
Agree	123	33.6
Undecided	12	3.28
Disagree	7	1.9
Strongly disagree	1	3
Total	**366**	**100**

The data in the above table show that respondents' understanding of the context of the information is as a result of the engagement and interaction derived from content they are exposed to.

Table 3: Perception on the Effectiveness of TikTok Health Tips

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	44	12.02
Effecive	302	82.5
Can't tell	12	3.28
Less effective	7	1.9
Not effective	1	3
Total	**366**	**100**

The table above shows that majority of the respondent's perception on the effectiveness of TikTok health tips is effective with 82.5%. This further establishes that respondents' constant exposure and interaction from the platform and their experiences showcases how effective TikTok health tips have been to the respondents.

Table 4: Responses on TikTok Health tips having Positive Influence on their Health Behaviour

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	82	22.4
Agree	258	70.5
Undecided	18	4.9
Disagree	7	1.9
Strongly disagree	1	3
Total	**366**	**100**

The table reveals that TikTok health tips messages have a way of connecting directly to trending health issues in the society; thereby making majority of the respondents with 70.5% positively influenced on any health messages disseminated on the platform.

Table 5: Level of Adherence to TikTok Health Tips

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	42	11.5
High	298	81/4
Can't say	14	3.8
Low	9	2.5
Very low	3	8
Total	**366**	**100**

The data in table 5 show respondents' level of adherence to TikTok health tips. Findings revealed that majority of the sample respondents with 81.4% accepts to adhere to TikTok health tips.

Table 6: Responses on the Extent to which TikTok Health Tips have positively influenced the Health Belief of the Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very high extent	49	13.4
High extent	291	79.5
Moderate	11	3.0
Low extent	7	1.9
Very low extent	8	2.2
Total	**366**	**100**

The table shows that majority of the respondents are positively influenced to a high extent. This implies that TikTok health tips to a valid percentage have been able to arouse a desired positive influence on the majority of the respondents.

Discussion of Findings

The data revealed that majority of the sampled respondents with 58.2% were exposed to TikTok health tips via their mobile phones. Also, the result showed that majority of the sampled respondents understand the context behind TikTok health tips and how it engaged them health wise. The finding is in line with Asemah & Edegoh (2013) who suggest that the basic premise of technological determinism theory is that the media are extensions of human body. That is, the kind of technology we use now expose us to all manner of contents via the internet on daily basis. TikTok amidst its other social media application is one of the fastest mobile application used mostly by the students on a daily basis to acquire knowledge, satisfy their interest and to be entertained. The theory confirms that social media is another communal society attracted to humans because of its technological development in vast communication among one another. Furthermore, the quantitative data retrieved and analysed revealed that respondents' perception on the effectiveness of TikTok health tips was effective with 82.5%. Also, Majority of the respondents' exposure

and interaction from the platform and their experiences showcases how effective TikTok health tips is to them.

This finding, therefore, validates and supports the social information processing theory. Social information processing theory is an interpersonal communication theory which suggests that online interpersonal relationship development might require more time to develop than face-to-face relationships, but when developed, it has the same influence as face-to-face communication. This explains why Asemah *et al* (2016) assert that the theory sees people as human beings capable of adopting and interpreting alternate methods to form impressions of others in the absence of cues present in face to face interactions. Instead of passively allowing the internet to influence and shape people's communication behaviours, people use the internet and the cues it provides to interpret and form impressions of others.

Furthermore, data reviewed showed that majority of the sample respondents accepts that TikTok health tips have positively influence their health belief. This is in line with Yoon (2000), cited in Asemah *et al* (2013) who observed in their study that the type of social media or network subscribed to by a teenager exerts influence on him or her to visit the internet. This infers that TikTok health tips to a valid percentage have been able to arouse a desired influence on the majority of the respondents. This result thus support the social judgement theory which explains that receivers of a giving information from a particular social medium buys an idea or take a stand only after it has been processed and interpreted within themselves. That is, health information exposed to on TikTok does not automatically have a direct meaning to an individual, hence it passes through a judgmental process of choice of decision and agreement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on a careful evaluation of results gotten and the empirical literature carried out in this study, the researchers concluded that the influence of TikTok health tips on the knowledge and behaviour of undergraduate students of select institutions in Edo State is relatively high and this have a positive effect on their health. Furthermore, the study affirms that the select undergraduates of Edo State exposure to TikTok health tips have shaped their reasoning towards their personal health belief which in turn have convinced them to adhere to health information on TikTok and to continually take adequate cautions on their health. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Students should at all time pay attention to their health status in other to balance their life span in school and after school.
2. Health practitioners, government could use the social media effectively to communicate and educate on any break-out of health crisis in the society. Thus, the creation of various health accounts on social media can help limit the spread of any out-break faster.
3. The health professionals can also help solve a lot of health crisis through social media handles where a firsthand communication can be easily solved without having to cue up in the hospital for long hours. That is, a rescue or emergency handles could be open by these health professionals to solve series of health cases which ordinarily some individuals are afraid to say physically.

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CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

INFLUENCE OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST HARD DRUGS ON THE UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Oseriemen Kristine Unu-Orukpe; Faith Ozikor Amah & Tsegyu Santas

Introduction

The media play a vital role in the society. The media serve as mirror of the society, as they reflect the society. These days, massive effect of media is seen. Media, as fourth estate of the realm and an important agent of society serve the public by providing them basic knowledge and information on all aspects of a single issue or on various issues of national and international interests (Sadaf, 2011). The primary purpose of a campaign is to create awareness, influence behavior, promote a message, or drive action among a target audience (Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021; Ovie & Nwaoboli, 2022). Part of the role of the media is to bring to fore any issue affecting the wider society or segment of the society. Hard drug usage among young people has become an issue of global concern. The importance of the media in the campaign against hard drug usage in Nigeria and its implications among Nigerian youth cannot be overestimated.

A drug can be defined as a substance that may perhaps, bring about an adjustment in the organic or biological function through its chemical measures. According to Fawa (2003), drug is defined as any substance which is used for treatment or prevention of a disease in man and animals. Drugs according to Alewu & Nosiri (2014), are broadly classified into two; namely: legal or licit and illegal or illicit. According to Ofuebe Adama, Nwankwo, Isiaku, Omeje, Agu & Nweke (2020), illicit or hard drugs are those that seriously disable the individuals as functional members of the society and cause severe emotional and physical dependence; for instance, morphine, colane and Indian hemp. Within the last decade, consumption of hard drugs has risen drastically in Nigeria. Students between the ages 16 and 24 years constitute the high risk-groups, with females getting more involved (Kelly, 2008). According to Kamlesh & Soma (2012), the causes of hard drugs usage are classified into three categories and they include: social factors, psychological factors (Vivek & Tharu, 2011) and biological factors (Natasha, 2019).

However, there is no doubt that the media have been educating, informing and creating awareness against hard drugs. This is because they have the power to calm the people as well as encourage them for positive action through their contents (Shalvee & Sambhav, 2020). With increasing reach and influence of media in today's time, they have become a very important part of society in crisis situation. The media's major role in the fight against hard drug usage has been to access the situation by bringing information to the general public in order to achieve attitudinal change. So far, the media have been complicit in making people aware of the hard drugs crises; although, with less success in eliciting change behaviour, especially amongst the young population. This study, therefore, sought to evaluate how media campaign against hard drugs usage influences undergraduates in University of Benin (Ekenhuan Campus) in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The use of hard drugs by undergraduates in Nigerian tertiary institutions has become an embarrassing occurrence to parents, schools, government authorities and the society at large. Recent studies have shown that significant proportion of tertiary/higher institutions' students consumes and/or use illicit or hard drugs (Akanbi Godwin, Anyio, Muhammad & Ajiboye, 2015; Ofuebe, 2020; Iheanacho, Jumbo & Etumnu, 2021; Okoye, Agbim, Ohaji, Etumnu, Okodogbe & Odionyenma, 2022; *The Punch*, 2022). This implies that despite the measures and successive media campaigns that have been rolled out and put in place to checkmate the scourge of hard drug usage amongst students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, this menace is still rampant, especially among undergraduates in university campuses. To this end, the researchers sought to investigate the influence of media campaign against hard drugs on the undergraduates of University of Benin (Ekehuan Campus) Benin City.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the extent of exposure of Uniben undergraduates to hard drugs media campaigns.
2. Determine the channels through which the students are exposed to hard drugs media campaign.
3. Ascertain the degree of the influence of the media campaign on their attitude toward hard drugs.

Conceptual and Literature Review

A campaign is a planned set of activities carried out over a period of time in order to achieve a social or political change (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2020). According to Baumana, Smitha, Maibach & Reger-Nash (2006), a media campaign uses several different types of media to influence or inspire people to adopt a healthy behaviour or belief. Leavy, Rosenberg, Bull & Bauman (2014) note that mass media campaigns are part of a comprehensive and population-based approach to communicate physical activity to engender behaviour change. Effective media campaigns use several of these types of media to increase exposure to the message. These media options can include advertisements, articles in newspapers, magazines or websites, banners, billboards, flyers, posters, radio and television public service announcements (PSAs), social media postings (Baumana *et al* 2006).

Media campaigns can be of short duration or may extend over long periods (Aigbefoh, Obi & Asemah, 2022). However, according to Leavy *et al* (2014), the greatest potential of media campaigns lies in their ability to disseminate well-defined behaviourally-focused messages to large audiences repeatedly, over time, in an incidental manner and at a low cost per head. Campaign messages can fall short and even backfire; exposure of audiences to the message might not meet expectations, hindered by inadequate funding, the increasingly fractured and cluttered media environment, use of inappropriate or poorly researched format.

A drug can be defined as a substance that may perhaps, bring about an adjustment in the organic or biological function through its chemical measures. According to Fawa (2003), drug is defined as any substance which is used for treatment or prevention of a disease in man and animals. Drug according to Fareo (2012), alters the body functions either positively or otherwise, depending on the body composition of the user, the type of drug used, the amount used and whether used singly or with other drugs at the same time. Similarly, drugs refer to substances that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye *et al* 2022). It is also considered a substance that modifies perceptions, cognitions, moods, behaviours and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). They could thus, be considered chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about physiological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007).

It is well recognised that the media play an enormously influential role in public responses to health issues. The mass media (print, television, radio and internet), have an unparalleled reach as a communication mechanism (Gunther, 1998, cited in Adedeji, 2020). They have substantial power in setting agendas; that is, what we should be concerned about and take action on and framing issues; that is, how we should think about them (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2022). Public health professionals have always been sensitive to the persuasive power of the mass media (Chapman, 2007; Martinson & Hindman, 2005). In fact, public health has often had the challenging task of both using the media to influence health practices. The media can be used as the primary change agent or as a means to support other education and clinical services. Flora, Maibach & Maccoby (1989), cited in Adedeji (2020) distinguished four roles of media; namely: media as educator, media as supporter, media as programme promoter and media as supplement.

The term "mass media" refers to all technological or mechanical equipment used by a source with the goal of concurrently reaching a diverse and complex audience with messages. According to Asemah (2011a); Asemah (2022b) and Asemah (2022), mass media are multiple routes through which mass communication takes place. Given the severity of hard drug addiction, the media must assume the moral obligation of informing the public about hard drugs and drug abuse; by focusing more on the disease as well as other problems. The media have the potential to set the tone and be the driving force behind a comprehensive drug awareness and education campaign in the society (De Jong & Winsten, 2017).

They have the potential to highlight both internal and external factors leading to the establishment of this scourge of hard drugs usage; as well as encouraging community participation in preventing the problem from getting worse (Udofia, 2014). The media can assist in educating the public about the dangers of drug addiction (Odorume, 2015). The media's role in preventing drug misuse has rarely been recognised (De Jong & Winsten, 2017). The media can help to establish and maintain the drug problem on the national agenda by sending out basic and implicit messages targeted at gaining population stability (EMCCDA, 2018). The media have the capacity to create awareness, educate and inform people about the possible danger that the society may likely face as a result of some behaviour of people (Uju & Etumnu, 2021).

Hard drugs usage and its control have always been difficult problems to solve. In reality, no single method or plan for combating this threat has been effective in the past. In general, one school of thought advocates controlling the supply side (illicit supply and trafficking), whereas the other advocates limiting the demand side. Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation are the best options (Okoye *et al* 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The social judgment theory (SJT) is a self-persuasion theory that was propounded by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif & Carl Hovland (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The evaluation and interpretation of an idea in light of the prevalent emotions is one definition of this concept. According to this theory, a person determines where a new idea should be placed on the mental attitude scale by weighing it against his or her existing point of view and comparing it to any new concepts that come into their awareness (Kitchen, Kerr, Schultz, McColl & Pals, 2014, cited in Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022).

The purpose of social judgement theory is to apply the ideas and findings of psychophysical judgement to the process of social judgement. Therefore, it is a theory that focuses on the internal processes of a person's personal judgement in relation to the idea included within a sent message, with the individual's selected position serving as the judgmental anchor in this context (McQuail, 2010, cited in Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022). Asemah & Nwammuo (2017) note that people interpret messages and on the basis of their interpretation, they take decision. This theory is relevant to this study because it demonstrates how media campaign messages about hard drug abuse may bring about different interpretations among the audience members and this will in turn, determine the attitude they will display towards the campaign.

Ofuebe *et al* (2020) investigated the effect of drug abuse and health risks among undergraduates of federal universities in Nigeria. The rationale for the study was to ascertain the effect of drug abuse and health risks among undergraduates. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design, with structured questionnaire as data collection instrument. Key finding of the study showed that health risks of drug abuse can lead to drug addiction, confusion, depression and suicidal thoughts. Summarily, the researchers concluded that there should be an intense media campaign aimed at enlightening the undergraduates on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse. Therefore, the researchers recommended that government should organise programmes aimed at enlightening the students on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse. This study is related to the present study in terms of methodology; however, it only focused on the effect of drug abuse among undergraduates and not the influence of media campaign in combating drug abuse. The present study fills this gap.

In the same vein, Iheanacho *et al* (2021) investigated the influence of COVID-19 broadcast media campaigns on the health consciousness of Owerri residents. The rationale for the study was to examine public perception of broadcast media campaigns of COVID-19 on the health consciousness of Owerri residents. The researchers employed the survey research method and questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that majority (85%) of Owerri urban residents were to a large extent, exposed to

broadcast media campaigns on COVID-19 as it relates to their health. The researchers concluded that broadcast media campaigns played significant role in making people in Owerri urban to be conscious of their health in COVID-19. It was recommended that broadcast media could be a veritable platform for educating the masses on COVID-19 and other health issues, among others. Again, this study is related to the present study in terms of methodology and subject-matter: it utilised survey research method and focused on broadcast media campaign; however, its area of study was limited to Owerri and the broadcast media campaign focus was on COVID -19 and not among undergraduates or drug abuse. The present study addresses this gap.

Similarly, Okoye *et al* (2022) investigated the effectiveness of mass media in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Imo State. The rationale for the study was to examine mass media effectiveness in curbing the menace of drug abuse among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Imo State. Anchored on the theory of reasoned action, the researchers adopted the survey research method. One of the key findings of the study revealed that the level of awareness among respondents of mass media campaigns against drug abuse was moderate. Therefore, the researchers concluded that mass media campaigns are ineffective in the fight against drug abuse among undergraduates of higher institutions in Imo State. Thus, it recommended that the media should intensify their publicity and commitment to drug abuse in order to raise public awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in society. This study is related to the present study in terms of methodology and subject matter; however, its scope was limited to undergraduates in Imo State.

Methodology

The researchers employed the survey research design. Survey, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornil (1997), cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) allows the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a largely economical way based most often, on questionnaire. Therefore, survey is relevant to this study because it gives rooms for systematic collection of data about variables related to the subject matter of this study from a sample or proportion of the population (undergraduates of Uniben) in order to understand how they react to, behave or feel in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. The population of this study consists of all undergraduates of University of Benin. The population of University of Benin is documented to be 75,133 for 2021/2022 academic year (cited in Chukwuebuni, Tam & Olaseinde, 2022). As such, 384 was the sample size as determined, using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size calculation. Where n=N/(1 + $N(e)$2).The sample size is n=384.

Asemah *et al* (2022) note that when a population is so complex, a researcher will need more than one sampling technique to select his sample and he will resort to sampling in stages. The first stage of the process involved the delineation of Uniben into campuses and purposive sampling technique was used to select one of the campuses (Ekenhuan Campus). In stage two, purposive sampling technique was used to select two faculties from the select campus; hence, Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Environmental Sciences because they constitute the two populous faculties domiciled in Ekehuan campus. Simple random sampling technique was used in stage three to select two departments each from the two

faculties and Mass Communication, Theatre Arts, Fine Arts and Sculpture Departments were selected. In the fourth stage, 384 copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents from the four departments using the simple random sampling technique. Data gathered from field survey were evaluated using descriptive statistics while results were presented in simple percentages, frequencies and tables. Thus, 384 copies of questionnaire were sampled to the respondents of which 367 copies were retrieved.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Awareness and exposure to Media Campaign against Hard Drugs

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	137	37.3
Agree	203	55.3
Undecided	27	7.4
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	**367**	**100**

The data in the above table show that most Uniben undergraduates are very exposed to the media campaign against hard drug usage. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 2: Extent of awareness and exposure to Media Campaign against Hard Drugs

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Large extent	56	15.3
High	68	18.5
Can't tell	39	10.6
Low	106	28.9
Very low	98	26.7
Total	**367**	**100**

The above data indicate that the extent of awareness and exposure to media campaign against hard drug is low among most Uniben undergraduates.

Table 3: Channels through which Respondents are exposed to hard Drugs Media Campaign

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Radio	31	8.4
Television	45	12.3
Newspapers	12	3.3
Magazines	6	1.6
Internet blogs/forums	96	26.2
Social Media	167	45.5
Others	10	2.7
Total	**367**	**100**

It can be deduced from the data in the above table that the channel through which most Uniben undergraduates got to know about media campaigns against hard drugs usage was social media.

Table 4: Influence of the Media Campaign on Respondents' Attitudes towards Hard Drugs

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Total abstinence from hard drugs	98	26.7
Reduction in my hard drugs usage	21	5.7
Better informed on the dangers of hard drugs	157	42.8
Become an advocate against hard drugs	72	19.6
Others	19	5.2
No influence	-	-
Total	**367**	**100**

From the data in the above table, it can be inferred that the hard drugs media campaign positively influenced Uniben undergraduates in several ways towards the hard drugs usage.

Table 5: Degree of Influence of Media Campaign against Hard Drugs on Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Very high	65	17.7
High	69	18.8
Undecided	74	20.2
Low	108	29.4
Very low	51	13.9
Total	**367**	**100**

The data in the table show that the hard drugs media campaign does not have a great deal of influence on Uniben undergraduates. This is reflected in the number of respondents that indicated very low and low, which amount to 43.3% of the sampled population.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that majority (92.6%) of the respondents are very much aware and exposed to media campaign on hard drugs usage. This percent is drawn from those that jointly indicated "strongly agree and agree." This suggests two things: the wide spread of the media campaign and the active exposure of Uniben undergraduates to different media platforms. Attempt to measure the extent of the awareness and exposure to the campaign among the undergraduate students, revealed that it was modest as alluded to by 55.6% of the respondents. Considering the high penetration of the campaign, it is safe to say that the exercise was not very effective. The awareness and exposure of the respondents to the media campaign is in line with the thrust of the agenda setting theory which says that the media may not tell us what to think, but they may tell us what to think about (Asemah, *et al* 2022). Also, this relates to the finding of Iheanacho *et al* (2021) that majority of Owerri urban residents are, to a large extent, exposed to media campaigns on COVID-19 as it relates to their health and the finding of Okoye *et al* (2022) which showed that the level of awareness among tertiary institutions students towards mass media campaigns against drug abuse is moderate.

The findings also revealed that most Uniben undergraduates were exposed to media campaign on hard drugs usage more on social media and the internet blogs/forums than other media platforms. The reason might be attributed to one factor- the two platforms are mostly used by students and young people. Thus, it becomes easy for them to get the exposure. This finding is in contrast with the finding of Iheanacho *et al* (2021) that the

broadcast media (radio and television) are the best media to initiate media campaigns on health issues. This study has found otherwise that the social media are the new game-changer when it comes to youth.

The findings also showed that the media campaign on hard drugs usage positively influenced Uniben undergraduates in several ways. As shown in their responses, 42.8% opines that they are better informed on the dangers of hard drugs. The positive result of this influence points to the fact that the messages canvassed in the media campaign have had huge influence on the thinking pattern of Uniben undergraduates in Ekenhuan Campus in their dispositions to hard drug usage and consumption. This result confirms the findings of Ayeni *et al* (2023) that media campaign messages can potentially alter the attitude of the audience.

The findings further showed that the media campaign on hard drugs usage does not have a great deal of influence on Uniben undergraduates in Ekenhuan Campus. This is reflected in the number of respondents that answered in that direction (43.3%); although, the ideas that were canvassed on the media campaign had huge influence on their thinking pattern and behaviour. This finding aligns with Fadhkurrohman & Purnomo (2019) who observed that the media are very influential in creating desired attitude. The findings indicated that the media campaign through the conventional and new media channels had significant effect on the students' attitude towards hard drugs usage, albeit, to a low degree.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the finding, it is quite obvious that the media campaigns played significant role in making Uniben undergraduates to be conscious of the dangers of hard drug usage and this could be linked to their awareness and exposure to the media campaign against hard drugs usage. Most of the respondents also attested that the attitude towards hard drugs such as total abstinence, reduction in hard drugs intake, becoming an advocate, as a measure to curb hard drugs consumption was greatly influenced by the exposure to media campaign against hard drugs; although the degree of such influence is low compared to the extent of awareness and exposure. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. There should be an intense media campaign aimed at enlightening undergraduates and indeed Nigerians at large on the dangers and consequences of hard drugs usage.
2. Authorities should leverage social media and the internet blogs/forums in educating the masses on the dangers of hard drugs and other health issues.
3. Continuous efforts should be made to integrate campaigns against hard drugs usage in education curricula of tertiary institutions.

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CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION AND THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF CAESAREAN SECTION AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

Queen Ohiolei Odoemelam; Jonathan Aliede & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Caesarean section is a surgical procedure which involves incisions made through a mother's abdomen and uterus to deliver one or more babies or to remove a dead foetus. While the experience of some women as it concerns pregnancy and delivery is very pleasant, others have hazardous experiences (Eni-Olorunda, Otito, Akinbode & Akinbode, 2015). Alkema, Chou, Hoga, Zhang, Moller, Gemmill (2015) are of the opinion that most of the deaths of pregnant women occur in low resource settings and are largely preventable while Hamilton, Martin & Ventura (2011) believe that increased access of women to c-section may decrease maternal mortality rate by as much as 92% . However, some women even see delivery by c-section as reproductive failure on their part (Jeremiah, Enyidah & Fiebai, 2011).

This is where persuasive communication comes in as a tool for idea modeling and behaviour change. The vehicle for persuasive communication is the media. They raise public consciousness to salient issues (Ogbodu, Ogunyemi & Asemah, 2023). The media set agenda for the public by way of raising awareness about issues as opposed to their knowledge about those issues (Asemah, 2011a). The media messages, especially persuasive messages are usually designed and presented primarily to convince the audience-members to support arguments or act in a certain way (Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013). Modern persuasive communication addresses the audience's needs, values and desires (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). Persuasive communication models are commonly used in health education and promotion to change negative health behaviours into positive responses (Perloff, 2003).

Globally, there have been series of communication interventions aimed at changing the negative attitude toward women who have undergone caesarean sections and rejection of the procedure for women in need. An example is the "My Birth Matters" Campaign in the United States of America. In Nigeria, various Non-governmental Organisations have engaged this discourse as reflected in the movie produced in 2016 and directed by Theodore Anyanji, titled "Stigma of womanhood." Therefore, this study investigates the level of exposure, perception and attitude towards the demystification of caesarean section among pregnant women.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, 58,000 women die during childbirth every year (Bryce & Udobang, 2019) giving the country the world's fourth-highest maternal mortality rate. Part of the problem is the country's low caesarean rate which stands at 2% against a global rate of 21 percent (Adewuyi, Auta, Kharmal & Tapshak, 2019). If we must be able to effectively prevent maternal mortality, a country's caesarean rate must not fall below 5%. This is because c-

sections are essential for preventing obstructed labour in cases where a woman's pelvis is too small; the baby is in a breech position or is too large to exit the birth canal. Without intervention, a constricted baby may fatally rupture the uterus or cause tears that can lead to catastrophic haemorrhage. However, this life-saving discovery has been intercepted with rejection and mysterious connotations at some level of the Nigerian society. Major concerns are related to the safety of the surgery, combined with religious and social factors which have led to its stigmatisation in Nigeria. Consequently, many women resist the surgery or hide it when they do go through with it. It is against this backdrop that the researchers investigated the influence of persuasive communication in the demystification of caesarean section among pregnant women in Benin, Edo state.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure of pregnant women in Benin to c-section demystification campaigns.
2. Find out the perception of pregnant women about c-section demystification campaigns.
3. Ascertain the pregnant women's attitude toward c-section.

Review of Related Literature

Persuasion as noted by Asemah (2011b) and Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2020) is an act or process of presenting arguments tomove, motivate or change an audience. Persuasion can beimplicit or explicit and can have both positive and negative effects. Persuasive communication as a concept is germane to the study of communication. It is important to note that the media are constantly in the business of persuading the audience and influencing behaviours. Such behaviours are modified by messages which appeal to the reasons and emotions of the target audience. Persuasion refers to such communicative activities that are mediated. One area where persuasion thrives is in advertising (Asemah & Edegoh, 2014). Wilson (2002) is of the opinion that persuasive communication can be targeted at the following: cognition, attitude and behaviour. The fourteen compliance-gaining strategies of persuasive communication include: ingratiation, promise, debt, esteem, allurement, aversive stimulation, threat, guilt, warning, altruism, direct request, explanation, hinting and deceit (Wilson, 2002).

Persuasive communication in media campaigns are often combined with other intervention activities like enforcement, community engagement and educational activities to reduce the risks of health-related complications and hazards (Odoemelam, 2020; Ogunjobi, Ekhareafo & Asemah, 2023).

The overall health of expectant mothers during pregnancy, childbirth and six weeks after childbirth is referred to as maternal health (Carroli, 2001; Ogunba & Abiodun, 2017). Maternal health has in recent years attracted the attention of scientific inquiries (eg. Asemah, 2012; Odoemelam & Ebeze, 2015; Sandall, Mola, Tribe & Nisser, 2018; Nompumelelo, Matladi, Sumaiya, Dais, Nyawo & Pheiffer, 2022). Pregnant women are usually given special care which is achieved via a series of antenatal visits to maternal healthcare facilities managed by trained healthcare professionals (Ogunba & Abiodun, 2017). However, research has shown that more than 500,000 women globally between the ages of 15 and 49 die of pregnancy and childbirth-related cases each year (Hill, 2001).

Studies revealed that most expectant mothers would choose to continue with their negative attitudes/behaviour to maternal health due to poverty, availability and accessibility of maternal healthcare services (Fagbamigbe & Idemudia, 2015; Parmar & Keyson, 2008).

Caesarean section (CS) is a life-saving intervention for newborns and women when complications occur, such as fetal distress, abnormal fetal presentation, hypertensive disease and antepartum haemorrhage (Fagbamigbe & Idemudia, 2017). Additionally, large differences in caesarean section use have been observed between births in the poorest and the richest wealth quintiles within many low income and middle-income countries (Dairo & Owoyokun, 2010; Fogg, 2003). A literature search revealed a positive correlation between caesarean section rate and level of education of women. However, there is an aversion for caesarean section among women (Betran, Torioni & Zhang; Keag, Norman & Stock, 2018). Overall, women prefer vaginal delivery to caesarean section (Betran, Ye & Moller, 2016; Naa-Gadau, Nuettey, Seneadza, akaateba, Azusong, Yirifere, Kankpeyang & Tette, 2019).

Persuasive communication is a form of influence that involves the intention to produce a change in behaviour. Persuasion is the deliberate attempt to induce people to take a desired action (Kenechukwu, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). It has been opined that there are five (5) stages an individual passes through before accepting or adopting a new behaviour and they include: knowledge, approval, intention, practice and advocacy (Asemah, Ekhareafo & Santas, 2022). Mbanusi, Ejiofor, Makhuochi & Orji (2020) are of the opinion that people may be steered by what information is disclosed or withheld and by how information is framed, while Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) posit that human behaviours are dependent on reasoned actions that limit the influence of attitude.

Persuasive messages use various techniques and medium to influence attitudes and behaviours (Ekhareafo, 2023). The mass media can be viewed from two different angles. First, as technological devices employed to disseminate information to a large and heterogeneous audience. These devices are radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, films, cinema and GSM. Second, as a social institution; they refer to those highly organised or defined authority relationships and are responsible for the gathering, processing, packaging and dissemination of information for public consumption (Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Edegoh & Asemah, 2014). Asemah, Edegoh & Anum (2013) and Asemah (2015), citing Moemeka note that information is central to all forms of human activity no matter the field and that there is the need for exchange of information to ensure completion of tasks.

Mass media campaigns are interventions that employ series of coordinated communication actions to achieve certain outcomes (Anwumabelem & Asemah, 2023). However, the substance of the mass media messages must be realistic and convincing to achieve specific goals (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022; Asemah & Edegoh, 2014). In Nigeria, there have been series of campaigns fighting against the stigmatisation of Caesarean section. A particular case is the campaign by a Non- governmental organisation called "Mamallete" situated in Lagos State. The purpose of the campaigns is often aimed at changing negative perceptions and attitude toward caesarean section.

Persuasive messages aimed to prevent Caesarean section stigmatisation will need to incorporate both immediate and long-term strategies to end maternal morbidity and mortality. Also, initiate media campaigns to end harmful traditional birth attendants. Media campaigns are veritable tools in the behaviour change literature (Nelson, Ekhorugue &

Asemah, 2021; Asemah, Kente, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Amah 2021). Behavioural communication intervention is usually more appropriate in influencing exposure to health issues (Mefalopulos, 2008; FAO, 2004; Moemeka, 2012; Odoemelam, 2012; Odoemelam, *et al* 2013; Odoemelam & Ekwueme, 2013; Pate, 2012). Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah (2021) and Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021, 2023) opine that with more people having access to the media, attempt to influence and modify views and attitudes becomes more intense.

Sandall, Mola, Tribe & Visser (2018) examined the short-term and long-term effects of caesarean section on the health of women and children. The researchers found that CS is not a standalone event and it is not intrinsically an adverse outcome. They revealed that reducing the frequency of CS use to less than a safe threshold value or replacing it with badly performed instrumental birth is more likely to cause harm than good. Similarly, Adewuyi, Auta, Kharmal, Tapshak & Zhao (2019) examined cesarean delivery in Nigeria, its prevalence and associated factors. The researchers revealed that there was a considerably low prevalence of caesarean delivery in Nigeria and that rural residence, religion, lack of antenatal visit, lack of health insurance coverage, lack of husband/partner's education and birth order were significantly associated with lower prevalence and decreased odds of caesarean delivery.

Also, Sunday-Adeoye & Kalu (2011) in a study titled: Pregnant Nigerian women's view of cesarean section discovered that a significant proportion of antenatal clients (pregnant women) were averse to c-section and that the negative cultural perception may have further reinforced this aversion. They further revealed that the maternal mortality ratio in Nigeria may partly be attributable to type one delay in accessing formal maternity services. The scientific inquiries into this phenomenon have paid more attention to the knowledgeability and acceptability of c-section. However, only few studies have looked at the demystification campaigns of c-section and how such campaigns are perceived which invariably affect behaviour outcomes of the target-audience toward c-section. It is based on observations that this study sought to examine the message effectiveness of c-section demystification campaigns and its impact on the perception and attitude of pregnant women in Benin, Edo State.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on health belief model. It is one of the first theories of health behaviour. It was developed in the 1950s by a group of US Public Health Service social psychologists who wanted to explain why so few people were participating in programmes to prevent and detect disease. HBM is a good model for addressing problems that evoke health concerns. Croyle (2005) highlights six major concepts in HBM:

a. Perceived Susceptibility: refers to a person's perception that a health problem is personally relevant or that a diagnosis of illness is accurate.

b. Perceived severity: When individuals perceive the severity of the health situation to be high enough to have serious organic or social complications that affects them directly or indirectly, they may adjust their behaviour.

c. Perceived benefits: refers to the patient's belief that a given treatment will cure the illness or help to prevent it.

d. Perceived Costs: Refers to the complexity, duration and accessibility of the treatment.

e. Motivation: This includes the desire to comply with a treatment.

f. Modifying factors: These include personality variables and socio-demographic factors.

This theory is relevant to this study as it explains why only a few of pregnant women in Nigeria will be willing to accept caesarean section as an alternative to child delivery, particularly in cases where pregnancy-related complications was observed.

Methodology

The researchers applied the qualitative research design. Benin City has a projected population of 1,293,731 out of which 655,921 are men and 637,809 are women (UN World Urbanisation Prospect, 2023). Although, only pregnant women in Benin City made up the population of the study. Data for the study came from a focus group (FG). Focus group discussion is an interview conducted with 6 to 12 people as a group simultaneously and a moderator leads the discussion about a specific topic; it enables researchers to gather qualitative data (Asemah & Okpanachi, 2014; Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2017; Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, 2023). Stewart (2018) describes it as a group discussion about a topic under the guidance of a trained group facilitator/moderator. Participants (n=30; 6 each) were recruited from the pregnant women in Benin City, Edo State. First, the researcher contacted a medical professional (a Nurse) with the request to suggest how the pregnant women may be recruited. Nominations and snowballing selection strategies were deployed to recruit participants (Krueger, 2002; Odoemelam & Odoemelam, 2023). Focus group sessions (n=5) were held within the month of June 2023 in two locations the researcher had secured permission to use. Majority of the participants agreed that the venue was accessible and comfortable for their discussions. However, three participants raised the concern that the venue was far from where they would be coming from. Nevertheless, they accepted to participate.

Each session lasted an average of 32.5 minutes, with 35 minutes as maximum and a minimum of 29 minutes. In all, a total of 165.5 minutes were spent in the FG sessions moderated by different facilitators. Selection into a specific group was randomised. Five (5) facilitators (n=5, research assistants) guided the discussions on the basis of research questions and items in the FG protocol. All the facilitators had a one-day training that lasted for one (1) hour. The training of the facilitators which was conducted online focused on three key areas in handling focus group sessions that include guiding, monitoring and recording the discussions (Krueger, 2002; Odoemelam & Odoemelam, 2023).

Specifically, in terms of guiding, the training of the facilitators addressed issues such as understanding the purpose of the study, creating a conducive and friendly environment during the discussions, ground rules for the participants, responsibilities of facilitators and the assistants and modalities for raising discussion questions/topics. In the monitoring aspect of the training, participants reviewed issues related to logistics, good listenership and handling distractions. The facilitator-trainings aimed at ensuring hitch free and seamless discussion sessions. Analyses were based on themes related to knowledgeability, perception and attitudes toward C-section.

Results and Discussion

Maternal Knowledge of Campaigns aimed to demystify C-section

Findings showed that majority of the participants were not exposed to campaigns aimed at demystifying C-section. This translated into poor knowledge of C-section among the participants. Participants *(n=5),* were exposed while *(n=25)* were not exposed to campaigns aimed at the demystification of caesarean section.

A participant in group one said: "I have never seen any message talking about C-section. The only time I heard about that CS was when one of my friend told me the doctor said she will have to do CS."

This result corroborates the study in Saudi Arabia by Yaqoub, Alsaif, Alhemdi, Eissa & Jood (2022) that found that most participants had poor knowledge score of c-section and its campaign messages. This is contrary to a study in Nigeria that found good knowledge among respondents (Aziken, Omo-Aghoja & Okonofua, 2010). The indications for caesarean section that prevent foetal compromise such as foetal distress and abnormal lie were also not well known. This is similar to findings from a study in Cape Coast, Ghana, which found that only 45% of respondents knew at least, one indication of CS (Prah, Kudom, Zasim & Abu, 2017). One primary goal for all campaigns is to reach the target audience. If this is not achieved, such a campaign can be said to be a fiasco. The low level of awareness observed in this study is an indication that campaigns aimed to demystify c-section are yet to adequately reach the target audience.

Pregnant Women's Perception of C-section demystification Campaigns

The findings revealed a negative perception of the c-section demystification campaigns. This result, therefore, reveals a gap in the message effectiveness of these campaigns. Message effectiveness is determined by its ability to influence target audience to respond or act in a certain way. A message is effective if it achieves its intended goal. In many health communication campaigns, this goal is to change mediators of behaviour such as attitudes, beliefs, norms, selfefficacy and intentions and, ultimately, behaviour itself. Message effectiveness is the extent to which message exposure leads to changes in these outcomes. In field trials and experimental work, this is often referred to as actual message effectiveness (Bigsby *et al* 2013).

Speaking on this objective, a participant in group 4 said: "I saw on social media (particularly on YouTube) a campaign on the demystification of caesarean section. Some women gave their personal experiences. This can be arranged! Sincerely I don't believe them!"

On the other hand, the majority, those who were not exposed to the campaigns were indifferent about their opinions. They all shook their heads in agreement that they had no idea as to what to say about any c-section demystification campaign.

Consequently, when asked about their perception of caesarean section, they all expressed negative perceptions about the phenomenon. Several reasons for the negative perceptions were identified in this study. Some of them are fear of pain, fear of complications, fear of stigmatisation and the avoidance of a scar reported and cost. This result is similar to findings from a community-based study in the Upper West Region and one from Burkina Faso and studies from Ghana which reported fear of death and pain as

the main dangers (Aziken, Omo-Aghoja & Okonofua, 2010; Feremi, Ibitoye, Olatubi & Ogbeye, 2014).

Pregnant Women's Attitude towards C-section

The findings showed a negative attitude towards c-section. This was particularly evident in the gesticulation and facial expressions of the participants. Bryce & Udobang (2019) in a report on BBC online platform titled "Why are women declining this surgery?" highlighted thus: "If you tell a Nigerian pregnant woman that you are going to go through caesarean section, they will tell you: "God forbid." This statement clearly captures the responses from this study's participants. That mythic ability to give birth through the normal birth canal and unattended has been upheld as a symbol of maternal virtue in Nigeria. However, majority of the participants mentioned that they will accept c-section if the Doctor says so, while others would accept caesarian delivery if their life or that of the fetus is in danger. This result is in tandem with a similar study by Aziken, Omo-Aghoja & Okonofua (2010). Nevertheless, it was discovered, contrary to the current findings, that some women, however, would not undergo caesarean section for any reason (Naa-Gandau, *et al* 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, findings showed poor knowledge of caesarean section and poor exposure level to c-section demystification campaigns. It also reveals negative perceptions and attitude toward c-section among pregnant women. Factors responsible for the attitude observed include, but not limited to: fear, societal stigmatisation and adverse socio-cultural and religious factors. Thus, the researchers recommend an urgent and critical need for programmes to increase women and community understanding and perceptions of c-section in Nigeria to change the negative tide. Factors such as message appeal and message effectiveness in c-section demystification campaigns should be reconsidered. C-section demystification should be made a matter of national concern to address the maternal mortality rate in the country. In addition, any intervention/campaign designed to address these problem must not only target pregnant women, but also focus on the community to provide broad-based community education and enlightenment.

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CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

ATTITUDE OF BENIN CITY RESIDENTS TOWARDS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON E-WASTE RECYCLING

Mercy Ogbodu & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The growth of new forms of mass media for example, websites, blogs, news aggregators, social media, as well as new forms of message delivery (smartphones, laptops, tablets) amplify the presence of media in daily life. It is clear that not only do researchers recognise the potential effects of mass media, but members of the public do as well. In fact, references to the power of the media are many in both media and public discourse. Researchers and the public alike are interested in and concerned about the mass media as a potentially influential force in social and political life.

Media are devices for transmitting messages from a source to a large destination. These devices are radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, films, cinema and GSM. Second, as a social institution; they refer to those highly organised or defined authority relationships and are responsible for the gathering, processing, packaging and dissemination of information for public consumption (Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Edegoh & Asemah, 2014). Asemah, Edegoh & Anum (2013) and Asemah (2015) note that information is central to all forms of human activity no matter the field and that there is the need for exchange of information to ensure completion of tasks.

Media campaigns have been used over the past decade in an attempt to affect various behaviours in mass populations. The great promise of mass media campaigns lies in their ability to disseminate well defined behaviour focused messages to large audiences repeatedly over time. (Wakefield, Loken & Homik, 2010). The media are a collective means of communication channels that use techniques of making a lot of direct personal communication between the communicator and the public (Asemah & Omosotomhe, 2015). They are employed in national campaign programme like HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, traffic codes and population census. The essence of using the media for campaigns is that it is believed that mass media are persuasive in nature; they can be used to convince the audience to accept a particular idea, whether from government or individuals (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2021).

Many media campaigns aim to directly affect individual recipients by invoking cognitive or emotional responses (Edegoh & Asemah, 2014; Ovie & Nwaoboli, 2022). Mass media messages can set agenda for and increase the frequency, depth, or both, of interpersonal discussion about a particular issue within an individual's social network, which, in combination with individual exposure to messages, might reinforce (or undermine) specific changes in behaviour. Since mass media messages reach large audiences, changes in behaviour that become norms within an individual's social network might influence that person's decisions without them having been directly exposed to or initially persuaded by the campaign (Livingstone, Ekhorugue & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023).

Media campaigns become necessary to create public enlightenment or awareness and education on e-waste management. These campaign messages are capable of "shaping social norms and values, influence people's decisions in manners that promote a more environmentally sustainable society" (Nwabueze, 2007, p.49, cited in Asemah, 2011). Communication plays a central role in shaping our understanding of the natural world and the role of humans therein.

Okunna (2002, p. 295) cited in Asemah (2011) believes that communication facilitates positive change to the target audience in terms of improving their living conditions. This is possible when there is "effective mobilisation aimed at creating favourable attitudes and behaviours among the people for whom a development project is being executed" (Okunna, 2002, p.300). In the same vein, McQuail (2010, p.54) cited in Santas & Asemah (2014) argues that the media could be a potent force for public enlightenment and popular education. The broadcast media, for example, are central arena for amplifying environmental issues and can influence the course of policy and attitudinal change. Thus, this study is an examination of the attitude of Benin City residents towards media campaigns on e-waste recycling.

Statement of the Problem

E-waste disposal and management has been recognised as a great challenge affecting most cities and environment in Nigeria. The protection or management of the environment which is important for healthy living still remains a huge challenge to the government at all levels. Consequently, seeking solutions to the problem is becoming more and more urgent (Balde, Forti, Gray, Kuehr & Stegmann, 2017).

It is observed that the neglect of the socio-economic, political, psychological life of Nigerians in the formulation and implementation of policy and programmes is among the numerous problems facing e-waste management. Kalantari & Asadi (2010, p. 309) also believe that the problem of e-waste is based on people's attention and attitudes towards the environment and the level of concern to the environment which could be affected by environmental awareness, attitudes, behaviours, values and actions. Agarwal (2005, p. 2) identifies social attitudes as one of the problems facing e-waste management while, Nwabueze (2007, p. 47) and Rukeh & Ogbemi (2007, p. 240) note communication as a tool for the management of e-waste. When mass media stimulate interpersonal communication about a given topic, the effects of direct exposure to the media messages are often magnified which give the best effect on behaviour of such campaigns. This is to say that the media is an aggregation of all communications between the communicators and the public. It is upon this basis that the study sought to examine whether mass media messages on e-waste recycling have had any significant influence on the attitude of Benin residents.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which Benin residents are exposed to media campaigns on recycling of e waste.

2. Ascertain the media through which the residents of Benin City obtain information on recycling e-waste.
3. Ascertain whether mass media campaigns on e-waste have any significant influence on Benin residents.
4. Ascertain the perception of Benin residents on mass media campaigns on e-waste recycling.
5. Ascertain Benin residents' attitude towards media campaigns on e -waste recycling.

Overview of E-waste and E-Recycling

E-waste is classified as hazardous waste as it contains elements that represent a threat to the environment and human health, such as heavy metals and brominated flame retardants, if inappropriate disposal methods are utilised during the disposal process (Tsai, 2020). Households, businesses, private organisations and the government agencies are the primary generators of e-waste (Wong, Mun & Rajendran, 2019). According to the Global e-Waste Monitor Report (2020), an average amount of 53.6 million metric tonnes of global e-waste was generated in the year of 2019, an average of 7.3kg per capita and only 17.4% was officially documented as properly collected and recycled.

