

SOUTH-EAST RESIDENTS PERCEPTION OF MEDIA INFLUENCE IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN NIGERIAN COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the roles of Nigerian mass media in the integration of migrants in host communities. The study is anchored on critical theory which emphasizes the need for the media to expand the scope of social interactions in the area of migration and community. The survey research method was adopted for the study. From the population of 4, 170, 000 (which is the population of the selected state capitals in the south-east namely; Umuahia, Abakaliki, Owerri, Awka and Enugu), the Yaro Yamane's formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 400. Using multi-stage sampling techniques, the researchers were able to distribute 400 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents across the state capitals of the five states of Abia, Anambra, Enugu Ebonyi and Imo State. The study found that Nigerian media portrayal of migrant has a way of shaping the perception of the people in the communities. These perceptions in some cases were positive and in other cases negative. It was therefore recommended that Nigerian media should choose ways or frames that will encourage societal inclusiveness for migrants in different communities across the country.

Keywords: Media, Migration, Inclusiveness, Migrants and Social Inclusion

Introduction

In the current global climate, migration and refugee policies are hot topics of debate. This created an opportunity for the media and society elites to grab the public's attention, alerting them to the supposed physical, economic and cultural threats from migrants, (Esses, 2013). Media coverage may have portrayed migrants in one way or another or simply raised it as a topical issue (UN World Migrant Report, 2013). Migration coverage presents a variety of different issues, narratives and viewpoints. Identifying how matters are framed is important because media frames affect how people think about migration (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2013). IOM (2017) argues that while much research evidence, around the world, points to media (international media associating migrants with "bad news," such negativity is not necessarily unique to migration coverage, as journalists "generally tend to emphasize problems across most topics"

Notwithstanding past studies, it can be said that the media may not only promote dehumanization of immigrants and refugees through depictions that highlight potential; threats to the host society, but also provide ready justification for the dehumanization and consequent outcomes (Esses, 2013). Esses (2013) said that the resultant dehumanization of migrants and refugees may appeal to members of the public, sewing to justify the status quo, strengthening boundaries between newcomers (migrants) and established residents, and defending against threats to the established residents' position in society. For example, studies of the portrayal of Tamil asylum-seekers arriving in British Columbia in 2010 show that negative media portrayals served to fan the flames of distrust and anxiety. Changes in traditional; media and growing use of social media in an international sphere are offering new avenues for "migrant-led" media and journalism as well as unique opportunity for migrants to highlight their concerns and contributions –in their own words- the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2012).

However, there has been movement towards more positive or at least more neutral coverage of migration issues across served destination and origin continues that doesn't seem to be attributable to any particular event. At the same time, rapid multiplication and diversification of social, international and online media brings potential for good but also pitfalls, for example, fake news. IOM (2017) express that such news items likely represent only the tip of the "fake news iceberg".

Migration coverage is not only positive or negative, but also presents a variety of different issues, narratives and viewpoints. Identifying how matters are framed is important because media frames affect how people think about migration (IOM, 2017). IOM also calls for more attention to different media systems and how they may or may not produce different kinds of contents regarding migration.

It is obvious, therefore, that people move from community to community, from state to state, and from country to country. In Nigeria, there has been great movement of people within and outside the shores of the country. People travel out of the country for social, economic or educational reasons. There is also great movement from rural to urban areas, from community to community and from state to state. In the year 2013, the then state Governor Babatunde Fashola had to relocate migrant who went to Lagos back to Anambra state (Premium Times, 2019). There has also been calls from Igbos to relocate their businesses back to Igboland by Ohaneze Ndigbo and several other ethnic riots that have taken place in the North.

Today, migration affects millions of people across the globe every day, as migrants and as non-migrants. Migration is by no means a new phenomenon. Humans have moved as individuals and groups since they first populated the earth, perhaps because mobility, as Urry (2007) has eloquently demonstrated, is inherent to the nature of all social entities, whether the movement itself is actual or potential.

This study, therefore, sought to examine south-east residents' perception of media influence in the social inclusion of migrants in Nigerian communities.

Statement of the Problem

Overtime, it can be said that man has also had a knack for socialization and which is often achieved with the tools of communication and in recent times, the media. This has often posed a challenge as people often believe the words of the media practitioners hooks, line and sinker without questioning the credibility and reliability of the media owners and personnel. Any report on migration within the country has always fueled debates that are hot. Therefore this research

work sought to understand how the media can be a cause of social exclusion and inclusion amongst migrants and host communities, portrayals of immigration policies and how the media can drive positive or negative perception and its general role in ensuring the integration of migrants across the Nigerian communities.

Research Objectives

This study is guided by the following objectives:

1. Examine the roles of Nigeria media in the integration of migrants in different host communities in the country.
2. Examine how Nigerian media portrayal of migration issues influence peoples' perception of these migrants in different host communities in the country.

Research Questions

This study asked the following questions:

1. What are the roles of Nigeria Media in the integration of migrants' different host communities in the country?
2. How does Nigerian media portrayal of migration issues influence peoples' perception of these migrants in different host communities in the country?