Electronic waste has been around for a very long time. However, the need for the proper disposal of that electronic waste began in the mid-70s. Since 1976 with the passage of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RACA), it has been illegal to dump e-waste in the United States and in less developed countries (Thakkar & Kumar, 2020). Shortly after the RACA was passed, there were series of events that took place paving the way for international dumping laws. The first of these events started in the 1980s when a Liberian ship was commissioned to pick up and dispose 14,000 tons of e-waste ash from Philadelphia. This ash was supposed to go to New Jersey; however, that jurisdiction refused it. So rather than finding another way to properly dispose of the e-waste, that Liberian ship headed out to sea and proceeded to randomly dump the entire 14,000 tons of e-waste into the ocean all the way from the Caribbean to Asia.

Later, there was another incident that took place in Nigeria. About 3,500 tons of toxic waste from Italy was illegally dumped in a small town called Koko in 1988.These illegal dumps were just a few of the events that led to the Basel Convention in 1989 when the world began demanding that international dumping laws be put into place to help ensure these types of events never happen again (Thakkar & Kumar, 2020). The inadequacy of Nigeria's environmental protection, institutional framework and regulations made the Federal Government to establish Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) and other regulatory bodies to protect the environment. This Decree provides the legal framework for effective control of the disposal of toxic and hazardous waste into any environment within the confines of Nigeria.

While this law is effective in itself, as at this moment, there are no direct laws prohibiting the importation of e-waste in the guise of "second hand" goods. Neither are there laws to determine the health or standard of the "second hand" goods being imported. In retrospect, the policy on trans-boundary movement of toxic waste has been side lined once-too-many because obsolete electronic devices flock into the country under the guise of "second-hand" goods and "charity" donations. Even though e-waste falls under the

category of hazardous waste, imported electronic devices are considered a valuable good only until it is determined to be e-waste. It is quite difficult to ascertain the health of imported goods into the country while they are still off shore, only when they berth will their contents examined by the port authorities.

E-waste recycling is one of the most talked-about issues in the world today due to its potentials to reduce environmental hazards and pollution. It is the reuse and reprocessing of electrical and electronic equipment of any type that has been discarded or regarded as obsolete. There is also the fact that it can protect our lives as humans and other life forms existing reprocessing and re-use of these electronic wastes. It is a process that seeks to recover material from electronic waste.

Recycling is a serious global concern for a lot of reasons. It has a strong bearing on our immediate environment as humans and life on earth generally. It even promises significant economic returns for persons, communities, and even nations. Many people have begun to tap from the floodgate of opportunities provided by e-waste recycling. In developing nations, entrepreneurs are taking advantage of e-recycling as a steady revenue stream and advancing environmental goals. It is gaining currency around the world as larger quantities of electronics are coming into the waste stream.

Mass media campaign is an intervention that employs a series of coordinated communication actions to achieve certain outcomes or effects in large audience over a period of time (Pandey, 2010). Mass media campaign is, an organised and aggressive marketing operation designed to reinforce an existing notion or sell people on a new idea to the general populace. The mass media, according to Asemah (2009, p. 37), ‘‘whether electronic or print, often set agenda for the public to follow; they monitor trends and events in our society and raise their agenda based on what they have monitored.’’ It is only when individuals are aware of an issue that they get concerned about it (Asemah, 2009, p. 38). This, therefore, implies that the mass media have been employed in the delivery of behaviour change interventions. Mass media are obliged to provide information for adequate enlightenment of the people on health and environmental-related issues in the society.

According to Park & Hove (2017), as cited in Isah, Abdulazeez, Kadiri &Asemah (2023), the mass media via campaigns, information dissemination and education shape perception and attitude of audience through the attention, frame valence and tone of reportage. This means that how the people receive and perceive the media messages is a function of how the media frame and report such issues.

Decades of studies on the consequences of mass media exposure demonstrate that effects are varied and reciprocal, the media impact audiences and audiences also impact media by the intensity and frequency of their usage (Asemah, 2009). The results of mass media for promoting social change, especially in developing countries, have become important for societal growth. The broadcast and electronic media are used to promote media contents that are very important to the awareness, understanding and response to climate change (Asemah, 2020).

According to Millar (2012), mass media are useful tools for the promotion of sustainable development and campaign for social change. Asemah (2021) conducted research on inducing positive attitude towards family planning through effective mass

media campaigns. The rationale for the study was to ascertain the place of the media campaign on family planning among Nigerian women. The result showed that the mass media have important part to play in family planning. Ogunjobi, Ekhareafo & Asemah (2023) researched on the effectiveness of broadcast media campaign against gender-based violence in Ekiti State. The findings showed that while the broadcast media can be effective tool for raising awareness and changing attitude towards gender-based violence, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure their effectiveness.

Ogbodu & Asemah (2023) examined attitude of Benin residents towards media campaigns against land grabbing. Findings showed that respondents were exposed to the campaigns on land grabbing and that the campaigns were effective as respondents showed high level of satisfaction which resulted in change in their behaviour. Baruah (2019) researched on the role of media in generating environmental awareness with special reference to environmental education. The findings of the study showed that the media play a major role in shaping perceptions and awareness of environmental issues. Government, journalists and broadcasters set the agenda for environmental discourse and decision making because without education, people will not be able to comprehend the issues and other policies related to the field of environment.

Again, Ben-Enukora, Okorie, Oresanya & Ekanem (2017) examined awareness and perception of media campaign on e-waste effects among residents of Ado Odo-Ota, Nigeria. The study sought to discover the residents' awareness of e-waste effects, ascertain the media through which they obtain information on the health and environmental effects of e-waste, determine the extent to which the residents are exposed to the media campaigns, find out their perception and determine the extent to which awareness of the health and environmental risks associated with e-waste influence residents' current behaviour towards e-waste. Their findings showed that media exposure on e-waste hazards was critically low. The broadcast media and the internet were identified as significant sources of information but residents were less frequently exposed to e-waste issues in the news.

Asemah & Ashonibare (2017) conducted a research on the influence of *don't drink and drive* media campaigns on the commercial drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The rationale behind the study was to find out the extent to which the media campaigns have gone in influencing the drinking habits of drivers in Ibadan while driving. Findings showed that the *Don't Drink and Drive* media campaign has been widely spread among commercial drivers in Ibadan and has positively influenced the driving habits of the drivers as regards drinking and driving. Moseri & Iilenwabor (2022) paid attention to residents' perception and assessment of electronic waste in Benin City, Edo State. The objectives for the study were to examine the knowledge, values, attitude and perception of residents to e-waste generation and collection in Benin City within the last ten years (2008-2018), evaluate the methods and effectiveness of the e-waste disposal strategies and explore sustainable strategies for e-waste management. Findings revealed that the cost at which residents in the studied area purchased their electronic devices was a key factor influencing their decision to dispose their electronic wastes. Awareness and attitude of Benin City residents towards media campaigns against illegal migration was examined by Okunbor, Ezeji & Muhammed (2023). The findings revealed the awareness level towards illegal migration was relatively poor, thereby affecting their attitudes negatively on migration related issues.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are so significant in research (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008). This study is anchored on theory of planned behaviour. According to Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), the theory of planned behaviour was built from what was assumed of human behaviour in the theory of reasoned action. This theory was presented in Icek Ajzen in 1985 in his article "From Intentions to Actions, a theory of planned behavior." It postulates that a person's behavioural intentions and their attitudes about certain behaviour are determined by being able to understand that person's behavioural and normative beliefs as well as the social norms for the society that they are within.

The theory of planned behaviour specifies the relationship between beliefs and attitudes. Due to the increasing amount of electronic waste (e-waste) generated in Nigeria, challenges such as consumers disposal behaviours have emerged. An understanding of the consumers' intentions to participate in formal e-waste collections is crucial in increasing the level of participation in an e-waste collection scheme. The theory of panned behaviour (TPB) creates an applicable platform for identifying the determinants of recycling intentions. Factors such as attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and environmental knowledge influence intentions to participate in formal e-waste collections. This theory is based around understanding and predicting human behaviours, which allows for such a wide range of uses. The theory of planned behaviour is broken down into a person's attitude, their perceived behavioural control and the subjective norms of society which all influence a person's intention and ultimately the final behaviour. Theory of planned behaviour has bearing on this study as it helps to understand and predict respondents' future behaviour by looking at the social norms, ingrained beliefs they adhere to and the consequences of their action.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research design while questionnaire was the research instrument. As noted by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), it is evident that survey research method focuses on people, the vital facts of people; their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour. The population of is Benin City which according to the 2023 population estimated as at the time of the study is 1,835, 200. In determining the sample size, the researchers adopted the Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula. The formula for the calculation is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

Where;

n = signifies sample size

N = signifies the of population under study

e = signifies the margin error (0.05)

Therefore:

n = 1,835,200 / (1+ 1,835,200$(0.05)^2$

n = 1,835,200/ (1+1,835,200(0.0025)

n =1,835,200/ (1+5,037.75)

n =1,835,200/5,038.75

n =399.9

n =400

The sample size is, therefore, 400.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Responses on Awareness of Mass Media Campaign on E-Waste Recycling in Benin City

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	97	25.2
Agree	126	32.7
Undecided	53	13.8
Disagree	65	16.9
Strongly disagree	44	11.4
Total	**385**	**100**

From the data gathered, majority of the respondents (50.7%) are aware of e-waste cycling media campaigns. This implies that respondents interface with media messages on e-waste recycling.

Table 2: Extent of Exposure to E-waste Recycling Media Messages

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	59	15.3
High	136	35.4
Can't tell	71	18.4
Low	63	16.4
Very low	56	14.5
Total	**385**	**100**

The data in table two show that the respondents were highly exposed to the campaigns. This is based on the fact that majority of them (50.7) answered in that direction.

Table 3: Medium of Accessing E-Waste Recycling Media Campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social media	186	48.3
Radio	100	26
Television	67	17.4
Newspaper	15	3.9
Magazine	17	4.4
Total	**385**	**100**

The data in table 3 reveal that social media (48.3%) and radio (26%) were the major channels through which respondents accessed e-waste recycling media campaign.

Table 4: Reponses on Media Campaign affecting the Perception of the need to Recycle E-Waste

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	90	23.4
Agree	141	36.6
Undecided	98	25.5
Disagree	41	10.6
Strongly disagree	15	3.9
Total		**100**

Table 4 reveals respondents' views on e-waste recycling media campaign. Majority of respondents' agreed that the campaigns influenced their attitude towards e-waste recycling.

Table 5: Response on Attitude Change after Exposure to E-Waste Media Campaign Messages

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	79	20.5
Agree	135	35.1
Disagree	90	21
Strongly disagree	81	23.4
Total	**385**	**100**

Data in the above table show a relatively high attitude change of respondents. It implies that respondents thought extensively (careful examination) on the information contained in the message thereby resulting in attitude change.

Table 6: Extent to which Media Messages on E-Waste Recycling Influenced Respond toward Campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	86	22.3
High	161	41.8
Low	92	23.9
Very low	46	12
Total	**385**	**100**

Table 6 data indicates high (41.8%) responses from respondents. The result shows that when media messages fall within the latitude of acceptance, the audience make evaluation about the content based on their stance.

Table 7: Level of Satisfaction with E-Waste Recycling Media Campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	67	17.4
Satisfied	112	29.1
Can't tell	95	24.7
Dissatisfied	65	16.9
Very dissatisfied	46	11.9
Total	**385**	**100**

The data in the table above show that mass media campaigns on e-waste recycling had a positive impact on the respondents as seen from their response on satisfaction of the campaigns.

Table 8: Degree to which E-Waste Recycling Media Campaigns Changed Attitude

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high	78	20.3
High	144	37.4
Low	104	27
Very low	59	15.3
Total	**385**	**100**

The data above show that the degree of influence of e-waste media campaigns on the respondents was high. This implies that the media play an integral part in shaping realities. Respondents learnt and placed importance on issues raised on e-waste recycling campaigns.

Discussion of Finding

The study was carried out to find out the attitude of Benin City residents towards media campaigns on e-waste recycling. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents had high exposure to media reportage on e-waste recycling. The finding is in agreement with Anwumabelem & Asemah (2022) which confirms high exposure to media campaigns on COVID-19. Again, David & Asemah (2022) note that majority of Edo State residents were aware of the flash flood media campaign in the State. This is to say that the mass media highly sensitised the people about environmental and health issues.

The findings revealed that social media were the major media through which respondents accessed e-waste recycling media campaigns, closely followed by radio and television. This shows that social media occupy a strategic position in the minds of the public. Social media are crucial platforms where opinions and outcomes are formulated. Asemah, Osife-Kuex & Verengkat (2017) state that media campaigns are usually messages that cover and reach a large audience most frequently through social media platforms, radio, television and other medium. The findings agreed with those of Asekhamhe, Ofunne & Omoevah (2023) that social media were the most accessed channels by respondent on the COVID-19 vaccine reportage. Further result revealed that the campaigns had high influence on respondents. This is an indication that when media audience exposes themselves to media content, it influences their attitude. This is the case, as attitude change is the fundamental aim of every persuasive message. According to Ekhareafo (2020), people are always highly exposed to messages if highly sensitised by the mass media. The impulse is that media campaigns significantly influence the likelihood of e-waste recycling in the respondents as there is a relationship between e-waste recycling rate and residents' perception of how effectual their behaviour to recycling of e-waste can influence environmental change. Findings also showed that most respondents perceived e-waste recycling media campaigns as very effective. The implication of this finding is that most respondents' attitude toward recycling and environmental protection consciousness effectively stimulated e-waste recycling intention as they perceived e-waste recycling media campaign as a call to duty. Nnadiukwu & Omeje (2019) note that mass media campaigns are effective and not totally ineffective in enlightenment and education of public against environment degradation in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings showed that Benin residents are highly exposed to e-waste recycling media campaigns and that they accessed the campaigns via social media, radio and television. Most respondents perceived e-waste recycling media campaigns as very effective and the degree of exposure was relatively high too. Thus, it was recommended based on the findings that the mass media should intensify awareness campaigns on e-waste recycling in the State to get more participation of residents. Again, e-waste recycling campaigns should be disseminated across all medium and lastly, broadcast stations should come up with special programmes dedicated to provision of information to their audiences on environmental sustainability. This is necessary, particularly at the face of the challenges posed by climate change and efforts to stem it.

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CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

INFLUENCE OF FASHION JOURNALISM ON SELECT DESIGNERS' CHOICE AND STYLE IN BENIN METROPOLIS

Sunday Akpobo Ekerikevwe; Gideon Nwafor & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

It is an undisputable fact that food, shelter and clothing are the basic human needs. Fashion is the manifestation of today's clothing needs which has transcended from the basic functions of coverage to cultural artifacts, style and the determinant of acceptance as well as romantic and sex appeals. Fashion is from the Latin word "Facere" which means "To make." Fashion is seen, therefore, as an art. Generally, fashion is the latest style of clothing, behaviour or decoration. Citing the Editorial Policy of Fashion Theory: The journal of dress, body and culture, Steele (2023) defines fashion as "the cultural construction of the embodied identity." This encompasses all types and forms of self-fashioning, including street styles and high fashion created by designers. Tariq (2023) sees fashion as the art of expressing senses of beauty through clothes. According to Tariq (2023), fashion is dressing in clothes that brings out the best of the body while impressing in others, the excellent taste of the wearer. Rony (2023) is of the view that fashion is not easy to define as it expresses different things to different people. However, Rony posits that fashion refers to the change in style of garment. Fashion is a style that takes place on a body or face or an appearance that varies from person to person, day to day and time to time.

According to Team Leverage Edu (2023), fashion journalism is an artistic form of news reporting focused primarily on fashion news, trends, shows and designers. Fashion journalists basically process, prepare produce and disseminate articles, pictures and news related to fashion trends and designs in the industry. This genre of journalism is purely entertaining and promotion oriented. A fashion journalist performs duties such as interviewing major personalities in the fashion and design industry, styling the models, photo-shooting, coverage of various events like fashion shows, production of fashion articles/news for social media, newspapers and magazines among others. The major responsibility of fashion journalist is to exhibit current fashion trends through the media. Fashion journalism, therefore, is the art of reporting and writing about fashion trends and designs in the mass media. Fashion Retail Academy (2023) is of the view that fashion journalism is more than just writing about clothes. It refers to any media type, including video, print and online copy.

Having experienced various influences, Nigerian fashion spearheaded by fashion home, tailors, designers, stylists and seamstresses have continually experimented with styles and fabrics from all over the world (Couture, 2006; Cowries, 2005 & Ekanem, 2011). Ebreso (2008, p.11) states that "today's woman, especially the Nigerian woman is fashion crazy." Ekanem (2011) aptly states that fashion in Nigeria has gone to such a level that religions, modest individuals, academic and other institutions have protested against some forms of it. Ekanem (2011, p.89) posits that:

> The low-waisted, bell-bottom jean trousers made popular by American performers and Makosa' dancers of Cameroon origin have been so misused by youths in Nigeria. This style, worn with short blouses allows

> a great portion of female waist, buttocks and belly to be indecently exposed. This fashion has sparked off a general protest against female use of trousers.

Since Elizabeth Smith Miller, a woman, invented the modern trouser style for women (Poloindia, 2008) which some religious leaders in Nigeria argued belong to men and should not been used by women (Ekanem, 2011), some scholars have argued that modern fashion styles and choices in Nigeria has been influenced by fashion journalism. Journalism has evolved into various genres in the last few decades. With the advent of digital media occasioned by digitalisation and globalisation, more genres have metamorphosed over time. Consequently, there are citizen, peace, community, advocacy, journalism. Other forms of journalism are: investigative, development, specialised, news, feature, broadcast, sports, trade, entertainment, online, photo journalism and fashion journalism.

With increasing rate of fashionism awareness coupled with creativity exhibited by disciplines such as fine and applied arts, costume design, tailoring and fashion designing, fashion journalism has assumed a global recognition and Nigeria is not an exception. It has been observed that modern days' fashion designers have relied extensively on fashion journalism and creative forms of fashion found in the media. However, researchers have not adequately interrogated the place of fashion journalism on fashion sense. It is against this backdrop that the researchers investigate the influence of fashion journalism on select designers' choice and style of fashion designs in Benin metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Fashion journalism has assumed a global recognition in the last few decades and has obviously wielded an observed influence on fashion sense of individuals and groups. This is especially so in the western world where designers' seek to impress their customers through outfits that stand them out from the ordinary. The question is what is the degree of fashion journalism influence on fashion designers' choice and style in Benin metropolis? This is the thrust of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. Ascertain the extent fashion designers in Benin metropolis are exposed to fashion journalism.
2. Determine the extent fashion journalism influences designers' choice of fashion making/design in Benin metropolis.
3. Reveal the extent fashion journalism has influenced designers' style of fashion making in Benin metropolis.
4. Find out the extent fashion designers in metropolis are generally influenced by fashion journalism.
5. Ascertain the challenges of fashion journalism use among fashion designers in Benin metropolis.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Fashion journalism is the branch of journalism that deals with reportage of fashion events and the promotion of fashion news, styles and trend. Fashion journalism as it applies to the

study is all efforts geared towards processing and presenting fashion-related activities such as fashion trends, personalities, stories, events as well as pictorial representation of fashion and trends to the public through the mass media, especially print and broadcast journalism. In the context of the study, it is an aspect of journalism that focuses on writing, photojournalism and television fashion shows and programmes that exhibit fashion trends, styles, personalities and news.

According to Team Leverage Edu (2023), fashion journalism is an artistic form of news reporting that primarily focused on fashion news, trends, shows and designers. This implies that fashion journalism encompasses all fashion news-related issues such as dress making and designs, style, photoshots, reportage of fashion events and shows as well as interviewing fashion designers fashion. A fashion designer in the context of the study is a person who designs high fashion identity, aesthetic sense and values. Choosing fashion is subjective and personal and may be influenced by certain factors. It allows the individual to express his or her personality.

There is dearth of empirical studies on the influence of fashion journalism on styles and choice of fashion designers. However, literature exists on the general effect of fashion journalism. Boyd & Schlagheck (2015) in their work "Democratising Fashion: The effects of the evolution of fashion journalism from print to online media" revealed that fashion influence no longer comes only from advertising and models, but reflects the taste and appearance of ordinary people. Fashion media audience turn to magazines for photo-types of beauty, tips and examples which they may use in evaluating themselves. Boyd & Schlagheck (2015) citing Englis, Solomon & Ashmore (1994) aver that "Fashion magazine are a potent means of socialising young consumers about beauty and fashion and for advertising beauty and fashion-related products." Diamond (2023) reporting two brains behind a fashion brand, for the *Guardian Newspaper* of Nigeria posits that fashion can influence people to adopt certain fashion or fabrics.

The study is hinged on the dependency theory propounded by Sandra Ball-Roacheach & Melvin De Fleur in 1976 and the uses and gratifications theory propounded by Elchu Katz, Jay Blumler & Michael Gurevitech in 1974 (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2011; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017).

Sandra Ball-Roacheach & Melvin De Fleur argue that dependency theory proposes an integral relationship among audiences, media and the larger social system and predicts that people depend on media information to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals and people do not depend on all media equally (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). Fashion designers have depended on fashion journalism via newspaper, magazines and television to access trendy fashion designs as well as interact with other fashion designers. This theory is, therefore, relevant to the study because the thrust of the theory is the dependability of people for media use.

On the other hand, the uses and gratifications theory sees media audience as active and goal-oriented and achieve their goals through the media source. This means that people use the media to their advantage more often than the media use them. This means that fashion designers can use media of communication to achieve their needs on fashion designs, choices and style.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research method. Survey as a research method is suitable for a large population and it enables researchers to elicit information, opinion, perception and feelings from respondents (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022; 2023). Okoro (2001);

Tejumaiye (2003); Ohaja (2003); Tonwe (2007); Nwabueze (2009); Okorodudu (2013); Ezeah & Asogwa (2013); Okwechime (2016); Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) aver that the survey method is the best approach to getting information on perception, feelings, opinion, attitudes and views of respondents. Survey enabled the researchers to find the extent to which fashion journalism influence fashion designers' choice and style of designs of clothing in Benin metropolis.

The population of the study consists of all fashion designers in Benin metropolis. The researchers regard the metropolis as Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. This implies that the population is made up of all fashion designers in Oredo Local Government from statistics generated from the Nigerian Union of Tailors (NUTG), Oredo is made up of 15 sub-zones of the Association. And there are 2,565 registered fashion designers in Oredo Local Government. This means that the population for the study is 2,565 fashion designers. The sample size for the study is 250 fashion designers in Benin metropolis. According to Asemah *et al* (2011), if a population is not too large, 20% of the population can serve as a good representation of the population, thus serve as the sample size.

The researchers used the purposive sampling procedure to select the sample size from the population. Okafor (2002); Asemah *et al* (2022); Onwubuishi (2001) and Okoro (2013) posit that purposive sampling technique is used by a researcher when the respondents possess some characteristics. The choice of purposive sampling, therefore, stems from the fact that it is only through it that the researchers can determine those fashion designers that are exposed to fashion journalism.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Degree of Exposure of Fashion Designers to Fashion Journalism

Exposure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high	244	97.6%
High	3	1.2%
Low	3	1.2%
Very low	-	-
Total	**250**	**100%**

The data collected show that majority of fashion designers' are exposed to fashion journalism.

Table 2: Extent Fashion Journalism Influences Designers' Choice of Fashion Making Design

Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	NS 1	Total	X	Decision
Fashion journalism greatly influences my choice of fashion design.	210 84% 1050	30 12% 120	10 4% 30	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1200	4.8	Accepted
Fashion journalism influences my choice of fashion design.	223 89.2% 1115	25 10% 100	2 0.8% 20	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1235	4.9	Accepted

Fashion journalism do not influence my choice of fashion design.	2 0.8% 10	8 3.2% 32	15 6% 45	225 90% 450	- - -	250 100% 537	2.1	Rejected
Fashion journalism sometimes influences my choice of fashion design	204 81.6% 1020	30 12% 120	- - -	- - -	16 6.4% 16	250 100% 1156	4.6	Accepted
Fashion journalism sometimes do not influence my choice of fashion design	224 89.6% 1120	20 8% 80	4 1.6% 12	- - -	2 0.8% 2	250 100% 1214	4.8	Accepted
I am not sure if fashion journalism influence my choice of fashion making	- - -	- - -	23 9.2% 69	214 85.6% 428	13 5.2% 13	250 100% 510	2.0	Rejected

This shows that fashion journalism greatly influenced designers' choice of fashion designs and fashion making in Benin metropolis. Fashion journalism influenced designers' choice of fashion design as 223 and 25 respondents respectively, representing 89.2% and 10% respectively with a mean value of 4.9 strongly agreed and agreed that they are influenced by fashion journalism in their choices of fashion design.

Table 3: Extent Fashion Journalism Influences Designers' Style of Fashion

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Very great extent	225	98%
Great extent	23	9.2%
Low extent	2	0.8%
Very low extent	-	-
Not at all	-	-
Total	**250**	**100%**

Majority of the population said that their styles of fashion designs are influenced to very great extent by fashion journalism. This is as 23 respondents said the influence of fashion journalism is great in their choice and styles of fashion making and design. This implies that fashion journalism influences designers' style of fashion design in Benin metropolis.

Table 4: Challenges of Fashion Journalism Use among Fashion Designers in Benin Metropolis

Items	**SA 5**	**A 4**	**D 3**	**SD 2**	**NS 1**	**Total**	**X**	**Decision**
Complex styles of design	10 4% 50	10 4% 40	208 83.2% 624	20 8% 40	02 0.8% 02	250 100% 756	3.0	Rejected
Crazy and indecent style	05 2% 25	03 1.2% 12	29 11.6% 87	210 84% 420	03 1.2% 03	250 100% 547	2.2	Rejected

Anti-cultural designs/styles	10 4% 50	11 4.4% 44	- - -	229 91.6% 458	- - -	250 100% 552	2.2	Rejected
Lack of adequate money for data/magazine/ Newspaper	241 96.4% 1205	05 2% 20	04 1.6% 12	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1237	4.9	Accepted
Customers' indifference to most styles.	10 4% 50	07 2.8% 28	08 3.2% 24	220 88% 440	05 2% 5	250 100% 547	2.9	Rejected
Lack of adequate awareness of fashion journalism styles	25 10% 125	15 6% 60	06 2.4% 18	180 72% 360	24 9.6% 24	250 100% 587	2.3	Rejected
Lack of motivation by individuals and organisations	15 6% 75	05 2% 20	05 2% 15	220 88% 440	05 2% 5	250 100% 555	2.2	Rejected
Epileptic power supply	231 92.4% 1155	10 4% 40	5 2% 15	2 0.8% 4	2 08 2	250 100% 1216	4.9	Accepted

Data collected from the study show that fashion designers in Benin metropolis are faced with three major challenges of fashion journalism use. These are lack of money to buy magazines, newspapers as well as to access fashion news, trends, fashion styles and designs from social media, epileptic power supply that hinders assessment to traditional mainstream television stations. Another challenge is customers' inability to afford some of the new trends of fashion because they are too expensive.

Table 5: Influence of Fashion Journalism on Fashion Designers' Creativity in Benin Metropolis

Items	**SA 5**	**A 4**	**D 3**	**SD 2**	**NS 1**	**Total**	**X**	**Decision**
Fashion journalism has influenced my creativity in fashion designing/making	239 95.6% 1195	04 1.6% 16	03 1.2% 9	04 1.6% 8	- - -	250 100% 1228	4.9	Accepted
Fashion journalism has not influenced my creativity in fashion making and design	03 1.2% 15	03 1.2% 12	- - -	240 96% 480	04 1.6% 4	250 100% 511	2.0	Rejected
Fashion journalism sometimes influences my creativity in fashion making	244 97.6% 1220	03 1.2% 12	03 1.2% 9	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1241	5	Accepted

I am not sure that fashion journalism has influenced my creativity in fashion making.	05 2% 25	04 1.6% 16	- - -	241 96.4% 482	- - -	250 100% 523	2.1	Rejected

Data generated from the study show that fashion journalism influenced fashion designers' sense of creativity in fashion making and design in Benin metropolis as 239 respondents representing 95.6% of the population agreed that their sense of creativity in fashion making and designs has been sharpened through fashion journalism.

Table 6: Extent Fashion Journalism influences Fashion Designers in Benin Metropolis

Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	NS 1	Total	X	Decision
Fashion journalism has generally influenced me as a designer	230 92% 1150	18 7.2% 72	02 0.8% 6	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1228	4.9	Accepted
Fashion journalism has not generally influenced me as designer	- - -	02 0.8% 8	17 6.8% 51	231 92.4% 462	- - -	250 100% 521	2.1	Rejected
Fashion journalism has sometimes generally influenced me as a designer	221 88.4% 1105	20 8% 80	05 2% 15	04 1.6% 8	- - -	250 100% 1208	4.8	Accepted
I am not sure if fashion journalism has generally influenced me as a designer	- - -	02 0.8% 8	03 1.2% 9	244 98% 488	01 0.4% 1	250 100% 506	2.0	Rejected

Fashion journalism has generally influenced fashion designers in all ramifications. Out of 250 fashion designers in Benin metropolis, 230 and 18 of them representing 92% and 7.2% respectively with an average mean of 4.9 strongly agreed and agreed that fashion journalism has strongly influenced them. This is in addition to 221 and 20 respondents, respectively representing 88.4% and 8% respectively that agreed that sometimes, fashion journalism influenced them as designers.

Table 7: Perception of Fashion Designers on the Extent Fashion Journalism Influences Customers' Choice and Style of Fashion Design

Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	NS 1	Total	X	Decision
Customers' choice are not greatly	- -	02 0.8%	18 7.2%	230 92%	- -	250 100%	2.0	Rejected

influenced by fashion journalism	-	8	54	460	-	522		
Customers' styles of fashion are greatly influenced by fashion journalism	240 96% 1200	8 3.2% 32	2 0.8% 6	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1238	4.9	Accepted
Customers' choices are greatly influenced by fashion journalism	200 80% 1000	40 16% 160	10 4% 30	- - -	- - -	250 100% 1190	4.7	Accepted
Customers' styles of fashion design are not greatly influenced by fashion journalism	- - -	- - -	210 84% 630	30 12% 60	10 4% 10	250 100 700	2.8	Rejected

The presentation shows that customers' choice of fashion making, design and style is influenced by fashion journalism. This is because some customers have access to designers' style and choice of fashion from fashion magazines or newspapers.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study showed that fashion designers are highly exposed to fashion journalism. Fashion journalism equally influenced designers' choice of fashion making, fashion style and fashion design in Benin metropolis. Similarly, fashion designers are faced with the challenge of adequate fund to purchase data for fashion journalism use. The finding is in line with Sellors (2014) who found that social media platforms cannot only be used to interact with the consumers, build online presence, but can also influence designers in unique ways that change the way they create and design their fashions.

Findings from the study show that fashion designers in Benin metropolis make use of fashion magazines, newspapers, fashion trends and styles as shown on television across the world. This implies that they make use of the media in their fashion choice and styles. This is in line with the uses and gratifications theory. Similarly, the finding also aligned with the dependency theory that proposes an integral relationship among audience, media and the larger social system and predicts that people depend on media information to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals.

From the data presented, fashion designers are well exposed to fashion journalism. Out of the 250 respondents, 244 of them representing 98% of the population are exposed to different platforms of fashion journalism and photojournalism such as online and printed materials. Out of the 250 respondents who are seasoned fashion designers, 210 of them representing 94% of the population strongly agreed that fashion journalism greatly influenced their choice of fashion designs in Benin City. Additionally, 30 respondents representing 15% of the population agreed that they are also greatly influenced by fashion journalism.

From the study, it is obvious that fashion journalism influences designers' style of fashion design in Benin metropolis. Out of the 250 fashion designers surveyed, 225 of them representing 95% of the population said their choice of styles are greatly influenced to a very large extent. From the data presented, there are obvious challenges which fashion designers faced in their attempt to use fashion journalism. These are lack of adequate

money to buy fashion magazines and newspapers as well as data for constant exposure to new trends in fashion designing, modern fashions are generally too expensive for customers to afford. This has made many fashion designers to avoid the use of fashion photojournalism.

From the study, it is obvious that fashion journalism is well known to fashion designers in Benin metropolis. They access fashion photojournalism in their day-to-day activities. This has sharpen their fashion creativity, style and designs as well as fashion exposure. One of the major challenges they are having is lack of constant access to the internet to view new trends/styles/designs in the fashion world. Specifically, therefore, the findings revealed that fashion designers in Benin City are well exposed to fashion journalism, their choices and styles of fashion designs are greatly influenced by fashion journalism and they have a major challenge of lack of constant access to fashion photojournalism in particular and fashion journalism in general, due to lack of access to the internet as a result of lack of adequate finance.

Specifically, findings, showed that fashion journalism is well utilised by fashion designers in Benin metropolis. Fashion journalism influences designers' choice and style of fashion making and designs. Fashion journalism shapes the creativity and innovation of fashion designers in the areas of fashion making, fashion style, fashion choice and fashion design in Benin metropolis. There are three major challenges that are associated with fashion journalism use among fashion designers in Benin metropolis. These are lack of adequate power supply, lack of money to always buy fashion magazines and newspapers and adequate customers' inability to afford new fashion style and design due to exorbitant prices. Fashion journalism has a strong influence on fashion designers' and consumer's choice and styles of fashion making and design.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that fashion journalism in general and fashion photojournalism in particular, form the core of fashion designers' activities in Benin metropolis. They are generally influenced by fashion journalism and it has greatly assisted in sharpening their fashion sense, design creativity, choice and style of production. Additionally, it has provided the map through which fashion designers in Benin City in particular and Nigeria in general, navigate the world of fashion and keep tab with the fashion industry. This has great influence on the promotion of popular fashion culture/tradition. However, fashion designers in Benin metropolis are faced with the challenge of inadequate and lack of constant access to fashion events and news as a result of lack of fund and inadequate power supply. Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Journalists should be encouraged to specialise in fashion journalism in Nigeria. This will assist in developing the fashion culture in Nigeria.
2. Organisations and individuals who are in love with fashion should occasionally organise a fashion fares for fashion designers.
3. Nigerian government should make internet services free to enable fashion designers constant access to the global fashion community.
4. Fashion journalism should be taught as a specialise area of journalism/mass communication studies in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF EDO RESIDENTS ON MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST LAND GRABBING IN EDO STATE

Victor Ehiagwina; Comfort A. Ogwo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Media are the channels used to transmit messages from a source to a large destination. These devices are radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, films, cinema and GSM. These channels are used for gathering, processing, packaging and dissemination of information for public consumption (Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013; Edegoh & Asemah, 2014). Asemah, Edegoh & Anum (2013) and Asemah (2015) note that information is central to all forms of human activity no matter the field and that there is the need for exchange of information to ensure completion of tasks. Thus, Edegoh, Asemah & Udeh-Akpe (2013) note that these mass media channels disseminate campaign programmes to make the audiences have balanced knowledge of critical issues in the society.

Media campaigns, also known as advertising campaigns or marketing campaigns, refer to coordinated efforts undertaken by individuals, organisations or businesses to promote a specific message, product, service or cause using various media channels (Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023). The campaigns share same messages and themes placed in different types of media at some fixed time (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2020).These campaigns aim to reach and influence a target audience through strategic messaging, creative content, and targeted media placements. Media campaigns can be implemented through traditional media outlets, such as television, radio, print publications, and billboards, as well as digital platforms like social media, websites, email and online advertisements (Nwaoboli, 2022).

Over the years, land grabbing has been a persistent menace in most communities in Edo State, Nigeria. The situation had taken a turn for the worst in recent times with situation where a parcel of land would be sold to different persons, thereby generating land disputes and chaos in some communities in Edo State (Ogbodu, Ogunyemi & Asemah, 2023).

The Edo people have decried their concerns to the State government against the rise of this fraudulent act on several occasions. In 2021, it was reported by most dailies that the victims and other concerned individuals took to the streets to protest against the activities of land grabbers in Edo State. They took their protest around major roads in Benin Metropolis, as well as to the palace of the Oba of Benin before heading to the Edo State government house to register their grievances. Both the Edo State government led by Governor Godwin Obaseki and the Benin Monarch, Oba Ewuare II have also expressed worry over the activities of land grabbers in the state, particularly as it has resulted in violent clashes between individuals and communities in Edo State, even to the extent that several parcel of land belonging to the palace have also been taken by land grabbers while government reserved areas have also been encroached (*The Punch*, 2023).

The government has taken steps to address the issue of land grabbing and protect the rights of legitimate landowners. The state government recognises the negative impact of land grabbing on economic development, social stability and the overall well-being of its citizens. Since 2016, the Edo State Government has initiated various measures to combat land grabbing. The government established a task force specifically dedicated to tackling land grabbing issues. This task force comprises representatives from relevant government agencies, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Legislation and policy reforms have been initiated to strengthen land administration and address the root causes of land grabbing. These reforms aim to improve land registration, documentation and dispute resolution mechanisms. The government has been actively involved in enforcing existing laws against land grabbing. It has intensified efforts to investigate reported cases, apprehend offenders and bring them to justice through prosecution. For instance, the *Nigeria Observer* on the 8th of November, 2022 in a report titled "Campaign against land-grabbing: Obaseki meets stakeholders, reassures on compensation for persons with authentic documents" notes:

> The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, met with community members and other stakeholders over the 1229 hectares of land repossessed from land grabbers for the state's new town development project, reassuring that the government will compensate persons with authentic claims to landed property in the repossessed area. Obaseki met with Ogheghe, Obayantor 1, Obagie 'N' Evbuosa, Okoroma communities, including elders, traditional rulers and members, among others, at John Odigie-Oyegun Public Service Academy, Benin City.

Despite the Edo State Governor's effort recently, the activities of land grabbers in the state still goes unhindered. Reports have shown that the Edo State Private Property Protection Committee hears an average of 20 land grabbing cases at every of its sitting on daily basis. It was also reported that in Oct 2022, the Edo State Police invited 23 individuals over issues relating to land grabbing in a day (*Thisday* Newspaper, 2022).

The Edo State government has strengthened its strategies to effectively curb land grabbing by adapting public awareness campaigns through the mass media as its new tactic. The government launched public awareness campaigns during the various media outlet to educate citizens about the dangers and illegality of land grabbing. These campaigns seeks to empower citizens with knowledge about their land rights and encourage them to report cases of land grabbing (*Thisday newspaper*, 2022).

The media campaigns were targeted at relevant stakeholders, such as community leaders, traditional rulers and landowners' associations as well as the general public. However, the vital question is; have these media campaigns created the supposed awareness about the Edo State Government various measures to combat land grabbing among residents in Edo State? What is the perception of the Edo people about these campaigns? Therefore, it is against this background that the researchers seek to evaluate the awareness and perception of Edo residents on media campaigns against land grabbling In Edo State.

Statement of the Problem

A lot of news reports have been written on land grabbling in Edo State but only a handful of researchers have really paid attention to the issue in term of awareness and perception of Edo residents on media campaign sponsored by the Edo State government against land grabbers in the State.

However, Agheyisi (2019) did a study to explore a case study of boundary dispute that developed into violent conflict between two communities in Benin City. The study did not provide information to measure public awareness about government effort in curbing land grabbling activities and dispute in the Edo State. The argument has been, there seems to be a potential loss sigh of awareness about government effort in strengthening the fight against land grabbers in Edo State, despite many government-sponsored media reportage on land grabbling.

Even though Ogbodu *et al* (2023), did a study to determine the attitude of Benin residents towards media campaign against land grabbling in Edo Sate, but the scope of the study centred only on residents in Benin City or Edo South senatorial district and did not capture other senatorial districts in Edo State where issues of land grabbling may seem to be dominant. The research, therefore, fills this gap by verifying the level of awareness among Edo residents across the three senatorial districts about on media campaigns against land grabbing in Edo State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine level of awareness of Edo residents on media campaigns against land grabbing in across the three senatorial the State.
2. Determine the media channels through which the respondents were exposures to media campaign against land grabbing in Edo State.
3. Ascertain the perception of Edo residents toward media campaign against land grabbing in Edo State.

Land Grabbing: An Overview

The concept of land grabbing has gained significant attention since the early 21st century due to the surge in global demand for natural resources, including arable land, food, biofuels, minerals and water. The phenomenon is fueled by a combination of factors, including population growth, increased consumption patterns, changing dietary preferences and speculative investments in land as a lucrative asset class (Obayelu, 2015). Land grabbing refers to the acquisition of large areas of land, typically in developing countries by foreign or domestic entities, often without the consent or involvement of the local communities or governments. It involves the purchase, lease or long-term control of vast tracts of land for various purposes, such as agriculture, mining, forestry, infrastructure development or real estate projects (Obuene, Akanle & Omobowale, 2022).

Ogbodu *et al* (2023), citing Atliola (2010) note that "land grabbing has been described as the foundation of all human activities. It is from the land we obtain food, shelter and space for every other activity." The brand new surge of land grabbing is also growing with international businesses and other dealers scrabbling for pastoralist land in

Nigeria as well as in many African nations' for agro-fuels and food manufacturing. There appears to be big issue over how the Nigerian state has being scheming with foreign buyers to oust the people of their land for agro-fuels and food product. Maximum lands which have been entered are veritable means of the livelihoods of negative and inclined pastoral agencies (Attah, 2013).

The World Bank Report in 2010 titled "*Rising global interest in farmland: can it yield sustainable and equitable benefits?"* reveals that land grabbing takes place largely in places where buyers could exploit corrupt or indebted governments with little ability to regulate the transaction or prevent buyers from targeting the poorest rural communities, expelling people with non-traditional land title from their land. This development has empowered private, foreign investors and governments to secure African land as investments denying landowner and local farmer the access to meet their agricultural need (Daniel & Mittal, 2009).

According to Ogbodu *et al* (2023), "land grabbing is a worrisome and rapidly growing phenomenon in Nigeria. Land grabbing has significant economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts which often results in conflicts and loss of human and forest resources. It is an issue of crucial concern."

Research has revealed that many communities are losing their land and structures to land snatching. Land is strongly taken, redistributed and indeed, vended back to their original possessors under the guise of mechanisation and development of similar communities. This has caused violence and uneasiness in utmost communities where land snatching has taken dominance. Original communities, including small- scale growers and indigenous peoples, are frequently marginalised or forcefully evicted from their ancestral lands without proper discussion or compensation. This can lead to social uneasiness, loss of livelihoods and violation of mortal rights.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Emenyon, Nwosu, Eririogu, Osuji, Ejike & Agbaeze (2017) in their study titled: 'Analysis of land grabbing and implications for sustainable livelihood' analysed land grabbing and its implications for sustainable livelihood in Owerri Municipal and Owerri West Local Government Areas of Imo State, Nigeria. The researchers used the purposive sampling technique while data were secured through the use of structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, bivariate analytical model and Ordinary Least Square multiple regression model. Findings showed that majority (76%) of the owners of the dispossessed lands were males, this gives an indication of land ownership rights in Nigeria. About 58% of dispossessed land owners inherited their lands and were full time farmers, indicating that farming is the major source of livelihood in the area. The grabbed lands were converted to built-up lands, especially hotels and other constructions on land (74%), while 26% of the lands were used for other non-agricultural establishments. The researchers recommended that compensatory lands should be released to the farmers and incentives granted to facilitate improvement in food crop production in the local government areas. This study, even though is not a communication research, but necessitated the study on awareness campaign against land grabbing is related to the current study in terms of approach and evaluation of the effect of land grabbling.

Adepoju, Ewolor & Obayelu (2018) also in their study examined the welfare implication of domestic land grabs among rural households in Delta State, Nigeria. Findings revealed secondary education, community leaders' influence, compensation are some of the significant factors influencing domestic land grabs in the study area. The researchers advocated for commensurate compensation of rural households whose lands were grabbed and periodical checks on community leaders who positively influence domestic land acquisitions arbitrarily. Ogbodu *et al* (2023) investigated the attitude of Benin residents toward media campaigns against land grabbling. The researchers utilised the survey method. The objectives of the study were to examine the level of exposure of Benin residents to media campaigns on land grabbing and the level of effectiveness of the land grabbing media campaigns. Findings revealed that the media campaigns against land grabbling in Edo state have created awareness among the residents in Benin City. The study and the current study shared similarities in term of content and approach. However, the current study has a wider scope as it covers the media campaign against land grabbling across the Edo State while Ogbodu *et al* (2023) covered only residents in Benin City.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social judgement theory. Social judgment theory is a persuasive communication theory that explains how individuals perceive and process persuasive messages (Asemah & Nwammuo, 2017; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). Developed by Psychologist, Muzafer Sherif & his Colleagues in the late 1960s, the theory proposes that people evaluate persuasive messages based on their existing attitudes and beliefs, using a framework of three key components: ego involvement, latitudes of acceptance and rejection and the anchor point.

Nwaoboli & Asemah (2022), citing McQuail (2010) opine that "the purpose of social judgement theory is to apply the ideas and findings of psychophysical judgement to the process of social judgement. Thus, it is a theory that focuses on the internal processes of an individual's own judgement in relation to the link included within a sent message, with the individual's select position serving as the judgemental anchor in this context." This theory is relevant to this study because it demonstrates how Edo State residents perceived and judged the media campaigns against the excesses of land grabbling in Edo State.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research design. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that survey research design is used to study very large population. The population of the study comprises three local governments selected from each of the senatorial districts of Edo state; these include Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central- Oredo, Esan West and Esako West Local Government areas which respectively have population of 553, 300; 188,700 and 294,000 (1,036,000) according to City Population (2022). A sample size of 384 respondents was taken for the study from the population of the study. The sample for the study was gotten, using Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation formula. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in this study.

In stage one, the researchers clustered the three senatorial zones in Edo State which are Edo South Senatorial Zone, Edo Central Senatorial Zone and Edo North Senatorial Zone. The researchers did this to massively represent a generic view of Edo State residents' on the subject of discourse.

In stage two, the researchers randomly select one local government from each of the three senatorial zones. These LGAs are Oredo, Esan West and Esako West Local Government areas. The researchers randomly selected from each of the local government using the lucky dip method. In Esako West LGA, Auchi was picked, in Esan West; Ekpoma was picked and in Oredo LGA, GRA Benin City was picked.

Having picked three towns, the researchers distributed the questionnaire proportionately; that is, 384/3=128 using the available sampling technique. Data gathered from the filed survey were evaluated using descriptive statistics mode of analysis while results were presented in simple percentage, frequencies and table. The entire questionnaire was distributed face-to-face to respondents in the select towns. All 384 were retrieved and were found usable.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Exposure to Media Campaign against Land grabbing in Edo State

Variables	**Ekpoma**	**Auchi**	**GRA Benin**
Very high	30 (24%)	48 (38%)	79 (56%)
High	58 (45%)	63 (49%)	38 (38%)
Undecided	18 (14%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)
Low	12 (9%)	8 (7%)	6 (7%)
Very low	10 (8%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)
Variables	Ekpoma	Auchi	128 (100%)

The data gathered from the table indicate that majority of the respondents were aware of the media campaign against land grabbing across the three senatorial districts in Edo State.

Table 2: The Mass Media Channels through which Edo Residents were exposed to Media Campaigns against Land grabbing in Edo State

Variables	**Ekpoma**	**Auchi**	**GRA Benin**
Radio	42 (33%)	44 (44%)	34 (36%)
Television	36 (28%)	34 (27%)	28 (22%)
Newspaper	10 (8%)	14 (11%)	16 (13%)
Billboard	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	30 (24%)
Social Media	40 (31%)	36 (28%)	20 (15%)
Total	**128 (100%)**	**128 (100%)**	**128 (100%)**

The data in table two reveal that majority of the respondents accessed media campaigns against land grabbing in Edo State through the radio.

Table 3: Perception of the Respondents on the Effectiveness of the Media Campaign against Land grabbing in Edo State

Variables	**Ekpoma**	**Auchic**	**GRA Benin**
Very effectiveness	60 (47%)	56 (44%)	78(60%)
Effectiveness	48 (38%)	48 (37%)	27(21%)
Neutral	3 (2%)	10 (8%)	7(6%)
Less effective	17 (13%)	14 (11%)	16(13%)
Total	**128 (100%)**	**128(100%)**	**128(100%)**

The data gathered from table three indicate that the respondents perceived the media against land grabbing in Edo State to be effective.

Table 4: Influence of the Media Campaign against Land grabbing in Edo State

Variables	Ekpoma	Auchi	GRA Benin
Has reduced land grabbing activities	73 (57%)	68 (53%)	*86 (67%)*
Neutral	29 (23%)	37 (29%)	*25 (20%)*
Has not reduced land grabbing activities	26 (20%)	23 (18%)	*17 (13%)*
Total	**128 (100%)**	**128 (100%)**	**128 (100%)**

The data gathered from table three indicate that the respondents perceived the media against land grabbing in Edo State to be effective.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that majority of the respondents have very high knowledge about the media campaigns against land grabbing in Edo State. This finding is in consonance with Ogbodu *et al* (2023) who found that respondents in Benin City were well-exposed to land grabbing campaigns through mass media. The findings revealed that the mass media play unique role in creating awareness and sensitising the people Edo State on the need to desist from land grabbing as majority of the respondents answered to that effect. This finding is line with Isah & Asemah (2023) who affirmed that Edo residents have very high exposure to media messages. This implies that residents in all the three senatorial districts in Edo State paid key attention to the campaign message against land grabbing activities in the state. This high significant level of awareness can be attributed to demographic nature of the respondents who have sufficient accesses to media message and can afford information gadget.

The findings in table two further indicated that most of the respondents in Edo State accessed media campaigns against land grabbing through radio, television and social media. For residents in Oredo Local Government areas, radio television and billboard were the major channels for accessing the campaign against land grabbing while those in Esan West and Esako West depended on radio, television and social media as there were no billboard campaign against land grabbing in Edo North and Edo Central. This finding supports Ogbodu *et al's* (2023) observation that included radio as the main channels through which respondents in Benin City accessed the campaign. The findings align with Asemah's (2020) observation that radio messages get to the farthest part of a country and it is a populist medium that has capacity of getting development messages across to a very wide segment of the rural dwellers. Similarly, Asemah, Osife-Kurex & Verengkat (2017) and David & Asemah (2023) state that media campaigns messages are majorly accessed frequently through television, radio and billboard. For the inclusion of social media as one of the major channels for the dissemination of the media campaign align with the view of Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021) who say that social media have high degree of creating awareness due to the increasing number of social media users in Nigeria who are mostly youth and have largest online presence.

Further findings indicated that most of the respondents in the three senatorial districts perceived the media campaigns against land grabbing in Edo State as very effective. The implication of this finding is that most respondents perceived land grabbing media campaign as effective. This finding is line with the perception theory which states people interpret messages base on the awareness through sensory information from their

environment and exposure. Asemah *et al* (2017) observe that perception is a complex process in which people choose, organise and perceive sensory stimuli to form a meaningful though about issues in the environment.

Also, finding showed that most respondents from all the senatorial districts in Edo State are satisfied with the campaign against land grabbing. The analysis from table four shows that the campaign has influenced the residents of Edo State to desist from land grabbing activities. This is in line with Asemah (2021) and David & Asemah (2023), who state that the mass media set agenda for the public to follow; this, they do by raising salient issues, occurrences and events, as they happen in the society and bringing them to public glare

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is hereby concluded that majority of the respondents in the three senatorial districts of Edo State are aware of the media campaigns against land grabbing activities in the state and most of the respondents in Edo State accessed the media campaigns on radio, television and billboards, especially residents within Benin City. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. The Edo State Government should intensify its awareness campaign against land grabbers in Edo State and beyond.
2. Billboard media campaign should be mounted at flash points areas in the three senatorial districts of Edo State.
3. Media house in Edo State should complement radio stations in facilitating media campaign against land grabbing in the State and beyond.

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CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

INFLUENCE OF OPINION LEADERS ON VOTERS' CHOICE OF CANDIDATES DURING THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN IRRI TOWN, DELTA STATE

John Odeogheneraro Ogbe; Daniel O. Ekhareafo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Opinion leaders are so important that they are often seen as trustworthy and reliable sources for information. The decision to support any viable candidate depends on the population's level of political consciousness; hence, the need for opinion leaders to relate and communicate with voters on the electoral process is never taken for granted. Because they are viewed as dependable and trustworthy, these leaders frequently act as role models for others and are highly appreciated for their opinions and deeds. This suggests that opinion leaders can support the choice of a capable and trustworthy candidate. It becomes undisputed that opinion leaders are *sine-qua-none* in a political arena, due to the fact that they (opinion leaders) have the power to inspire people, persuade the electorate to support their preferred candidate and have an impact on their voting choices. This simply means that it is nothing new to communicate with voters in an effort to influence their choice of candidates. It predates political competition itself. Opinion leaders have always been accountable to those contesting elections, encouraging the appropriate electorate to support the candidate they are endorsing by standing in the gap for them (Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah, 2022). Additionally, they educate voters on the electoral process which is crucial for a successful election. To sum it up, Jason (2021, p.25) says:

> In politics, opinion leaders interpret and disseminate political messages for the average to help him or her understand complex political issues. Typically, the opinion leader is held in high esteem by those who accept his or her opinions. Political pundits and self-described specialists in a certain field are examples of political opinion leaders. These individuals are frequently consulted by the media for their remarks or thoughts, such as public officials, celebrities and media personalities. They are important because they help shape people's opinions on complex issues that they otherwise do not have the time or expertise to learn on their own. Utilising opinion leaders can alter how supportive people are of a particular political issue and can either help or harm a politician's agenda.

Despite the influence of traditional rulers, clerics and the community leaders, opinion leaders continue to play significant roles in swaying voters' choice of candidates. This view was echoed by Hammed (2017), as cited by Ojomo & Amos (2019, p. 267) when he notes that:

> Opinion leaders have the ability to use their skills to influence people's opinion and bring the people together for societal development, especially in a society where people are still drawn back by deep rooted beliefs, customs, superstitions, poverty and illiteracy.

The implication of this is that majority of the voters belong to groups where the opinion leaders are the key office holders; thus, they are more susceptible to being persuaded by influential individuals (opinion leaders). In such groups, it is expected that

voters will make decisions based on group interests and concerns. Also, because these voters have same interests and knowledge of themselves because they live in same community, it is easier for them to endorse a candidate of their choice whom the opinion leaders have confined in them to be a trustworthy candidate. In view of this, Asemah & Umoro (2022, p. 292) state that:

> Community endorsement can be based on students, lecturers, traders, doctors. It refers to community of people who share the same beliefs, who understand what the issues are and are collectively willing to tackle it by choosing a candidate on the basis of competence and ability to perform. Community endorsement is a process where the electorate of a particular country publicly declares their support for a political candidate that is perceived to have the competence and credible track-record to provide leadership. It is a collective decision of the voters not based on the economic power of the candidate nor the party he/she belongs.

Studies have established that opinion leaders are individuals whose ideas and behaviours serve as a guide to others (Ojomo & Amos, 2019; Jason, 2021). Realising the power of opinion leaders, political parties began to use them (opinion leaders) as instruments for political activism to sway voters' choices because they are the ones closest to them. However, it has been noted that given the variety of information sources at their disposal, it may be necessary for them to additionally consult opinion leaders, including religious and community leaders. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how opinion leaders affected voters' choice of candidate during the 2023 presidential election in Irri community.

Research Objective

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the degree to which opinion leaders were successful in influencing voters' choice of candidate during the 2023 presidential election in Irri community.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

To be an opinion leader, one must project an air of authority and have followers who respect and trust their judgement on matters. Politics, social unrest, economic inequality and strained relations among communities may all be part of these challenges. One of the most debatable facets of opinion leadership is politics, a particular area of interest. In almost every case, voters in communities look up to those that they regard as opinion leaders for their opinions on political speech, political candidates and voting preferences. In order to hasten the acceptance of a political message, it may be desirable in some voting situations to communicate with the opinion leader who has the power to persuade others to adopt novel concepts. Seema (2014) is of the view that opinion leaders filter information they share with electorate and are quite selective; this makes the sway from their choice of candidates. In fact, political groups are used by opinion leaders; they are not isolated, solitary activities. They involve family, friends and the society at large.

From the stand point of view, the voters tend to follow the opinion leaders based on what they will benefit as Ekhareafo & Alonge (2021, p. 184) note that political rhetoric can be deployed to attack, praise and caution the audience to take the path or make choices that will benefit them later. The language deployed by the rhetor can make the rhetorical appeal convincing. There are various perspectives on the importance of political

communication. It offers adequate and insightful political data. Such details centre on the political parties that are now in existence, candidates, election dates, registration requirements and voting processes. Political communication not only clarifies political information, but also informs voters about the electoral process.

In the same vein Grishin (2012), cited by Patrick, Kaior & Aisha (2000) note that political communication encourages formation of standards that oversee political behaviour and activities. This is accomplished through strengthening of principles, self-esteem, socialisation and advancement of the political structure by means of preservation of several designs. Therefore, political communication controls political awareness and happenings. Controlling function suggests impact on development of civic awareness and public opinion through societal customs, thereby achieving societal control. The general public has developed a strong skepticism towards politicians because they believe that they constantly seek to mislead the electorate with their platforms, which has led to increased voter skepticism. As a result, this encourages voters to research each presidential contender. Voters rely on opinion leaders for information about the candidates because they frequently perceive them as reliable sources. They are also more likely to accept a political message from someone they know than from someone they have never met.

Asemah & Umoro (2022) conducted a study on imperative of community endorsement in the selection of candidates for election. The scholars were particularly interested in the scope of the influence of choosing a candidate because it has been challenging for social scientists to gauge and characterise the scope to which voters choose candidates for political posts, specifically when voters are open to several information sources such as the accessible communication networks and self-select news media. The differences between both studies are that the previous study adopted literature-modeling for its methodology while the present study uses the survey methodology.

In the same vein, Ojomo & Amos (2019) in their study of the influence of opinion leaders on voting decisions of urban and rural electorate in the 2019 gubernatorial election in South-west, Nigeria. The findings showed that voters' voting decisions are influenced by opinion leaders. The researchers that opinion leaders are trusted by both urban and rural electorate because they are authorities who serve as a conduit between the public and politicians. However, their analysis did not determine the types of methods employed to sway voters' judgements or the degree to which they affected electorate's voting behaviour.

This work is anchored on two steps flow theory and knowledge gap theory. When Lazarsfeld (1940) questioned the generally accepted notion that media communications stretched from a content provider directly to audience members' ears (or eyes). He established the two-step flow of mediated information distribution. Lazarsfeld countered that influencer really filtered communications and served as filters for disseminating mass media messages. The two-step flow of information theory was first developed by Lazarsfeld and later by his co-author Elihu Katz, who proposed that opinion leaders who closely monitor the mass media add their own views and interpretations to communication before passing them on to their eventual audiences (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017).

On the other hand, the knowledge gap theory which was developed by Tichenor, Donohue & Olien (1970) assumed that information is not acquired by society equally, since it differs according to individuals' social and economic circumstances. The idea of the theory is relevant to this research because it captures the informational, educational and infrastructure gap between voters and opinion leaders that is caused by differences in

socioeconomic status. The theory relates to this work because it explains why people are more prone to rely on opinion leaders when making electoral judgements since they find it difficult to easily obtain information. While the two-step flow theory shows how information flows from the opinion leaders to the voters.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted. A survey as defined by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) is an experiential study that uses questionnaire to determine descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. Also, Kothari & Garg (2014) define survey as the method of securing information concerning a phenomenon under study from all or a select number of respondents of the concerned universe. Survey aided the researcher to elicit quantitative data from the respondents who are the voters. The population of study was drawn from Irri community with total population of 9440 registered voters which comprised 18 units and the researchers picked the 4 units with the highest population namely:

Unit 12: Ugiriama hall 1121
Unit 5: Eviewho hall =872
Unit 10: Irri Town hall =856
Unit 9: Okpara hall =854
Sample size= 361

The Taro Yamane formula was adopted with 0.05 as the error margin.

n= N
1+N(e)
n=3709
1+3709
(0.05)*(0.05)
n=361

Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the administration of the research instrument.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Opinion Leaders Influenced Voters' Choice of Candidate in Irri during the 2023 Presidential Election

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	249	69
Agree	58	16
Undecided	4	1
Disagree	31	9
Strongly disagree	19	5
Total	**361**	**100**

Table 1 shows that voters where influence by opinion leaders against the choice of their candidate during the 2023 presidential election in Irri community with 69%

Table 2: Reasons for Opinion Leader's Success in influencing the Voter's choice of Candidate

Variable	Frequent	Percentage
Lack of educational background of some the voters	22	6
Because they are seen as trustworthy people with reliable information about all the presidential candidates	198	55
The opinion leaders come with incentives to sway voters away from their choice of candidate	15	4
The partisan dispositions of party identification of opinion leaders	126	35
Total	**361**	**100**

Table 2 shows why opinion leaders were successful in influencing voters' choice of candidate during the 2023 presidential election with 55%.

Table 3: Responses on Opinion Leaders using Monetary Incentives to change voting Decisions of Voters

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	23	6.4
Agreed	29	8
Neutral	18	5
Disagreed	113	31.3
Strongly disagree	178	48.3
Total	**361**	**100**

From table 3, it is deduced that opinion leaders do not use monetary incentives in influencing voters against their choice of candidate.

Table 4: Responses on the Strategies used by Opinion Leaders to influence Voter's Choice of Candidates in the 2023 Presidential Elections

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Emotional appeal	56	16
Personal connection	128	35
Issue framing	15	4
Credibility and trust	162	44
Total	**361**	**100**

The data in the table show that credibility and trust were the strategies used by the opinion leaders to influence voters during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

It is clearly revealed in table 1 that opinion leaders influenced voters' choice of candidate during the 2023 presidential election in Irri community. The findings showed that opinion leaders influence voting choice of electorate's presidential candidates because the electorate depended and sought advice from the opinion leaders. It is clearly revealed in tables 2 & 4 that opinion leaders are also trust worthy and reliable source of information.

The findings also showed that voters turned to opinion leaders because they are the authorities who act as mediators between Politian and voters as confirm in the findings of Kown & Song (2015) that voters base their choices on the advice of people they see as knowledgeable authority who have knowledge of the candidate and believe to be trustworthy. It was also revealed that opinion leaders influences voter's choice of candidate because the voters sought the advice of opinion leaders; the reason been that the opinion leaders are more viable to get more information. This has resulted to gap in knowledge about the presidential candidates between the voters and the opinion leaders. This is in line with the knowledge gap theory. The findings agree with those of Ojomo &Amos (2019) who note that voters depend on opinion leaders for directions on voting decision about a credible candidate. This is also a confirmation of the principles of two-step flow theory that voters do not get messages from the primary source directly must pass through the opinion leaders to them via personal conversation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is safe to say from the results that most of the respondents were uneducated about how to vote for the right candidate and relied on opinion leaders. As a result, their reliance on opinion leaders in choosing their favoured candidate was significant. More so, people still rely more on opinion leaders because of their shared affiliations and interpersonal ties. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Government should establish an effective information distribution system. Since opinion leaders have such a large effect within the Irri community, the government and electoral agencies like INEC should develop a communication channel that would be directed towards the conscience of the opinion leaders in order for them to accurately and legitimately influence the voting decisions of the populace.
2. Media professionals are urged to develop political education and enlightenment that they may distribute to the electorate. By doing so, they can lessen the power of opinion leaders and encourage voters to consistently support their candidate of choice.

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CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CULTISM IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Bobby Eghosa Obayuwana; Emeke Precious Nwaoboli & Gloria Ehimwema Ogono

Introduction

The advent of the new media has no doubt made the world a global village, using a more advanced digital technology system of sending and receiving information as rightly observed by Marshall McLuhan (1964). The increase in the usage of the internet and mobile in Nigeria, especially among students in various tertiary institutions has now hastened the adoption of social media as the contemporary village square, where they easily interact, share ideas, aggregate their interests and share information (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Social media which comprise majorly Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram have all become the new normal among students of tertiary institutions across Nigeria, due to the widespread of the communications medium by individuals of virtually all ages, especially the Nigerian youth and students' community. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have become a major source of crime reporting and investigative journalism (as stated by Inyomih 2019, in Asemah, 2023). This goes to justify that social media are greatly used by the youth (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022).

Social media have made a profound impact in 21st Century social interaction. People now easily log in to social networking sites and access information easily due to the interactive nature of social media platforms. This is a result of technological expansion which has also affected internet soft wares leading to chatting sites known as "social media" (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013).

Ewusan (2007); Sponal & Gitimu, cited in Asemah (2022) posits that social media have created a phenomenon on the internet and gained popularity over the last decade by using platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp to create, maintain and sustain relationships. The utilisation of these social media is expected to bring significant improvement in the lives of their users, particularly heavy users and the heavy usage would translate not just into better academic performance, but social security through online anti-cultism campaign. Edegoh, Asemah & Ekanem (2013) posit that social media have been aggressively embraced with institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, particularly in Federal and State Institutions as well as Private Universities and polytechnic. Consequently, many of these academic institutions have now put technological and structural faculties necessary for easy access to social networking sites by both students and staff of these academic institutions, but the extent of utilisation of social media in promoting anti-cultism.

The speed at which news information is collected, evaluated and communicated through the social media nowadays plays a greater rate in crime prevention such cultism and its related activities (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). Despite the facts, the utilisation of social media in promoting anti-cultism and other related vices have not come to limelight due to the fact that students most times do not use the communications for the right purposes due to the non-regulation and unavailability of social media guidelines and usage overtime.

Previous studies have shown that platforms like YouTube and Facebook were only used to parade the names and activities of cult groups with no impact from social media platforms in promoting anti-cultism campaigns in various institutions across Nigeria. The origin of these cult groups were only paraded online without anti-cultism campaigns being carried out to mitigate their activities and allay the fears of students, many of who have fallen victims to this social menace, especially the freshers of many tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Investigative Journalism and crime reporting have led to the increase in awareness of cultism amongst tertiary institutions, in times in Nigeria through social networking sites, but the continuous effective usage of these sites by spreading anti-cultism campaign messages by University authorities and students is a fundamental issue that has been left unsolved since the advent of social media. While several studies have been carried out on media as weapon of unearthing cultism activities in various tertiary through awareness in institutions in Nigeria, not much has been done in utilising social media for the campaign against cultism, especially in the University of Benin which. It is against this back drop that this study was carried out to determine the utilisation of social media for promoting anti-cultism campaign in the University of Benin.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which social media tools are used to promote anti-cultism campaigns by the University of Benin.
2. Find out the level of exposure of University of Benin students to social media anti-cultism campaigns.
3. Ascertain the perception of the students about the social media anti-cultism campaigns.
4. Determine the influence of the campaigns on the attitude of university of Benin undergraduates.

Conceptual, Literature and Empirical Review

Dominick (2009) posits that social media network can also be referred to as a map of specified ties such as friendship, to which an individual is connected. Social networking sites include Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), Google talk, Google+Messenger, iPhone, Androids and so on (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013). Social media are online media that expedite conversation as opposed to traditional media (newspaper, magazine, television and radio) which deliver content, but do not allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation or development of the content (Ward, 2012, cited in Asemah *et al* 2013). Similarly, Haenlein (2010, p. 61), cited in Asemah, Illah & Edegoh (2013) defines social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Thus, social media guarantee greater interactive conversation between and among users.

Thousands of social media networks exist and they appeal to various groups for so many reasons. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) classify social media into six categories; namely: collaborative projects (Wikipedia); Blogs and Microblogs (Twitter); content communities (YouTube); social networking sites (Facebook); visual game worlds (world of wear craft) and visual social worlds (second life). These social media forms

use technologies such as blogs, picture sharing, V-logs; wall posting, e-mails, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) (Nwammuo, 2013). The most popular web-based social media include Linkedln, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsAApp Ning, Flickr, Google, StumbleUpon and Reddit (Edegoh, Ekanem & Asemah, 2013). These social networks increasingly provide a platform for recruiting employees, servicing customers, professional networking, personal and professional branding and marketing products and services

The new media, according to Asemah, Ekhareafo & Olaniran (2013) have brought significant advancement into the realm of human interactions and one thing that appears certain is that its uses are not without a cost.

According to Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr (2010), about 57% of social network users are 18-29 years old and have a personal profile on multiple social media websites. Quan-Haase & Young (2010), cited in Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013) found that 82% of college students reported logging into Facebook several times a day. Younger students tended to use Facebook more frequently than older students to keep in touch with friends from high school or from their hometown (Pempek *et al* 2009, cited in Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013). When internet technology has surged in popularity, it is reasonable to be curious about its impact on human face-to-face communication. Baym, Zhang & Lin (2004), cited in Sponcil & Gitimu (2013) found that the quality and quantity of interactions in other media were not threatened by social internet sites.

Studies conducted in Nigeria on internet use tend to yield similar findings. Igboaka & Hanson (2010) studied internet use in Ihiala, a rural Nigerian village. They found that internet users are mostly highly educated and that both students and business people use the internet for economic development purposes. Edegoh *et al* (2013) conducted a study on Facebook utilisation by students of Anambra State University. They found that students were heavy users of Facebook and that the gratifications they derive from using Facebook included chatting, information seeking and for academic purposes. Asemah & Nwaoboli (2021) conducted a survey which established that 78% of Nigerians use social media on a daily basis with 66% being University students.

Okonofua & Ewere (2018) examined the utilisation of social media for the campaign against cultism in the University of Lagos. The objective of this study was to examine the utilisation of social media platforms in raising awareness and combating cultism in the University of Lagos. The researchers employed quantitative research design, specifically survey approach. The findings showed that a significant proportion of students at the University of Benin actively used social media platforms for various purposes. Additionally, the majority of the participants believed that social media campaigns could effectively combat cultism on campus. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that university authorities and anti-cultism organisations should invest in targeted and well-designed social media campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of cultism.

Osagie (2019) examined social media utilisation for the campaign against cultism among Akwa Ibom State youth. The findings showed that social media platforms were utilised by various stakeholders, including government authorities, student groups and anti-cultism organisations, to raise awareness and disseminate information about cultism. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the development of comprehensive social media strategies that integrate offline activities to maximise the effectiveness of the campaign against cultism.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Philosopher, Abraham Kaplan (1964), cited in Yaroson & Asemah (2008) opines that a theory is a way of making sense out of a disturbing situation. Theories are important in any academic endeavour and this importance is premised on the fact that theories lend themselves to various texts and analysis such that the phenomenon central to the research get explained, clarified and even predicted as the case may be (Asemah 2010; Edegoh & Asemah, 2013).

Therefore, for better understanding of the study, two theories of communication have been chosen to provide the needed framework; namely: the uses and gratifications theory and the technological determinism theory. The uses and gratifications theory falls within media effects tradition and its bottom line is that media do not do things to people; rather, people do things with media. The specific objective of uses and gratifications theory is to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs (Burgeon, Hunsaker & Dawson, 1994, pp. 374-375). The theory explains the positive effect of individual media use. Thus, Asemah (2011) avers that the uses and gratifications theory proposes that audience-members use the media to satisfy their needs. These needs include learning, passing time, companionship, escape from tension, excitement and relaxation. Thus, the major assumption of the uses and gratifications theory, propounded in 1974 by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler & Michael Gurevitch is that people are not just passive receivers of mass media messages, but actively influence the message effects. This is because people selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain media messages on the basis of their needs and beliefs. Thus, Anaeto *et al* (2008, p. 71) rightly assert that there are as many reasons for using the media as there are media users. The relevance of the theory is located within the framework that recipients of media offerings actively influence the effect process: they selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain media messages.

Technological determinism theory was formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. The basic assumption of the theory is that the media are extensions of the human body; it holds that the media not only alter their environment, but also, the very message they convey (Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The theory asserts that technology decisively shapes how individuals think, feel and act and how societies organise themselves and operate. The relevance of the theory to the study cannot be over emphasised. The technology of social media have altered our environment to the extent that people can now easily share ideas, photos, videos, likes and dislikes, and have offered humanity a chance to be engaged and engage others (Ward, 2013, cited Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). This opportunity did not exist some decades ago. Users of social media are provided with opportunity to connect and be connected to by the social media technology.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is survey while questionnaire was the research instrument. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that survey is conducted to collect and analyse social, economic, psychological and other types of data. The research population consist all undergraduates at the University of Benin, with a total student population of 75,000 according to the Central Records Processing Unit of the institution. A sample size of

379 was arrived from the population.

The researchers adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the students were purposively chosen due to their higher availability during the study period compared to post-graduate students. In the second stage, the undergraduates were divided into faculties, using stratified sampling. The select faculties include Science, Agriculture, Management Science, Arts, Life Science, Social Science, Law, Physical Science, Dentistry, Medical Science, Bio-medical Science, Medicine, Education, Health Science, and Engineering. In the third stage, four faculties were randomly selected using a ballot system. The chosen faculties were Arts, Engineering, Educations and Agriculture. In the fourth stage, four departments were purposively selected within these faculties- Mass Communication department was chosen from the Faculty of Arts, Electrical Engineering from the Faculty of Engineering, English Education from the Faculty of Education, and Agricultural Extension from the Faculty of Agriculture. In the fifth stage, 100 students each were conveniently selected from the departments of Mass Communication, Electrical Engineering, and English Education, while 98 students were selected from the department of Agricultural Extension.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the copies of questionnaire that were administered, 368 which was 97% of the samples were successfully filled and returned, while the remaining 3% were invalid. The decision, therefore, was made by the 97% of the respondent whose copies of questionnaire were properly filled.

Table 1: Responses on University of Benin using Social Media for Campaigns against Cultism

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	65	20.4%
Agree	268	67.4%
Undecided	18	4.9%
Disagree	12	3.3%
Strongly disagree	5	1.4%
Total	**368**	**100**

In table 1, findings show that majority of the respondents (67.4%) agree than social media platforms were used to promote anti-cultism campaigns in the University of Benin.

Table 2: Social Media Channels of assessing anti-cultism Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	78	21.2%
Twitter	60	16.3%
Instagram	37	10.1%
Whatsapp	113	30.7%
YouTube	35	9.5%
Tik-Tok	45	12.2%
Others	0	0%
Total	**368**	**100**

The data in table 2 show that WhatsApp and Facebook were the channels through which

the students of university of Benin mostly assess the campaigns against cultism. This is based on the fact that majority (68.2%) of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 3: Responses on the Perception of the Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	113	30.17%
Effective	37	10.1%
Can't tell	35	9.5%
Less effective	45	12.2%
Not effective	0	0%
Total	**368**	**100**

The data in table 3 show that the campaigns are effective as majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 4: Responses on the Direction of Influence of the Campaigns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	287	78%
Negative	44	12%
Can't tell	37	10%
Total	**368**	**100**

In table 4, most of the respondents (78%) agreed that the utilisation of social media tools have positive influence on them.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicated that the utilisation of social media for the campaign against cultism in the University of Benin was perceived positively by the students. The campaigns were considered effective and influential in raising awareness and combating cultism on campus. Table 1 reveals that a significant majority of the respondents (67.4%) agreed that social media platforms were used to promote anti-cultism campaigns in the University of Benin. This indicates that social media were recognised as valuable tools for raising awareness and addressing the issue of cultism on campus as supported by Okonofua & Ewere (2018). Also, the findings showed that WhatsApp (30.7%) and Facebook (21.2%) were the most commonly used platforms by the students. These findings suggest that these platforms were effective in reaching and engaging the target audience, as they were the preferred choices for accessing campaign content.

Also, the findings reflected the respondents' perception of the effectiveness of the campaigns. A considerable proportion of the participants (30.17%) viewed the campaigns as very effective. This indicates that the utilisation of social media for anti-cultism campaigns in the University of Benin had a positive impact on the perception of the respondents and this is supported by Okonofua & Ewere (2018). Table 4 provides insights into the direction of influence of the campaigns on the respondents. The data show that majority (78%) of the participants perceived the influence of social media

campaigns against cultism as positive (Osagie, 2019). This suggests that the campaigns effectively conveyed their intended messages and fostered a positive change in attitudes and behaviours related to cultism. These findings support the idea that social media platforms can serve as powerful tools for addressing social issues and engaging with the target audience (Okonofua & Ewere, 2018; Osagie, 2019).

The findings demonstrate a connection between the uses and gratifications theory and technological determinism theory. According to the uses and gratifications theory, the high percentage of respondents agreeing that social media platforms were used for the campaigns indicates that students actively sought out and engaged with these platforms to fulfill their needs for information and participation in combating cultism. The preference for specific social media channels further support this theory, showing that students selectively chose platforms that best meet their needs. On the other hand, the technological determinism theory is supported by the positive influence of social media campaigns on the students. The perception of effectiveness and the positive impact reported by the respondents indicate that the implementation of social media played a role in shaping their attitudes and behaviours, aligning with the idea that technology influences social change as attested by Asemah & Nwaoboli (2021); Nwaoboli (2022; 2023); Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022).

Conclusion

The research investigated the awareness and perception of the use of social media for the promotion of anti-cultism campaign in the University of Benin. The findings showed that many of the respondents were exposed to social media channels like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instalgram and YouTube. The researchers conclude that social media platforms are extensively used in the fight against cultism in the University of Benin. The majority of the respondents agreed that social media was employed for anti-cultism campaigns, with WhatsApp and Facebook being the most commonly utilised channels. The campaigns were perceived as effective and had a positive influence on the students, as they reported a shift in attitudes and behaviours towards cultism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Constant campaigns against cultism should be encouraged through the use of social media during their sessional orientation programmes as they help the university community effectively sensitising and conscientising its staff and students against the ills of cultism, while structuring their focus on their social reality on campus, using the digital platforms.
2. Social media platforms should be adequately utilised and integrated alongside all other traditional forms of communication.

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PART THREE

MASS MEDIA, SOCIETY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

Gladys Osadebamwen Idahosa; Martha Joda & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The ability of language to convey a wide variety of messages across genres, including political speeches in which speakers exhibit their command of the language's fundamental functions-interactive (used for human communication), domain-based (as in politics) and symbol of identity, depends on how credible the language is perceived to be. Planned communications adhere to precise design and placement methods with the aim of altering public perceptions, attitudes and actions (Glik, 2004, cited in Asemah, 2012). Asemah (2009) observes that the media, whether electronic, print or new media often set agenda for the public to follow.

On May 29, 2023, immediately after taking over office as the Executive President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Ahmed Bola Tinubu gave his inaugural address at Eagles Square, Abuja.

Nigeria has seen both military and civilian government throughout its history. The 2023 presidential election that elected Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Nigeria's president was one of the most contentious since the Fourth Republic (1999). The immediate issues include massive obstacles, instability, corruption, the endless and apparently insurmountable fuel and electricity shortages. Thus, the researchers were motivated to analyse the speech presented by the President on the 29th of May, 2023.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the key themes and messages conveyed in the inaugural speech of President Bola Tinubu.
2. Analyse the language and rhetoric used in the speech.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the speech in communicating the President's messages to different audiences.

Conceptual, Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Any utterance that aids in communication is referred to as a speech act. Speech may be used, among many other things, to make declarations, ask questions, express regret, describe or convince. Additionally, it is implied that the kind of speech, the utterance's form and the situation in which it is employed, have an impact on the meaning of what we say. Speech acts are simply verbal actions that may be powerfully and subtly communicated in a variety of settings and circumstances. John Austin categorises and explains the idea of a speech act in great detail. The majority of people believe that communication is crucial to the planet and to every aspect of human existence (Asemah, 2011). Humans shape and exert power over society via communication (Asemah, 2011). Asemah (2023) observes that communication is a phenomena best understood in terms of

the influence or effect it has. "Speech act theory has been concerned with analysing the performance of linguistic acts (asserting, promising and questioning) as a rule-governed form of behaviour," according to the philosophy of language. Speech actions are used to express declarative statements because they have unique meanings rooted in socially plausible occurrences.

Speech act categories are developed by early pragmatics theorists. Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Behabitives and Expositives are the five classifications that Austin suggests. "Verdicts are typified by the giving of a verdict by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire," he claims. They might be an evaluation, calculation or estimate. Acquit, convict, count, diagnose and analyse are a few examples.

"The exercising of powers, rights or influence" is a definition of an exercise. Examples include choosing, suggesting, forewarning and ordering. Commissives are distinguished by undertaking or promising. Commissives are used to "commit the speaker to a particular course of action." Promise, underwrite, contract and covenant are just examples.

Habits "concern social behaviours and attitudes; they include the idea of response to other people's actions and fortunes as well as attitudes and manifestations of attitudes towards another person's previous behaviour or impending behaviour. A review of traditional and modern speech act theories aids in improving comprehension of speech actions. However, this research does not aim to cover the literature in its entirety.

The art of successful or persuasive speaking or writing, particularly the use of rhetorical devices and other compositional strategies, is known as rhetoric. Rhetoric is the presentation of a speech using cross-disciplinary insights. It is a human art or skill that is based on Aristotle's "three steps of rhetoric:" invention, arrangement and style, as well as three different types of rhetorical proofs: ethos (how a speaker's credibility and character can influence an audience to believe him or her credible), pathos (the use of emotional appeals to change the audience's judgements) and logos (the use of inductive and deductive reasoning to construct an argument).

Since the ancient era, rhetoric has been seen as the discourse art that gives authors and speakers the abilities to use speech actions to effectively communicate. From Greek times until the late 19th century, it was one of the three traditional conversation arts. Speakers were taught how to give compelling speeches in a variety of settings and organisations, such as courtrooms and assemblies, through classical rhetoric.

President Muhammadu Buhari's inauguration address was examined by Osisanwo (2017) from the perspective of Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT). According to the research, the president engaged in a variety of pragmatic activities, including suggesting, promising, assuring, appreciating and thanking people. Politics and language are intimately related since politics is a social phenomenon. According to Chilton (2004) and Osisanwo (2017), the core of politics is the battle for control of power, which is dependent on language's potent influence. Chilton (2004) continues to make the case that politics is seen as a mutual concord between the institutions and customs of a community for resolving conflicts and dissension over problems of influence, wealth and other forms of power.

This study is based on two theories; they are the stance and engagement theory and the speech act by Kent Bach & Robert M. Harnish. Hyland's posture and engagement model, which refers to the employment of rhetorical strategies to preserve social contact between researchers and their audience as well as allowing researchers to provide convincing conclusions was suggested in his work from 2005. Politicians utilise their stance and involvement in inaugural speeches as a tool to rally the state's support, brag about previous accomplishments, promise commitment to the state's beneficial growth and request unanimity from the populace. These results clarify the language used in inaugural speeches and assert that because of the position and engagement they include, political inaugural speeches provide access to knowledge about the political sphere's historical growth. Hyland's posture and engagement model, which refers to the employment of rhetorical strategies to preserve social contact between researchers and their audience as well as allowing researchers to give convincing judgements, was suggested in 2005. The assumptions made by various academics on the reality of life and knowing profoundly influence these linguistic decisions.

According to Hyland (2005), professionalism refers to the way researchers exhibit their voice or personality and transmit their assessments, ideas and convictions, while engagement refers to how researchers recognise and connect with their audience inside the text. Four components may be used to present a stance: hedges, boosters, attitude indicators and self-mentions. While engagement is more participant-oriented and focuses on how to include the audience in the discussion to "anticipate their possible objections and engage them in appropriate ways" (pp. 182), stance is more researcher-oriented and is concerned with how the researcher projects himself or herself in the text. It is made up of five primary components: the reader's pronouns, private asides, references to commonly held information, instructions and inquiries. Despite the fact that position and engagement seem to represent the author/speaker and the audience, respectively, Hyland (2005) contends that they are really two aspects of the same thing and overlap because they both support the interpersonal aspect of discourse.

According to Yaroson & Asemah (2008), Asemah (2011); Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2008), theories are crucial to research. Therefore, it is noteworthy in light of this research that no one factor is to blame for present behaviours that either originate behaviour or result in behavioural change in regards to environmental degradation. According to Asemah (2016), the media have the authority to bestow status on a person. According to Searle's Declarations, there are two categories of non-communicative illocutionary acts: Effective and Vindictive. According to Asemah & David (2021), a significant source of fresh knowledge and ideas for society's citizens is the mass media.

Methodology

The researchers adopted the hermeneutic approach to textual analysis. This method of textual analysis as noted by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) is utilised to provide in-depth description and interpretation of fundamental structures expressed in a media text. The instrument of study for this research was a coding manual and a data extraction form. The coding manual

contained a detailed description of the coding scheme, including the categories and codes used to identify themes, messages and rhetorical devices in the speech. The data extraction form was used to record the data extracted from the speech, including the text of the speech, the codes assigned to each segment and any additional notes or comments. The sampling technique was purposive sampling, which involves selecting the speech based on its relevance to the research objectives. In this case, the speech that President Tinubu delivered during his inauguration as the President of Nigeria was purposively selected for analysis. The sample size for this research was the entire text of the speech. Since the speech is a single document, it was considered as the complete sample for analysis. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the speech & ensures that all relevant themes, messages, and rhetorical devices are captured.

Data Presentation and Analysis

U.1*:* ''Fuel Subsidy is gone for good''

The president announced the total removal of fuel subsidy, saying the scheme has increasingly favoured the rich more than the poor. He added that the subsidy could no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake drying resources and illocutionary acts like promise, declaration, condemning. The encoder is aware of the incessant increase in pump price in the country. The speaker promises (commissive) to reverse the ugly trend. The notion of "felicity condition" makes it clear that U.1 is not supposed to be uttered by anybody who is not in a position to do so. Being the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the speaker makes an authoritative declaration that there will be a new status-quo (a paradigm shift), even though it is futuristic. By making his position clear, the speaker

U.2: ''My Administration will govern on behalf of the Citizens and not rule over them''

The utterance conveys a clear message (informative): that he will govern on behalf of the citizens and not rule over them. The speaker is displeased with the situation and does not want it to be a recurring decimal. In a country where good governance operates, the citizens is not relegated to the background. The use of the modal auxiliary "will" amplify the illocutionary force of the speaker's promise; the speaker makes the promise with "certainty, seriousness and willingness." Searle's speech act theory submits that varied psychological states are expressed in the use of speech acts. Cognitive pragmatics investigates the mental states (beliefs, thoughts and intentions of speakers-hearers). The modal auxiliary "will" make the audience believe in the speaker's proposition (the promise).

U.3: ''I will make Security top most Priority for in my Administration''

The speaker promises to focus on policies that will result in the progress of security in Nigeria. He thinks that the security sector should be given the priority it deserves. This implies that the speaker believes solid security is a catalyst for national growth and development. The modal auxiliary "will" conveys the seriousness of the commissive; the encoder's willingness to fulfil it.

U.4: ''I will make Food more abundant, but less costly''
Illocutionary Acts: informative, promise, persuading
The speaker utters from his background knowledge of one of the demands of Nigerians to increase production and engage in value-added processing. The livestock sector will be introduced to actions and food shall be made more abundant. The encoder speaks with absolute confidence to provide food for the citizens in a low rate. As a product of speaker-hearer shared knowledge, U.4 brings respite to the audience. According to Akinnaso, "communication is said to be effective when the sender's aim or objective of sending a message is achieved by acknowledging, understanding and implementing the message." The speaker believes that a good leader accepts and implements a reasonable proposal such as that presented by the President. By making sure that the timely speech is pleasant, unifying and audience-supportive, it can be concluded that the speaker uses speech act persuasively.

U.5 ''The Youth, I heard you loud and clear''
Illocutionary acts: responsive, ascriptive
The speaker desires to take the restive youth out of the streets of Nigeria. He is mindful of the expectations of parents for their children and expects his audience to infer his message appropriately. Adegbija posits that "inference involves the drawing of a conclusion from known or assumed facts or statements, from available data or particular premise. It is the deductive process through which the addressee or reader progresses from the literal meaning of an utterance to what the speaker/writer actually intends to express. The context of an utterance is often very crucial in making the appropriate inference. Inferences are made on the basis of the background context, our experience of life or world knowledge and the mutually shared beliefs. Knowledge of the literal meaning of an utterance often contributes to appropriate inference that will lead us to the non-literal meaning." The expression "loud and clear" is very awakening in terms of its potential to generate the listeners' trust. Indeed, it is a glimmer of hope for the target audience. The speaker tries to make the listeners understand that he is so worried about their plight that prompt action has to be taken. The expression "loud and clear" is germane; it shows colocation, has semiotic potential, it is cohesive and it is subtly prosodic. The utterance is informed by different antecedents that necessitated anti-government sentiments from the youth. One of the antecedents is the surprising massive votes given to the Labour Party by the angry youths. The speaker feels it is time to correct the misdemeanor in governance.

U.6: ''I will generate and distribute Power''
Illocutionary Acts: directive, informative, dissentive, condemning
The speaker promises to generate power and to make electricity more accessible and affordable to business and homes alike. The utterance (U.6) presents the speaker as a prospective reformer of the country's public universities. The speaker successfully communicates his timely message through appropriate choice of words.

U.7 ''Let us come together to build the Nation''
Illocutionary Acts: requestive, persuading

By engaging the audience in the task of nation-building, the speaker demonstrates the thrust of stance and engagement theory. Exploring the function of language, Bola Tinubu expresses himself accordingly. According to Crystal, language is "the systematic conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression." The utterance is suggestive of what the speaker thinks about leadership. He views leadership as a collective task which necessitates the cooperation of losers and winners in an election such as the 2023 presidential election that made him the nation's President-elect. It is the hearer's task to retrieve information from a speaker's utterance. The implicatures in the utterance can be worked out: the speaker is wise and understands that at such a post-election moment, there is the urgent need to pacify the political opponents who think that the election was rigged. Kempson defines pragmatics as "the study of the general cognitive principles involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance." The utterance is soothing, all-embracing, neutrality-laden and reassuring. The indexical expressions (personal pronouns) "us" and "our" establish speaker-hearer bond and give the audience a sense of collective goals and aspirations. Indeed, the speaker uses the personal pronouns to arrest the attention of the audience and get their approval.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that in order to effectively communicate his inaugural speech, the speaker incorporates several key elements; these include utilising shared knowledge, employing personal pronouns, employing goal-driven speech acts, fostering a connection between the speaker and the audience, issuing a call to action and appealing to the emotions of the listeners. The analysis shows that a political speech is a perfect genre for exploring the communicative abilities of language when it comes to describing the current state of society and proposing solutions to societal issues. The speech demonstrates that language is, in fact, a form of action. Political speeches are not created in isolation, rather, they are influenced by the social realities of the time. In the analysis of U.1-U.7, Bola Tinubu's inaugural speech focuses on various phenomena that are relevant to the discourse in Nigeria.

The speaker skillfully uses language ("linguistic engineering") to effectively convey his message to different groups of people, including young individuals, middle-aged individuals and older individuals. All these categories of audience share a common desire: they want to see the dividends of democracy in the upcoming administration, which will be led by the speaker. It can be inferred from the analysis that the speaker holds certain political ideologies. He expresses these ideologies in both subtle ways (through implicature) and direct ways (through explicit speech acts). The speaker's use of implicature to express their viewpoints on the game of politics is quite intriguing. They touch on three different perspectives: the "controversial perspective," the "do-or-die perspective" and the "service-to-humanity" perspective. These perspectives primarily revolve around social issues that are addressed through the use of language. Labov accurately points out that language cannot be separated from its social context, as special meaning relies on language. Omachonu *et al* point out that language primarily refers to human linguistic behaviour. Language plays a significant role in human affairs.

Interpersonal communication and identity formation play a crucial role in all the activities that humans engage in.

Speech acts performed across U.1-U.7 encompass a range of communicative functions, such as providing information, making promises, giving directives, persuading others, expressing dissent, condemning certain actions or behaviours, responding to others and ascribing attributes or characteristics to individuals or groups. These speech acts are not accidental. The main purpose of the speech informs them. The fact that the Master Speech Act is informative and used to inform the audience about what to expect in the incoming regime is not surprising. Adegbija argues that a significant amount of discourse functions as a Master Speech Act. This Master Speech Act serves as the foundation for all other speech acts that are incorporated into it, allowing the writer or speaker to effectively convey their message. Consider table 1 for information on speech acts across U.1-U.7:

Table 1. Information on Speech Acts across U.1-U.7

Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage	Communicative Function
Informative	5	20%	to make the audience know y
Promise	4	16%	undertaking to do y
Declaration	2	8%	to declare that something is y
Condemning	4	16%	to reject y
Ascriptive.	3	12%	to give attributes to y
Persuading	3	12%	to make the audience believe y
Responsive	1	4%	to react to y
Directive	1	4%	to direct the audience to do y
Dissentive	1	4%	to refuse to accept y
Requestive	1	4%	to desire x from the audience

Ten speech act categories are performed in the selected corpora. Table 1 shows the speech acts, their frequencies, percentages and communicative functions in the entire body of discourse. Informative (20%) is used "to make the audience know y" (where x is an infinite, unspecified entity). In a promise (16%), the speaker "is undertaking to do y." In declaration (8%), the speaker "declares that something is y." "To reject y counts as "condemning (16%) y." An ascriptive (12%) "gives attributes to y." A speaker is persuading (12%) the audience if the speaker's utterance is "to make the audience believe y." "To react to y" is "to make a responsive" (4%). A directive (4%) is "to direct the audience to do x." A dissentive (4%) is "to refuse to accept y." Arequestive (4%) is "to desire y from the audience." Interestingly, speech acts can have primary and secondary illocutionary acts in context. This view aligns with the literature. For example, in Bola Tinubu's election victory speech, informatives, promise, declaration, condemning, ascriptive and responsive are used essentially to persuade (the hearers that things will get better in the incoming administration of the President). The speech successfully aroused the audience's emotions. Language philosophers (pragmatic theorists) acknowledge that the goal of pragmatics is to process language for smooth communication.

Conclusion

This paper is a rhetorical analysis of the inaugural speech of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The findings revealed that rhetorical devices were employed in the inaugural speech on May 29th, 2023, to pass across certain covert messages to the audience. The resources of language were deployed by the President to persuade, influence and control the cognition of the Nigerian audience. This shows a strong connection between rhetorical devices and ideological contents in political speeches.

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CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

PERCEPTION OF BROADCAST MEDIA COVERAGE OF BANDITRY IN NIGERIA AMONG RESIDENTS OF KASTINA STATE IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA

Zakari Omale; Adeline O. Nkwam-Uwaoma & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

For some time now, bandits have held Nigeria hostage with their heinous activities. They have been involved in kidnapping for ransom, attacking public places, raping and invading communities. Parts of Northern Nigeria such as Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Kebbi have witnessed an increasing rate of activities of bandits (Ugwu, Etummu, Talabi, Fadeyi, Aiyesimoju, Apuke & Gever, 2021). Their mode of operation involves maiming and killing their victims when they least expect it. Normally, they would mount fast motorcycles through the forests into the neighbourhood, particularly at night, and shoot at will (Ademola, 2021).

The activities of bandits have a significant negative impact on society. This is because their activities have led to a disruption in the socio-economic routines of the affected places, led to the death of many people while it has also injected fear into the populace. For example, only in 2018, bandits were responsible for the death of 1,100 people in six of the Northern states of Nigeria. The following year, 2019, the number of casualties attributed to the activities of bandits was 2,200. This represented a 67% increase in the number of deaths caused by the activities of bandits. Furthermore, in 2021, bandits killed 3, 125 persons in Nigeria (Oyero, 2021). The number has continued to increase with no sign that this will end anytime soon.

The high number of death caused by banditry is a testimony of the magnitude of the problem and how it has affected the lives and livelihood of people living in Northern Nigeria. For example, a total of 247,000 have been displaced by bandits. Also, the activities of bandits have resulted in more than 41,000 refugees (Acaps, 2020). This statistics paint a picture of the magnitude of the problem and the need for all the stakeholders in Nigeria to contribute in finding solutions to the problem.

Broadcasting as a concept may be described as the process of spreading messages far and wide (Asemah & Asogwa, 2016). The media in general and broadcast media, in particular, have a role to play in hastening a resolution to the problem. Through their surveillance role, the broadcast media can scan the society and set agenda on the security challenge with the expectation that this will contribute in addressing the problem. Gever (2015) says the surveillance function of the broadcast media places on them (the broadcast media) the responsibility of monitoring society and reporting events that happen in society. It entails that the broadcast media should constantly beam their searchlight on society and determine issues that require urgent attention. Udeze & Chukwuma (2016) aver that the idea behind the surveillance role of the broadcast media is the need to provide warning signs and suggest solutions with the aim of making society a better place. Banditry is one of the critical issues in which case the broadcast media need to play its surveillance role so that they can contribute in addressing the problem. Based on the foregoing, it becomes necessary to determine Kastina residents' perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing activities of banditry in Nigeria, studies on public perception of broadcast media coverage of the security challenges are limited. For example, Ugwu, Etummu, Talabi, Fadeyi, Aiyesimoju, Apauke & Gever (2022) whose study focused on banditry did not examine public perception, instead, the researchers examined media coverage of the security challenge. Although Ugwu *et al* included broadcast media in their sample, they did not examine public perception. The implication is that beyond the general scanty literature on media coverage of banditry, the available studies also paid less attention to public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry. Although, Ezegwu, Obichili, Agbasimelo & Omokapue (2021) examined public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry, they conducted the study in Edo State, where there are no little or no banditry activities. In addition, Ezegwu, Obichili, Agbasimelo & Omokapue excluded important measures like perception on time allocated to banditry as well as the public perception on the key issues that are contained in broadcast media coverage of banditry. This is the gap this study fills.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure to broadcast media messages on banditry.
2. Determine public perception of the allocation of time to banditry in broadcast media coverage of the issue.
3. Ascertain public perception of the type of issues that are highlighted in broadcast media coverage of banditry.

Review of Related Literature

Broadcasting is the transmission of information through the airwaves from a broadcast station to a large, scattered and heterogeneous audience. It involves the transmission of information, news, entertainment, or educational programming to a large number of recipients simultaneously (Asemah & Amah, 2021; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023; Nwaoboli, 2023a). Asemah (2011a) and Asemah & Asogwa (2016) aver that broadcasting enables a broadcast station to reach out to people who are located in different locations and also different in demographics and psychographic make-up. Broadcast media is made up of radio and television. The broadcast media through their programmes can create awareness of security issues, educate the general public on security issues as well as set public agenda. Nwabueze & Ebeze (2013) aver that broadcast media have a role to play in addressing the growing security challenges facing Nigeria. They note that the broadcast media can set agenda on insecurity and educate the audience members to take precautionary measures.

There are many strategies that the broadcast media can adopt to promote national security and combat security challenges. Among such strategies is the creation of special programmes that are aimed at addressing security challenges by galvanising the general public to support security agencies and become more aware of security threats. In Nigeria, for example, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria has a security programme called "Watch 360." The programme is aired on the Network Service at 5:30 pm every Sunday. The aim of the programme is to create a sense of security alertness among the general public and also set public agenda regarding security issues in Nigeria. Odishika (2021) explores the usefulness of *WATCH 360* radio programme in addressing security changes

in Nigeria and concluded that the programme is a good example of the role of radio in addressing national security challenges in Nigeria. Odishika adds that the programme has been able to set security agenda in Nigeria and suggest ways of making the country free from security challenges. Asemah, Anum & Edegoh (2013) say that radio has the capacity to promote positive development and promote the security of lives and property.

Another way through which broadcast media can contribute in addressing security challenges is through their coverage and reportage. The broadcast media can set agenda on security issues by frequently reporting such issues in manners that draw the attention of the concerned authorities. In this instance, the broadcast media allot airtime to such issues and frame them in ways that contribute in resolving and not escalating them.

Banditry in Nigeria has dealt a heavy blow on Nigerian society. It has impacted negatively on the mental health of those affected, created an atmosphere of fear, impacted on economic activities, education as well as the social life of people. Okoli & Okpaleke (2014) say that banditry encompasses violent crimes such as village raids, kidnaping, cattle rustling and armed robbery. In the view of Ojo (2020), banditry is an organised crime that is driven by economic motivation. Whatever definition that is given to banditry, the central point is that banditry is a crime that is coordinated with leaders, members and sometimes with a name. Bandits usually have economic motives and for that reason, they engage in violent activities that will enable them to achieve their goals.

Bandits in Northern Nigeria began in 2011, shortly after the general election (Olayoku, 2014) and since then, it has become a serious security threat to the existence of Nigeria. Bandits have been engaged in the kidnapping for ransom of school children and other innocent citizens. The British Broadcasting Corporation (2021) in painting a disturbing picture of bandits in Nigeria reported that in July 2021, over 300 students in Nigeria were held hostage by bandits. The report indicated that the victims were from different states of the federation like Niger, Kebbi and Kaduna. The report further revealed that bandits in Nigeria have set many houses ablaze and in some instances, levied villages and communities outrageous amounts in exchange for protection.

Gever & Nwabuzor (2014) did a study to examine the influence of broadcast media messages on the security alertness of the general public. The researchers applied the descriptive survey research design and sampled 400 participants. They conducted the study in Enugu state and collected data with the use of a structured questionnaire. Gever & Nwabuzor found that broadcast media significantly contributed to improving security alertness among the general public. Despite this, the study did not examine public perception of broadcast media coverage of insecurity. In addition, the focus of the study was not banditry. The current study fills this gap.

Udeze & Chukwuma (2016) did a study to examine public assessment of broadcast media promotion of national security. The study was conducted in Nigeria and a sample of 625 from one city in each of the six geo-political zones. They used a descriptive survey research design and collected data with the use of a structured questionnaire. The result of the study revealed that the assessment of the general public was that the broadcast media were not effective in discharging their surveillance role to the Nigerian society. The study of Udeze & Chukwuma is relevant to the current one because it examined the audience assessment of broadcast media coverage of security issues. However, the researchers did not examine banditry. The current study fills this gap by examining the public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry.

Ugwu, Etummu, Talabi, Fadeyi, Aiyesimoju, Apauke & Gever (2022) examined broadcast media coverage of banditry in Nigeria. The researchers examined Nigerian Television Authority, Channels Television as well as two newspapers. The researchers used content analysis and collected data with the use of code sheet. The researchers found that broadcast media like television stations had less volume of coverage than newspapers. Although, Ugwu *et al* examined media coverage of banditry, less attention was paid to public perception. Instead, the researchers examined media content. In the current study, attention was paid to public perception.

Amos (2015) did a study to examine the adherence to ethical principles in media reportage of insecurity in Kenya. The researchers applied a qualitative research design and studied both broadcast and print media in Kenya. Their results revealed that the media in Kenya hardly makes use of experts in their reportage of insecurity. The less utilisation of experts' views, according to the researchers, was capable of denying the general public important information on security issues. The researchers also found that there were instances of sensational headlines and overblown captions. Although, Amos added broadcast media in the sample, the sample also included print media. Overall, the study of Amos highlighted the critical role of broadcast media in promoting security issues and driving government policies and programmes on security issues. However, Amos, did not examine public perception.

Ezegwu, Obichili, Agbasimelo & Omokapue (2021) did a study to examine audience perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry and kidnapping with a focus on residents of Benin-City. The researchers sought answers on the extent of coverage of banditry and kidnapping, the specific broadcast media that cover banditry and kidnapping and audience perception of the impact of broadcast media coverage of kidnaping and banditry. The participants in the study were 400 residents of Benin-City and data were collected with the use of a structured questionnaire. The researchers found that 74% of the respondents agreed that the broadcast media actually covered banditry and kidnapping to a reasonable extent.

The researchers further reported that 87% of the respondents reported that private broadcast stations covered banditry and kidnapping than publicly owned broadcast stations. Finally, the researchers reported that residents of Benin-City had positive perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry and kidnapping. Although the study of Ezegwu *et al* is relevant to the study because it examined public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry, there are many limitations to the study. First, the study was conducted in Benin-City which is not affected by banditry; thus, raising questions on the appropriateness of the population. In the second place, the researchers paid less attention to exposure in the research objectives and questions. Another limitation from the study is that the measurement units used for the study appeared to have provided little details regarding the issue. In the current study, the researcher fills the identified gaps.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda setting and perception theories were used in this study to investigate public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry in Nigeria. Agenda setting theory is first traced to the 1922 book by Walter Lippmann entitled *Public Opinion* (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023; Nwaoboli, 2023b). Walter had in the book argued that the mass media of communication influence the views that people have regarding issues. In other words, the picture in people's head is determined by the media (Lippmann, 922, p. 29, cited in

Asemah, 2011c; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The actual postulation of the theory was done in 1972 through the study of Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw. The researchers investigated 100 undecided voters in Chapel Hill to ascertain the influence of the news media in their knowledge of the public agenda and reported that when editors select news items, they are setting agenda for the public. In the view of Asemah (2011a; Asemah, 2011b), the theory is essential in understanding the impact of media content on the audience. Researchers (Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo 2013; Asemah, 2012; Asemah, Edegoh & Ezebuenyi, 2013; Asemah & Edegoh, 2012; Illah, Ogwo & Asemah, 2012; Asemah, 2015; Yaroson & Asemah, 2008) hold the view that agenda setting theory is a useful theoretical postulation for investigating the impact of the media in setting public agenda.

The researchers used Ann Marie Barry's perception theory to augment the agenda setting theory. Ann Marie Barry suggested the theory in 2004 to explain how people develop views and opinions as a result of their exposure to stimuli. Barry argues that the mind does do not form perception until when people get exposed to information for them to process it and then form perception. Researchers (Asemah, Edegoh & Ojih, 2013; Asemah, David & Akpabio, 2022; Tsegyu & Asemah, 2013; Asemah, Nwammuo & Edegoh, 2014) have found that perception is an important aspect of media studies because it offers information on the impact of media content on the audience. Therefore, the researchers considered perception theory an important framework for the study to understand how exposure to broadcast media influences public perception of their coverage of banditry.

Methodology

Descriptive survey was used to examine public perception of media coverage of banditry. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), descriptive survey is useful for studies that examine phenomena. Therefore, descriptive survey was used because it enabled the researchers to examine public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry. All the residents of Katsina State made up the population of this study. The National Bureau of Statistics (2012) projects that Katsina State has a projected population of 7,831,319. A total of 385 residents of Katsina State constituted the sample size for this study. The sample size was determined with the application of Australian calculator. The researchers set the confidence level as 0.05 and 0.5 was set as population proportion.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in this study. In the first stage, the researcher divided Katstina state into three senatorial districts (Katsina North, Katsina Central and Katsina South). In the second stage, the researchers used the fishbowl method to randomly select three local governments (Mani, Katsina and Matazu Local Governments) respectively from the senatorial districts. In the third stage, two towns from each of the local governments were selected through simple random sampling technique. For Mani Local Government (Jani and Jino), Katsina Local government (Makera and Sabon layi) and Daura local government area (Daberam and Don-Nakola Garjiya). In the fourth stage, convenience sampling technique was used to share 64 copies of questionnaire to respondents in the select towns, except Daberam where 65 copies were distributed.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 385 copies of questionnaire administered to the participants, 352 copies were filled and returned. This number represents 91%, which was regarded as sufficient for analysis.

Table 1: Exposure to Broadcast Media Messages on Banditry

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	72	20
High	44	13
Moderate	180	51
Low	56	16
Not exposed	0	0
Total	**352**	**100**

In table 1, the researchers sought to determine the extent of exposure to broadcast media coverage of banditry. The result of the study revealed that the majority of the participants reported moderate extent. This implies that participants in the study were exposed to broadcast media coverage of banditry, hence the need to ascertain their perception.

Table 2: Perception on Time allocated to Stories on Banditry

Item	Frequency	Percentage
High time	102	29
Moderate time	190	54
Less Time	60	17
Total	352	100

The researchers sought to determine the time allotted to stories on banditry. The result of the study showed that the majority of the participants indicated moderate time while 29% reported high time and 17% indicated less time.

Table 3: Perception on Key Issues in Broadcast Media Coverage of Banditry

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Attacks	2.8	.90	Accepted
Kidnapping	2.9	.32	Accepted
Ransom	2.7	.98	Accepted
Threats	3.0	.89	Accepted
Solution	2.1	.43	Rejected
Impact of banditry	2.7	.65	Accepted
Government reaction	3.2	.32	Accepted

The researchers computed the table above to determine the key issues that were featured prominently in broadcast media reports on banditry. The result of the study showed that of all the items presented, solution was the only item that was rejected because it did not meet the 2.5 required bench mark for accepting or rejecting items. Therefore, the broadcast focused on other issues but paid less attention to solution to banditry.

Discussion of Finding

The findings showed that the extent of exposure to broadcast media message on banditry was average. There is an important implication from this finding. It suggests that broadcast media will need to do more to ensure that the general public are exposed to messages on

banditry. This is important because it will help them to take precautionary measures that will reduce their vulnerability to bandits' activities. This is particularly important because the study of Gever & Nwabuzor (2014) showed that exposure to broadcast messages on security was an important requirement for the audience to develop security alertness and take part in addressing the security challenges posed by the broadcast media. The result of this study has also extended the study of Ugwu *et al* (2022) that examined the coverage of banditry in the broadcast and print media without paying attention to exposure to broadcast media messages on the security threat.

The findings further showed that the public perceives the broadcast media as allotting average time to the issue of banditry. Ordinarily, this is not bad because the broadcast media have other issues to also report. Issues like politics, education, environment, entertainment and agriculture, among others equally deserve attention in the broadcast media and it will be unreasonable to expect that the broadcast media will abandon all other issues and focus on banditry. This aspect of the current study has extended the study of Udeze & Chukwuma (2016) that examined public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry without paying attention to the time allotted. This information is important because it offers an insight into the value that the broadcast media places on an issue. The study has also extended that of Ezegwu *et al* (2021) that examined public perception of broadcast media coverage of banditry and kidnapping with less attention paid to how the public perceives the time broadcast media allot to security issues.

Finally, the result of the study revealed that the public perceives that issues that received attention in broadcast media coverage of banditry to include kidnapping, attacks, ransom, government response and the impact of banditry. The issue of solution did not receive attention in broadcast media coverage of banditry. These results have extended the study of Ezegwu *et al* (2021) and Amos (2015) that examined broadcast media and coverage of insecurity without paying attention to solutions to security challenges. Understanding how the broadcast media highlight solutions to banditry in their coverage is important because it will offer information that could guide the broadcast media in Nigeria on how to set public agenda on security challenges.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that the general public in Katsina is exposed to broadcast media messages on banditry. The broadcast media also allot reasonable time to the security challenge. However, the broadcast media paid less attention in setting the public agenda on solutions to the security challenge. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. There is a need for the broadcast media in Nigeria to continue to use different programming techniques to ensure that the audience members are exposed to messages on banditry. This recommendation is important because strategic programming is one of the ways that broadcast media in Nigeria can contribute in addressing Nigeria's security challenges.
2. Although the overall time allotted to banditry was perceived not to be bad, there is still room for improvement as such timing was found to be average. This is important because it is through time allocation that broadcast media in Nigeria will be able to educate the general public on issues relating to banditry.
3. Broadcast media in Nigeria should focus on promoting solutions to banditry, instead of paying more attention to their activities. This is important because setting the agenda on solution to banditry will continuously remind stakeholders on the need to end banditry as soon as possible.

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CHAPTER FORTY

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 2023 FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL IN NIGERIA

Jibrin Umar Omachi; Victoria Ugbedeojo Ikani & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Fuel subsidy removal has been a highly contentious issue in Nigeria for several years. The Nigerian government has been subsidising fuel prices since the 1970s, with the aim of making fuel affordable for citizens (Akinlo, 2012). However, the subsidy has become a burden on the government's finances, leading to calls for its removal. Fuel subsidy is a contentious issue in Nigeria, with proponents arguing that it is necessary to keep fuel prices affordable for the average citizen, while opponents argue that it is a drain on the country's resources and encourages corruption. Over the years, the Nigerian government has implemented various policies aimed at reforming the fuel subsidy system, including partial deregulation and attempts to remove the subsidy entirely (Akinduyite & Ekpo, 2013).

On May 29, 2023, the Nigerian government announced its plan to remove fuel subsidies completely; a move that was met with mixed reactions from the public. Many Nigerians expressed concerns about the potential impact of this decision on the cost of living, inflation and the economy at large, while others welcomed the move as a necessary step towards reducing government spending and promoting economic growth.

Mass media outlets played a crucial role in covering the issue; with various news outlets providing different perspectives on the matter. The role of the media in shaping public opinion on this issue cannot be overstated as one of the roles of the mass media is to shape public opinion on topical issues in the society (Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli, 2023; Asemah, 2009). The mass media have the power to influence the way people perceive and understand government's decision and can help to shape the discourse around the issue (Asemah, 2011a; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021).

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria in 2023 sparked widespread debate and protests, with various mass media outlets providing coverage of the issue. The media has played a critical role in shaping public opinion on this issue, but there are concerns about the quality and accuracy of media coverage. Some critics have accused the media of bias and sensationalism and there is need to investigate the extent to which these concerns are valid. Although, several researchers such as Oyesomi & Ilesanmi (2013) have carried out studies on mass media and fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria, none, to the best of knowledge of the researchers, has been carried out on public perception of mass media coverage of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. As such, the study sought to answer the question: What is the public's perception of the mass media coverage of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria? This is the problem of study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the extent of public exposure to mass media messages on the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the mass media platforms through which members of the public were exposed to news stories on the 2023 Fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the public perception on mass media coverage of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.

Conceotualisation of Fuel Subsidy

Fuel subsidy is a policy implemented by governments to reduce the cost of fuel for consumers by providing financial support to fuel producers or distributors (Adenikinju, 2013). This support is usually in the form of price control mechanism that sets the price of fuel below the market price, with the objective of making fuel more affordable to consumers, particularly those on low incomes. Proponents of fuel subsidies argue that they reduce the cost of living for the poor and vulnerable segments of the population, who may struggle to afford basic necessities such as food and transportation (Adenikinju, 2013).

However, opponents of fuel subsidies argue that they are inefficient, costly and place a significant strain on government finances. Critics also express concerns that fuel subsidies benefit the wealthy more than the poor since wealthier households tend to consume more fuel. Despite these concerns, many countries continue to implement fuel subsidies as means of supporting low-income households, promoting economic growth and stimulating investment in the energy sector. According to Olayungbo (2015), fuel subsidy can also refer to the difference between the market price of fuel and the price paid by consumers, which is often subsidised by the government. Fuel subsidies can take various forms, such as direct payments to fuel producers or distributors, tax exemptions or price controls. The implementation of fuel subsidies can have significant economic and social implications. While fuel subsidies can help to reduce the cost of living for consumers, they can also be costly for governments, lead to inefficiencies and market distortions and benefit the wealthy more than the poor.

Furthermore, fuel subsidies can also refer to the direct transfer of funds from the government to consumers to offset the cost of fuel (Bigsten, 2010). This type of subsidy is often implemented in developing countries as a means of supporting low-income households. Direct fuel subsidies can have positive effects on poverty reduction and social welfare by making fuel more affordable for low-income households. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of this approach, as direct subsidies may be costly for governments and can be subject to fraud and corruption. There are also concerns that direct subsidies can lead to market distortions and inefficiencies.

Understanding Mass Media

The media are seen as the channels that are used for conveying messages from a source to a very large audience (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b, Asemah, 2011c; Asemah, 2011d). Mass media refer to the various forms of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time (Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah & Amah, 2021; Kenechukwu, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah, 2013). These communication channels include television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the internet. According to McQuail & Windahl (2015), mass media are an important tool for communication and entertainment

in modern society. It plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and cultural norms and is considered an essential component of modern society.

According to Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah (2021), mass media messages are transmitted through various channels to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences. Katz & Lazarsfeld (2006) define mass media as the channels through which messages are transmitted to large, heterogeneous, and widely dispersed audiences. The authors emphasise the importance of understanding the characteristics and preferences of the audience in the design and dissemination of mass media messages. This understanding is crucial as it can impact the effectiveness and influence of the messages.

McLuhan & Fioure (2017) define mass media as extensions of man that amplify or enhance a particular sense or function. They argue that mass media technologies, such as television and radio, have the power to shape human perception and experience. They are an integral part of human evolution and their impact on society cannot be ignored.

The influence of mass media on society is significant and its impact on shaping public opinion and cultural norms cannot be ignored. Mass media have the power to shape how people consume and interpret information, how they perceive the world around them and how they interact with each other (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022a; Asemah, 2023b; Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2013). They also play an essential role in informing public policy and shaping political discourse. However, the impact of mass media on society is not always positive (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021a; 2023b). There are concerns about the potential for misinformation and the spread of fake news, as well as the influence of mass media on children and young adults, who are particularly vulnerable to media messages. Additionally, there are concerns about the concentration of media ownership, which can limit diversity of viewpoints and stifle free speech.

Conceptualisation of Public Perception

Public perception refers to the collective beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and judgments held by the general public or a specific group of people towards a particular individual, organisation, product, event, or concept (Ayeni & Nwaoboli, 2023; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023b; Nwaoboli, 2021). According to Griffin (2018), public perception is the way in which individuals and groups form opinions about issues, events and people based on the information available to them. The author emphasises that public perception is subjective and can be influenced by a wide range of factors, including media coverage, personal experiences and cultural norms. Howe, Markowitz & Lee (2015) define public perception as the collection of beliefs, attitudes and opinions that people hold about climate change. Ovie & Nwaoboli (2022) argue that public perception of is shaped by a complex interplay of knowledge, cognitive heuristics and psychological factors and that understanding these factors is crucial for effective communication and policy development.

Cantril & Allport (1960), cited in Nwaoboli (2021) define public perception as the attitudes and beliefs of a significant number of people about matters of public concern. The authors argue that public perception is shaped by a complex interplay of individual and social factors, and that understanding these factors is crucial for effective communication and policy development.

In summary, public perception is the collection of beliefs, attitudes and opinions that people hold about issues, events and people based on the information available to them.

It is subjective and can be influenced by a wide range of factors, including media coverage, personal experiences, and cultural norms. Understanding public perception is crucial for effective communication and policy development, as it is shaped by a complex interplay of individual and social factors.

History of Fuel Subsidy in Nigeria

Fuel subsidy in Nigeria has been in existence since the 1970s (Amnesty International, 2023). It was introduced as a means of controlling the price of fuel and ensuring its availability to the public. The subsidy was initially intended to provide relief to the poor and vulnerable, who were most affected by the rising cost of fuel. Over the years, however, the subsidy has become a subject of intense debate due to its economic, social and political implications. On January 1, 2012, the Nigerian government announced its intention to remove fuel subsidy, citing the need to reduce the drain on government resources and combat corruption (Adenikinju, 2013). The decision was met with widespread protests and strikes, as Nigerians took to the streets to express their opposition to the policy (Adenikinju, 2013). The protests, which were largely peaceful, were led by civil society groups, labor unions and student organisations. The protests were characterised by a range of activities, including rallies, marches and sit-ins. The protesters called for the immediate reversal of the policy, arguing that the removal of fuel subsidy would lead to an increase in the cost of living and exacerbate poverty and inequality. They also called for an end to corruption and mismanagement in the Nigerian government.

The protests were met with a heavy-handed response from the Nigerian government, which deployed security forces to disperse the protesters and arrest their leaders. The government also imposed a curfew and banned public gatherings in some parts of the country, in an attempt to quell the protests (Olayungbo, 2015). Despite the government's efforts to suppress the protests, they continued for several weeks and ultimately led to a partial reversal of the fuel subsidy removal policy. The government reinstated a partial fuel subsidy, which resulted in a reduction in the price of fuel, although it was still higher than the pre-removal price. As such, the protests were eventually called off on January 16, 2012, after the government agreed to reduce fuel prices and implement other reforms in the oil sector (Akinlo, 2012).

In 2016, the Nigerian government again attempted to remove fuel subsidies, citing the need to reduce government spending and boost economic growth (Amnesty International, 2023). The move was met with protests and opposition from labor unions and civil society groups, who argued that removing the subsidies would lead to higher fuel prices and increased hardship for ordinary Nigerians. The protests were largely peaceful, but there were some incidents of violence and clashes with security forces. The government eventually backed down from its plans to remove the fuel subsidies, and fuel prices were kept at their subsidised levels.

In 2020, the Nigerian government again attempted to remove fuel subsidies as part of a wider economic reform programme (Amnesty International, 2023). The move was met with protests and opposition from labour unions and civil society groups, who argued that removing the subsidies would lead to higher fuel prices and increased hardship for ordinary Nigerians. The protests were largely peaceful, but there were some incidents of violence

and clashes with security forces. The government eventually agreed to partially restore the fuel subsidies, but fuel prices remained higher than their subsidised levels. Finally, on May 29, 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu during his presidential inauguration removed fuel subsidy. This was met by mixed reactions as the president had declared that no matter the protest by anyone, the subsidy removal would still not be reversed (Amnesty International, 2023).

Mass Media Coverage of Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

The media have played a crucial role in shaping public opinion on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. The coverage of fuel subsidy removal has been characterised by a range of activities, including news reporting, opinion pieces and editorial content. The media have also used a range of platforms, including print, broadcast and online media, to disseminate information and shape public opinion. The media coverage of fuel subsidy removal has been influenced by a range of factors, including the political leanings of media organisations, the level of government control over the media and the interests of advertisers and sponsors (Oyesomi & Ilesanmi, 2013). Some media organisations have been critical of fuel subsidy removal, arguing that it would lead to an increase in the cost of living and exacerbate poverty and inequality. Others have been supportive of the policy, arguing that it would reduce the drain on government resources and combat corruption.

The media coverage of fuel subsidy removal has also been influenced by the level of public awareness and engagement on the issue. When fuel subsidy removal was announced in 2012, 2016 and 2020, there was a widespread outcry and protests across the country (PwC Nigeria, 2023). The media played a crucial role in documenting and disseminating information about the protests, which helped to shape public opinion and put pressure on the government to reverse the policy. The mass media have reported on the issue of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria in various ways, including:

a. **News Reporting**: News reports on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria in 2023 provided updates on the policy, including the government's rationale for the removal, the reaction of stakeholders and the impact on the economy and the people (Tax & Business Matters, 2023). These reports also highlighted the protests and strikes that followed the announcement of the policy, as well as the government's response to the protests in the former removals of the protests.

b. **Opinion Pieces:** Opinion pieces in the mass media provided a platform for experts, activists, and stakeholders to express their views on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria (Tax & Business Matters, 2023). These opinion pieces presented different perspectives on the policy, including the economic, social, and political implications of the removal, as well as the alternatives to the policy.

c. **Editorial Contents:** Editorial contents in the mass media provided a summary of the issue, as well as the position of the media organisation on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. These editorials presented the arguments for and against the policy, and called on the government to address the concerns of the people.

d. **Investigative Journalism:** Some media organisations such as *Sahara Reporters* conducted investigative reports on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. These reports uncovered the corruption and mismanagement in the fuel subsidy regime, as well

as the involvement of powerful individuals and groups in the scam. The investigative reports also highlighted the failure of the government to address the problem, despite several attempts to reform the subsidy regime.

The media coverage of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria has faced several challenges and opportunities. One of the main challenges has been the issue of media bias, with some media organisations being accused of taking sides and promoting their own interests at the expense of objective reporting. This has led to a lack of trust and credibility in the media, which has in turn undermined their ability to shape public opinion and influence policy.

Empirical Review

Demola & Adeleke (2014) focused on the mass media coverage of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria by analysing select newspapers. The objective of the study was to apply the agenda setting theory to analyse the newspapers' coverage of the policy. The research design used was descriptive content analysis and data were collected by analysing articles published in *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *ThisDay* newspapers over a six-month period. The study found that the newspapers gave considerable coverage to fuel subsidy removal, with *ThisDay* providing the most coverage. However, the newspapers' coverage of the issue was dominated by news reports and they tended to prioritise the government's perspective on the issue. The researchers recommended that the newspapers should provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of fuel subsidy removal and prioritise the perspectives of stakeholders and civil society groups in their reporting.

Musa & Sanusi (2013) investigated the public perception of fuel subsidy removal in Lagos State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to apply the social responsibility theory to investigate the public's perception of the policy. The research design used was cross-sectional survey and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 400 respondents in Lagos State. The study found that the majority of respondents were opposed to fuel subsidy removal, and perceived the policy as unfair and insensitive to the needs of the poor. The respondents relied heavily on the mass media for information on the issue. The researchers recommended that the mass media should provide balanced and informative coverage of fuel subsidy removal and should also work to engage with the public and incorporate their feedback in their reporting. The researchers also recommended that the government should provide alternative measures to cushion the effect of the policy on the poor.

Oyesomi & Ilesanmi (2013) examined the mass media coverage of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria by analysing selected radio and television stations. The objective of the study was to apply the uses and gratifications theory to investigate how individuals use and interpret media content related to the policy. The research design used was descriptive survey and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 300 respondents in Lagos State. The findings showed that the respondents relied heavily on radio and television stations for information on fuel subsidy removal, with the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels Television being the most popular sources. The respondents preferred news reports and expert opinions as their preferred sources of information. The researchers recommended that the radio and television stations should provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of fuel subsidy removal and prioritise the perspectives of stakeholders and civil society groups in their reporting. The researchers recommended that the stations should explore alternative platforms and channels for disseminating information on the issue.

The previous empirical studies by Demola & Adeleke (2014); Musa & Sanusi (2013) and Oyesomi & Ilesanmi (2013) all focused on the topic of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. They examined the role of mass media in covering the policy and its impact on the public. The studies used different theoretical frameworks to analyse the issue and recommend that the mass media should provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of fuel subsidy removal and priouritise the perspectives of stakeholders and civil society groups in their reporting. However, the current study has some differences. It specifically focused on the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria, while the previous studies cover different time periods. The current study also had different objectives compared to the previous studies.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the agenda setting theory. Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw propounded the agenda setting theory in 1972 (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Ekhareafo & Nwaoboli, 2022). The theory suggests that the media have the ability to influence the salience of issues in the minds of the public (McQuail & Windahl, 2015). The theory posits that the media do not tell the public what to think, but rather what to think about. In other words, the media's selection and emphasis of news stories can shape the public's perception of the most important issues of the day. According to Arijeniwa & Nwaoboli (2023), the tenets of agenda setting theory include the following:

a. **Media Agenda:** The media agenda refers to the issues that the media choose to cover and the prominence they give to them in their reporting.
b. **Public Agenda**: The public agenda refers to the issues that the public considers most important or salient at a given time.
c. **Agenda Setting**: Agenda setting refers to the process by which the media's selection and emphasis of news stories influence the salience of issues in the public agenda.
d. **Priming**: Priming refers to the process by which the media's coverage of an issue can influence the way in which the public evaluates political leaders and policies.

The usage of agenda setting theory is justified in the topic of public perception of mass media coverage of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria because the theory suggests that the media have the ability to influence the salience of issues in the minds of the public. In the case of fuel subsidy removal, the media's selection and emphasis of news stories can shape the public's perception of the policy and its importance. By analysing the media's coverage of fuel subsidy removal, agenda setting theory can help to identify the factors that shape public opinion on the policy and can provide insights into how the media's coverage of the policy can be improved to better inform the public and promote democratic governance.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research design and employed structured questionnaire to collect data. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that the survey researcher is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristics of a whole population or people. The questionnaire comprised close-ended questions and was administered face-to-face to respondents.

The population of the study was 107,500, which represents the population of Idah

in Kogi State, Nigeria. This is according to World Population Census (2023). Random sampling technique which involves unsystematic selection of respondents was used to select participants from the population. The sample size for the study was 384 and it was determined using the Cochran formula, with a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyse the collected data. The questionnaire was distributed with the help of two trained research assistants, but 17 copies of questionnaire were either unretrieved or incorrectly filled out. Therefore, the data analysis was based on the 95% of returned copies of questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent of Exposure to Mass Media Messages on the 2023 Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	144	39.2
High	201	54.8
Neutral	0	0
Low	12	3.3
Very low	10	2.7
Total	**367**	**100**

Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents were highly exposed to mass media messages on the 2023 fuel subsidy removal policy. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 2: Mass Media Platforms through which Members of the Public were Exposed to News Stories on the 2023 Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Broadcast	120	32.8
Print	67	18.3
Outdoor	0	0
Social	180	49.0
Others	0	0
Total	**367**	**100**

The data in table 2 indicate that social media was the most common source of exposure to messages on the 2023 fuel subsidy removal policy in Nigeria, followed by broadcast and print media. The high percentage of respondents reporting exposure through social media may indicate the growing influence of social media on public discourse in Nigeria.

Table 3: Perception of Mass Media Coverage of the 2023 Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
The media coverage did not provide enough information on the policy and its implications	12	3.3
The media coverage was sensationalised and did not provide factual information	15	4.1
It helped cushion the adverse effects of the policy	50	13.6

It helped people understand the benefits of the subsidy removal	120	32.7
It educated people on the need the need to accept the policy	90	24.5
The media coverage was biased and unbalanced	33	8.9
The media coverage was fair, balanced, and informative	47	12.8
Total	**367**	**100**

Table 3 shows that the perception the respondents have about the coverage of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal policy was positive.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that the respondents were highly exposed to media messages on fuel subsidy removal. This implies that the mass played a significant role in disseminating information and shaping public opinion on the policy. This finding is consistent with previous research on the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and policy decisions. For example, a study by Asemah & Nwaoboli (2023) found that media coverage can have a significant impact on public opinion and policy outcomes. The findings also showed that social media were the most common sources of exposure to media messages on the policy in Nigeria, followed by broadcast and print media. This finding is consistent with the growing importance of social media in shaping public opinion and policy decisions across the world. For instance, Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli (2022) found that social media can serve as a powerful tool for mobilising and coordinating collective action and shaping public opinion.

Furthermore, findings showed that majority of the respondents reported positive perceptions of the coverage of the policy, with a significant percentage reporting that the media coverage helped people understand the benefits of the subsidy removal. This finding suggests that the media played a key role in informing and educating the public on the policy and its implications. However, a smaller percentage of respondents reported negative perceptions of the media coverage in terms of sensationalism and insufficient factual information, highlighting the need for media outlets to provide accurate and informative coverage. The findings are also consistent with the agenda setting theory, which posits that the media can influence the salience and importance of issues by shaping the public's perception and understanding of them. The findings highlight the critical role of mass media in shaping public opinion and policy decisions in Nigeria and the importance of providing accurate and informative media coverage to help the public understand and accept policy decisions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the mass media played a significant role in disseminating information and shaping public opinion on the 2023 fuel subsidy removal policy in Nigeria. More so, majority of the respondents reported positive perceptions of mass media coverage of the policy and it helped people understand the benefits of the subsidy removal. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Media outlets should continue to play an active role in informing and educating the public on policies and their implications, especially in relation to the 2023 fuel subsidy removal policy.

2. Given the growing importance of social media in shaping public opinion, policymakers and media practitioners should consider utilising social media platforms in disseminating accurate and informative information on policies and issues.
3. Policymakers and media practitioners should continue to engage with the public and seek feedbacks to ensure that the public is well-informed and policies widely accepted.

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CHAPTER FORTY ONE

OGUN STATE RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE BROADCAST MEDIA REPORTAGE OF GOVERNOR DAPO ABIODUN'S *LET THERE BE LIGHT* PROJECT

Dorcas Oluwadamilola Fadeyi & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Strategic communication is a powerful tool that can improve the chances of success of development project in any given society. It strives for behaviour change, not just information dissemination, education or awareness-raising (Godson & Chinonye, 2014). A development programme that uses communication approaches can reveal people's underlying attitudes and traditional wisdom, which helps people to adapt their views and to acquire new knowledge and skills and spread new social messages to large audiences. The economic system and the media have an intricate relationship. Without the media, which maintain a constant flow of information, vital for economic progress, economic and social life of the people as well as national development will suffer. Through broadcast media programming, the government is informed about the level of acceptance or otherwise of its policies and programmes by the populace (Sanni & Ojewole, 2013).

The purpose of development is to empower people so they have greater control and power over decisions that affect them (Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Tsegyu, 2017; Asemah, 2012; Asemah & Uyeh, 2012). Development communication is culturally contextual, people-oriented, empowering and egalitarian (Asemah, Edegoh & Anum, 2013). Therefore, for government development projects to reach as much of the populace as possible, there is a need to recognise the fact that initial awareness messages need to be re-transmitted, discussed and re-discussed among audience members in order for it to have a lasting effect. Awareness does not stop at only that which comes from the media, but instead, how it is turned into subject-matter for public discourse, for it to have a resonant and lasting effect. Communication as dialogue and debate occurs spontaneously in anytime of social change. The increased freedom of expression in recent times has been almost simultaneous with changes in the global political structure. Asemah (2010), cited in Asemah, Edegoh & Anum (2013) sees development as a gradual process of bringing about positive attitudinal change in the people.

Santas & Asemah (2013) state that broadcast media are powerful instruments that can be used to engender development, especially in developing countries, like Nigeria whose quest is to enlist herself among one of the developed countries in the world. Santas & Asemah (2013) postulate that development communication via the establishment of radio and television will ensure that people are recognised, giving them opportunity to participate in development programmes that concern their welfare and well-being. It is believed that most discussions people hold today originate from the broadcast media and as such, they exist to service the information needs of the society in line with the social responsibility role of the press; hence the media have the power to influence audience perception. Thus, the study was carried out to determine the Ogun State residents' perception of the broadcast media reportage of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project.

Statement of the Problem

Social development encompasses a commitment to individual well-being and volunteerism and the opportunity for citizens to determine their own needs and to influence decisions that affect them. Social development incorporates public concerns in developing social policy and economic initiatives. Until recently, social development was conceived in terms of a set of desirable results-higher incomes, longer life expectancy, lower infant mortality and more education. Recently, emphasis has shifted from the results to the enabling conditions, strategies and public policies for achieving those results-peace, democracy, good governance, social freedoms, equal access, laws, institutions, markets, infrastructure, education and technology; yet, little attention has been placed on the underlying social process of development that determines how society formulates, adopts, initiates and organises and few attempts have been made to formulate such a framework.

Although, scholars like Omotosho (2010); Hadiza (2020) and Omolade (2013) to mention a few, have carried out researches on development in some parts of the country, attention was focused on concept or knowledge of these projects paying little or no attention on the Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project in Ogun State. Therefore, this study focuses on Ogun State residents perception of the broadcast media reportage of Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project.

Objective of the Study

The following objectives guide the study to:

1. Determine the extent of awareness of Ogun State residents of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let there be Light* Project.
2. Determine the broadcast media channels through which the Ogun residents access reports on Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project.
3. Ascertain the level of satisfaction of Ogun State residents to media attention attributed to the Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project.
4. Find out the level of effectiveness of broadcast media coverage of the *Let There Be Light* Project.
5. Determine whether or not the Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project equates proper dividends of Democracy.

Review of Related Literature

Asemah & Asogwa (2016), citing Chester, Garrison & Willis (1978) describe broadcasting as the transmission through space, by means of radio frequencies, of signals, capable of being received audibly, visually or both, by the general public. Kwame, Danley, David & Earnest (2022) carried out a study on the patronage of farm radio as an agricultural knowledge source for farmers. The rationale behind the study was to evaluate the level of farmers' information patronage on farm radio. The research was carried out in the Bosome Freho District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana with 400 farmers selected, using the multi-stage sampling technique. Data were analysed using means, standard deviations and the chi-square test of independence. Results showed that the farmers highly patronised the farm radio programmes. Although, farmers were satisfied with the farm radio programmes, their utilisation of knowledge from the programmes was low. Patronage of

farm radio programmes was associated with radio set ownership, educational level and age of farmers. The researchers recommended that farmers should be encouraged to own radio sets and continue to rely on farm radio programmes for agricultural information.

Santas & Asemah (2013) carried out a study on public perception of the role of rural broadcasting in rural development in Nigeria. The rationale behind the study was to find out the place of rural broadcasting in sustainable development. The findings showed that rural broadcasting plays a crucial role in communicating development messages to the people in the rural communities. The findings further showed that rural broadcasting provides information on health, education, government programmes and agricultural-related issues. The similarities between the reviewed work and this paper is that, they both examined the public perception of each study as it bothers on the role of the broadcast media; secondly, these studies were carried out to harness development in different sectors of the country.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on perception theory. Perception, according to Yolanda Williams, cited in Asemah (2011) can be defined as our way to recognise and interpret information we have gathered through our senses. This also includes how we respond to a certain situation with the given information. Psychology is the study of behaviour and mental processes, while perception is how we react to situations. Perception is influenced by various factors, such as personal biases, cultural background, emotional state, and individual differences (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, Ekhareafo & Nwkam-Uwaoma, 2017; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023; Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023; Ayeni & Nwaoboli, 2023). These factors shape our perceptual filters and can lead to different interpretations of the same sensory input among different individuals or even within the same person at different times.We use our senses to detect and recognise something which then allows us to process the information and discover the emotions and react to the situation we see, which is perception. To this end, the researchers applied the perception theory because the theory has already been successfully used to recognise and interpret information gathered through the sense. This theory has thus proven to be applicable in evaluating the opinion, reaction and response of Ogun residents to the broadcast media reportage of the Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project in Ogun State.

Methodology

The research design for this study is survey. The choice of survey by the researchers was informed by the fact that survey as a technique for generating quantitative data spears to be a potent method of measuring data related to demographics, attitudes and opinions. More so, the use of a survey for data collection in this study is justified by the fact that as noted by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, (2023), it is the most appropriate method of gathering and measuring data related to demographics, attitude, opinion and perception. The population of this study comprises one Local Government Area each from the three Senatorial districts in Ogun state. The summation of these LGAs gave rise to the population of 899,853. Therefore, the population of this study is 899,853. A sample of four hundred (400) was taken for the study. This was arrived at, using Cochran's formula of sample size determination.

The researchers used multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, the researcher purposively selected three LGAs each from the three senatorial districts in Ogun state; they are Abeokuta South of the Ogun Central Senatorial District, the Ogun East Senatorial District and Yewa North, the Ogun West Senatorial District, respectively. In the second stage, the researchers purposively selected one town from each of the select LGAs. The towns are Ake town (Ogun central), Ijebuode town (Ogun East) and Ayetoro town (Ogun West). In the third stage, the researchers used simple random sampling to select five (5) streets from the select towns; they are Abeokuta, Akingbala, Elekuro, Ijapa and Ilugun in the Ogun Central Senatorial District; Temidire, Ayesan, Molipa, Onirugba and Eregu in the Ogun East Senatorial District and Idagba, Okeola, Sala, Ayingbo, Lantoro in the Ogun West Senatorial District.

`The researchers wrote the names of all the streets of the select towns in a piece of paper. The lists were folded and put in a basket. The researchers shook the basket thoroughly, then, a research assistance was blindfolded and asked to select from the basket. This process yielded this select five streets from each select towns. In the fourth stage, the researchers purposively selected ten (10) houses from each of the five streets- Abeokuta, Akingbala, Elekuro, Ijapa, Ilugun (Ogun Central) Temidire, Ayesan, Molipa, Onirugba, Eregun (Ogun East) and Idagba, Okeola, Sala, Ayingbo Lantoro (Ogun west) respectively. In the fifth stage, the researchers used the simple random sampling to select three (3) occupants from each of the select houses. The researchers wrote the names of all the occupants of the select houses in a piece of paper. The lists were folded and put in a basket. The researchers shook the basket thoroughly, then, a research assistance was blindfolded and asked to select from the basket. The process yielded this select (3) occupants from each select houses. Therefore, this gave rise to the sample of the study which is 400. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondents' Level of Awareness of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Projects

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	63	16.9
High	114	30.6
Undecided	62	16,6
Low	92	24.7
Very low	42	11.3
Total	**373**	**100**

The table above indicates respondents' extent of awareness of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project. The table clearly shows that majority of the respondents had a high level of awareness of the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project.

Table 2: Respondents' Channels of Accessing Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project Campaign in Ogun State

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Television	198	53.1
Radio	60	16.1
Social media	42	11.3

Internet	59	15.8
Video content	14	3.8
Total	**373**	**100**

The table above shows the channels through which respondents accessed Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project. The analysis depicts that majority accessed the broadcast media reportage of the project through television (53.1%).

Table 3: Respondents' Satisfaction with Media attention attributed to the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let Be there be Light* Project

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	22	5.9
Satisfied	46	12.3
Can't tell	96	25.7
Less satisfied	161	43,2
Not satisfied	48	12.9
Total	**373**	**100**

The table 3 depicts respondents' satisfaction with media attention attributed to the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project. It is obvious from the above table that majority 161 (43.2%) of the respondents are less satisfied with the media attention attributed to the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project.

Table 4: Broadcast Media Reportage of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project's Level of Effectiveness

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	78	29.0
Effective	109	29.2
Can't tell	51	13.7
Less effective	133	35.7
Not effective	2	5
Total	**373**	**100**

The table 4 above shows the perception of the respondents on the Governor Dapo Abiodun *Let There Be Light* Project. It is clear from the table that majority (35.7%) of the respondent perceived the broadcast media reportage as less effective.

Table 5: The Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light Project* equates to proper Dividends

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	77	20
Agree	155	41.6
Undecided	82	22.0
Disagree	33	8.8
Strongly disagree	26	7.0
Total	**373**	**100**

Table 5 above shows the responses surrounding *Let There Be Light* Project equating the dividends of democracy. It is clear that majority of the respondents agreed (41.6%) with the assertion that *Let There Be Light Project* equates to proper dividends of Democracy.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicated that majority of the respondents (36.0%) had a high level of awareness of the *Let There Be Light* Project reportage in Ogun State. Therefore, respondents interpreted the extent of report differently. This finding supports reception theory as applied in the study. This finding is in harmony with Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-uwaoma (2017) who observed that people view things differently based on their needs, perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes and abilities. The analysis in table 2 indicated respondents' choice of viable media reportage of the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project. The findings showed that television was the medium through which the respondents mainly accessed the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project. This could probably be because television as a medium has sounds and attractive images that trigger imaginations and raises curiosity. This finding supports Swason's (2004) observation that television provides an aesthetic platform for the presentation (airing) of political advertising and electioneering messages and their exposure to television content than any other medium.

The findings further showed that the respondents were less satisfied with the media attention attributed to the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project. The implication of this is that the Ogun State residents were not exposed to the right information that suit their existing beliefs and perception about the Governor Dapo Abidoun's *Let There be Light* Project. Asemah *et al* (2017) while writing on media dependency theory note that the capacity of a medium to satisfy the needs of an individual as much as possible, is very much imperative.

The findings showed that the media coverage of Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project was less effective. This implies that majority of the select respondents perceived the broadcast media reportage of the project to be less effective. This finding supports the social judgement theory as applied in the study. Social judgement theory seeks to explain how an audience processes messages. This finding is in agreement with Asemah, Edegoh & Ogwo (2013) who found that a new information is compared to existing beliefs and a decision to accept or reject the information. The select respondents of Ogun State through the findings have judged and interpreted the broadcast media reportage of Governor Dapo Abidoun's *Let There Be Light* Project and have then a taken a position; this also corroborates Amah, Oladele &Asemah's (2022) observation that the audience- members interpret and judge a message and take a position. The analysis from table 5 showed that (41.6%) showed that the Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project equates proper dividends of democracy. This finding supports development media theory. The development media theory emphasises the primacy of the national development task; the pursuit of cultural and informational autonomy and the support for democracy and solidarity with other developing countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on findings, it is not out of place to conclude that the broadcast media, especially the television have been fair in giving reportage to Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There*

Be Light Project in Ogun state. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. The media should heighten awareness campaigns on Governor Dapo Abiodun's *Let There Be Light* Project in Ogun State and other states.
2. The broadcast media have large propensity to induce change; hence creators of broadcast media contents should not relent in their efforts in packaging broadcast media contents that can help in raising the awareness of developmental projects in the State.
3. The Government of Ogun State should endeavour to design developmental programmes in the rural setting for circulation of development throughout the state.

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CHAPTER FORTY TWO

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Ojeh Bertrand; Festus Prosper Olise & Sunday Ekerikevwe

Introduction

Undoubtedly social media can be seen as the most widely accepted technological invention of the 21st century; they have drastically changed how issues are handled in Nigeria and the world in general. National security is referred to as the requirement to maintain the survival of the state using economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power (Lipman, 1943, cited in Salawu, 2013).

National security is greatly entwined with the facilitation of governance which is the effective management of national affairs of a country at all levels of its functioning and it is aimed at maintaining the integrity of the nation and the security of its people (Abraham, 2012). To achieve good governance in any country, it becomes crucial for the authorities to exercise political, economic and judicial control in a manner that ensures that the people are given their freedom to fulfill their duties and resolve their disputes as it is allowed in the constitution (Vohra, 2008). National security encompasses freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the wellbeing of the people. The aim of national security is to secure the just and equitable living conditions all the citizens of the country and of peace for human life.

Social media as means of communication are computer–mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas and pictures/videos in virtual communication and networks (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). It is the collection of internet websites, services and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation and sharing. Social media can also be defined as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of over generated content (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Social media, therefore, depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss and modify over-generated content.

However, the prospects of the social media are also faced with peculiar challenges which have crippled their roles, especially in propagating national security. Social media have allowed everyone to be content creators and distributors which have in turn, led to the rise of fake news (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022. 2023). Some lawbreakers and cyber criminals utilise social media to modify legitimate documents and distribute them as part of disinformation campaigns. Terrorists and other criminal groups use social media to pass their information to the general public to their advantage due to their cost advantage (Ngige, Badekele & Hamman, 2016).

In Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorists rely majorly on social media handles such as Twitter, Facebook and Youtube to advance their goals and objectives as they engage the state in years of bloody violence that have seen more than 50,000 deaths, displacements of about 2.2 million people and destroyed social economic infrastructure in the north-east. It is pertinent to note that social media platforms are powerful because they can combat insecurity and the same time, pose security threats (Nsude & Onwe, 2017).

Over the years, media organisations have influenced strategic decisions in the world, especially on outcome of conflict (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a, 2022b). During times of crisis, nations have used the media in some instances as a strong weapon to determine outcomes of counter insurgency (Akale & Udegbunam, 2018). The advancement in the social media came on board with digital platforms and internet and is regarded as one of the most used sources of information and communications by both citizen and government operations. However, the use of social media as a communication platform introduces serious security and privacy concerns, including fake news or rants vectors for cyber-attack that the government and the security operations cannot ignore (Kimutai, 2014). Conversely, insurgent groups also use the media among other tools to tilt public opinion.

It is important to note that the national Assembly has earlier passed the prohibition of frivolous petition and other related matters bill 2015, popularly known as the social media bill. The bill is aimed at censoring aspects of conduct of new media technologies (Ogbete, Enwemeka & Okoh, 2019). Also, the prohibition of hate speeches and for other related matters, otherwise known as hate speech Bill 2019 and the protection from internet falsehoods and manipulations and other related, matters bill, 2019 were measures adopted by the Nigerian Government to regulate the online space. It is based on this that the researchers were motivated to study social media and security in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Cann (2011) notes that social media are a set of internet-based services that allow users generate their own contents for service and others. He further states that the presence of social media in Nigeria sometimes threatens the peace and stability of Nigeria and gives rise to insecurity across the country. Nsudu & Onwe (2017) submit that Facebook is the most used and mentioned social media platform when talking about social networking platforms, followed by WhatsApp and Twitter. According to Chuckwuere & Onyebukwa (2018), social media tools have affected the social, economic, cultural and political aspects of human endeavours as events and information associated with these aspects are virtually discussed.

Achumba, Ighommeroho & Akpor (2013) note that insecurity is defined from two perspectives. Firstly, they defined the concept as a state of being open or subject to danger and conditions of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, they defined insecurity as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety as a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Ndubuisi–Okolo & Aniburogwu (2019) note that insecurity signifies danger, hazard, uncertainly, lack of protection and lack of safety. Onyebukwa (2018) deployed a quantitative research method through online questionnaire to determine the impact of Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp as social media tools on insecurity in the northern and south–eastern parts of Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that Nigeria's security climate is very poor and social media are not a threat to Nigeria national security. The findings also revealed that the public is uncertain whether Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have increased insecurity in the northern and south eastern parts of Nigeria and many more.

Kimutai (2014) conducted a similar study and found that terrorist groups take advantage of social media to communicate with fraudsters in cybercrime groups and to coordinate along in their fundraising activities carried partially or completely over the internet. The findings also revealed that terrorist group use social media as a tool to recruit communicate and spread propaganda. Cuman (2012) conducted a documentary analysis on

the extent to which social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, whatsApp, Youtube and meblogs played in facilitating uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. Findings revealed that the usage and growth of social media in the Arab region to a great extent facilitates the mass, mobilisation of protestors, empowerment, shaping of opinions and influencing change. Asemah & Edegoh (2013) conducted research on social media and insecurity in Nigeria.

The objectives of the study were to find out whether social media contributed to insecurity in Nigeria the extent to which social media have contributed to insecurity in Nigeria and the social media network that has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria. The study was anchored on technological determinism theory. Their finding showed that social media have actually contributed to security challenges in Nigeria and the extent of contribution was high. The findings further showed that out of the social media network, Facebook was the one that caused wise insecurity more. Ogbette, Enwemeka & Okoh (2019) carried out an investigation on the nexus between social media and national security in Nigeria. They found that the Nigerian Commission Acts (2003) is not very effective as regards regulating the social media in aspects of content sharing. It was also revealed by them that there is poor enforcement of the freedom of information Act and Nigerian Communications Commission due to low technology base.

Nwabueze & Ebeze (2013) carried out a study on the relevance of mass media in combating insecurity in Nigeria. The researchers recommended that journalists should be regularly trained on terrorism and conflict reporting in order to keep abreast of modern techniques that will be used in ensuring effective use of the mass media in combating insecurity in Nigeria. To curb insecurity, the police force is considered an essential institution, but is faced with several challenges. Abdullahi & Abdul-Qadir, (2019) conducted a study to examine how different social media platforms were used in the context of mass mobilisation for social support. The findings showed that the use of social media platform is an effective medium of drawing support for people in an emergency. Findings from the study further revealed that both the abducted schools and the Nigerian Government received foreign and domestic assistance to help address the insecurity challenge due to social media intervention.

In a study conducted by Alakali, Faga & Mbursa, (2017) to assess audience perception of hate speech and foul language in the social media in Nigeria and the implications for morality, it was revealed that promoting hate speech and foul language on the social media have moral consequences on the society. The findings also showed that the masses to an extent, did not know what obligations are created by law against perpetrators of hate speech and foul language in Nigeria. Dalhatu, Erunke & Idakuta in 2019 carried out a study on media, terrorist and security in Nigeria's fourth republic. It was found that insecurity and terrorism are inimical to the sustainability of democracy and development of Nigeria. Malicious media report, ethno-religious, political, economic-based violence and systemic corruption were among the things enumerated as the predisposing factors and challenges of national security in the fourth republic.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the technological determinism theory. This theory states that media technologies shape how individuals in a society think, feel and how society operates as it moves from one technological age to another (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). The theory as propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 explains the impact of information and communication technology (ICTs) on how information is consumed, retrieved and

disseminated in contemporary society. It seeks to explain social and historical phenomenon in terms of the principal determining factor, which is technology. The theory states that communication technologies in general are the prime causes of changes in society which determines the course of history (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, 2011; Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam – Uwaoma, 2017). The theory is relevant to this study as the advent of social media have awaken citizen journalism and increased participation of the public in national affairs, people are able to keep in touch with different kinds of socioeconomic, political and social events. The limitation of the new technologies had turned the world into a global village.

Methodology

The researchers adopted library research method. Here, the researchers consulted books, journals, newspapers, magazines and internet sources.

Discussion

Social media when used properly can have great and positive impact in the nation's security structure. Social media are used by security agents in Nigeria to get information and inform people about happenings in troubled areas where insecurity is high. The introduction and use of dashboard websites and other platforms designed by security agents in monitoring activities of terrorist and insurgent groups like Boko Haram as well as fake news and propaganda, is a welcome development. Security personnel, especially police and military, have been able to track a lot of criminals and terrorists through social media tracking devices. More so, they are able to monitor security prone areas through dashboard created by organisations such as Centre for Information Technology Advancement, Hate Speech Dashboard and Transparency International Security Dashboard. Here, the technological determinism theory adopted in this study comes to play as it helps clarify that communication technologies in general are the prime causes of changes in society which determines the causes of history.

Improper use of social media platform poses serious threat to national security. One of the areas in which this is manifest is the increase of fake news, misinformation, unsubstantiated claims, hate speeches, seditious messages which leads to further insecurity in the country. Another area where improper use of social media rears its ugly head is in the area of spreading of propaganda by politicians which usually leads to violence, online bickering and abuse between persons. Terrorists also use social media platforms for the same purpose that the security agents use it to pass information about their attacks, create fear among the people and also get tips about their operations. This shows that social media can be adequately utilised to promote national security when used properly.

Conclusion

The importance of social media in our society today cannot overemphasise; they are useful in enforcing national security in Nigeria. The improper use of social media is placed within the context of increased national security challenges in the country and to that end, the researchers conclude that using social media to spread false and negative information causes unnecessary tension among citizen. Also, the inability of government to provide strategies that will enhance using social media platforms poses serious threats to national security. Social media have both positive and negative influence on the Nigeria security system. Thus, the researchers recommendation that the general populace should be enlightened by the federal government through the office of the National Orientation

Agency on how to use the social media positively in the enhancement of National security in the country. This will help to curtail spreading of fake news, misinformation, propaganda and hate speech.

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CHAPTER FORTY THREE

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE 2023 NIGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Aisha Egwa; Gideon Nwafor & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

In addition to providing general coverage of election campaigns, the media make efforts to report topical issues that are being discussed as a result of election in any society (Asemah, 2015). This includes reporting on the economy, security, education, healthcare and other social issues. This coverage helps to inform the public about the various issues being discussed and their potential impact on the election.

Newspapers are a crucial factor in political campaigns (Asemah & Umoro, 2022; Asemah & Ogwo, 2013; Asemah, 2013) and corporate relations (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a; 2022b) which are very relevant to political stakeholders. It can be argued that conducting a transparent election is unattainable without the media. As posited by Nwaoboli & Ajibulu (2023), the media serve as efficacious tools surveillance, correlation, education and the dissemination of information to the wider public. The 2023 presidential election in Nigeria has been conducted, preceded by a range of campaign initiatives aimed at mobilising Nigerian citizens to participate in the election and exercise their right to vote for their preferred political candidates. In addition to physical campaigning by political candidates, the media played a crucial role in disseminating information regarding the elections. In fact, Asemah (2011a, 2011b), Nwaoboli & Asemah (2021) & Nwaoboli (2023) posit that the general populace rely on the media as a primary source of information.

Consequently, Nigerians frequently depended on newspapers to provide coverage of election campaigns, enabling them to make informed assessments regarding political matters. This research seeks to investigate the extent to which select Nigerian mainstream newspapers covered the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the genres used by *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers *in* the reportage of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.
2. Find out the direction of the reportage of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns by *The Guardian* and *The Punch* Newspapers.
3. Find out *The Guardian* and *The Punch newspapers'* tones of coverage of the 2023 Nigerian presidential campaigns.

Election Defined

The term "election" refers to the process of choosing a candidate or a group of candidates for a particular position or office through a formal voting system (Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). An election is a structured process that designates an individual or a

collective entity for a public position or that approves or declines a political proposition through the act of casting votes (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Elections can serve as a means to either endorse or oppose a political proposal. The electoral process holds significant institutional value in democratic governments and electoral systems. The legitimacy of a government in democratic systems and voting procedures is derived solely from the consent of the population (Adibe, 2015).

The process of conducting elections that are both free and fair is crucial in transforming the consent of the governed into actual governmental power. Elections represent a fundamental pillar of modern democratic systems. However, it is worth noting that not all elections are conducted in a manner that aligns with democratic principles.

According to Adibe (2015), while some elections may present viable options, the available choices are often restricted to those put forth by the governing party, thereby rendering such elections undemocratic. Ikpegbu & Ihejirika (2020) posit that democratic elections encompass more than mere symbolism, as voting holds significant value. Democratic elections are characterised by competitiveness, periodicity, inclusivity and decisiveness. They involve the selection of top government decision-makers by citizens who possess a wide range of freedoms, including the ability to criticise the government, publish their criticism and present alternative viewpoints. Such elections occur at fixed intervals and are designed to provide a level playing field for all candidates.

Perspectives on the 2023 General Elections

The 2023 Nigerian presidential election was between 18 political parties. Among the major contenders of the election were the Labour Party (LP) and New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) aside the All Progressives Congress (APC) and The People's Democratic Party (PDP). The election seemed like a three-horse race among the APC, Labour Party and PDP. In Nigeria, nothing like that has ever occurred as it had always been between PDP and APC.

One novel act in the election was that the governing party had two Muslims representatives, Kashim Shettima and Bola Ahmed Tinubu, for Vice President and President, respectively. This to some extent, initially caused division among the party as many contended that this goes against the unwritten political tradition of the nation, which stipulates that Christians and Muslims must hold the two highest offices in the nation (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) registered about 12 million new voters since the most recent election in 2015, bringing the total number of registered voters for the 2023 election cycle to at least, 96 million. More than 70% of these new voters were between the ages of 18 and 34 (*The Guardian*, 2022). Also, for the election, INEC added more than 56,800 more polling units (a 41% increase) to make up for the rise in voters, bringing the total number of voting sites for the year to 176,846 (*The Nation*, 2023). Teams of four election workers, numbering 707,384 in total, including tens of thousands of supervisors, collation officers, returning officers and officials from local to national levels, were sent by the electoral authority to each polling unit. In order to do this, almost 1 million poll workers were needed to be transported by land and sea, and goods also needed to be sent to places that sometimes, could only be reached by roadways, which posed a great danger of terrorism and criminal activity (*The Vanguard*, 2023). Tens

of thousands of journalists, election observers and security personnel were also sent to these areas. One burning issue sequel to the election was that INEC promised to transmit in real time, the presidential election using Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BIVAS), but this was not so as INEC claimed there were technical itches. This incident, therefore, made many people doubt the authenticity of the result and made unsatisfied political candidates go to court to contest the election result.

Literature Review

The role of newspapers in electioneering is an important one. Newspapers provide information about candidates, their policies and their views on current issues. They can be a powerful tool to sway public opinion and influence voters. Newspapers have the ability to reach a wide audience through their print editions, as well as through their online presence. They can provide up-to-date coverage of campaign events, as well as in-depth analysis of election issues (Oyesomi, Salawu & Onyenankeya, 2019). Newspapers also provide a platform for candidates to express their views, as well as a forum for readers to discuss and debate important issues. By providing objective information and analysis, newspapers can help to educate voters and to encourage informed decision-making. They can also be used to highlight the differences between the different candidates and their policies, which may help voters to make an informed decision (Oluwaseun & Odebiyi, 2021).

In addition, newspapers can be used to spread messages about a particular candidate or party. This can include endorsements from prominent figures, as well as more subtle messages about a candidate's character or views (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). Advertising can also be used to promote a particular candidate or party. Also, newspapers provide a platform for candidates to respond to criticism or to make their case for why they should be elected. This can be a powerful way of engaging with the electorate and of convincing them to vote for a particular candidate. Overall, newspapers play an important role in campaigns (Asemah, Anum & Ogwo, 2012). By providing objective information and analysis, they can help to educate voters and to encourage informed decision-making. They can also be used to highlight the differences between the different candidates and their policies, as well as to spread messages about particular candidates or parties. Finally, they provide a platform for candidates to respond to criticism or to make their case for why they should be elected (DellaVigna & Hermle, 2017).

It is difficult for politicians in contemporary politics to contact all of the people in their respective areas and to seek their support in order to win elections without the assistance of the media because of the nature of current politics. Newspapers have evolved into the contemporary venues through which political party candidates disseminate information to citizens and seek their support in order to win elections. According to Kurfi (2010), it is arguable that without access to the full range of information about their world, citizens cannot fulfil their roles and democracy will elections. In spite of this, the goals and purposes of the media do not always align with the ways in which politicians actually utilise the media during elections.

According to Maisel (2007), democratic regimes cover a broad spectrum in terms of the freedom with which those in power can be criticised by the press or by the

opposition; the amount of information to which citizens have access in order to arrive at their own conclusions and the freedom with which candidates can express their views and with which citizens can vote.

This is the reason Nigerian journalists strive to provide sufficient information on political parties and their candidates during elections through their editorials, news coverage and feature stories. This would enable Nigerian voters to make informed decisions about the candidates they should vote for in the elections; not on the basis of what the candidates can immediately provide for the people, but on the basis of public assessment of the capability of the candidates to perform in public office. Besley & Prat (2005) advised that the media should provide information that would enable the electorate to make informed decisions about who to vote for in an election. This information would enable the electorate to choose wisely on who to vote for in an election. They are aware that the majority of people will typically lean in the direction that the media take on public matters; thus, most politicians make it a practise of using the media do so with the purpose of keeping public support in order to maintain and develop their political career. This is because most politicians who make it a habit of utilising the media for whatever reason do so with the intention of maintaining and advancing their political career. The public often relies on the media for information about the ideologies and manifestoes of political parties, as well as information on the competency of the candidates running for election (Esuh, 2008).

However, it is immoral for the media to take a position favourable to one political party at the expense of the other parties participating in the conflict (Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013); rather, during the elections, they are meant to provide every candidate, regardless of the party affiliations of the candidates running for office, with an equal chance to connect with voters (LeVan, 2009).

Empirical Review

The study conducted by Ekeanyanwu (2007) aimed to assess the Nigerian press's coverage of political conflicts and crises during the second term of President Obasanjo's regime from 2003 to 2007 in a pluralistic society. Utilising the content analytical research method as the primary means of data collection, the findings showed that the Nigerian press exhibited suboptimal performance in covering political conflicts and crises due to the prevalence of advocacy-based reporting and the potential influence of editorial directives from publishers. The researcher arrived at the conclusion that the Nigerian press has functioned primarily as active participants in political crises and conflicts, rather than as unbiased arbiters of such events. It was suggested that measures be taken to discourage advocacy journalism in the Nigerian media industry and proposed greater public involvement in the industry through ownership by the populace.

Nwaokafor & Okunoye (2013) authored a study entitled "Media power in elections: Evidence of the role of agenda setting theory in political communication in Nigeria's evolving democracy." The objective of the study was to examine the influence of media in electoral processes and presented empirical evidence on the significance of agenda setting in political communication within the context of Nigeria. Following the conducted research, the researchers illustrated the significant influence of media, particularly during electoral periods, which has led to favourable outcomes for the political parties and

communities that were exposed to the media content. It concluded that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), among other media outlets, effectively employed its capacity to reach a large audience within a restricted timeframe to sway the public's perception. This was achieved not only by disseminating information regarding significant news items or issues, but also by providing guidance on how to evaluate candidates based on their leadership capabilities. It was, therefore, recommended that the media should always report elections in a fair manner.

Ojebuyi & Salawu (2018) carried out a study titled 'partisanship and selective reporting in Nigeria to determine the level of objectivity demonstrated by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of Nigeria's 2015 presidential election. Textual analysis was used to examine news stories on electioneering activities of the People's Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress by four newspapers and the researchers found that the newspapers foregrounded some news stories about the political parties and their presidential candidates and as well buried others in manners that depicted biases influenced by ownership and political alignments of the newspapers. They, therefore, recommended that Nigerian news media should be fair and objective while reporting election issues.

Onwubuya, Nwaoboli & Ajibulu (2023) examined *The Sun* and *The Vanguard* newspapers' coverage of the 2023 presidential election campaigns. The objectives of the study were to examine the tones used by *The Sun* and *The Vanguard* online newspapers in the coverage of the 2023 presidential election and examine the frames used by *The Sun* and *The Vanguard* online newspapers in the coverage of the 2023 presidential election and the researchers anchored the study on the content analysis research design. Also, five issue-specific tones and seven frame categories were used in the analysis. The researchers analysed 72 news reports in *The Sun* and 45 news reports in *The Vanguard* newspapers through the use of systematic sampling technique. The researchers discovered that *The Sun* newspaper dominantly used the indifference frame, while *The Vanguard* used the attack frame to report the campaigns. The researchers thus recommended that both newspapers should use more of the policy issue frame in order to help Nigerians make informed decisions on whom to vote for in elections by portraying the plans and agenda of the candidates.

The studies are related to the current study in that all the studies dealt on presidential elections. However, they majorly differ in scope as the newspapers studied by the former researchers and the period of study differ from the current one.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory

The framing theory was first proposed by sociologist Erving Goffman in 1974 as a way to explain how people interpret and respond to messages (Yaroson & Asemah, 2008; Asemah, Nwanmmuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The theory suggests that people's interpretations of a message are influenced by how the message is framed or presented (Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023). For example, a news story about a new law can be framed as either a positive or a negative development. People might interpret the same story differently based on how it is framed. It suggests that the way an issue is framed in the media may determine how it is perceived by the public. For example, a news report about a political leader's policies may be framed as a success story or a failure, leading the public to perceive the leader in different ways.

The theory states that how a message is communicated is more important than the content of the message itself (Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023). The framing theory is based on the idea that people are more likely to take action when an issue is framed in a way that makes it personally relevant. This means that how a message is communicated can influence the way it is interpreted and perceived by the recipient (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). In political communication, the framing theory is used to explain how different political messages are framed and how they can influence public opinion. In education, the theory has been used to explain how different educational messages are framed and how they can influence student learning. The framing theory suggests that people are more likely to take action when an issue is framed in a way that is personally relevant to them. This means that for a message to be effective, it must be framed in a way that resonates with the target audience (Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023).

Yaroson & Asemah (2008) and Asemah (2011c) note that theories are very important in research. Thus, the framing theory can be applied to the newspaper coverage of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election campaigns by looking at how the election was framed in the newspapers. This can be done by looking at the language and images used in the coverage, as well as the themes and messages that were given more emphasis.

Methodology

The researchers adopted quantitative content analysis as the research design. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that content analysis is an analysis based on the manifest content of mass media message. The population of the study comprised all publications of *The Guardian* and *The Punch* Newspapers between January 1, 2023 and February 25, 2023 which was a total of 56. A total of 312 news reports were seen in *The Guardian* newspaper, while *The Punch* newspaper had 206 news stories on the 2023 presidential election. The researcher thus decided to use the systematic sampling technique because of the high number of reports available on both newspapers. Every 3rd report was picked and coded for the analysis, and this made the researcher to arrive to a sample size of 104 in *The Guardian* newspapers and 68 in *The Punch* newspapers. More so, six specific-issue tones and six genres were used for the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Genres used in the Reportage of the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election

Genres	***The Guardian* (Percentage)**	***The Punch* (Percentage)**
Straight news	66 (63.5%)	34 (50%)
Opinion/comment	15 (14.4%)	9 (13.2%)
letter-to-the-Editor	1 (0.9%)	3 (4.4%)
Features	12 (11.5%)	13(19.1%)
Editorial	7 (6.7%)	3(4.4%)
Cartoons	3 (2.9%)	6(8.8%)
Total	**104 (100%)**	**68(100%)**

Table 1 shows that majority of the stories on the 2023 presidential election came in the form of straight news, followed by features and opinions/comment.

Table 2: Direction of the Reportage of the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election

Direction	***The Guardian* (Percentage)**	***The Punch* (Percentage)**
Positive	29(27.9%)	18(26.5%)
Negative	23(22.1%)	12(17.6%)
Neutral/balanced	50(48.1)	33(31.7%)
Can't say	2(2.9%)	5(7.4%)
Total	**104(100%)**	**68(100)**

Table 2 shows that *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers majorly covered the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria from a balanced angle.

Table 3: Categorisation of *The Guardian* and *The Punch* Newspapers' Coverage of the 2023 Presidential Campaigns According to the Tone of Reports

Tone categories	***The Guardian***	***The Punch* (Percentage)**
Attack	9(8.7%)	2(2.9%)
Supportive	12(11.5%)	11(39.3%)
Persuasive	15(14.4%)	11(16.2%)
Discouragement	8(7.7%)	3(4.4%)
Responsibility	32(30.7%)	21(30.9%)
Indifference	28(26.9%)	20(29.4%)
Total	**104(100%)**	**68(100%)**

Table 3 showed that the tone of coverage by *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers were majorly that of responsibility followed by the indifference tone.

Discussion of Findings

The researchers found that *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers majorly toned their reports on the campaigns to show responsibility and indifference to the campaigns and the implication of this is that the reports were not majorly toned to persuade people to vote for a candidate, show support or attack a candidate or discourage a candidate or political parties' supporters. In addition, the study's findings supported Ajibulu's (2022) assertion that the media give attention to important issues in the society and use media frames and tones to present the information to the public. This can be confirmed by the high number of news reports which were all toned to show the mood behind the messages.

More so, the researchers found that majority of the stories on the 2023 presidential election came in the form of straight news, followed by features and opinions/comment. This is not novel considering the fact that politics is a major news headliner. Also, the findings showed that *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers majorly covered the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria from a balanced angle.

In all, the findings support Hanggli & Kresi's (2010) notion that the media use political framing strategies in their news report and Nwaoboli & Ajibulu's (2023) study which showed that media were objective to an extent in their coverage of the 2023 presidential election. This also agrees with the framing theory which says that the way the media frame issues could determine how the public perceive and react to the issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings showed that newspapers in Nigeria majorly toned their reportage of the 2023 presidential election on political candidates and their supporters being responsible for their actions alongside their indifference tone which led to a high level of balanced election coverage. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. All political parties should ensure that they have effective communication strategies in place that leverage the power of the print media to reach out to the electorate.
2. The media should strive to be impartial and ensure balanced coverage of various candidates and their respective agendas.
3. The print media should adhere to ethical standards in their coverage of election campaigns to ensure that the public is not misled or misinformed.
4. The government should ensure that the electoral process is free and fair and that all political parties are given equal access to the print media.

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CHAPTER FORTY FOUR

ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES BY DANGOTE CEMENT PLC, OGUN STATE

Nana Mariam Muhammed; Tina C. Touitou & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Public relations (PR) is a field of communication that focuses on the management of relationships between an organisation and its publics; it is the practice of understanding the purpose of an organisation and its relationships withinsociety (Asemah, Akase & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2018; Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). It is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics. PR is used to create, maintain and enhance an organisation's reputation and image (Anatusi, Nnabuko & Asemah, 2014; Asemah, Kente, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Amah, 2021). In Nigeria, public relations has become an important tool for organisations to build and maintain relationships with their stakeholders and Dangote Group of Company is not left out. PR is used to create a positive image of the organisation and to build trust and credibility with its stakeholders (Eze, 2011; Asemah, 2011a). It is also used to communicate the organisation's message to its stakeholders and to create a positive public perception of the organisation.

In the modern world, people, organisations or institutions make every effort to establish a respectable reputation for themselves, the neighbourhood in which they operate and the global community. In whatever they do, a high degree of public relations is required (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a). Any company or organisation may use public relations as a method or instrument for communication to help build trust and understanding with the public (Igbo, 2008; Asemah, 2012a). Public relations is still highly important in today's companies since it is still the most effective method for determining and communicating to the public an organisation's overall image. In today's very competitive company climate, public relations is often crucial strategic enablers (Nwosu, 2014; Nwaoboli, 2022).

This is due to the fact that well-articulated public relations initiatives will always provide a good strategy targeted at enhancing the company's public image. Therefore, senior management and public relations practitioners in an organisation see public relations as the result of a strategic thinking process, with the primary goal of developing a reciprocal and friendly connection with the public in order to improve how well a company's brand is conveyed to the general public (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022b).

The role of public relations in organisations in Nigeria is to create and maintain relationships with stakeholders, to build trust and credibility, to communicate the organisation's message and to create a positive public perception of the organisation (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2020). It is also used to manage crises and to create a positive image of the organisation. Public relations is an important tool for organisations to build and maintain relationships with their stakeholders. It is used to create a positive image of the organisation and to build trust and credibility with its stakeholders. It is also

used to communicate the organisation's message to its stakeholders and to create a positive public perception of the organisation.

The public relations strategies of Dangote Cement PLC have been a source of concern for many stakeholders in the industry. Thus, the problem to be addressed in this research is the effectiveness of the public relations strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the extent of recognition of public relations by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State.
2. Find out the public relations strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the public relations strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State.
4. Evaluate the impact of the public relations strategies on the company's reputation and brand image.

Review of Literature

Dangote Group PLC is a Nigerian multinational conglomerate founded by Aliko Dangote in 1981. It is the largest industrial conglomerate in West Africa and one of the largest in Africa. The company is headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria and has operations in several countries in Africa, including Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia. The company has a presence in Ogun State, Nigeria, where it operates a number of businesses, including cement production, sugar refining, flour milling and salt production.

The Dangote Group is a diversified conglomerate with interests in a wide range of industries, including cement, sugar, flour, salt, oil and gas, telecommunications, real estate and logistics. The company is the largest producer of cement in Africa and the second-largest producer in the world (Chukwuma & Umeh, 2009). It is also the largest sugar refiner in Africa and the second-largest in the world. The company is also the largest flour miller in Africa and the second-largest in the world. The Dangote Group has a strong presence in Ogun State, Nigeria, where it operates a number of businesses, including cement production, sugar refining, flour milling, and salt production. The company has a cement plant in Ibese, Ogun State, which is the largest cement plant in Africa. The company also operates a sugar refinery in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, which is the largest sugar refinery in Africa. The company also operates a flour mill in Abeokuta, Ogun State, which is the largest flour mill in Africa. The company also operates a salt production facility in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, which is the largest salt production facility in Africa.

The Dangote Group has a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility and has invested heavily in the development of the communities in which it operates. The company has invested in education, health, and infrastructure projects in Ogun State, Nigeria. The company has also invested in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the state. The Dangote Group has a strong commitment to environmental

sustainability and has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce its environmental impact. The company has implemented a number of energy efficiency initiatives, including the installation of solar panels and the use of renewable energy sources. The company has also implemented a number of water conservation initiatives, including the installation of water harvesting systems and the use of water-efficient irrigation systems (Chukwuma & Umeh, 2009).

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organisation and the public (Asemah & Edegoh, 2014). PR aims to create and maintain a positive image and build strong relationships with an organisation's target audience. It is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics (Omoruyi, 2011). PR can be used to build brand awareness, create positive publicity and manage reputation. It can also be used to influence public opinion, shape public policy and create a favourable environment for an organisation to operate in. PR professionals use a variety of tactics, such as media relations, crisis communication, social media and content marketing, to reach their goals (Asemah, 2011b).

Public relations describes any form of communication which is aimed at bringing about goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. public relations can be defined as the process of creating awareness about the policies, programmes, philosophies, actions, in-actions, prospects and problems of an organisation, whether commercial or noncommercial, with the sole aim of achieving mutual understanding (Asemah, 2010a; Asemah, 2010b; Asemah, 2012b; Asemah & Asogwa, 2012). Contributing to the numerous definitions of public relations, Asemah (2011c); Asemah (2011d) and Asemah (2011e) described it as any form of communication which is aimed at bringing about goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. As a planned communication, it concerns every organisation, whether commercial or non-commercial, government inclusive.

At its core, public relations is about creating and maintaining relationships between an organisation and its publics. It is a two-way process that involves both the organisation and its publics. The organisation must be willing to listen to its publics and respond to their needs and concerns. At the same time, the publics must be willing to listen to the organisation and understand its goals and objectives (Oladimeji, 2013). The goal of public relations is to create a positive image for an organisation and its products or services. This is done through a variety of tactics, such as media relations, public speaking, special events and social media. PR professionals use these tactics to create a positive image of the organisation and its products or services (Ibe & Eze, 2011).

Public relations is also about managing relationships between an organisation and its publics. This involves understanding the needs and concerns of the publics and responding to them in a timely and effective manner. PR professionals must be able to identify potential issues and develop strategies to address them (Ibe & Eze, 2011). Public relations is an important part of any organisation's overall communication strategy. It is a powerful tool that can be used to build relationships, create positive images, and manage issues (Yaroson & Asemah, 2007). PR professionals must be knowledgeable about the organisation and its publics in order to effectively communicate with them. They must also

be creative and strategic in their approach to public relations.

The role of public relations in organisational management is to help organisations establish and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders and to manage any potential conflicts or crises that may arise (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022b). There are various ways in which public relations can contribute to effective organisational management.

First and foremost, public relations can play a crucial role in shaping an organisation's reputation (Asemah & Ogwo, 2013). A positive reputation can help an organisation to attract and retain customers, investors and employees, while a negative reputation can lead to a loss of trust and credibility. Public relations professionals can help to shape the perception of an organisation through media relations, crisis management and other communication strategies. By effectively managing an organisation's reputation, public relations can contribute to its long-term success (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Also, public relations can help to foster positive relationships with employees. Employee engagement is crucial for organisational success and public relations can play a key role in building a positive organisational culture (Nwosu, 2014). Public relations professionals can help to communicate organisational values and goals and to create opportunities for two-way communication between employees and management. By fostering a positive organisational culture, public relations can help to improve employee morale, reduce turnover, and increase productivity.

Public relations can help to build relationships with customers and other external stakeholders. Effective communication is key to building and maintaining positive relationships with customers, suppliers, and other external stakeholders (Obi, 2010). Public relations professionals can help organisations to develop and implement communication strategies that are tailored to specific stakeholder groups, and that build trust and credibility. By establishing open and transparent lines of communication with external stakeholders, public relations can help organisations to better understand their needs and concerns and to develop products and services that meet these needs. Public relations can help organisations to manage crises and reputation-threatening events. Crises can arise in many different forms, including product recalls, environmental disasters, and financial scandals (Ubani & Okeke, 2009). Effective crisis management requires a rapid response, clear communication, and a well-coordinated strategy. Public relations professionals can help organisations to prepare for potential crises through crisis planning and simulation exercises, and can help to manage crises when they do occur.

In addition, public relations can help organisations to navigate the complex regulatory and political environments in which they operate. Public policy issues, including environmental regulations, tax policy, and trade agreements, can have a significant impact on organisations (Oladimeji, 2010). Public relations professionals can help organisations to understand and navigate these issues, and to communicate their positions effectively to policymakers and the public. Overall, public relations plays a crucial role in organisational management. By managing an organisation's reputation, fostering positive relationships with employees and external stakeholders, managing crises and navigating complex regulatory and political environments, public relations can help organisations to achieve

their goals and contribute to their long-term success. As such, public relations should be seen as an integral part of any effective organisational management strategy.

Asemah (2010) conducted a study on public relations and organisational management. Questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data from the respondents. The findings showed that public relations is crucial to organisational administration. Community relations, sponsorship, crisis management, media relations and institutional advertising are just a few examples of public relations activities that may assist a company in achieving improved performance. The results also demonstrated the need for firms to consistently engage in public relations initiatives. The public relations officer is expected to be a part of the management team since public relations is a management function. The researcher concluded that organisational management and public relations are inextricably linked.

Asemah (2009) assessed the public relations activities of Jos International Breweries PLC. The survey research methodology was employed, utilising questionnaire and interview guide as tools to gather data from the respondents. The findings showed that Jos International Breweries PLC does not prioritise public relations as a method of managing the organisation. The aforementioned issue is evident in the disregard for the information unit responsible for managing the public relations efforts of the organisation. The findings also showed that Jos International Breweries PLC has not effectively utilised public relations strategies in its organisational management.

Theoretical Framework

Situational Theory of Publics

The situational theory of publics (also known as the situational theory of public relations) is a theoretical framework that explains how different publics are formed and how organisations can effectively communicate with them. The theory was developed by James Grunig and Todd Hunt in the 1980s and it has since become one of the most widely used theories in the field of public relations.

It proposes that publics are not fixed or static, but dynamic and situational in nature. Depending on the situation, an individual or group may become a public that is interested or affected by a particular organisation or issue. Therefore, effective public relations strategies must be tailored to the specific situation and the needs and interests of the publics involved. The theory identifies four key situational factors that affect the formation of publics and the effectiveness of public relations strategies:

a. **Problem Recognition**: This refers to the extent to which individuals or groups perceive a problem or issue as relevant or important to them. If a problem is seen as highly relevant or important, it is more likely to generate a public that is interested in the issue.

b. **Constraint Recognition:** This refers to the extent to which individuals or groups perceive constraints or barriers to addressing the problem or issue. If there are significant barriers to addressing the problem, it may be more difficult to generate a public that is interested in the issue.

c. **Level of Involvement:** This refers to the extent to which individuals or groups are personally involved in the problem or issue. If individuals feel a personal connection to the issue, they are more likely to become part of a public that is interested in the issue.

d. **Information Seeking:** This refers to the extent to which individuals or groups actively seek information about the problem or issue. If individuals are actively seeking information, they are more likely to become part of a public that is interested in the issue.

This theory is relevant to this study as it proposes that organisations should tailor their public relations strategies to the specific needs and interests of each public. This may involve different communication channels, messages and tactics depending on the characteristics of the publics involved.

Methodology

Survey served as the research design for this study while questionnaire was the research instrument. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012); Ovie & Nwaoboli (2022) and Asemah, Nwkam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that when carrying out a study that has to do with a large population, it is better to use survey research design. The population of this study is the total number of staff in Dangote Cement PLC, Ogun State which according to the administrative department of the firm, is 2596 as at January 2023. A sample size of 346 respondents was taken for the study from the population. The sample for the study was gotten, using Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation formula. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Extent of recognition of Public Relations by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	112	35
High	202	63.1
Neutral	0	0
Low	5	1.6
Very low	1	**0.3**
Total	**320**	**100**

Table 1 shows that the extent of recognition of public relations by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State is very high. This implies that the company prioritises PR.

Table 2: Public Relations Strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Developing Quality relationship with stakeholders	103	32.2
Crisis management	16	5

Employee engagement	29	9.1
Community outreach	53	16.5
Corporate social responsibility	60	18.7
Media relations	59	18.4
Others Please mention		
Total	**320**	**100**

Table 2 shows that developing quality relationship with stakeholders is the major public relations strategy of Dangote Cement PLC, Ogun State. This was followed by the strategy of CSR and media relations.

Table 3: Effectiveness of the Public Relations Strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	195	60.9
Effective	108	33.8
Not Effective	6	1.9
Can't tell	11	3.4
Total	**320**	**100**

Table 3 shows that the public relations strategies employed by Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State are very effective. This implies that their strategies are well designed and create mutual benefits between the company and its stakeholders.

Table 4: Impact of the Public Relations Strategies on the Reputation and Brand Image of Dangote PLC, Ogun State

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Overcoming competition	29	7.6
Enhanced reputation	36	11.3
Increased revenue	110	34.4
Positive customer experiences	38	11.8
Increased visibility	26	8.1
Customer loyalty	81	25.3
Others Please mention	0	0
Total	**378**	**100**

Table 4 shows that the public relations strategies of Dangote Cement PLC have had a positive impact on the company's reputation and brand image. The company has used its public relations strategies to ensure that its brand is seen as one that is reliable, trustworthy and dependable.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicated that Dangote Cement PLC has implemented a number of public relations strategies in order to promote their brand and products. These strategies include the use of media such as television, radio and print, as well as digital media such as social media and online advertising. The company has also implemented a number of corporate social responsibility initiatives in order to build relationships with local communities and to promote their brand. The findings also indicated that Dangote Cement

PLC has been successful in using public relations strategies to promote their brand and products. The company has been able to reach a wide audience through their use of corporate social responsibility initiatives and community outreaches that have been effective in building relationships with local communities.

The findings of the research revealed that Dangote Cement PLC has a well-developed public relations strategy in place. The company has a strong presence in the media. The company also has a strong online presence. The findings also revealed that Dangote Cement PLC has a strong relationship with the local community. The company has a number of initiatives in place to engage with the local community such as sponsoring community events. The findings also revealed that Dangote Cement PLC has a strong focus on customer service by building good relationship with stakeholders. Overall, the findings revealed that Dangote Cement PLC has a well-developed public relations strategy in place. These strategies have enabled the company to build a strong brand and reputation in Ogun State. This is in agreement with the tenets of the situational theory of publics which says that effective public relations yields positive responsibility from stakeholders in favour of the firm that carried out the PR and its stakeholders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research conducted on the public relations strategies of Dangote Cement PLC in Ogun State concludes that the company has been successful in its public relations efforts. The company has used a variety of strategies to ensure that its message is communicated effectively to its target audience. These strategies include the use of the media, crisis management, employee engagement, community outreaches and CSR. Based on the findings and conclusion, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Dangote Cement PLC should continue to invest in its public relations strategies. The company should focus on developing relationships with stakeholders, creating a positive image, and increasing brand awareness.
2. The company should consider expanding its use of digital media and public relations events to reach a wider audience.
3. The company should continue to monitor and evaluate its public relations strategies to ensure that they are effective and achieving the desired results.

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CHAPTER FORTY FIVE

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S LETTER TO THE CLERK OF THE COURT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ON SENATOR IKE EKWEREMADU'S CASE

Adekunle Mamudu; Thomas Anomoaphe Alemoh & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

The media in Nigeria has recently been awash with the news of the arrest, detention and subsequent trial of Senator Ike Ekweremadu and his wife over a criminal case of organ harvesting from a 21 year old Nigerian boy. The case became a public matter that generated a lot of discussion in the traditional, new and social media. Senator Ekweremadu is a Lawyer turned politician and he hails from Enugu State. He has been a Senator of the Federal republic of Nigeria since June 2003 as a member of the People's Democratic Party during which he served at a point, as Deputy Senate President and a member of many committees in the Senate.

Ever since his case came up in the United Kingdom, many well-meaning Nigerians have tried to see how they can defend or sympathise with the Ekweremadu's family, while some others have joined in criticising the family. One of those who have spoken on behalf of Senator Ekweremadu is Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who in a letter to the Chief Clerk of the United Kingdom Court, appealed for clemency for Senator Ekweremadu and his wife. Ever since he wrote the letter, there have been many comments from different television and newspaper analysts. Following the responses the letter has generated and still generating, the need to do a critical study of the letter becomes necessary. Therefore, the researcher carried out a critical discourse analysis of Obasanjo's letter to the Chief Clerk of the United Kingdom Court in order to show how Obasanjo presented his appeal and the personality of Senator Ekweremadu to the Chief Clerk.

Literature Review

Many works have been done on different discourses and data from the perspective of critical discourse analysis and some works have been done on the recent letters of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to past presidents of Nigeria and other well-meaning individuals in Nigeria, like Senator Ike Ekweremadu. One of such papers is the one written by Ekhareafo & Ambrose (2015). In the paper, the authors carried out a critical discourse analysis of Obasanjo's letter to former President Goodluck Jonathan while he was in office as President of Nigeria. They employed an eclectic approach to critical discourse analysis as theoretical framework and came up with findings that Obasanjo's personal issues with Jonathan brought about the letter. Although this may have some truthful political stand based on the political reality on ground during the administration of President Jonathan, this paper nevertheless disagrees with their conclusion that Obasanjo, in his letters, used power in a manner to show superiority, amongst others.

Bamisaye & Omotunde (2015) did a critical discourse analysis on select political speeches of a former governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi. In it, the authors employed the critical discourse approach of Norman Fairclough and M. A. K Halliday's systemic functional grammar as theoretical framework. Their finding was that language was used by Dr. Kayode Fayemi to achieve positive self-presentation and presented his

opponent in a negative light. The relationship this present paper shares with Bamisaye & Omotunde's is that they are both rooted in critical discourse analysis.

Other works have tried to employ critical discourse analysis as a broad theoretical background to interrogate other data. One of such is Samson (2016) that carried out a critical discourse analysis of hate speeches in 2015 Nigerian election campaigns. In the work, the author collected data from three Nigerian newspapers. One of the weaknesses of the paper is the fact that the analysis done by the author was not based on any known theory of critical discourse analysis. Although this paper has reason to agree with the conclusion of the author that the language of political campaigns in Nigeria is ingrained with ideologies intended to maintain or grab political power, it nevertheless believes that ideological commitment can sometimes have some personal colourations as is demonstrated in this paper. In like manner, Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko (2020) in a textual analysis of select hate speeches, established the negative implications associated with hate speech and recommended sanctions against offenders.

Also, Otagburuagu (2016) examined the issue of language and power dominance in Nigerian political discourse from a critical discourse analysis perspectives. The authors collected the political speeches of the late General Sani Abacha and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, both former military and democratic presidents respectively, as data. The authors employed Norman Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis and M. A. K. Halliday's Systemic functional grammar as theoretical framework. The finding of the work which this present paper agrees with is that there are different dimensions of language use and power relations in political discourse. The present paper also agrees with the conclusion reached in the paper that language is a powerful instrument for the expression of political thoughts (Otagburuagu, 2016).

Olagunju (2016) also carried out a critical discourse analysis of interaction among newspaper readers at newspaper stands in Kaduna metropolis. The aim of the paper was to critically examine how the language used demonstrates issues of power and conversational social relations. Although Olagunju's conclusion that language of interaction between newspapers free readers manifests many forms of social practices, the paper is nevertheless different from this present paper because this present paper focuses on Obasanjo's letter to the Chief Clerk of the United Kingdom Court.

Olaoye (2016) has done a sociolinguistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* from a critical discourse analysis angle. Although the work is on literary discourse, the author set out to show how various speech acts in the plays helped in advancing the thematic concerns of the play. This particular paper is different from this present paper because while Olaoye focuses on literary discourse and the manifestation of critical discourse features, the present paper examines a letter, a non-literary piece written by a former president of the Federal republic of Nigeria in the person of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

Theoretical Framework

Theories as noted by Yaroson & Asemah (2008); Asemah (2011) and Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2011), play important functions in every research. Thus, this paper adopts Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach of critical discourse analysis as theoretical framework. The approach believes that language and social practices are in a dialectical relationship in such a manner that the language of a given discourse is capable of affecting the social practices within the discourse and the social practices can also

influence the language used. The approach believes that in the interpretation of a text, both linguistic and non-linguistic features are important because they all help in conveying meanings and messages, although an analyst may decide to focus on one part. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) note that the purpose of analysing a text is to describe its content, the structure and functions of the text as every message attracts multiple and divergent interpretations (Asemah *et al* 2022; Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo, 2023). This paper, in this light examines the content of the letter from the point of power relationship as designed by the theory of critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough's approach has three dimensions: description; interpretation and explanation (Fairclough, 2006). The description talks about the linguistic property of the text or data to be analysed. In it, the analyst is expected to account for experiential, relational and expressive values of words. The interpretation part has to do with the relationship a text or data share with interaction from the text producer. That is, the text is taken to be a product of a process of production initiated by the text producer. Explanation talks about the relationship between interaction and social context. So, Fairclough believes that since social practice is capable of influencing language and language is also capable of influencing social practice, the analyst of a text should try and account for how all of these influence the ideological stance, power relations, issue of dominance and other issues pertinent to critical discourse analysis. This approach is used as the theoretical framework of this paper because its tenets are useful in addressing the crux of this paper.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative using library research approach because it enabled the researchers to give an open analysis in such a way that none of its sections is prefigured and it can accommodate new things during the course of writing the paper. The library research approach involves accessing and utilising various resources available in libraries to gather data, explore topics, and gain insights for academic or professional purposes (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a; 2022b; Nwaoboli, 2023). In terms of data gathering, Obasanjo's letter was sourced from the internet and downloaded as text. The letter was read and studied and it was thereafter analysed based on the theoretical framework of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A careful study of the data shows that Obasanjo used some strategies to present himself as a worthy individual who should be listened to. He also tacitly presented three ideological positions about Senator Ike Ekweremadu which he wanted the United Kingdom Court to believe.

Strategies for Presentation of Self Worthiness

Analysis of the data shows that the following strategies were used by Obasanjo to present himself as being worthy of the attention of the Court. He fronted the power and authority he had had; and tacitly presented himself as Nigeria's elder statesman who upholds justice. In terms of fronting the power and authority he once had, Obasanjo deliberately wanted the UK Court to know that he knows what it means to have and use power and authority. To him, therefore, he is in a better position to appeal to the Court in respect of Senator Ekweremadu's case and because he too had had greater power, authority and responsibility as a two time president of Nigeria, his personality and experience should, therefore, not be

taken for granted as far as his appeal is concerned. Text 1 below shows the use of this strategy.

> Text 1
> I am Olusegun Obasanjo, a soldier commissioned into the British Army of the West African Frontier Force in 1958 and rose to the rank of a full General in the Nigerian Army. I received the surrender of the end of the Nigerian civil war. I was military Head of State from 1976 to 1979 and elected president from 1999 to 2007.

In Text 1 above, one can see that Obasanjo has had power and authority both as a military president and as a democratically elected president. Ordinarily, he could have afforded to leave out the information in Text 1 out of the letter because it can easily be assumed that the Court Clerk will have all the information, but his presentation of the information about his past presidency is a deliberate strategy geared towards ensuring that he is not taken for granted, even when he is appealing on someone's behalf. The foregrounding of the fact that he is a soldier commissioned into the British Army of the West African Frontier Force can also be taken as a tacit attempt to claim some military affinity with the British Army; an institution which is respected in the United Kingdom and indeed, the world at large. This affinity is expected to be taken for granted by the Chief Clerk of the Court and as such, whatever political benefit that is accruable to such affinity should be accorded to him.

In terms of presenting himself as an elder statesman, Obasanjo employed what the writer of this paper chooses to call "the custodian of history approach." In the letter, a deliberate effort was made by Obasanjo to present himself as a leader who keeps track of events and happenings in Nigeria to the extent that when things are going wrong, he will be able to use his historical knowledge to speak to the situation and when things are going well he will also do same. Text 2 and 3 confirm this strategy.

> Text 2
> I clearly remember that in the heady days of the keen contest for the presidential ticket of our party in early 1999, he joined other well-meaning Nigerians from the South-Eastern part of Nigeria to set aside extraneous considerations and ensure that South East unanimously adopted me for presidency.

> Text 3.
> I do realise the implications of their action and I dare to say, it is unpleasant and condemnable and cannot be tolerated in any sane or civilied society.

The point of emphasis in Text 2 that supports the strategy of Obasanjo presenting himself as an elder statesman through the use of "the custodian of history approach" is the first line. The use of "I clearly remember that in the heady days…" is meant to make the reader to see him as someone who still has a clear memory of events. But in Text 3, Obasanjo wants the reader to know that being an elder statesman does not make him to neglect social justice; hence, he openly acknowledged the implications of the action of the Ekweremadus. What is more interesting vis a vis the strategy of Obasanjo presenting himself as an elder statesman is that going outside the letter as a text and going into the social political arena of Nigeria, one is bound to see that the courage to write the letter alone has presented Obasanjo as an elder statesman. He could have chosen to keep quiet or look away like other past presidents of Nigeria and other respected Nigerians are doing.

The mood and attitude as reflected in his choice of language, structure and content of the letter further foreground the fact that Obasanjo did not only use the strategy of painting himself as an elder, he is indeed an elder statesman.

Obasanjo's Ideological Position on Senator Ike Ekweremadu

A close study of the data shows that Obasanjo advanced two different ideological positions on Senator Ekweremadu and they are: Senator Ekweremadu is an astute politician who has the interest of Nigeria at heart and he is a selfless man. These two positions, one could say, form the basis upon which Obasanjo is appealing for clemency for him. In terms of his ideological position that Senator Ekweremadu is an astute politicaian who has the interest of Nigeria at heart, Obasanjo wants the reader to know, in several instances, that the likes of Senator Ekweremadu are not common in the present Nigerian politics. To him, Senator Ekweremadu has consistently shown that the interest of Nigeria should be put first in everything political in Nigeria. Text 4 has examples for this.

> Text 4
> Within this period of his service in the Nigerian Parliament, he has served as Deputy Senate President and has headed so many Committees in various capacities and brought to bear his broad-based experience in legal practice and public administration. Sometime in 2009, he was appointed as the first Deputy Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States.

In Text 4 above, Obasanjo shows to the reader the positions which Senator Ekweremadu's political astute nature has fetched him. Apart from the normal regional political consideration in choosing the leadership of the Senate, to hold a position in the Nigerian Senate requires that the person is of good character and has clear political orientation that will better the lot of Nigeria in general. For Senator Ekweremadu to have served as head of different committees and also served as Deputy Senate President and also got appointed as first Deputy Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States, it is the belief of Obasanjo that Nigeria has benefited from Ekweremadu's political experience. Text 5 presents more examples

> Text 5
> I clearly remember that in the heady days of the keen contest for the presidential ticket of our party in early 1999, he joined other well-meaning Nigerians from the South-Eastern part of Nigeria to set aside extraneous considerations and ensure that South East unanimously adopted me for presidency. This was without regard to the fact that my closest competitor hailed from their part of the country.

Text 5 above is meant to further project the political sagacity of Senator Ekweremadu. Prominent in the text is the fact that Senator Ekweremadu is not a tribal bigot nor does he get involved in regional politics that is capable of jeopardising Nigeria as a country. This is what Obasanjo had in mind when he wrote that regardless of the fact that his close competitor for the position of the President of Nigeria was from Senator Ekweremadu's part of the country, he did not consider tribal or regional politics; rather he supported his emergence. The effect of this position in the discourse of his appeal is that Senator Ekweremadu should be seen as a politician who engages in social and political practices that are beneficial to the Nigerian people at all times.

In terms of the ideology of Senator Ekweremadu as a selfless man, our data show that Obasanjo tries to ensure that Ekweremadu's humanitarian and philanthropist activities are fronted for the Chief Clerk to see. The discursive effect of this is to ensure that the reader of the letter (the Chief Clerk) may begin to see that Senator Ekweremadu's intention of bringing the said 21 year old boy to the United Kingdom, aside the medical needs of his daughter, may be to thereafter render some help to him. Text 6 below illustrates Obasanjo's ideology of Senator Ekweremadu as a selfless man.

> Text 6
> Through the Ikeoha Foundation, a non-governmental organisation founded by him and his wife in 1997, he and his wife have rendered a lot of charitable activities, enhancing poor people's access to quality education and healthcare and building their capacity to participate in mainstream social, political and economic activities of their communities.

In text 6 above, the philanthropic gesture associated with Senator Ekweremadu is seen to be a family thing. What this means is that the desire to help people, especially the less privileged, is something that Ekweremadu's family do always. This is why they even have a foundation set up in that regard. The discourse function of this is to tacitly show that since Senator Ekweremadu has always been in the business of helping people, it will be somehow to think that he will deliberately go out of his way to hurt an innocent individual in the person of the said 21 year old boy.

Conclusion

This paper has so far carried out a critical discourse analysis of the letter written by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of the Federal Republic of Nigerian, to the Chief Clerk of the United Kingdom Court, appealing on behalf of Senator Ike Ekweremadu and his wife who are being tried for a criminal offence of organ harvesting of a 21 year old Nigerian boy. The study has shown that Obasanjo's use of language in the letter is such that it employed discursive strategies that foreground him as someone who is worthy of putting up an appeal for Senator Ekweremadu, based on the personality he (Obasanjo) has acquired over the years. The use of language in the letter also showed that Obasanjo has two ideological positions on Senator Ekweremadu, upon which he based his appeal. Following the analysis of the data and the findings, it can be concluded that the language of the letter and the discursive strategies therein are such that they are capable of appealing to the emotions and conscience of the Chief Clerk of the UK Court who may be swayed to giving a favourable consideration to Obasanjo's appeal.

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CHAPTER FORTY SIX

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND ORGANISATION HARMONY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

Opeyemi Popoola Oladele & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Organisational communication is the set of activities that organisations carry out. Organisational communication is a phenomenon that reflects the basic principles, characteristics, values, orientations and organisational culture of the organisation (Suh, Harrington & Goodman, 2018). People in organisations operate from different and distinct units through communication, they relate with each other to achieve organisational goals. Local government councils are made up of people, like any other organisation, who work together towards the organisation's growth. The diffusion of information through this network in the organisation engenders organisational harmony.

The management of an organisation that desires a harmonious environment must strive to improve workplace communication through daily e-mail updates, meetings, telephones, access to private chat rooms where employees can raise questions without having to leave their desks and the bulletin board on the wall which acts as a guide for employees to have an idea about the day to day happenings and running of the local government councils. Open communication channels, along with employee participation in the formulation and implementation of communication strategies, have proven to be a necessity for organisations (Daniel, 2018). Communication strategy cannot be effective in a workplace if the management hesitates to make employees aware of changes and updates within the organisation that can impact their job. This is because when employees are fully aware of the changes and what is expected of them, they can perform better towards attaining the organisation's goals. Hoarding of information or its inadequacy leads to rumours, which, if not checked, leads to confusion in the system. Many organisations fail as a result of poor and or inadequate communication (Suh, Harrington & Goodman, 2018).

Therefore, communication being the pivot of an organisation is crucial to the performance of local government councils. A communication strategy helps the organisation to build strong relationships with the employees and interdependent relationships are the hallmark of organisations. Local governments with functional communication strategies that are skillfully implemented win the hearts of their employees because an inclusive communication strategy boosts the self-worth of members of the organisation (Judge & Robbins, 2013). Communication strategies have subsequently become recognised as valuable tools for any organisation to reach its employees by efficiently and adequately communicating ideas, innovations, policies and plans towards attaining set goals in the organisation (Asemah, 2010). No organisation can communicate unless it has clarity of purpose, which can be expressed concisely. Exact steps should be taken to ensure that all employees feel involved in decisions that affect their daily work, as the different strategies give direction and set the tone for the organisation to improve its effort.

Effective communication is occasioned by multi-directional flow (downward, upward, and horizontal) because where the multi-directional communication flow is in place; it engenders harmony and good working relationship between the management and staff of the council. Effective communication enhances the coordination of human resources to establish a harmonious workforce and environment for attaining set goals and objectives. Thus, it is against this background that the study examines communication strategies and organisational harmony in local government councils in Edo State. The selected Local government areas are: Etsako West (Edo North), Oredo (Edo South) and Esan West (Edo Central).

Statement of the Problem

The structure of local government council is made up of the executive that formulates policies and ensure their implementation, the legislature that makes laws for the council in addition to performing oversight functions and the employees of the council who implement policies and directives of the executive. This marriage makes local government administration complex. Therefore, effective communication strategies become inevitable and imperative for effective administration and harmony in the council. As a result of the all-important role that communication plays in any organisation, without employing a strategic communication approach, local government administrations may experience disharmony in policy implementation and bonding of the workforce.

It has also been observed casually by local government employees and other stakeholders in local government council in the study area that there seems not to be harmony in the local government councils. They claim that the management is not open and transparent with communication, as things are shrouded in secrecy. They also observed that the leadership of local government councils lacked clearly defined communication strategies for use in the coordination of activities of the council. Reports of absenteeism, locks out and bitter disagreements between the executive, legislature and career employees abound in the system and could be attributed in part to ineffective communication.

There is no organisation that can achieve its goals without effective communication between employers and employees. Several studies have been carried out on communication and other variables like job satisfaction, productivity, employee identification and performance. However, very few studies have been conducted on communication strategies and organisational harmony, particularly in local government councils. For instance, Akarika, Ekanem & Ukpe, (2017) assessed the role of communication flow in creating industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research method used for data collection was opinion survey. Mojaye (2015) examined the influence of communication on industrial harmony in the civil service of Delta State. There is a literature gap, especially the relationship of communication strategies and harmony among local governments. This study aims to fill the gap by examining the relationship between communication strategies and organisational harmony in select Local Government Councils in Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do the select local government councils communicate with their employees?
2. What communication strategies do select local government areas in Edo State adopt in their council?
3. How did the employees of the select local government councils perceive the communication strategies adopted in the council's areas?
4. To what extent does communication leads to harmony in the select local government areas in Edo State.
5. What is the nature of relationship that exists between the leaders and the employees in the select local government areas in Edo State?

Literature Review

Conceptualisation of Communication

Communication is the process by which information is passed between individuals. Asemah (2011) defines communication as the system of passing information, ideas, messages and feelings between two or more people through previously agreed language, code, sign or symbol. Also, Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) define communication as the process by which people interactively create, sustain and manage meaning. Communication, according to Asemah (2009) is the process of sharing information, ideas and attitude. To share means to give or receive a part of something or to assume something in common. Communication is defined as the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more parties. Communication has to do with the exchange of ideas between two or more people (Asemah & Asemah, 2018).

People in organisations work together to achieve a common goal which can only be reached through communication. Newman & Ober (2013) note that a group of people must interact in order to communicate their ideas, need expertise and plans. Managers in organisations must understand how communication works and how to communicate competently as this will make them more effective in every aspect of business. Communication is said to be successful only when there is understanding of the sender's message. Communication in an organisation relates to the deliberate, intentional application of physical symbol complexes, with a view to bringing out specific meanings in the minds of other individuals (Stewart, 2002).

Communication here is viewed as a tool that people use to accomplish their goals and objectives (Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, 2023). According to this perspective, miscommunication occurs only when no message is received or when the message that is received is not what the sender intended. Typical communication problems include information over-load (when the receiver becomes overwhelmed by the information that must be processed); distortion (the effect of noise on the receiver's ability to process the message) and ambiguity (when multiple interpretations of a message cloud the sender's intended meaning).

Understanding Organisational Communication

Organisational communication is an inter-twine between organsiation and communication to plan products, hire, train and motivate workers, coordinate manufacturing and delivery, persuade customers to buy and bill them for sale. For many businesses, non-profit and government organisations, the "product" is information or services rather than something tangible. This information and services are created and delivered by communication.

Organisational communication largely focuses on building relationships or repeated interpersonal interactions, with internal organisational members and interested external publics (Asemah & Asemah, 2018). Goldhaber (1990), cited in Asemah & Asemah (2018) argue that organisational communication occurs within a complex open system which is influenced by and influences its internal and external environments. Organisational communication helps us to accomplish tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services and production; acclimate to changes through individual and organisational creativity and adaptation; complete tasks through the maintenance of policy, procedures or regulations that support daily and continuous operations; develop relationships where human messages are directed at people within the organisation-their attitudes, morale, satisfaction and fulfillment (Goldhaber, 1990 cited in Asemah & Asemah, 2018). In an organisation, communication flows in five main directions; namely:

i. **Downward Flow of Communication:** Communication that flows from a higher level in an organisation to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication (Management Study Guide, 2013).

ii. **Upward Flow of Communication:** Communication that flows to a higher level in an organisation is called upward communication. It provides feedback on how well the organisation is functioning. The subordinates use upward communication to convey their problems and performances to their superiors. The subordinates also use upward communication to tell how well they have understood the downward communication. It can also be used by the employees to share their views and ideas and to participate in the decision making process (Management Study Guide, 2013).

iii. **Lateral/Horizontal Communication:** Communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organisation is called lateral communication; that is, communication between peers, between managers at same levels or betweenany horizontally equivalent organisational members (Management Study Guide, 2013).

iv. **Diagonal Communication:** Communication that takes place between a manager and employees of other workgroups is called diagonal communication. It generally does not appear on organisational chart. For instance, to design a training module, a training manager interacts with operations personnel to enquire about the way he/she performs his or her task (Management StudyGuide, 2013)

v. **External Communication:** Communication that takes place between a manager and external groups such as: suppliers, vendors, banks and financial institutes. For instance, to raise capital, the managing director would interact with the Bank Manager (Management Study Guide, 2013).

Understanding Organisational Harmony

Communication serves four major functions within a group or organisation; namely: control, motivation, emotional expression and information (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Communication acts to control members' behaviour in several ways. Organisations have authority hierarchies and formal guidelines that employees are require to follow. When employees are required to communicate any job-related grievance to their job description or to comply with company policies; for instance, communication is performing a control function. But informal communication also controls behavior. When work groups tease a member who produces too much (and makes the rest of the group look bad), they are informally communicating with and controlling the member's behaviour.

Good communication could be seen as a bond that links people together to achieve a common goal. It is necessary in the coordination of the human elements of the organisation into an efficient and effective working unit. The need for communication pervades all organisations. Omego & Nwachukwu (2012, p.2) posit that "for communication to be effective, there must be sharing of information or ideas from one person to another." It is also worth mentioning that there are different ways of communicating: by gestures, facial expressions. It could be in form of written words or symbols. A smile or even silence can constitute communication. Other ways of communicating may include: informal talks, telephone calls, inter-office memos, letters, reports, posters and planned conferences. Harmonious environments cannot be created, goals cannot be met and even problems in organisations cannot be solved without adequate communication. This concept of communication takes many forms: face-to-face discussions, letter, memos, phone conversations and notices posted on boards.

Communication Strategy

Communication may be seen as the process by which individuals share information, opinions, ideas, feelings and attitudes (Asemah, 2011). Communication, according to McShane & Von Glinow (2003), as cited in Asemah, Okpanachi & Olumuji (2013) is the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more parties.

The essence of communication strategy is to help both management and employees in an organisation to communicate effectively to meet core organisation objectives. Communication strategy helps an organisation to build strong relationships with the employees and interdependent relationships are the hallmark of organisations (Daniel, 2018). Griffin & Moorhead (2007) define communication as "the social process in which two or more parties exchange information and share meaning." They further maintain that "just as the human nervous system responds to stimuli and coordinates responses by sending messages to the various parts of the body, communication coordinates the parts of an organisation." Effective communication strategy is, therefore, one which plays a central

role in high-performance, just as information, understanding and knowledge are the lifeblood of an organisational body (Asemah, 2012).

Review of Empirical Studies

Asemah & Asemah (2018) conducted a study on organisational communication as a strategy for enhancing employee motivation. The researchers used qualitative research method. The researchers discussed the relationship between organisational communication and employee motivation. The discussion showed that good communication leads to increased job satisfaction, safety, productivity and profits; it decreases grievances and turnover. The researchers noted that effective internal communication is essential for addressing organisational concerns. The researchers recommended that for organisations to communicate effectively, they should identify and analyse their audiences, use appropriate communication channels and constantly communicate with employees. Asemah & Asemah (2018) adopted qualitative research method in their study while this study used mixed method to examine communication strategies and organisation harmony in Local government councils in Edo State. Both studies centre on organisational communication strategies.

Lawal, Omotayo, Kolawole, Adedamola & Igbalajobi (2010) studied effective communication as a tool for industrial harmony, high productivity and development, with a focus on academic environment. The researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed Staff forum, Memo and Notice Boards as media of communication in the study area; more than 50% of the respondents affirmed regularity of usage of identified media of communication in management of affairs of the establishment. Lawal *et al* (2010) study focused on academic environment, while this study focused on local government councils in Edo state. The researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from the respondents. Similarly, the present study used quantitative and qualitative methods. Karimi (2013) studied the ‘‘impact of communication on employee motivation in the Kenyan public service.’’ Karimi used descriptive research design to obtain information on the impact of communication on employee motivation. The findings revealed that communication had a motivating effect on employees at Postal Corporation of Kenya; thus translating this motivation into job satisfaction. Karimi (2013) studied the ‘‘impact of communication on employee motivation in the Kenyan public service while this study was conducted in Nigeria.

Chitrao (2014) examined internal communication satisfaction as an employee motivation tool in the retail sector in Pune. Chitrao’s study revealed that all employees prefer face-to-face interaction and that interpersonal, dialogic communication remains important at levels in an organisation and that employees want regular face-to-face interaction with top and line management as it enables them to ask questions and get clarifications and also makes them feel valued because of the time taken by higher level executives to personally interact with them. Chitrao (2014) focused on internal communication satisfaction, while this study focused on organisational communication and harmony in select LGAs in Edo state, Nigeria.

Akarika, Ekanem & Ukpe, (2017) assessed the role of communication flow in creating industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research method used for data collection was opinion survey. The researchers conducted personal interviews with the management and union leaders in the institutions. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State and they adopted opinion survey. This present study used the mixed method.

Theoretical Framework

The researchers made use of modern organisational theory**.** Modern organisational theory views modern organisations as a system of mutually dependent variables, involving the individual and the personality structure in the organisation. There is congruence between the individual expectancies and those of the organisation. The theory advocates for a system approach where the organisation is seen as a unit with highly integrated and interdependent units. In this regards, the organisation recognises both its formal and informal structures and their communication systems. The theory was propounded by Max Weber (1864-1920, as cited in Ushie, 2012).

Thus, communication is the vehicle that ensures the efficient functioning of the system and its interdependent parts. It is also vital to any social system as it creates an environment of trust, harmony and proficiency. The assumption of the theory is that employee work for numerous reasons, including to achieve satisfaction, happiness and desired lifestyles. Therefore, relating the strategic communication and how the strategy enhances or hinders organisational harmony situates itself properly in this context. Effective communication strategy provides task messages, maintenance messages, human relations messages and innovative messages to local government and its sub-systems. These messages help to maintain harmony in local government administrations.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey design for this study. Survey according to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) is used in research when dealing with a very large population. The population of this study comprised three local government area councils in Edo State. They are Etsako West (Auchi, Edo North), Oredo (Benin City, Edo South) and Esan West (Ekpoma, Edo Central). The population of staff in these three local government councils is 8,047, according to the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Edo State, 2022. The breakdown shows that Etsako West has 2,591 staff, Oredo has 2, 671 and Esan West has 2,784 staff. The researcher used the Krejcie and Morgan online calculator to determine the sample size of the study. With error margin of 5% at confidence level of 95% to determine the sample size of the study. The sample size is 367. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in this study. Multi-stage sampling is a sampling technique that involves two or more stages of selection. Stage One, Edo State was clustered into three Senatorial districts, which are: Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central. The reason is to ensure easy access and to remove any cluster error.

Stage two, from the three (3) Senatorial districts, one local government council area which are smaller units were randomly selected. The Local governments are: Etsako West (Auchi, Edo North), Oredo (Benin City, Edo South) and Esan West (Ekpoma, Edo Central).

In stage three, based on this population, the proportionate sampling method was applied to select a sample of 367. This was done to allocate sample in accordance with the population of each of the councils available in the sample size of 367/3 = 122. At fourth stage, purposive sampling was used to select only the Local government Councils staff. The essence of purposive sampling was to ensure that only staff who work at the Local Government council are selected for the study. At fifth stage, accidental or convenience sampling was used to distribute copies of questionnaire to the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 367 copies of questionnaire administered to respondents, only 352 (96%) were returned and found useable; thus, giving the questionnaire a mortality rate of 15 (4%). Therefore, only 352 copies of questionnaire were used for the purpose of data analysis.

Table 1: Response on whether the Select Local Government Councils Communicate with their Employees

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	102	29
Agree	161	46
Undecided	37	11
Disagree	29	8
Strongly disagree	21	6
Total	**352**	**100**

The data in table 1 above indicate that the select local government councils communicate with their employees. This is due to the fact that majority (75%) answered in this direction.

Table 2: Communication Strategies Prefer in the Local Government Council by the Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Memos	149	42
Letters	20	6
Telephones	51	14
Meetings	86	24
E-mails	33	9
Seminar and workshops	13	4
Total	**352**	**100**

The data in table 2 reveal that 42% of the respondents prefer the use of memos as communication strategy in the council area.

Table 3: Perception of the Communication Strategies Adopted in the Council's Areas

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	103	29
Effective	178	51
Can't tell	35	10
Less effective	20	6
Not effective	16	4
Total	**352**	**100**

The data in table 3 reveal that the respondents perceive the communication strategies adopted in the council's areas as effective.

Table 4: Extent Communication has led to Harmony in the Councils areas in Edo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	108	31
Large extent	175	50
Can't tell	44	13
Low extent	10	2
Very low extent	15	4
Total	**352**	**100**

Data in table 4 reveal 50% of the respondents said communication has led to harmony in the select local government areas in Edo State to large extent.

Table 5: The Nature of Relationship that exists between the Leaders and the Employees in the Local Government Areas

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Cordial relationship	289	82
Hostile relationship	19	5
Can't tell	44	13
Total	**352**	**100**

The data in table 5 show that cordial relationship exists between the leaders and the employees in select local government areas in Edo State

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the select local government councils communicate with their employees. Asemah (2011) notes that the communication process includes all acts of transmitting messages to channels that link people to the languages and symbolic codes which are used to transmit messages, it includes the means by which messages are received and stored as the rules, customs, beliefs and conventions, which define and regulate human relationships and conventions, which define and regulate human relationships and events. Evans (2021) adds that communication is an important aspect of human existence as it is considered the epicenter of the daily activities of man.

I was discovered that memo was the major communication strategy used by the select local government areas in Edo State. Also, further findings in table 2 showed that majority (43%) of the respondents said memo is used because it is easily understood. According to Nweze & Chidi (2014), memo is for internal circulation, sometimes written on standard letter heads. It was also discovered that most of the respondents perceived the communication strategies adopted in the council areas as effective. Asemah *et a l* (2017) observe that perception is a dynamic mechanism in which people choose, organise and perceive sensory stimuli to form a meaningful and coherent image of issues in the environment. Communication strategies, systems and practices do play a central role in high-performance. Information, understanding and knowledge are the lifeblood of the organisational body. A thoughtful and comprehensive communication strategy is a vital component to any successful change and improvement (Richard, 2009).

The finding revealed communication has led to harmony in the select local government areas in Edo State to a large extent. Awonyi (1982) as cited in Cole (2005) affirms that without communication there would be chaos. The findings also support the theory used in the study. The transactional process theory proposes that the relationship between receivers of a message and the message is much like that of a river and its banks, each working its effects upon the other and contributing to shape themselves. The theory is because in addition to information transmission in the local government councils, persons who engage in sending and receiving information contribute a lot to the content, meaning, adequacy and effects of communication on individuals, departments and the industry. The extent of communication transaction affects the extent of harmony.

The findings further showed that cordial relationship exists between the leaders and the employees in select local government areas in Edo State. This discovery is consonance with the interactional view theory as used in the study. Interactional theory was formulated by Paul Watzlawick in 1967. It is one of the theories of relationship maintenance. Watzlawick, cited in Griffin (2000) formed the theory of social interaction by looking at dysfunctional patterns within families in order to gain insight about healthy communication. Although this theory was designed for relationship maintenance in family relationship, it has application in communication strategies; a plan on how to improve communication in work place as he asserts that relationship messages are always the most important element in communication, particularly in the communication between managers and their subordinate or employees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Communicating efficiently in an organisation helps to promote harmonious relations between management and employees and it is critical to productivity in the local government councils. The researchers concluded that the select local government councils communicate with their employees and that communication has led to harmony in the select local government areas in Edo State to a large extent. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The select local government councils should intensify efforts and ensure that they communicate regularly with their employees.
2. The select local government councils should explore and adopt other communication strategies beyond the use of memo in the council areas, such as meeting, telephone, zoom and Google meet.
3. Since respondents perceived the communication strategies adopted in the councils as effective, the select local government council areas are advised to keep the momentum high in other to achieve its organisational goals and aims.
4. The Local Government Chairmen should encourage effective communication at every level in their council areas such that it will build individual relations between employers and employees to ensure organisational peace or harmony.
5. The select local government councils are advised to ensure that they continue to maintain cordial relationship between the leaders and the employees in their councils. This will facilitate harmonious relationship between the leaders and the employees in such councils.

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CHAPTER FORTY SEVEN

ASSESSMENT OF REPUTATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF THE NIGERIAN CORRECTIONAL SERVICE, WARRI CUSTODIAN CENTRE

Purity Hope Oyibotha; Daniel O. Ekhareafo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

Reputation was, is, and always will be of immense importance to organisations, whether commercial, governmental or not-profit-organisations (NGOs). This is because good reputation enables organisations to achieve their aims and objectives. According to Cravens, Oliver & Ramamoorti (2003), reputation is the most critical, strategic and perhaps, enduring asset that a corporation possesses, while Whetten & Mackey (2002) define corporate reputation as what the company is seen to be. Similarly, Lewis (2001) describes corporate reputation as an intangible asset of immense value that is built up overtime. It is difficult to quantify a reputation and understand its exact impact on a business; however, it has been shown that a good reputation lends numerous advantages to an organisation (Boyd, Bergh & Ketchen, 2010).

Therefore, in a fast-changing world where organisations can easily fall short of their promises to stakeholders, there is need to not only intuitively recognise the value of a sound reputation, but to also systematically and purposefully manage their reputations (Smaiziene & Jucevicius, 2010; Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a; 2022b). Along this line, Argenti & Druckenmiller (2004, p.368) argue that 'organisations increasingly recognise the importance of reputation management to achieve business goals and stay competitive.' Thus, reputation has become a crucial asset in any organisation. Organisations, no matter how large or small, ultimately depends on its reputation for survival and success (Asemah, Akase & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2018). Hence, for Nigerian Correctional Services (NCS) as a public-service delivery organisation, having a strong strategy in place to build and protect corporate image and reputation is essential.

Studies have shown that reputation is anchored on the relationships that exist between an organisation, its staff, clientele and other stakeholders within the context of the organisation's vision and core values (Watson & Kitchen, 2010; Smaiziene & Jucevicius, 2010). The Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS) is one of such organisations that rely so much on positive reputation in order to successfully carry out its mandate. And the NCS being the only organisation that offers prison service in the country has been constantly faced with dealing with perceptions of Nigerians about the activities of the prison service within the law and order framework in the country. However, the inability of the organisation to manage the publics' perception of the vision and values creates an expectation gap that could lead to crises. Thus, the researchers investigated the reputation management strategies of Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the level of awareness of NCS in Warri about reputation management.
2. Ascertain the extent to which NCS in Warri are engage in Reputation Management
3. Determine the influence of reputation management on the image of NCS in Warri.

Concept and Literature Review

Reputation is defined as respect and trustworthiness or the general ideas of people about a person or something, how much a person or something is appreciated and admired based on past behaviour or character. However, in the management sphere, reputation is met by the word "corporate reputation.'' Ponzi, Fombrun & Gardberg (2011) observe that the search for a comprehensive definition of CR has grown over the decades and continues to gain interest among academics and practitioners. However, literature suggests there is not one definition of corporate reputation and that scholars have offered a variety of structure definitions on corporate reputation (Barnett *et al* 2006).

Similarly, Fombrun *et al* (2000) cited in Esenyel & Emeagwali (2019) define corporate reputation as a comprehensive assessment of an organisation's ability to provide valued outcomes to a representative group of stakeholders. In a more holistic manner, Anca & Roderick (2007) describe CR as the long-term combination of how stakeholders fulfil the responsibilities of the organisation, how they meet their expectations and the overall performance of the organisation in adapting to the social-political environment is as corporate reputation. Hence, reputation is seen as a short statement of the perceptions held by all critical stakeholders of an organisation and is an outcome of the past actions of a firm and how others perceive the firm (Chun, 2005; Williams Schnake & Fredenberger, 2005). Therefore, corporate reputation stands out as a concept that develops in the perception of the institution and requires a long process.

According to Asemah & Ekhareafo (2022), reputations are value judgements that evolve over time primarily based on emotional, financial, social and cultural attachment between an organisation and various publics. This is because reputations are subject to perception that has been built over significant time-span as it represents the collective perceptions that stakeholders have built up about an organisation over a period of time (Coombs, 2010). They are made up of perceptions and orientations formed on the basses of the interactions and dealings with organisation over a period of time.

According to Asemah & Ekhareafo (2022), reputation management (RM) is the strategic use of corporate resources to positively influence the attitudes, beliefs, opinions and actions of multiple corporate stakeholders, including consumers, employee, investors and media. Munyoro & Magada (2016) contend that cooperate reputation management is a systematic set of strategies to predict and meet expectations, foster and manage strong relationships and engender positive feedback among all stakeholders in order to meet expected organisational goals. Reputation management seeks balance public and stakeholders' perceptions, which can foster attitude and orientations that helps corporate organisations actualise short and long-term goals (Asemah & Asogwa, 2012; Asemah & Ogwo, 2013; Asemah, & Nwammuo, 2018; Asemah, 2019; Asemah, Kente & Ukwam-Uwaoma, 2020). The paradigm of reputation management is that an organisation's reputation is dependent on its behaviour as a corporate citizen, as part of the societies in which it operates from (Watson & Kitchen, 2010).

Organisations engage in public relations to manage their relationships with their stakeholders (Asemah & Asogwa, 2012).In the prison system, public relations task is an important aspect of the job of the public relations practitioner. Baskin, Aronoff & Lattimore (2003) cited in Akintaro & Ekhareafo (2017) assert that one of the major components of public relations is news service whose job is to publicise the information that originates from the organisation. Asemah, Ekhareafo, Edegoh, & Ogwo (2013) add that public relations officials do this by responding to calls from reporters. They make use of news releases and feature stories about the occurrence of important events; for instance, the

appointment of a new commandant. Special event management is another aspect of prisons PR. The creation and production of the organisation's publications, whether media reports, social media posts or magazines and newsletters, is also under prisons relations department (Asemah, Edegoh & Anatsui, 2013). Ledingham (2000) cited in Akintaro & Ekhareafo (2017) states that tasks of public relations officers include:

a. Providing an overview of press clippings for senior level administrators.
b. Offering editorial project assistance to departments.
c. Engaging in crisis management when matters do not go well.
d. Offering training for faculty and staff.

Against this backdrop, the importance of public relations cannot be overemphasised. The aspects of the organisation which Public Relations Officers project in the management of an organisation's reputation are image and identity, vision and culture (Collins & Porras, 1996 cited in Akintaro & Ekhareafo, 2017), personality, institutional confidence and goodwill (Akintaro & Ekhareafo, 2017). Therefore, it is important that organisations establish a sustainable relationship with other organisations (local and international), as means of building good reputation.

According to Asemah & Ekhareafo (2022), the following are strategies employed by organisations in managing their reputation:

a. **Public Relations Team:** Having a round-the-clock working public relations team is a vital instrument in reputation management. The public relations team helps the organisation to be in control of the communication narratives.

b. **Control Communication Narrative:** Communication is a vital instrument for managing reputation; it can shape public perceptions. Therefore, a company must take ownership of its communication narrative, both on the main stream and interactive media. Asemah *et al* (2018) call it tracking everything, everywhere both online and offline.

c. **Proactive Response:** This entails anticipating potential crisis situation and preventing it from happening or decisively and quickly dealing with a budding crisis situation.

d. **Corporate Social Responsibility:** This accords a company a favourable reputation in the eyes of the host communities and the public in general. Asemah, Edegoh, Ekhareafo & Ogwo (2013) contend that CSR improves a company's public image which in turn, improves the impression that people have about the organisation.

e. **Solid Value System:** Reputations are built on value system, weather tangible or intangible. Some organisations build their reputation on integrity, efficiency, quality of service delivery, while other reputations are built on quality of products or contents.

As a result of expansion of globalisation, competition has become even more difficult. In order to make a difference, Roberts & Dowling (2002) assert that corporate reputation is the fact that organisations have to give importance to. This is because corporate reputation is the most critical strategic and valuable asset an organisation can have, as well as a necessary measure of corporate success (Eckert, 2017). Corporate reputation is significant because perceptions affect both financial and non-financial results (Shamma & Hassan, 2009). According to Fombrun *et al* (2004), reputation is essential because it informs us about what types of products we can buy, which institutions we can work with or which institutions we can invest in. Hence, for any organisation, reputation

is crucial. The reason for this is that the reputation affects all the stakeholders of the organisation (such as customers, employees, investors and the public) from the perspective of the organisation (Khan, Roy & Hossain, 2019).

Reputation also carries the messages that the organisation wants to convey to its stakeholders and facilitates the delivery of these to the target audience (Helm, 2007). Reputation attracts talented individuals who want to work in that institution, while investors also consider the reputation of the organisation when investing in the organisation (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993, cited in Esenyel, 2020). In many empirical studies, it has been concluded that a positive reputation provides high performance and strategic advantage. Corporate reputation highlights the position of the institution in the industrial social system, is a strategic value, draws attention to the attractive features of the organisation and broadens the areas of choice of administrators (Adeosun & Ganiyu, 2013). Reputation affects consumers' decisions about which business to buy, where to work for employees and which investors will take shares (Carmeli & Cohen, 2001, cited in Esenyel, 2020). A strong reputation attracts qualified employees, reduces employee circulation and leads to positive customer attitudes (Esenyel, 2020). Therefore, for an organisation, there are many benefits, both material and immaterial, of reputation. The corporate reputation provides an opportunity to assess the entity's ability to deliver desired or expected outputs of the product quality or social responsibility status. It gives information about the company's interaction with its stakeholders and this difference is difficult to be imitated by other firms (Clive, 1997, cited in Esenyel, 2020).

Esenyel & Emeagwali (2019) examined the relationship between perceived corporate reputation and employee's positive word of mouth intentions with the mediating role of trust in the manager. The rationale for the study was to examine the moderating effect of value congruence between perceived corporate reputation and positive word of mouth behaviour. The descriptive approach was applied and to test the research model, a quantitative questionnaire-based survey was used. One of the key findings, among others, was that the trust in managers partially mediated the relationship between perceived corporate reputation and positive word of mouth behaviour. The researchers concluded that it is vital to get the support of employees and to maintain a strong reputation. This study and the present study both assess the subject matter of corporate reputation and utilised survey research design; however, the researchers did not focus on the RMSs nor the prison industry; this present study will fills this gap.

Ananaba, Nwosu, Otika & Osuagwu (2021) investigated the relationship between corporate reputation and customer satisfaction. The survey research design and structured questionnaire were employed. The findings showed that trustworthiness, corporate social responsibility, credibility and reliability were respectively significant and exhibited significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. The major conclusion that emerged from the findings is that corporate reputation is a multifaceted construct whose dimensions have significant positive relationships with marketing performance outcome of customer satisfaction in the mobile telecommunications industry. The researchers recommended that managers should apply the dimensions of corporate reputation that is appropriate for their target segment and develop their customer satisfaction strategy. Again, this study examined corporate reputation and customer satisfaction while the present study focuses on the RMSs of an organisation. However, the two studies share similarities in methodology in that they employed the survey research design and questionnaire.

This study is anchored on the impression management theory (IMT). Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2022) observe that theories play a vital role in research. The impression management theory was proposed by Erving Goffman in 1959 in his

publication titled: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and then was expanded upon in 1967. According Asemah & Ekhareafo (2022), the thrust of the theory is that it describes the steps and actions taken by an organisation to present a good image before the public. It is the steps taken to shape how the public sees an organisation or individual and why they do so. Sanaria (2016) notes that the theory deals with the conscious or subconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of other people about a person, object, entity or event by regulating and controlling information in social interaction. Vijayabanu, Therasa & Anjali (2019) note that it is composed of five dimensions: Self-promotion, exemplification, ingratiation, defensive and deception –and these factors influences impression management.

The theory is related to this study because the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS) needs to manage its reputation and how the publics form impression about the organisation and perceive the corporate image and reputation. Instead of using interpersonal communication, RMS can be used to create positive impression on the minds of their public such as, controlling communication narratives, PR/spokespeople, proactive responses, CSR and solid value system.

Methodology

Survey method was adopted for this research with structured questionnaire employed for data collection. The researchers adopted this method because it gives room for appropriate sampling of the population. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2022) note that survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people; their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour. The population of this study is made up of officers and men of the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), Warri Custodial Centre, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria with an estimated population of 136 personnel. Census sampling was used in administering copies of questionnaire to the respondents. According to Asemah *et al* (2022), this method is suitable for small populations, especially 200 or less, hence, this technique is justified since our study's population is estimated at 136 personnel. The sampling technique was the simple random sampling. The researcher chose simple random sampling technique to distribute 136 copies of questionnaire to the population. Thus, 136 copies of questionnaire were distributed face-to-face to respondents in NCS, Warri Custodial Centre. However, 125 were retrieved while 122 were found usable. Therefore, our data analysis was consequently based on 122. The data were analysed using simple percentages, frequency counts and mean score and presented in tables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondent's awareness of NCS Warri Custodial Centre's Reputation

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly agree	37	30.3
Agree	67	54.9
Undecided	18	14.8
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	**122**	**100**

Table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents affirmed that they are aware of reputation of the organisation. This implies that the respondents are well informed about

PR activities in the organisation targeted at enhancing the organisation's reputation and image.

Table 2: Level of awareness of NCS Warri Custodial Centre's Reputation

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Very high	14	11.5
High	21	17.2
Can't tell	17	13.9
Low	38	31.1
Very low	32	26.2
Total	**122**	**100**

Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents affirmed that their level of awareness of reputation of NCS Warri is low despite their level of awareness.

Table 3: Channels through which the Respondents got to know about NCS Warri

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Conventional media reports	42	34.4
Social/Online Media stories	35	28.7
Words of mouth	21	17.2
Awards and recognitions	16	13.1
Others	8	6.6
Total	**122**	**100**

Majority of the respondents affirmed that conventional media channels were the primary sources through they got to know about NCS, Warri. This implies that majority of the respondents are regular media audience, hence the high response rate.

Table 4: Respondent's Views on the Extent to which NCS Warri engages in Reputation Management

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Very high	10	8.2
High	19	15.6
Can't tell	26	21.3
Low	36	29.5
Very low	31	25.4
Total	**122**	**100**

On the extent to which the NCS Warri Custodial Centre engaged in RM, the respondents avowed that it is to a low extent. This implies that the PR unit of the organisation has not intensified their reputation management campaign to the expected standard.

Table 5: Responses on the Strategies used for Reputation Management

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
CSR activities and initiatives	29	23.8
Standby PR team	42	34.4
Controlling communication narrative	12	9.8
Proactive response	16	13.1

Solid value system	23	18.9
Total	**122**	**100**

Data in table 5 indicate that majority of the respondents avowed that the standby PR team (n=42, 34.4%) and CSR activities and initiatives (n=29, 23.8%) are the widely-used strategies for reputation management by NCS. This implies that NCS employed different strategies in managing their reputation.

Table 6: Influence of RMSs on the Image of NCS Warri

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Positive	88	72.1
Negative	10	8.2
Can't Say	24	19.7
Total	**122**	**100**

Data in table 4 indicate that majority of the respondents agreed that the reputation management of NCS Warri has positive influence on it corporate reputation and image. This implies that the PR campaign of the organisation that focuses on the reputation of the organisation is effective.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that majority of the respondents (85.2%) agreed that they were aware of the reputation of the organisation while the level of awareness of reputation management in the organisation was average (48.4%) as seen in table 2. In the same vein, the data in table 3 revealed that 48.4% opined that they became aware of their organisation's reputation through reports in the traditional media, social media and words-of-mouth. This corroborates the study of Akintaro & Ekhareafo (2017) who found that the level of awareness of the reputation and reputation management of an organisation can determine the level to which stakeholders perceive their organisation and this, in turn occasions their impression. This is in line with the thrust of the impression management theory that stakeholders' interests must be considered when managing reputation as ignoring such could elicit problems about reputation

The data in table 4 showed that the extent to which NCS Warri engages in reputation management is low (29.5%). Although, table 5 revealed that they employed different strategies in managing their reputation, especially, Standby PR team and CSR activities and initiatives; this is an indication that NCS reputation management team was not very active, despite making use of different strategies to reach the organisation's stakeholders. Again, this is in tandem with the postulation of the impression management theory that the steps and actions taken by an organisation to present a good image before the public are vital as these steps will shape how the public sees an organisation or individual and why they do so (Asemah & Ekhareafo, 2022).

The data in table 6 showed that reputation management has positive influence on the organisation's image. The import of the analyses is that respondents believed that the reputation management strategies adopted by the organisation had positive influence on its image. This is in tandem with one of the findings of Esenyel & Emeagwali (2019) that an organisation is about relationship with other institutions and the reputation management of an organisation is vital in improving the overall image to make them acceptable to the publics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that reputation management strategies have positive influence on the corporate reputation of NCS, Warri Custodial Centre. In line with the findings and conclusion of this study, the following are recommended:

1. NCS should have a well-defined set of parameters that guide their relationships with the various stakeholders. This will help reputation managers to clearly identify their objectives when engaging their publics.
2. There is need for NCS to step up her reputation management efforts so as to increase the level of awareness of RM campaign among the internal publics (employees).
3. A regular assessment of the NCS's reputation is necessary. The assessment should be conducted against the rules that define the organisation's relationship with its publics.

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CHAPTER FORTY EIGHT

PLEA BARGAIN AS AN IMAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN THE BANKING SECTOR

Chikaodi Njoku; Daniel O. Ekhareafo & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Plea bargaining has become an integral part of modern criminal justice systems worldwide. As legal proceedings can be lengthy, expensive and unpredictable, plea bargaining offers an attractive alternative for both defendants and prosecutors. However, beyond its immediate legal benefits, plea bargaining has also emerged as a potent image management strategy for accused individuals and public prosecutors alike. This essay delves into the dynamics of plea bargaining as an image management strategy, exploring how it influences public perception, judicial efficiency and the balance between justice and pragmatism.

An image is seen as the impression people have about an organisation or an individual (Asemah, 2011a). Image management is very essential for every organisation (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a, 2022b). Plea bargaining is a negotiation process between the defendant and the prosecution wherein the accused agrees to plead guilty to a lesser charge or reduce the severity of the original charge in exchange for a more lenient sentence. The prosecution gains the advantage of securing a conviction without the need for a costly trial, while the defendant receives a potentially lighter punishment. However, beyond its direct legal implications, plea bargaining is a multifaceted tool that significantly impacts the public perception of those involved.

One of the primary reasons defendants opt for plea bargaining is to manage their public image (Asemah, Kente & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2012; Asemah, 2012; Asemah, Edegoh & Anatsui, 2012). Facing a high-profile trial can be daunting, leading to negative media coverage and social stigma. By accepting a plea deal, defendants can often avoid the public spectacle of a trial, thereby limiting potential damage to their reputation. Public perception plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and defendants often see plea bargaining as a way to maintain a semblance of control over their portrayal in the media.

Moreover, pleading guilty to a lesser charge can sometimes be viewed more favourable than being found guilty of the original offense at trial. This perception allows defendants to present themselves as accepting responsibility for their actions and showing remorse which may resonate positively with the public, the judge and the parole board if applicable.

Plea bargain is the legal instrument and subject of focus. For crime rate to reduce to the minimum, the application of the rule of law cannot be understated and the rule of law implies that the law reigns over the ruler and the ruled, the government and the governed, the have-not and the haves (Larger, 2021). It has become a matter of great concern with the introduction of "plea bargaining" into the Nigeria legal system. Thus, plea bargaining has done more harm than good.

It is of great pain that the rich, high-profile personnel who is charged for corruption and embezzlement of public funds is given the option of plea bargain and the poor and low class are made to face the wrath of the law not considering the gravity of his crime. Results have proven that the aim of the introduction of plea bargain is to get faster convictions,

though the suspected criminal is given a milder punishment as against what he would have gotten. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has been observed to apply the process of plea bargain in handling high-profile criminal cases (News Admin, www.street journc.org, 2013).

Some cases where its application was used range from that of Tafa Balogun, Diprieye Alamieyeseigha, Lucky Igbinedion, Erastus Akingbola and John Yusuf Yakubu. They then go about enjoying the rest of the loot after some might have been forfeited by the Government. Plea bargaining has long been utilised as a tool to expedite the resolution of criminal cases by allowing defendants to plead guilty to reduced charges in exchange for leniency or a lesser sentence.

In recent years, the banking sector has faced increasing scrutiny and public distrust due to various financial scandals and malpractices. As a response to these challenges, banks may resort to plea bargaining as an image management strategy to mitigate reputational damage and restore public trust. This statement of problem explores the implications and potential drawbacks of plea bargaining as a means of safeguarding the reputation of banks in the face of legal controversies. The banking sector is a critical pillar of any economy, entrusted with safeguarding assets and facilitating economic growth through financial services. However, a series of high-profile financial scandals and fraudulent practices have severely tarnished the image of some prominent financial institutions. Instances of money laundering, fraudulent accounting, insider trading and market manipulation have raised concerns about the ethics and integrity of the banking industry.

In response to legal investigations and criminal charges brought against these banks, plea bargaining emerges as a potential strategy to manage their public image and protect their standing in the financial market. It is based on the foregoing that the researchers investigated plead bargaining as an image management strategy in the banking sector.

Theoretical Framework

Theories as noted by Yaroson & Asemah (2008); Asemah (2011b) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023), play very important functions in research. The work is anchored on image restoration theory. The theory proposed by William L. Benoit in 1995, is a communication theory that explores how individuals and organisations manage their public image or reputation in the face of criticism, accusations or public scrutiny. It provides a framework for understanding the strategies people employ to restore or repair their damaged reputation after being involved in a perceived offense or crisis. The theory is based on the idea that public figures, organisations or entities have an "image" or reputation that can be negatively impacted by various factors, such as accusations of wrongdoing, scandals or unfavourable events. When faced with such challenges, individuals or organisations may use communication strategies to mitigate the damage to their image and attempt to regain public trust and support. Benoit's image restoration theory identifies five primary image restoration strategies that individuals or entities may employ; they are:

a. **Denial:** The accused denies any involvement in the alleged wrongdoing or claims that the event did not happen as reported.

b. **Evasion of Responsibility:** Instead of outright denial, the accused might attempt to shift blame onto others or claim that external factors or circumstances were responsible for their actions.

c. **Reducing Offensiveness:** This strategy involves acknowledging the wrongdoing, but downplaying its severity or presenting it as a one-time mistake rather than a reflection of the individual's or organisation's character.

d. **Corrective Action:** The accused acknowledges the wrongdoing, expresses remorse and outlines steps taken to correct the situation and prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

e. **Mortification or Suffering:** This strategy involves offering a heartfelt apology, expressing guilt and shame and seeking forgiveness from those affected by the actions.

When faced with a crisis or negative publicity, individuals or entities may choose one or a combination of these strategies, depending on the nature of the offense, the stakeholders involved and the prevailing public sentiment. The success of each strategy depends on the perceived sincerity and effectiveness of the communication efforts.

Image restoration theory is often applied in various contexts, including politics, business, sports and entertainment, to analyse how public figures and organisations respond to scandals or controversial events. By understanding these communication strategies, public relations practitioners, media analysts and researchers can gain insights into how image management operates in real-world situations. Image restoration theory can be applied to the context of plea bargaining to understand how defendants, prosecutors and the justice system may utilise communication strategies to manage their public image or reputation in the aftermath of criminal charges. When facing a criminal case, all parties involved may consider the potential impact on their public perception and use plea bargaining as a means to restore or protect their image.

Conceptual and Literature Review

A plea bargain is a negotiation process in criminal cases between the prosecution and the defense, wherein the defendant agrees to plead guilty to a lesser charge or accept a lighter sentence in exchange for a reduced or dropped charge. It is a voluntary agreement reached before a trial, aiming to expedite the legal process and avoid the uncertainties and costs associated with a full trial. Plea bargains are prevalent in the criminal justice system and serve as a means to resolve cases efficiently while also providing some benefits to both parties involved (Bibas, 2004). Plea bargains play a crucial role in the criminal justice system as they allow for the resolution of cases without the need for a lengthy and often resource-intensive trial. When a defendant faces criminal charges, they may choose to negotiate a plea deal with the prosecutor to minimise the potential consequences of a conviction. In doing so, they may agree to plead guilty to a lesser offense which carries a lighter sentence or cooperate with the authorities in exchange for reduced charges or other concessions (Guttman, 2018)

For prosecutors, plea bargains can result in assured convictions and the avoidance of trial-related risks, such as the possibility of a jury finding the defendant not guilty. In cases with limited evidence or when securing witness cooperation is challenging, a plea bargain may be seen as a pragmatic approach to securing some measure of justice.

It is worth noting that while plea bargains offer advantages in terms of efficiency and resource management, they have also been subject to criticism. Critics argue that the pressure to accept a plea deal may lead some defendants to plead guilty to charges they may not have committed, potentially leading to unjust outcomes. Moreover, plea bargaining might exacerbate disparities in the criminal justice system, as those with fewer resources may feel compelled to accept deals regardless of their actual guilt or innocence (Kamisar, 1979)

Silveira (2017) investigated how sentences to be assigned at trial impact plea bargaining. The analysis was based on the model of bargaining with asymmetric information by Bebchuk (1984). He provided conditions for the nonparametric identification of the model, proposed a consistent nonparametric estimator and implemented it, using data on criminal cases from North Carolina. Employing the estimated model, he evaluated how different sentencing reforms affect the outcome of criminal cases. The results indicated that lower mandatory minimum sentences could greatly reduce the total amount of incarceration time assigned by the courts, but may increase conviction rates.

In a similar vein, Larger (2021) argues that criminal convictions have been administratised in two ways: (*a*) Trial-avoiding mechanisms have given a larger role to nonjudicature, administrative officials in the determination of who gets convicted and for which crimes and (b) these decisions are made in proceedings that do not include a trial with its attached defendant's rights. In a different view of the concept, Gormey (2022) contends that the fundamental assumption underlying plea bargaining is that it is 'efficient.' Even ardent critics of plea bargaining often accept the assumption that it is efficient in being cost effective.

With specific reference to the image of corporate organisations and its implications on consumers dealings with it. Akin & Demirez (2011) evaluated the possible impact of consumers' identification with organisation on the effectiveness of corporate communication and consumer retention, depending on the perceived image and consumers' relational satisfaction and to build an appropriate conceptual model. Analysing the data gathered through questionnaire administered on 485 people by SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), the researchers found that increased corporate image enhances consumer relational satisfaction and this impacts positively on consumers' identification with the organisation/corporate. This means, that public perception of organisation's image can impact on public dealings with its programmes and activities.

As a notion, its practical application in Nigeria has been seen in few celebrated cases such as the popular Tafa Balogun, Lucky Igbinedion, Cecilia Ibru, Erastus Akingbola and John Yusuff Yakubu's criminal trials. These persons were charged to courts for fraudulent conversion and misappropriation of public funds, but were later freed on the ground of plead bargaining. Although plea bargaining allows the criminal justice system to 'serve resources, it is controversial. Some commentators believe it is inappropriate in that it allows defendants to get off too. Others argue that it is too coercive and undermines important institution rights.

Discussion

For public prosecutors, the decision to offer a plea deal or not is influenced by numerous factors, including the strength of the evidence, the defendant's criminal history and the potential impact on their image. Prosecutors are accountable to the public and may face criticism if high-profile cases end in acquittal or result in reduced sentences. As such, offering a plea bargain to secure a conviction, even for a lesser charge, can be a strategic move to avoid negative publicity and demonstrate their effectiveness as legal representatives of the state.

In cases where evidence might be questionable or scarce, a plea deal ensures that some form of accountability is established which can be more appealing than risking a complete acquittal. From a public perception standpoint, securing any conviction, even through a plea bargain, is often viewed as a win for the prosecution. While plea bargaining serves as an effective image management strategy for both defendants and prosecutors, concerns about justice and fairness inevitably arise. The desire to maintain a positive public image may lead some defendants to accept plea deals, despite being innocent or facing inflated charges. Additionally, the use of plea bargaining might perpetuate disparities in the criminal justice system as those with limited resources or who lack adequate legal representation may feel pressured to accept unfavourable plea deals due to their perceived inability to win at trial. This can result in unjust outcomes and potentially exacerbate existing inequalities.

To strike a balance between image management and justice, legal systems must implement safeguards to ensure plea bargaining is conducted transparently and fairly. These safeguards should include providing defendants with access to competent legal representation, requiring judges to thoroughly assess the voluntariness of plea agreements and offering alternatives to imprisonment, such as diversion programmes for non-violent offenders. The strategies for managing plea bargain in the case of the banking sector are:

a. **Admission of Guilt and Contrition**: The Chief Executive, in conjunction with their legal team and the bank's public relations experts, may choose to accept a plea deal that involves admitting guilt to lesser charges related to the corruption scandal. By doing so, the executive demonstrates contrition and a willingness to take responsibility for their actions, potentially mitigating public anger and portraying a sense of accountability.

b. **Cooperation with Authorities:** As part of the plea bargain, the executive could offer full cooperation with law enforcement agencies, helping them uncover the extent of the corruption and assisting in the prosecution of other individuals involved. Cooperation could be seen as an effort to rectify the wrongdoing, potentially improving the public's perception of the executive's actions.

c. **Settlement and Restitution**: The plea deal could include an agreement for the executive to pay fines or restitution to the bank and affected parties. This financial compensation demonstrates an intention to make amends and address the harm

caused by the corruption scandal. Publicly announced efforts to repay any embezzled funds or losses could be part of the bank's image restoration strategy.

d. **Introducing Reforms and Compliance Measures**: The bank, in coordination with the executive, could publicly announce a series of internal reforms and compliance measures to prevent similar misconduct in the future. Demonstrating a commitment to improving the bank's governance and ethical practices may help regain public trust.

e. **Media Management**: The bank's public relations team must manage the narrative surrounding the plea bargain. By providing clear and consistent messaging, emphasising the executive's cooperation and acceptance of responsibility, and highlighting the bank's efforts to rectify the situation, they can attempt to control the media's portrayal of the situation.

f. **Engagement with Stakeholders**: The bank should engage with its stakeholders, including customers, shareholders and employees, to provide transparent information about the steps being taken to address the corruption scandal and prevent future incidents. Regular updates, town hall meetings and other communication channels can be utilised to rebuild trust and maintain transparency.

g. **Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives**: The bank could engage in visible and meaningful corporate social responsibility initiatives to showcase its commitment to making a positive impact on society. Supporting community projects, environmental initiatives or charitable causes may help offset the negative image resulting from the scandal.

h. **Leadership Change:** Depending on the gravity of the situation, the bank's Board of Directors may consider a leadership change. A new CEO, untainted by the scandal, could signal a fresh start for the institution and be a proactive step towards rebuilding its image.

Conclusion

Plea bargaining undoubtedly serves as a powerful image management strategy for both defendants and prosecutors, impacting public perception, judicial efficiency and the overall fairness of the criminal justice system; while it can offer pragmatic benefits, there is an essential need to strike a balance between the pursuit of justice and the management of public image. Through carefully implemented safeguards, legal systems can maintain the efficiency of plea bargaining while upholding the principles of justice, fairness and individual rights. It is essential to note that using plea bargaining for image management purposes must never undermine the pursuit of justice or accountability for the wrongdoing. All actions taken to enhance the bank's image should be genuine, lawful and focused on preventing future misconduct, rather than mere window-dressing. Any attempts to manipulate public perception without genuine efforts to address the issue may backfire, leading to even more significant reputational damage for the bank and its executive.

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CHAPTER FORTY NINE

ANALYSIS OF PRESS COVERAGE OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA

Ukato Felix Amiebaho; Emeke Precious Nwaoboli & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

One of the major functions of the media is the provision of adequate information about events in the society. The mass media cater for these human need by providing information on what, who, why, where and how of an event which is considered news worthy to be relayed to the public. Information is, therefore, the livewire of any society and the world at large, it stipulates the paramount factor of unification due to the fact that a society that is kept incommunicado is a dead one.

Journalists are public servants informing members of the public on current and burning issues in the society; they are the watchdog who keep watch on the institution of the society (Asemah & Ekerikevwe, 2015). Reporting on electoral violence presents a number of dilemmas and paradoxes to journalist whose responsibility is to inform the public objectively, fairly and accurately. It is a dilemma to them in the sense that one of the main objectives of electoral violence is to maximise publicity in order to create a psychological effect on the public.

Generally, the role of the press in any society is to shape event, as well as disseminate information relating to conflict, disorders and violence (Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021; Nwaoboli, 2022; Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). The essence and importance of the media is ensure that people's rights and privileges are given to them (Santas, Inobemhe & Asemah, 2023). Nigeria and some parts of African countries are known generally for electoral violence and these electoral violence posed security threat and disunity amongst Nigerians. The media in Nigeria are owned either by the government or private individual. As a result, the ownership tends to influence how they report case of electoral violence. Thus, the study was motivated by the need to determine how the media fared and performed in reporting electoral violence during the 2023 general elections.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the frequency of reportage given to electoral violence of the 2023 general elections in the select newspapers.
2. Determine the level of prominence given to electoral violence by the select newspapers.
3. Ascertain the journalistic genres used in the reportage of electoral violence in the select newspapers.

Literature Review

Uwachukwu (2010) avers that electoral violence has apparently become a threat employed by greedy politicians in the realisation of individual political goals. Electoral violence can be defined as violence carried out during an election period so as to influence the electoral

process and as a result may lead to national crisis and disaster. Electoral violence is being characterised by issues such as greed, ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and selfishness, if not properly checked will continue to endanger the political atmosphere of Nigeria. Danladi & Mohammed (2012) expressed that post-election violence is increasingly becoming a trend in Africa with deadly consequences. Ikpe (2007) opines that election violence has defined every policy put in place to check it. This according to him is as a result of using political office to accumulate private wealth is the reason political elites would employ every strategy including rigging, violence and ethnics solidarity to ensure electoral success.

Jega & Iyayi (2007) posit that the increase in election violence in Nigeria is based on the fact that Nigeria politics has come to assume the characteristics and attribute of a rate-race in which only the fittest and richest survive. In the case of the 2023 general elections, greed for power was the main cause of electoral violence among the various political parties. In 2008, Barack Obama, a black man became the first Afro-American to rule America affair more than two centuries of white domination, yet the white accepted the change in good faith and the country moved on.

The media are agents of social change that can bring about positive attitudinal change in audiences (Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b; Asemah, 2011c). The Nigeria mass media play their basic roles of information, education and entertainment in the society. Thus, Asemah (2011a) notes that one of the cardinal functions of the mass media is to educate people, hence people turn to media for learning and self-education.

The fact that electoral violence has become a major issue of discourse in the Nigeria space is glaring; thus, a source of worry to many who want a better society. Politics in Nigeria is deeply rooted in ethnic, religious and regional allegiance owing to the intricate nature of the entire political structure which has overtime resulted in weak political institution with no clear-cut philosophies and ideologies. As such, there is no successful election without the media, it play a crucial role in sustaining democracy. The importance of the media cannot be over emphasised. As the fourth-estate of the realm, the media act as agenda-setter, gatekeeper and watchdog. Melone (2004) notes that journalism can play a role in escalating violence. The media have the ability to accelerate and magnify fear or reduce them. Osadolor (2001) notes that the media should help to investigate the causes of election violence.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the agenda setting theory. According to Izuogu (2009), agenda setting theory of the media has capacity to cause an issue to be elevated in importance in the mind of the public through repeated focus or reportage. Yaroson & Asemah (2008); Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) observe that most of the issues we think and worry about are issues raised by the media. The agenda setting theory has its root in the age-long belief that the media possess the power to set the agenda and raise issues of public importance such as whistle blowing, politics and issues bothering on the national security of the media. The main thrust of the agenda setting theory is the ability of the mass media to restructure the audience perception and thinking of any issue or event. The

importance of this lies in the fact that the media can focus on election violence in any part of the country and give prominence or not.

Zain (2014) notes that agenda setting theory elaborates the connection in term of relationship between the emphasis that the mass media put as an issue and the media audience or the public reaction or attribute to such issue. The agenda setting theory was deemed best for this study because most of the electoral violence that were reported on the Nigeria media, especially newspapers, brought about public attention and perception on the crisis that eventually led to resolution of the issues.

Methodology

The researchers adopted content analysis as the research design. Content analysis as noted by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2017) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) is described as the examination of the manifest contents of mass media messages. In the same vain, Obaze & Onosu (2009) note that content analysis is an objective and systematic analysis or study of any document that are manifest. The population of this study comprises all the editions of *This Day* newspaper and *The Vanguard* newspaper published between February 26thand May 30th 2023. Both papers published a total of 135 and 141 editions each. Thus, the population of the study is 276. The instrument of data collection was the coding sheet. The content categories include the extent of reportage and prominence. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique for the study and Saturdays and Sundays was selected because the audience have enough time to read through the dailies since it is off days.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Extent of Coverage

Newspaper	**No. of stories %**
This day	135 48.09%
Vanguard	141 51.08
Total	276 100%

From the table, it is very clear that *the vanguard* newspaper gave more coverage to the election violence in the 2023 general elections.

Table 2: Prominence of Stories

Newspaper/Prominence	***This Day* %**	***Vanguard* %**	**Total %**
Front page	40 (29.6%)	42 (29.7%)	82 (29.7%)
Back page	27 (20%)42	30(21.2%)	57(20.6%)
Inside front page	18 (13.3%)	18 (12.7%)	36 (13.4%)
Inside back page	30 (22.2%)	29(20.5%)	59 (21.3%)
Inside page	20 (14.8%)	22 (15.6%)	42 (15.2%)
Total	135 (100%)	141 (100%)	276 (100%)

The table shows that both *this day* and *vanguard* newspaper made use of the front page to report most of the issues pertaining to electoral violence in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Table 3: Coverage on Story Genres

Newspaper	***This Day* %**	***Vanguard* %**	**Total %**
New stories	31(22.9%)	39(27%)	70(253%)
Editorial	37(27.4%)	36(25.59)	73(26.4%)
Features	39(28.8%)	42(29.7%)	81(29.3%)
Advertorial	28(20.7%)	24(17.02%)	52(18.8)
Total	135 (100%)	141 (100%)	276 (100%)

The above table points out that features stories was used to report electoral violence in the select newspapers in the 2023 general elections more than others.

Table 4: Direction of Coverage

Newspaper	***This Day* %**	***Vanguard* %**	**Total %**
Positive	116(85.9%)	128(90.7%)	244(88.4%)
Negative	3(2.22%)	5(3.54%	8(2.89%)
Neutral	16(11.8%)	8(5.67%)	24(8.69%)
Total	135 (100%)	141 (100%)	276 (100%)

Table 4 shows that the *vanguard* newspaper carried more positive item than *this-day* newspaper during the period under review. However, the two newspapers gave positive coverage to the electoral violence.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one sought to determine the coverage given to electoral violence by the select newspapers. As observed in table 1, 276 item were covered by *This-Day* and *vanguard* newspaper in the edition studied. The findings revealed that *vanguard* newspaper has the highest edition with 141 editions. The finding also revealed that both *This-day* and *vanguard* newspaper gave more prominence to electoral violence using front page of the select newspapers. The finding of this study are in line with Nwabueze & Ebeze (2013) who noted that common practices by the media contribute negatively to crises situation. This include media coverage of stereotype among category of people, sentimental coverage of stories based on journalist, culture, shallow and one-sided coverage of events, frequent use of sentimental headline to boost sale and inflammatory statement among people inability to support fact.

The finding also revealed that both *This-day* and *vanguard* newspaper make list of front page to report most the issue concerning electoral violence. Thus, it is safe to say that most of the stories were considered important to appear on the front pages of the select newspaper. This to a large extent conform to the theory which the study is anchored on, using front page of the select newspaper will give more attention and attract people's curiosity.

The finding showed that out of the 135 stories covered by *This-day* newspaper, 39 item were reported in form of feature stories. On the other hand, out of the 141 item covered by *vanguard* newspaper, 42 items were reported as feature news stories. This implies that there was gross under representation of the electoral violence. The finding further showed that the direction of coverage were positive. For instance, table four showed that out of 135, stories covered by *This-day* newspaper 116 figuring (85.9%) were reported in a positive manner while out of 141 item covered by *vanguard* newspaper 244 or (88.4%) were also given positive manner. This implies that the *vanguard* newspaper carried more positive items than *This-day* newspaper.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that the select newspaper did not give adequate coverage to the election violence in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Thus, the following recommendations are given:

1. The select newspaper organisations should pay good attention to electoral violence.
2. Newspaper owners/managers, whether private or government should assigned reporters to cover any form of electoral violence around the country and thus should be done objectively.
3. The issue of religion, ethnicity or cultural background should be watched by journalist / reporters. Most journalist tend to be bias with their reportage.

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CHAPTER FIFTY

ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES IN NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY, WARRI

Placida Timothy; Sunday A. Ekerivkewe & Gloria Ehimwema Ogono

Introduction

Communication plays a very significant role in every society and it has become a tool for bringing about social change and sustainable development in every modern society (Ugande & Asemah, 2014). Communication is the natural aspect of man's life. It is a unique and distinct activity that all humans are involved in. Communication is an integral part of human existence. Communication is the basis of all socioeconomic, political and cultural activities (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Communication contributes to the success or otherwise of every human activity and it is the process in which survival, relationships and development are rooted (Hassan, 2012).

"Communication is basic to life. Much of what we are is because of an initial backlog of messages right from the time of birth. Communication goes on most times because we spend between 60-80% of each day engaged in some form of communication (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). From the first time man found it necessary to join another in achieving common goals, he has to face the necessity of communicating. Communication, therefore, is the vehicle through which daily activities are carried out"(Akpovi, 2010).

Communication amongst humans or animals cannot be overemphasised. Communication is a crucial attribute to human endeavours and survival. This is a distinct feature that distinguishes the living from the dead. It is the basis of human existence as our daily activities depend on it. It is a proactive process and there are certain psychological processes people undergo during communication exchange which in turn, makes it interactive; by so doing communication strengthens relationship both with workers and costumers. The need for communication is universal because whenever two or more are together, some kind of communication is bound to occur (Akpovi, 2010).

According to Ordway Tead, "no business can exist without communication." Akpovi (2010.p.91) agrees with the assertion when he said that "in any organisation, communication is an aid to successful planning, organising, staffing, coordinating, controlling of the organisational resources. Communication, therefore, is an essential tool in the management of any organisation." It is essential to note that any organisation which must achieve its aims and objectives must have an effective communication system.

Poor communication ranks as the single most important reason that organisations do not attain success in their set goals achievement (Nebo, Nwankwo & Okonkwo, 2015, p. 132). It becomes necessary that management of complex organiation like the Nigerian Ports Authority, in particular, chooses the most suitable channel of sending and receiving messages from and to their workers as this will help in getting effective, clear and positive feedback.

Overtimes different studies have been done showcasing that effective communication brings out successful organisational outputs (Garnett, Marlowe & Pandey, 2008; Pandey & Garnett, 2006). Communication influences the perception and opinions about persons, communities, organisations, governments and even society. As a managerial

tool, communication is frequently expected to share information with members, coordinate activities, reduce unnecessary managerial burdens and rules and ultimately improve organisational performance (Eunju, 2009). Okoh (2005) asserts that the majority of organisational issues, such as disagreements, disputes, biases, flawed judgements, poor execution, gaps and misunderstandings, are the result of poor and inefficient communication and miscommunication. The problem of communication is exceedingly challenging and complicated. Against this backdrop, the researchers assessed how organisation communication brings about the achievements of aims and objectives in the Nigerian Ports Authority, Warri, Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent of communication in Nigerian Port Authority, Warri.
2. Find out the channels used for communication in the organisation
3. Ascertain the extent to which organisational has helped to achieve the aims and objectives of the Nigerian Ports Authority, Warri.

Literature Review

Communication remains a major facet of human beings (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023). No organisation can stand without communication in a day-to-day bargains, negotiations and interests (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a; 2022b). Asemah (2009) opines that communication is the process of sharing information, ideas and attitudes. He adds that to share means to give or receive part of something or to assume something common. In any organisation, management can achieve aims and objectives through communication. Management in organisations communicates with and through other people. This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organisational effectiveness (Brun, 2010; Summers, 2010). Thus, one of the most inhibiting forces to organisational effectiveness is lack of effective communication (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010).

Communication is defined as the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more parties; it is, therefore, the process of sharing information, ideas and attitudes (Asemah, 2011; McShane & Von Glinow, 2003, cited in Asemah, Okpanachi & Olumuji, 2013; Asemah & Asemah, 2018; Asemah, 2022a). Fiske (1990) says that communication is social interaction through messages (Asemah, 2022b). Asemah & Ekhareafo (2022) aver that 'organisations that have dealings with the public need to regularly communicate changes, manage crisis and position the organisation in the minds of the public.'' This simply implies that the need for orgnisational communication cannot be overemphasised. Thus, Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah (2013) contend that communication revolves around how we interact with our entire world, whether it is by spoken words, written words, gestures, music, paintings, photographs or dance.

It is pertinent to state that communication has several impacts in workgroups functioning in that organisation. Communication functions as a medium to share ideas, thoughts, policies, rules and rewards (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2022). Therefore, organisational management charged with the burden of this functions should always avoid ambiguity in order to sustain and balance business achievements.

Organisational communication, as defined by Lindlof & Taylor (2011), studies corporate life as constituted through discursive processes such as conflict, teamwork and

leadership. Internal organisational communication makes it easier for employees to share information. An organisation's internal communication system plays a key role in facilitating the efficient exchange of information among its personnel. These formal systems/patterns of communication that operates across several organisations are the norms. Operation is carried out in two different ways: vertically and horizontally. The majority of the time, it is based on the organisational command structure. The vertical communication is downward and upward form of communication direction. In other words, vertical communication transmits information among different levels in the organisational structure.

In an organisation, downward communication refers to flow of messages from a higher-level employee to a lower-level employee of an organisation; while upward communication depicts an opposite meaning to downward communication. Upper communication is deemed very essential to the success of an organisation. The absence of upward communication can destruct a company from reaching its goals and objectives. Grassroots information can make and unmake the survival of an organisation (Tubbs & Moss, 2008).

With the levelling of the hierarchical structure and the advent of matrix organisations, this style (horizontal/flat communication) of communication has become more common (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). As a result, it is the exchange of information between individuals, departments, divisions or other organisational units at the same level of hierarchy. Organisational communication often demonstrates the values of an organisation, the reason for its existence, the types of customers it serves, how their workloads are completed and the chain of reporting between members.

Madlock & Booth-Butterfield (2008) contend that whenever there is a significant association between persons within an organisation; realistically, their positions are made known considering the connection and how much weight is put on such relationship. Employees make efforts to establish and maintain mutual connections and communication, whether consciously or unconsciously, in order to sustain themselves successfully.

Theoretical Framework

The interactional view theory served as the foundation for this investigation. A theory called the "interactional view" emphasises the value of communication in society. In 1967, Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson proposed it. Due to its reliance on the current environment, this theory is sometimes referred to as the theory of pragmatics. According to the theory, a normal family is an interconnected system, meaning that whatever occurs to one member of the family would inevitably affect all the other members (Asemah-Ibrahim, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2022a, 2022b). This is how the system sees things. Inferring that there is one thread that binds a family together, the theory contends that the family should be seen as a system with sub-stems. According to Udoakah & Asemah (2018), the family cannot operate successfully if there is no interconnectivity among the many sub-systems. This theory emphasises the importance of communication in modern culture.

From the top positions of the organisation to the least positions of the organisation, everyone has an important role to play and if any of their functions is not carried out properly, there would be a hindrance to organisational success; so this makes communication a very vital tool for it to survive. This theory becomes applicable to this research work because organisations also function as a family to achieve their structured aim and objectives.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey research design. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ehareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that survey research design is used in studies with very large population. The population of the study is made up of staff of Nigerian Ports Authority. The population of the organisation is 356. Therefore, the population of the study is 356. A sample size of 150 was drawn using the Cochran sample size determination formula. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Response on the extent to which Organisational communication is recognised in Nigeria Ports Authority, Warri

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high	70	46.7%
High	48	32%
Can't tell	17	11.3%
Low	9	6%
Very low	6	4%
TOTAL	**150**	**100%**

The data in the table show that communication is highly recognised in the organisation. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 2: Channels used for Communication in the Organisation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Face-to-face	60	40%
Telephone	50	33.3%
Written (memos)	7	4.7%
Emails/Internet	33	22%
Total	**150**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that the organisation communicates through face-to-face approach (40 %). The implication of this is that face-to-face communication is mostly used in the organisation.

Table 3: Response on the Effectiveness of the Communication in the Organisation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Very effective	70	46.7%
Effective	40	26.7%
Can't tell	14	9.3%
Less effective	20	13.3%
Not effective	6	4%
Total	**150**	**100%**

Data from table 3 presented above indicate that communication in the organisation is very effective as majority of the respondents answered in that direction (46.7 %).

Table 4: Responses on the extent to which Organisational communication has helped in the achievement of Aims and Objectives

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high	80	53.3%
High	16	10.7 %
Can't tell	36	24 %
Low	14	9.3 %
Very low	4	2.7 %
Total	**150**	**100%**

The data show that organisation communication has helped achieving aims and objectives with 53.3 % agreeing to the fact. This signifies that achievement of aim and objectives are highly dependent on organisational communication.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that effective communication can help an organisation to achieve its aims and objectives. This is in line with Nwachukwu (1999) who notes that two key managerial functions facilitated by communication are provision of a vehicle by which one can implement a plan of action and the provision of a means through which organisation members can be motivated to execute corporate plans willingly and enthusiastically. It follows therefore that, the issuance of orders and participative response is dependent on communication. Communication serves as lifeline of every organisation because through it, employees understand their roles in a system and it is the tool through which effective control of organisational activities may be instituted. Ineffective communication becomes a blockage to organisational success (Miller, 2009). A congested organisational structure can also result in communication breakdown (Cheryl, 2013).

Equally, the finding revealed that to be able to continuously maintain organisational aim and objectives, the management must always transmit information, ideas, attitude and feelings through the process of communication non-stop. This is in tandem with Orewere (2006) who sees communication as a process of spending (transmitting) and receiving messages between individuals, among a group of people in a place or locality or between people in a wider society. Nomuaja (2009) sees communication as the transferring of information from one person to another with the person at the receiving end understanding the content of the information. It is an interchangeable or a sharing of ideas, facts, opinions, emotions and information by two or more people through the use of words, letters, gestures and symbols that must be understood by the two parties concerned. Communication in an organisation serves as an adhesive that tightens all acts of the organisation and it acts as magnifying glass by helping to make this clearer. With communication, colleagues corresponds in many ways to allow them to accomplish tasks and also achieve the set aims and objectives of the organisation.

The findings also showed that there are various forms of communication in the organisation, but the face-to-face interaction is the most common. Yaroson & Asemah (2008) note that interpersonal communication can thrive when the sender and the receiver share certain things in common; it may be age, religion, education and belief. Face-to-face communication serves as a direct form of communication with employees. This channel of communication may be regular or irregular, depending on the situation (Wallace, 2004).

Communication is seen as a thread that binds family together; without effective communication, there will be disorderliness and disunity. Interactional view theory likens organisations to a family and to maintain the dysfunctional nature of communication, there are five axioms of communication which must be followed; they are one cannot communicate, communication content and relationship, punctuation, digital and analogue modalities, communication can be symmetric or complimentary. Thus, in essence, every organisation has its ideas, dreams and philosophy for its existence. For it to survive, be productive, be profitable, a high level of effective communication process must continue in order to achieve the structured aim and objectives.

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that communication is highly recognised in Nigerian Port Authority, Warri and it has contributed to the achievement of aims and objectives in the organisation. Thus, it is recommended that the Nigerian Ports Authority, Warri should continue to give due attention to organisational communication.

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CHAPTER FIFTY ONE

SELF-AFFIRMATIVE DISCOURSE ON *IKA COMMUNITY* NEWSPAPER AND GRASSROOT DEVELOPMENT IN IKA COMMUNITY OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Ojeh Bertrand; Martha Joda & Omowumi Bukola Olaseinde

Introduction

A community newspaper is an essential communication tool for achieving development goals, especially in developing countries. It is a locally-oriented newspaper that typically focuses on rural communities, city neighbourhoods, suburbs or small towns, rather than state, national or world news. One of the branches of the print media industry that focuses on rural or grassroot development is rural community newspaper. The importance of community newspaper cannot be overemphasised within the role of the media as a development agent in today's global world. In the context of the paper, a community can be said to be a group of people with a shared identity and boundary. A community can also be said to be a group of people gathered together in any geographical area, whether large or small and united by common interest (Daramola, 2017). It is important to note that the history of newspapers in Nigeria can be traced to the establishment of 'IweIrohim," a religious newspaper whose target was to educate and enlighten the people living in Abeokuta and its environs about lifestyle and religions using Yoruba language in 1859.

In 1960s, when African rural newspapers were just coming up, their sophistication was determined by the prevailing literacy levels of the period. Most of the newspapers were set up as tools for literacy retention and development. The focus of the African community newspaper includes who does what, in which place and with what effect on the community as a unit.

Community newspapers are significant to the development of communities (Ekhareafo, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023). They can be described as the localisation of the mass media to meet the needs of our various native communities. Community newspapers started fully in Africa when a rural newspaper was established in Liberia in 1963. This was followed by the establishment of rural areas in Niger Republic (1964), Mali and Togo (1972) and Kenya (1976). Some were government owned while others were owned by appointed members of the community. Community newspapers are close to the communities they live in and as such, should bring to the attention of its readers available opportunities in government at all times.

According to Ate (2008), the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo & Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe played crucial roles in the establishment of community newspapers in Nigeria. The duo established provincial newspaper which marked the beginning of the recognition of the role of community journalism and national development. The newspapers established by these leading nationalists brought into limelight the cultural antefacts and ideo-facts of rural people in print journalism. They painted the sorry picture of abject poverty and backwardness in rural areas and that drew the attention of the government to the plight of rural dwellers. These papers informed the rural dwellers of great things or issues within their domains and those in cities. Through this medium, village dwellers were wooed and

mobilised to participate in developmental programmes of their communities, thus engendering social change.

In 1920, there were about 25 community newspapers in Lagos alone. *The National Concord* for instance was established in 1980. The Concord Press Limited established a series of 'Community Concord' newspapers in Ogun, Ondo, Imo, Bendel and Kano, Oyo, Kaduna, Gongola, Sokoto, Niger, Plateau, Bauchi, Borno, Kwara, Anambra, Enugu, Benue, Rivers and Katsina States respectively to meet the needs of the people there. 'Amama' 'Udoka' and 'Isokan' were also established in Northern and Southern Nigeria to make the literates in the rural areas have access to a cheap community newspaper published in English Language.

The aim of *community concord* was to provide development information. It was established to promote the language and culture of the people and to promote development and creativity, to help the flow of newspaper from the urban areas to the rural areas and from the rural areas, to the urban areas. It is important community newspapers have the powers to evolve social change that could lead to rural transformation in different areas. Even though there are very few community newspapers in Nigeria today, its importance in helping to bring development to the grassroots cannot be waived aside.

The rural community dwellers even in these days have a few development projects coming from the government and people whom they have elected to serve and represent them at all three tiers of government. Studies show that beneficiaries of government expenditure on education, health, water supply, electricity industries and road construction in Nigeria are mainly urban dwellers. Unfortunately, less than 30% of total government development expenditure is designated for the benefits of rural communities.

Most local communities in Nigeria have a lot to offer in terms of agricultural produce like Maize, Millet, Omon, Tomatoes and so on. Community journalism serves as a medium in bringing the community and government to work together to attract investors to invest in these communities. Our communities in Nigeria need good roads to allow farmers transport their produce to the urban area. Good road can facilitate easy access to the local government by businessmen and women. Through effective report in community newspapers, developments are for sure and its way to rural communities. It is in light of the above that this paper seeks to find out how *Ika Weekly Newspaper*, a community based newspaper can be utilised in grassroot development in *Ika Community* of Delta State.

Conceptual Review of Community Newspaper

A community newspaper is a regular publication which carries new stories, features, editorials, illustrations and/or pictures as well as advertisements for the people of a particular community. It is put together and published by rural folks placed in their own place (Anaeto, 2008). A community newspaper is a periodic publication that serves specific communities, typically geographic communities. A community newspaper is sometimes a small circulation done on daily basis, but more often a bi-weekly, weekly or monthly (Yamamoto, 2011). It can also be described as a newspaper which carries news features, editorials and pictures about and for a particular community (Oso, 2003). Osunbiyi (2003) defines it as a type of newspaper that provides services to its immediate rural community. It provides information on who does what in which place, when, why, how and with what effects on the communities as a unit. Such information is utilitarian in nature in the sense that they are meant to assist the overall development of the community.

Understanding Grassroot Development

Aroh (2002) asserts that grassroots development has a deep foundation making it challenging to give a one-for-all-kind of meaning. He avers that the term ‘‘grassroots development’’ symbolises a set of guidelines to improve the wellbeing of the rural dwellers that usually have a vast population in society – grassroots development is often affiliated with community or rural development and is generally used as a framework to measure the impact of community growth and expansion.

Development Communication

Development communication is the application of the processes of communication to development process. In other words, development communication is the use of the principles and practices of exchange of ideas to fulfill development objectives (Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2013). Anaeto (2008) sees development communication as "the planned and systematic application of communication resources, channels, approaches and strategies to support the goals of socio-economic, political and cultural development." Development communication is not just a matter of transmitting information about how things can be done by using available facilities, it is much more than the exchange of problem-solving information.

To Wilson (1997), development communication is relating media practice to the needs of development through news, features, cartoons, deliberate campaigns like mass literacy, health, public health, public enlightenment, electoral processes, agriculture, rural banking, national security and other rural or national development goals. This view situates development communication within the purview of the needs and aspirations of the rural people

Overview of *Ika Weekly* Newspaper

Ika Weekly newspaper was established in June 1989 and as the name implies, it is a weekly paper. For the purpose of clarity, it is a community newspaper based in Agbor, Delta State. It is owned by Mr. Steven–Ekiri–Mekiri-Uwa, the publisher who was a former newspaper vendor/bookseller and a native of Agbor, in Ika South Local Government Area, Delta State.

Among other objectives, the newspaper was birthed to disseminate across the world, news/information that is Ika-nation-specific, act as a vehicle for the propagation and promotion of Ika culture and tradition, while recognising and celebrating Ika sons and daughters that demonstrate uncommon talent in their various fields of endeavour.

Over the years, *Ika Weekly* newspaper has grown to become one of the leading community newspapers in Delta State, Nigeria. The paper is an authoritative reference point and household name in Ika land, as well as among Ika sons and daughters in the diasspora. This is as a result of the newspaper's objective, refreshing, informative and entertaining features. In pursuit of the accomplishment of its aim and objective of being a catalyst for a better society, *Ika Weekly* newspaper has successfully over the years, appreciated distinguished Ika Indigenes that have made *Ika* nation proud with the highly esteemed annual *Ika Weekly* newspaper distinguished personality of the year award. *Ika Weekly* newspaper presently operates both print and online publication.

Literature Review

Community newspaper like *Ika Weekly* which is a component of the print media and by extension, the mass media are said to have great impact on national development. This is particularly true, when its mobilisation role at the grassroot level is taken into consideration. The importance of developing the rural areas of any given country through community journalism which will further translate to national development cannot be overemphasised. Development, according to Asemah & Tsegyu (2012) is a process of change of attitude, social structure and general acceleration of economic growth through reduction of poverty and inequality. In spite of the overwhelming role the mass media are said to be playing in national development, some people are still of the view that this role is not effective. They buttress their position with some cogent reasons which should not be ignored. There is this general concession that Nigeria mass media are urban based. If one embarks on a research to find out the number of community newspapers and other rural-based media in Nigeria today, one will not be surprised to discover that only few exist. Infrastructural facilities such as roads, water, electricity and houses have been identified as obstacles to effective role of community journalism in community transformation and development. Other constraints are:

a. **Financial Constraints**: Financial resources are always in short supply for community newspaper owners. Since their operations are limited, they tend to be financially handicapped as financial institutions do not seem to have much confidence in them with the result that credit facilities are not easily made available to them (Nwanne, 2013).

b. **Poor Management**: Closely associated with financial constraints is the question of poor management of the meager resources generated from the business. Some publishers simply assume that whatever income that accrues to the business is profit; such publications sooner than later usually disappear from the newsstands. This partly explains the high mortality rate of many newspapers and magazines, especially community publications in Nigeria (Nwanne, 2013).

c. **Political Interference:** Many media houses in Nigeria and perhaps, across the world suffer different levels of political interference. In Nigeria, it is a clear and present danger because political authorities always want to be perceived positively by the people, even when their actions and inactions do not justify such trust. Indeed, in a bid to stop 'unfriendly' stories, political authorities often threaten community newspapers and other media either openly or in a subtle manner to desist from a particular editorial direction which it has set for itself. In some other cases inducements are offered to avoid unfavourable stories (Nwanne, 2013).

d. **Unprofessionalism**: Community newspaper and other local media are generally bedevilled with a high level of unprofessionalism. Many community journalists are unqualified and generally unprepared for the demands of the job. Many professional journalists in a bid to survive economically often prefer to work for the popular national newspapers and magazines and their electronic counterparts.

This creates a gap which is often exploited by those who do not have the requisite training in journalism. Naturally the output of such a bunch of staff is predictably poor (Nwanne, 2013).

e. **Illiteracy and Low Patronage**: Illiteracy still remains a major problem and challenge in Nigeria. This is even more worrisome given that a great majority of Nigerians live in urban areas. (Onabajo (2003) estimates that about 80% of Nigerians live in the rural areas and are usually engaged in subsistence agriculture. Large portions of this group are illiterates. Indeed, illiterates are handicapped in important ways as they are not in position to consume media products. The problem of low patronage is worsened by poverty which has exacerbated since the removal of fuel subsidy on May 29th, 2023 which has led to a serious like in petroleum products.

A study on development information in Nigeria's local newspaper was carried out by Umuerri & Soola (2017). The researchers examined the extent to which local newspapers reported development and non-development information. The researchers applied content analysis and their findings revealed that the local newspapers were more non-developmental in their orientation than developmental. The findings also showed that the issue of development was not diversified as hypothesised. Onyenemezu & Boro (2021) studied the impact of mass media on mobilisation of rural dwellers for participation in community development programmes in Bayelsa State, particularly in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The findings revealed that mass media have been used to mobilise rural dwellers for participation in community development programmes. The findings also showed that the presence of local media stations in the area have however emancipated the rural dwellers from constraints posed by lack of access to conventional mass media. The researchers based on their findings, recommended among others that radio clubs, community viewing centres and radio stations should be established in rural communities and provisions of adequate funds by government and non-government agencies for the improvement of the various activities of mass media for effective participation of rural dwellers in community development activities.

Amadi & Enyindah (2017) carried out a study on community newspapers as catalyst for effective rural transformation. The researchers carried out the study to investigate the utilisation of the community newspaper in facilitating moral transformation and reduce rural urban drift. The researchers adopted the survey research method with the sample size of 384. The finding showed that the total neglect by successive administrations in the adequate distribution of economic, social and political structures to the rural areas was as a result of the non-existence of community newspapers. The researchers recommended the immediate/urgent establishment of rural/community newspapers and industries in the areas to curb rural urban migration.

Kehinde (2011) carried out a study on development news in Nigerian newspapers. The researchers focused on the privately–owned *punch* and the state-owned *New Nigerian* newspapers for coverage of development news in Nigeria between the period June 2007

and May 2008. The researchers adopted content analysis. The findings revealed that development matters were poorly covered by the two newspapers. The findings also showed that preferential treatment was given to certain categories of development news such as agricultural practice, public health, welfare, literacy and education at the detriment of others in the two newspapers. The researchers recommended that strictly, development-focused newspapers should be established and also, the existing ones should train and retrain staff on the need for adequate coverage of rural development issues.

Ate & Ikerodah (2012) carried out a study on community journalism in Nigeria. The researchers observed that community media is community-owned, people-oriented and less profit-driven. According to them, it has the capacity to facilitate and smoothen effective communication in places where the presence of mass media is not well felt; thus, fostering development in other media marginalised communities. The findings further showed that, through community media, crimes at grass root level can be prevented while civic education, cross–gender dialogues, cultural literacy among other things can be harnessed for development purposes. They recommended amongst others that there is the need for professionals to strengthen science and technology reporting in Nigeria at the grass root level and that there should be training and retraining of community media workers in information communication Technology (ICT) in other to keep themselves abreast of current trends in the industry.

Nikade, Omego & Ochonogor (2019) carried out a study on mass media coverage of development news in rural and urban areas of Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The findings showed that development news report in the rural areas were significantly neglected in favour of the urban areas. The researchers also found that ownership interest was the leading cause of neglect of development news reports in the urban and rural areas of Bayelsa state. The researchers recommended among others that as part of their social responsibility and in leading with ethical standard, journalists in Bayelsa state should strive to identify development news sources in the rural communities and that the ownership of media stations in Bayelsa state should put public information above personal or parochial concern. Nwanne (2013) did a study on perspectives on community media and rural development in Nigeria. The researcher showed that that community media are constrained by financial inadequacy, political interference, illiteracy and low patronage. The researcher recommended that prospective investors come together and invest in community media and community media should endeavour to effectively cover their areas while ensuring that they are run professionally.

Theoretical Framework

Theories as noted by Yaroson & Asemah (2008); Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam Uwaoma (2017) are very important to research. This study is anchored on development media theory and agenda setting media theory. Development media theory was put forward as a means of paying for the imbalance in development and information flow of the third world countries and a solution to the technological problems facing them. The third world countries are beset by problems that makes development of mass communication system difficult. In order to deal with peculiar developmental challenges facing third world countries, this theory was put in place with emphasis on the right to communicate and the

need to use communication to galvanise social change. The tenets of development media theory as enunciated by McQuail (2000) are:

a. Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with naturally established policy.
b. Freedom of the media should be open to economics priorities and development needs of the society.
c. Media should give priority in the content to the national culture and language.
d. Journalist and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
e. In the interest of development, the state has a right to intervene or restrict media operation.

Development media theory seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the press in countries that are conventionally classified as developing countries or third world countries. This theory is very much related to the study as it explains the need for balanced development and information flow in the third world countries like Nigeria as obtainable in foreign developed countries. In this context, community newspaper like *Ika Weekly* can be a veritable tool in relaying positive development needs of *Ika community* of Delta State with their unbiased reportage.

The agenda setting theory on the other hands was born and built on the notion that the mass media set agenda for what people should care about. It is the idea that what the public thinks about is set by the media. This theory, introduced by Dr. Maxwell McCombs & Dr. Donald Shaw in 1972 states that the news plays an integral part in the shaping of political realities. The amount of time spent in an issue and the information relayed in a news story, along with the story's position, determines how much a reader learns and the amount of importance placed on the issue. The agenda setting theory of McCombs and Shaw states that when the media reflect on the views of a candidate during a campaign, they are also shaping and determining the issues of importance. This can ultimately set agenda for a political campaign. Asemah *et al* (2017) note that the media raise salient issues as they happen in our society and people begin to think about them. The agenda setting theory in relation to this study helps in making the audience to focus on what is more important; in this case, grass root development. This is true because the theory specifically suggests that media outlets can influence what issues are considered important by the public and that this influence can shape the public's attitudes and beliefs towards grass root development in the community.

Methodology

The research approach adopted by a researcher is often determined by the subject matter (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2017). The researchers used library research method. Relevant books, journals, records, newspapers, magazines and online materials were used. The researchers did not use any primary source of information.

Discussion of Findings

Communication serves as the basic element of interaction and information sharing in life (Asemah, Edegoh & Anum, 2013; Illah, Ogwo & Asemah. 2022). Communication, indeed, shapes how people conduct their daily lives as well as spread knowledge, values and social norms; communication is central to society (Piotrow, Kincard, Rimon & Rinehard, 1997, cited in Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah, 2014; Santas & Asemah, 2013; Ezegwu & Asemah, 2020). Communication is the central fact of human existence and social process. Nobody can be an island; hence the need to communicate with others in different ways and this goes a long way to show that human existence would be impossible without communication (Asemah, 2009; Asemah *et al* 2017; Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Tsegyu, 2017). The establishment of community newspapers is of paramount importance in bringing about the much needed grass root development in our various communities. The rural community newspaper carries stories, features, editorials, illustrations, as well as, advertisements and when all these are put together and published, they bring out about development in the area of health, agriculture and others too numerous to mention. Anibueze (2005, p. 5), cited in Asemah *et al* (2017) avers that:

> Rural newspapers place emphasis on continuing education and change. Thus, they provide regular information on local, state and national affairs, which enable the ruralites to be aware of and learn new techniques and processes. Rural newspapers also arouse interest in self development efforts; they provide avenue for dialogue on matters of common concern; they promote adult literacy and acquisition and they promote or reinforce culture for group identification and socialisation.

The implication of the above is that the rural community newspaper has a critical role to play in the development of the rural areas that need constant information on how to promote social change among the rural dwellers. In this case, *Ika Community* newspaper can be used to engender development in every area at the grass root level. This is in line with the development media theory which says that the media can be used to bring about positive attitudinal change in the society. Asemah (2011a) avers that the rural newspaper has become a formidable instrument of rural development. The *Ika Community* newspaper can contribute to rural development in the following areas:

1. **Promoting Literacy:** It contributes to developing literacy among the rural people. The rural newspaper not only provides reading materials, but also enables the people in rural communities to practise writing. It supplies villages with information about their own life situations and information they can identify with. The newspaper also helps to develop a literary tradition in the language used in publishing it.
2. **Providing Functional Knowledge:** Rural newspapers can be used to teach mothers about housekeeping, children, preparation of nutritious food, disease prevention and care.
3. **Promoting Useful Change:** A participatory rural newspaper should be a constant reminder to the village people to work hard to improve their living conditions. It

should teach them that help from the central government can only supplement, but not replace their own efforts. The newspaper should not be a shopping list of what the rural people want the central government to do for them. It should rather encourage all sectors of the community to contribute to the economy and it should also assist them in adapting and adopting appropriate technology in farming.

4. **Linking the Leader and the People:** Rural newspaper should be a channel of mutual communication between the rulers and the ruled. The ruled should express in them their aspirations, joys, sorrows and problems. The rulers should also communicate to the people their plans for the community, as well as, how they want to see these plans fulfilled.

5. **Serving as Windows to the World:** The rural newspaper should be a window to the "outside world" to enable it to see the life of the village community and possibly, render some help where it is needed. Stories in the rural newspaper can be lifted and published in the national and even international press.

6. **Safeguarding Cultural Identity**: The participatory rural newspaper plays an important role in safeguarding, conserving and promoting practices, which are useful to the rural community, so as to maintain their identity.

The above implies that rural newspapers can facilitate the progress and development of the rural areas. This is mainly because rural newspapers are meant for the rural dwellers and they also operate it (Asemah *et al* 2017). The rural community newspapers take into cognizance the culture of the rural people and this makes it an effect medium of rural development. This explains why Asemah (2011b) says that communication is an activity that takes place in a social context and the socio-cultural settings of the persons involved in the exchange of ideas are very vital to what becomes of the communication interchange (Asemah, 2011b). Fraser & Estrada (2001), cited in Asemah (2013) observe that citizens have a democratic right to reliable, accurate and timely information. This can be provided by the rural newspaper. This explains why Asemah & Uyeh (2012) note that information is central in all forms of human activity, no matter the field, be it medicine, agriculture, tourism or engineering.

Development is a gradual process of bringing about positive attitudinal change in the people (Asemah, 2010; Asemah, 2012). This can in turn, have positive influence on the rural areas. Rural areas as noted by Asemah & Okpnachi (2015) ''generally refer to areas in a country that are not fully developed; they are areas in a nation where there is a high traditional lifestyle that cannot be found in the urban areas or cities.'' The *Ika community* newspaper can, therefore, be used to bring about the needed positive attitudinal change.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the discourse, it can be concluded that community journalism is the sure way of bringing about grassroots development to rural communities in any given nation. This assertion is true because community newspapers are closer to their communities and are abreast with developmental needs of the rural populace unlike the city-based newspapers whose reports are majorly centred on issues and activities in the major towns and cities.

Therefore the place of *Ika Weekly* newspaper in grassroots development in *Ika community* of Delta State cannot overemphasised. Thus, the researchers recommend that:

1. Government should encourage existing community newspapers through patronage, especially by way of placement of Government-related advertisements in them.
2. Establishment of community newspapers should not be for individuals alone. Government at all levels should establish community newspapers in various communities, thereby creating employment and easily assessing the needs of such communities.

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CHAPTER FIFTY TWO

PERCEPTION OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF SEUN KUTI'S ASSAULT ON POLICE AMONG BENIN RESIDENTS

Isibor Odion Osahenrumwen; Christiana Shade Ade-Johnson & Ezekiel S. Asemah

Introduction

Today, social media messaging apps and platforms are the most commonly used sites worldwide. Social media originated as a way to interact with friends and family, but soon expanded to serve many purposes. In 2004, MySpace was the first network to reach one million monthly active users. In 2023, 94.8% of users accessed chat and messaging apps and websites, followed closely by social platforms, at 94.6% of users. Search engine sites were next, with 81.8% of users accessing them (Beckly, 2018).

Social media are a digital technology that facilitate the sharing of text and multimedia through virtual networks and communities (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2021, 2023; Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). More than 4.7 billion people around the world use social media. In 2022, the number of social media users worldwide grew by 137 million. The largest social media platforms are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and WeChat. Social media typically feature user-generated content and personalised profiles that lend themselves to engagement via likes, shares, comments and discussion (Nwaoboli, 2022, 2023, Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022).

On average, global users spent 2.24 hours each day on social networks in 2020, the highest across almost any media type According to Global Web Index, 46% of internet users worldwide get their news through social media platforms. That compares to 40% of users who view news on websites. Gen Z and Millennials were most likely to view news on social media sites versus other generations. Social media play a key role in businesses' marketing strategies given the sheer amount of time individuals spend each day on social platforms and apps. At the same time, social media are an ever-changing field. New apps such as TikTok, Signal and Clubhouse have joined the ranks of established social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. Social implies the relationship existing among individuals with a specific community, while 'media' is the channel through which the relationship is maintained (Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah, 2021).

As much as social media/ new media affect man directly or indirectly, the traditional media are still depleting as each day passes. A number of studies have shown that mass media are powerful tools that have been and can continue to be used to effect change. Mass media known as a "means of production "which disseminate the idea and world views are an agent of ideological control (Marc & Engel, as cited by Boyagoda, 2017).

On 15 may, 2023 the assault between Seun Kuti and the police was first conveyed through the social media platforms (*Vanguard* and *Punch* 2023), with a footage of abuse and assault constantly captured. Thus, this study was motivated by the need to determine how Benin residents perceive social media coverage of the assault.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent of exposure of Benin residents to media coverage of Seun Kuti assault on police.

2. Ascertain the channels through which Benin residents were exposed to Seun Kuti's assault on police.
3. Ascertain the level of effectiveness of the media reportage of Seun Kuti's assault on police.

Literature Review

Perception is the organisation, identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information or environment (Asemah & Nwaoboli, 2023; Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). All perception involves signals that must pass through the nervous system and in turn, result from physical or chemical stimulation of the sensory system. The major perspectives of psychology that emerged are cognitive, behavioural, psychodynamic, humanistic, biological, socio-cultural and evolutionary. Perception is the process of being aware of or comprehending sensory information.

Ikaderinyo (2023) notes that the media and journalists have responsibility to the audience to present an objective report and that ownership and control of media stations alone are not adequate to influence objectivity; hence, it identified intervening factors such as news commercialisation, media ownership and control.

This study is hinged on two theories of mass communication; that is, agenda setting and perception theory. The agenda setting can be traced to the 1972 works of Maxwell McComb & Donald Shaw. Agenda setting has two main assumptions. The theory's first core assumption is that the media often embark on filtering and the second is that issues given prominence in the media are most likely to be seen or heard as most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issue we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The theory is relevant to this study as it helps the media to decide the role of the media in setting and given the first impression to the public about what to think or believe in a particular event or information.

Perception is the process of being aware of or comprehending sensory information (Nwaoboli, 2021, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Klapper proposed the perception hypothesis in 1960 (Asemah *et al* 2017). It is one of the limited effects theories that explain how people view things differently as a consequence of their differing cognitive structures of needs, perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes and abilities. The theory presumes that people selectively expose themselves to media messages, depending on the reach of the media, accessibility, age, cultural acceptability, taboos and other factors. The notion is based on psychology and is often used in media and communication research (Nwaoboli, 2021). The theory is relevant for this study as it helps the media to detect the decisiveness of the public.

Methodology

The researchers applied survey research method. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) and Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Sabo (2023) note that one of the advantages of survey is that it can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings. The population of the study comprises residents of Benin. Based on available statistics, Benin City's population is 1,682,200 (One million, six hundred and eighty-two thousand and two hundred) people (https://citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/NGA012__edo/). The sample size is 400. This was arrived at, using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula.

Multistage sampling technique was adopted. In the first stage, the city was divided (stratified sampling) into local government areas; namely: Egor, Ikpoba – Okha, Oredo and Ovia North-East. In the second stage, areas with high population density were randomly selected: Uselu area for Egor, Sakponba road for Ikpoba – Okha, King Square for Oredo, and Ugbowo area for Ovia North-East. In the third stage, residents who were well educated were purposefully selected. Finally, in the fourth stage, the researchers randomly administered the copies of questionnaire to the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 367(96%) copies were adequately filled and returned. Thus, the presentation and analysis of data was based on the 367 copies.

Table 1: Extent of exposure of Benin Residents to Media Coverage of Seun Kuti's Assault on Police

Options	Frequency	%
Very high	101	28
High	165	45
Can't tell	22	6
Low	67	18
Very low	12	3
Total	**367**	**100**

Table 1 shows that the exposure to the assault among Benin residents was high. This is based on the fact majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 2: Responses on the Channels through which Benin Residents were exposed to Seun Kuti's Assualt on Police

Options	Frequency	%
Radio	60	17
Television	85	28
Newspaper	25	8
Magazine	57	15
Social media	140	35
Total	**367**	**100**

The data in the above table show that the respondents were exposed to the assault through different channels of communication; however, radio and television were the highest.

Table 3: Responses on the Level of Effectiveness of the Media Reportage of Seun Kuti's Assault on Police

Options	Frequency	%
Very effective	32	8
Effective	56	15
Can't tell	34	9
Less effective	154	42
Not effective	91	25
Total	**367**	**100**

The data in table 3 show that the coverage of the assault was not effective as majority of the respondents answered in that direction.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that the extent of exposure of Benin residents to the assault by Seun Kuti on the police was high. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered in that direction. A total of 69% of the respondents answered in that direction. This implies that the respondents are fully aware of the assault by Seun Kuti on the police. The mass media are agents of information. Asemah (2011) notes that the mass media survey the environments and report the happenings to the members of the society. Ikaderinyo (2023) notes that the media and journalists have responsibility to the audience to present an objective report and that ownership and control of media stations alone are not adequate to influence objectivity.

The findings further showed that the respondents were mostly exposed to the assault on the police through radio and television. Radio and television can reach a very far and wide audience and this perhaps explains why they were the sources through which the respondents accessed the messages on the assault. Asemah (2022) notes that electronic media, especially radio and television, can convey messages from a source to a large and heterogeneous audience.

The findings, however, showed that the coverage of the assault on the police was not effective. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered in that direction. A total of 250% answered in that direction. This is based on the interpretation that the respondents gave to the coverage. The finding is, therefore, in line with the perception theory which this study is anchored on. Perception is the process of being aware of or comprehending sensory information. Klapper proposed the perception hypothesis in 1960 (Asemah *et al* 2017). It is one of the limited effects theories that explain how people view things differently as a consequence of their differing cognitive structures of needs, perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes and abilities. The theory presumes that people selectively expose themselves to media messages, depending on the reach of the media, accessibility, age, cultural acceptability, taboos and other factors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that the coverage of the assault by Seun Kuti on the police was not effective. This is simply based on the fact majority of the respondents answered in that direction; thus, the researchers recommend that media should learn how to pay serious attention to serious issues that affect society so that people will be fully aware.

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CHAPTER FIFTY THREE

Perception and Attitude to the Corporate Social Responsibility Efforts of Ultima Limited by its Publics

Tina C. Touitou & Helen O.C. Ambassador-Brikins

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) of business, refers to the obligations of a business outfit to pursue those policies, make decisions or follow those lines of actions which are desirable in terms of objectives and values of the society. The doctrine of corporate social responsibility rests on the idea that business should be conducted with concern for the effects of business operations upon the attainment of valued social goals. Since societies around the world encounter various social problems, inhabitants of companies' host communities expect them to help solve some of these problems using their resources effectively for national development (Ganuri, 2012). CSR helps to build the image of the organisation, gain the public's trust, sympathy, support and goodwill for its operations. The main aim of CSR in an organisation is to reach out to its publics and create a peaceful and understanding environment whereby the host community and the organisation can coexist peacefully. In using CSR as a tool for public relations, the public relations department of an organisation has the obligation of advising the organisation on various social responsibility strategies that can be adopted to enhance its image in the eyes of the community. Organisations, according to Asemah, Okpanachi & Olumuji (2013) and Asemah (2015) carry out corporate social responsibility programmes because it gives them licence to operate. Thus, Asemah & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2016) note that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an important part of planning to get and sustain the competitive advantage in the globally competitive companies.

Ultima Limited has contributed immensely to the growth and achievement of the Nigerian entertainment industry through its music sponsorship programme and game shows; examples are *the Project Fame (PF) West Africa singing competition* and the *Who Wants to Be a Billionaire* (WWTBAM) game show recorded and produced by Ultima, Limited sponsored by MTN. Ultima has helped generate a significant amount of employment opportunities in Nigeria. It has provided many people with the revenue needed to start independent businesses and provide better living for themselves.

However, organisations are sometimes faced with situations where their efforts to be socially responsible have backfired. This study is designed to study the use of CSR, by Ultima Limited and its publics' perception of those activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does Ultima Limited recognise corporate social responsibility?
2. What are the areas of corporate social responsibility of Ultima Limited?
3. What is the level of effectiveness of the corporate social responsibility activities of Ultima Limited?

Review of Related Studies

Corporate social responsibility is about the integrity with which an organisation governs itself, fulfills its mission, lives by its values, engages with its stakeholders and measures its

impacts and publicly reports on its activities; it addresses issues around corporate governance, including how an organisation fulfils its mission, lives by its values, engages with its stakeholders and measures its impacts and reports on its activities (Asemah, 2015; Asemah & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2016; Asemah, & Udoakah, 2018).

The practice of corporate social responsibility implies that if a corporation is able to carter for the environment where it operates, then that corporation is financially viable and this encourages more people to invest in the company; thus, as an organisation takes so much from the society for its existence and survival, it should also contribute to the maintenance, well-being and growth of the society (Asemah & Nwammuo, 2018; Asemah & Ekhareafo, 2022; Asemah, 2022). The implication is that organisations have power; they have great influence and they need to balance it with responsibility (Asemah, Ekhareafo, Edegoh & Ogwo, 2013). Thus, CSR helps ensure that the organisation complies with regulatory requirements (Asemah, Edegoh & Anatsui, 2012). The foregoing explains why Asemah & Asogwa (2012) posit that CSR is a social investment or involvement-philosophy that helps any social institution or organisation, including government, to avoid taking decisions or actions that may make it seen by its target publics as uncaring or insensitive to their needs and interests.

Corporate social responsibility involves advising management and working with it to ensure that the organisation is not only a responsible and responsive ‘‘corporate citizen,’’ but is seen to be so. CSR is conceived as the responsibility to plan and manage an organisation’s relationships with all those involved in or affected by its activities. It is a social investment and an opportunity to portray goodwill in a community. Companies’ host communities demand that companies should apply CSR regardless of their size, shape and origin. Since societies around the world encounter various social problems, inhabitants of companies’ host communities expect them to help in solving some of these problems using their resources effectively for national development (Gigauri, 2012).

Social responsibility in a sense means the intelligent and objective concern for the welfare of society that restrains individual and corporate behaviour from destructive activities, no matter how profitable it may lead in the direction of positive contribution to human betterment and national development. Another point of view is that corporate social responsibility actions are those actions that, when judged by society in the future, are seen to have been of maximum help in providing necessary amount of desired goods and services at minimum financial and social cost, distributed as equitably as possible.

Corporate social responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders and the public. Corporate social responsibility is also called corporate citizenship. It is a broad concept that can take many forms, depending on the company and industry. As important as corporate social responsibility is to the community, it is also important for a company. CSR helps build a strong and lasting relationship between employees and corporations and it boosts morale and helps both employees and employers feel more connected with the world around them. It has been observed that the organisations that adopt CSR, view it as an excellent opportunity to “bank” goodwill and acceptance in the community and also as a social instrument.

Organisations also classify socially responsible companies as those who refrain from taking actions that might be perceived by the public as insensitive, careless or callous. Nkanga (2007), cited by Osemene (2012) maintains that CSR involves the commitment shown by companies to contribute to the economic development of a local community and the society at large. For instance, an organisation must ensure a satisfactory rate of return to investors, provide a good welfare structure and other benefits to its employees, make

products and services available at reasonable prices to its consumers and ensure a well-maintained environment with the citizenry. To this end, the organisation is not only adding value to its stakeholders, but also building its organisational image and reputation.

Carroll & Buchholtz (2003) rightly posit that social responsibility is a very important concept in business policy. These responsibilities are not only those that management has towards members in the organisation, but also those it has towards the society in which it operates. Social responsibility is an ethical or ideological theory that businesses should not just be profit-oriented but instead, should contribute to the welfare of their communities, given an entity, whether it is a government, corporate organisation or an individual, it has a big responsibility to society at large.

Corporate social responsibility is the best way to get connected with consumers and keep them active and engaged with the brand, because with CSR campaigns, the organisation discusses something that everyone will benefit from. When brands make positive contributions to the people and society, they are actually benefitting from them in the process. Brands benefit through customer loyalty, greater productivity, lower operating costs, increased sales and more capital and investors. CSR is the way to show the human angle of the brand, due to brands and businesses deal and work closely with humans. The CSR has a huge, sturdy and immediate influence on business performances as well. As stated by CSR Rep Trak studies, if businesses improve their CSR perception, there are huge chances that consumer recommendation will develop up to 9% for the brand. Brands need to make themselves responsible socially and be good corporate citizens to add better value to their business. Asemah & Nwammuo (2017) note that there is the need for the private sector to contribute immensely to the attainment of sustainable development in every society.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories and concepts that have been used to explain the concept of corporate social responsibility practices of organisations (Asemah & Edegoh, 2014; Asemah, 2015).

The study is anchored on stakeholder theory. The stakeholder theory relates with business ethics, organisational management, morals and values. The theory holds that an organisation must serve all those affected by it, known as stakeholders– employees, financial investors, customers, suppliers, governmental groups, local communities and neighbours. Giving the history of the theory, Simon (2016) & McAbee (2022) explain that the stakeholder theory was formally laid out in 1984 by R. Edward Freeman. The theory operates on the reasoning that an organisation should do right by all its stakeholders and that in doing so, the organisation will achieve true lasting success (https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/stakeholder-theory). McAbee (2022) insists that in practice, it can promote a positive feedback loop that ultimately leads to greater returns for stakeholders and even shareholders. In the context of this research, members of Omole community where Ultima Limited is located and the company's employees are the stakeholders. However, the community is in focus here. McAbee (2022) declares that perhaps, the single biggest key to successful stakeholder management is communication; maintaining that an organisation can maintain a good relationship with its stakeholders, if it can effectively communicate the reasoning behind its decisions even if it cannot meet every stakeholder's expectation or desire.

The model, is therefore, relevant to this study because corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be seen as the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary

expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time (Asemah, Okpanachi & Olumuji, 2013a, citing Carroll & Buchholtz, 2003). The concept of corporate social responsibility implies that organisations have moral, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities in addition to their responsibilities to earn a fair return for investors and comply with the law. Thus, it lays emphasis on organisations taking care of the environment where they operate (Asemah, Okpanachi & Olumuji, 2013b).

Masuku & Moyo (2013) investigated CSR as an invention of public relations in Econet and National Railways of Zimbawe (NRZ). In their examination of how CSR was perceived by people in Zimbabwe, the researchers adopted a triangulation method by integrating qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Findings showed that PR campaigns can also be perceived as CSR campaigns by the targeted population of a study. The researchers concluded that CSR and PR improve the quality of the organisations' relations with all their stakeholders. David (2012) examined community expectations of CSR in the Niger Delta in the context of political, traditional and administrative systems. The findings showed that integration of community perspective will open channels for community-company cooperation. The researchers recommended that organisations should appreciate the rural communities in which their businesses operate in order to build a comprehensive framework.

Gigauri (2012), while working on the impact of CSR on consumer purchase decision, relied on quantitative methods of research. The findings revealed that consumers, in developing countries were not well informed about CSR, hence they did not demand for it. Similarly, Walker & Kent (2009) assessed the effect of CSR on consumer attitudes in the sports industry. A semi-structured interview was conducted and a proposal was drafted and sent out to officers of two NFL teams. A consumer level framework linking CSR to organisational evaluations and patronage intentions revealed a general positivity in sports consumers' responses. The researchers recommended that to properly manage consumer relationships and reputation, organisations should not only adopt CSR as an integral part of their mission, but must also communicate their missions widely.

Papafloratos (2009) in his study titled "Do CSR Initiatives Influence the Consumers?" highlighted the influence that CSR initiatives have on consumer behaviour. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the CSR managers of two mobile phone operators and copies of a questionnaire were administered to postgraduate students of the University of Bath. The findings showed that students would boycott an operator that did not use CSR initiatives. Eisingerish & Ghardwaj (2011) opined that corporate social responsibility has been given a lot of attention in the course of the last decades. The implication of this is that contemporary companies are pursuing their economic, social and environmental responsibilities on a voluntary basis and are integrating them into all business while interacting with their stakeholders. Several factors contribute to the growing significance of organisational image in recent years, but the main factor stimulating the current interest in a firm's image is the society's growing expectation that corporations be socially responsible.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey design. The population consists of the internal publics of Ultima Limited and members of the host community in Omole, Lagos. The population of the internal public consists of 52 people (Ultima Linkedin) while that of the external public,

which is Omole a place in the location of Ojodu/Berger, Lagos, consists of about 35,000 people(google.com/search?q=).This gives a population of 35,052 people. Using the TaroYamane formula thus: $35,052/1+35,052(0.05)^2 = 395$, the sample size came to 395. Using the simple random sampling technique, 13 employees of the company were selected. This technique gave each respondent an equal opportunity to be selected. From the host community, 382 respondents were selected, using the cluster sampling technique. The host community was divided into sub communities, with each sub division regarded as a cluster. This produced respondents from the clusters. Willingness to participate in the study was also a criterion for selection of respondents. Even though the sample consisted of 395 respondents, 350 copies of the instrument were filled in a manner deemed usable and returned; resulting in a retrieval rate of 89 %. Cronbach Alpha Analysis was employed for determining the level of the questionnaire's reliability and the value of 0.81 was obtained. The data obtained through the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS and presented with descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researchers administered 395 copies of the questionnaire, but 350 copies were retrieved and found to be filled in a manner deemed usable.

Table 1: Responses on the Extent to which the Company pays Attention to Corporate Social Responsibility

Opinion Rating	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very high	101	29
High	212	61
Undecided	12	3.4
Low	15	4.2
Very low	10	2.4
Total	**350**	**100**

The data in the above table show that the company highly recognises the practice of corporate social responsibility. This is based on the fact that majority (90%) of the respondents answered in that direction.

Table 2: Areas of CSR which the Company pays Attention

Area of CSR	Frequency	Percent %
Provision of employment	51	14.5
Compensation for environmental damages	23	6.5
Provision of electricity	12	3.4
Provision of pipe borne water	12	3.4
Construction and rehabilitation of roads	32	9.1
Equipment/ renovation of schools	30	8.5
Supporting health care delivery	40	11.4
Supporting agriculture	27	7.7
Providing soft loans for economic development	42	12.5
Skill training and acquisition	38	10.8
Award/scholarships	43	12.2
Total	**350**	**100**

Based on the data in the above table, it is evident that the company engages in different areas of corporate social responsibility.

Table 3: Level of Effectiveness of the CSR Programmes

Opinion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very effective	142	40
Effective	166	47.4
Can't tell	17	5
Less effective	8	2.1
Not effective	17	5
Total	**350**	**100**

From the data in the above table, it can be said that the corporate social responsibility performance of the company is effective. A total of three hundred and eight (308) respondents answered in that direction.

Discussion of Findings

Data revealed that Ultima Limited integrates activities that promote the welfare of its stakeholders into its efforts to make profit. Investigation of the extent of the company's recognition of CSR showed that it is given priority by the company as about 90% of the respondents rated the company high in its recognition of CSR. This is also an indication of the community's support to the company.

The main area of Ultima Limited's CSR activities is provision of employment, which is followed by the provision of soft loans for economic development, award of scholarships, support for health care delivery and then, skill training and acquisition. Efforts towards provision of potable water, electricity, road rehabilitation and construction and renovation of schools were not ranked so highly. This is an indication of the reasoning that provision of knowledge, skill and empowerment for income generation, coupled with good health will position community members for better life. It is understandable that in a clime where unemployment is rife, premium is placed on employment and empowerment for economic development.

Majority of the respondents were of the view that the company's CSR efforts were effective, even though 7% had a contrary view, while 5% could not take a decision on the matter. Ultima Limited regards its host community members as "stakeholders" in the business and seems to have taken the counsel of Freeman, to do right by its stakeholders, so it can reap its benefits by achieving true lasting success. A socially reasonable organisation seeks areas in which it can give back to the community in which it operates and CSR helps it to build closer relations with employees, boost the company's reputation and even strengthen customer loyalty (Team Bonding 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Ulitima Limited gives priority to CSR and is rated highly as an organisation that gives recognition to corporate social responsibility. In as much as there are various areas of need, the company, by its CSR activities, gives more attention to areas that would directly and indirectly empower community members to be gainfully employed; examples of which are provision of employment, provision of soft loan for economic development and award of scholarship. Ultima also gives priority to promotion of wellness and good health. Based on the findings and conclusion, the researchers hereby recommend that Ultima Limited should more vigorously pursue its CSR programmes and as much as it lies in its power, develop new ones.

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