Review of Literature

Concept of Migration:

Migration is a geographical movement of people across a specified boundary for the purposes of establishing new permanent or semi permanent residence. It involves a movement of people from one location of living to another. It is of two broad types which are: Internal Migrations (movement of people within the boundaries of a nation (internal mobility) and International migration (movement of people outside the boundaries of a nation (international mobility)). Migration is a spatial mobility inbuilt in human condition and heavily influence by politic, economic, cultural, ecological and social context in which migration occurs (Chukwu,2017). Migration is not restricted to man as birds, animals, fishes, etc, migrate at one time or the other as a result of certain conditions existing at a particular time. The concept of

migration could be internal or external. It is internal when the movement is within from one part of the country to the other, or external, when it involves moving from one's country to another country. Migration could be short term circular migration, educational migration, and short term mobility linked to selling of agricultural goods. There are ongoing debates on how different forms of movement can be classified, as they do not always have clear demarcations. Chukwu, 2017 said that Movement can be: within or across borders; volunteer (for work, study or family reasons) or forced (as a result of conflict or natural disaster); regular (with documentation) or irregular (without documentaries); and temporary, season or long term/permanent

Eton (2018) listed various reasons why people justify migration and capsule it into two main reasons. They are push factors and pull factors. Push factors; which are lack of services, safety, high crime rate, crop failure, national disasters and war. Pull factors (man's desires); higher employment, wealthy, better services, safes and leas crime political stability, fertile laid, lower risk from disasters etc. The theory of pull and push with their attendant vulnerabilities (UNDP, 2010) have been employed to explain the whys of migration. The pull is the attraction and the push is the repulsion. The push factors include: conflict, natural disasters; natural or man-mad "environmental degradation; lack of employment opportunities, under-employment, poverty, extreme hardship; unequal access to employment and services (healthcare, education; gender constraints/threats at origin (including early marriage, female circumcision, homosexuality); persecution as outlined in 1951 Refugee Convention; lack of political freedom and protect of human rights; and lack of good governance/rule of law. The pull factor, according to (UNDP, 2010), also include perceived opportunities elsewhere (work, education); families' re-unification (through marriage, parents/children); demand for high/low-skilled labour, and social networks. These are vulnerabilities associated with migration.

Other reasons include:

1. To improve standard of living
2. Natural disasters or civil interest (refugees)
3. Environment challenges
4. Escape from situations

5. Educational reasons
6. Sake of differences in social amenities
7. Sake of change and adventure

Not minding these reasons, migrants are faced with many challenges such as xenophobic acts, racism, intolerance, killings, discriminations of all kinds, slavery, and even social exclusion which removes the warmth of the new found homes of migrants.

Empirical Review

In study entitled “The Role of Media in Migration and Integration by, TriinVihalemm (2017),” found out that the media is an important co-influencer of the migration and integration process while understanding that the massive use of the internet have changed previous concepts and created new areas of researchers. Also, Kira Kosnick (2014) in the study entitled “Mediating Migration: New Roles for mass media”, it found out there is a significant academic and wider public sensitivity towards mass-mediated production of images and other signs representing migrants and migration processes while revealing that the state and supra - state- driven uses of media and information technologies for purposes of migration and mobility control have received much less critical attention. In another work, “European media coverage of the migration crisis by Myria Georgiui, and Dr Rafal Zaborowsk (2016),” it found out that despite significant differences across European regions, time periods and political stances of news outlets, there is a general, consistent movement from humanitarianism towards militarization in newspaper portrayals of the crisis. It can therefore be said that the media in a global hemisphere plays an important role in the integration of migrants globally.

Also another work “Social Media, Social Integration and Subjective Well-Being among New Urban Migrants in China by lu-Wei and Fang fangGau 2016,” revealed that social media use can contribute to social integrating, including building of social identity and social network as well as real world social participation.

In a related study entitled “Media Reporting of Migrants and Migration: A global perspective by Allen, McNeil and Blinder 2017”, it was found out though a great deal of coverage tends to be negative, with exceptions of some (New Zealand) the national media have slowly produced more

positive content, even if the overall balance still trends towards negative. It also highlighted how migrants themselves produce and share content alongside conventional media. In another work “Negative Media Portrayals Drive Perception of Immigration Policy, study found by Lawrence 2016,” found out that the media have a central place in shaping the public’s view of immigrants and immigration and also that though laws are critical but media messages create conditions for policies to be created, passed and for them to be implemented.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the critical theory which states that the principle that analysed specific social phenomena requires awareness of the connectedness and embeddedness of scale phenomena in the broader totality to understand the interaction of migration and community (rather than a narrow focus on integration) (O’Reilly, 2011). In essence, migration is induced by different factors which can either be physical or psychological, and internal or external. It is important to expand the scope of social interaction in discussing issues of migration to reflect factors that causes the movement and how migrants are to be integrated to the society. This theory is relevant to the study because migration issues are paramount to countries and the world in totality. It is therefore, pertinent for the media to create broad framework for the discussion of migration and how societies within the country can help ensure inclusiveness of migrants.

Methodology

The researchers used the survey research method for the study. The Survey method was used to gauge the views of host communities about migrants in the country. The projected population for the study was 4, 170, 000 (which is the population of the selected state capitals in the south-east namely; Umuahia, Abakaliki, Owerri, Awka and Enugu). These state capitals represented the five south east states of Abia, Ebonyi, Imo, Anambra and Enugu. The Yaro Yamane’s formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 400. The choice of the South East is that it has witness more non-Igbo settlers and migrants across the world based on religious and professional waves within the past ten years. The Yaro Yamane formula was used to arrive at the sample size of 400, while the multi- stage sampling techniques was used by the researchers to select respondents from the capitals of the five states from the east which include: Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States. The instrument of data collection was questionnaires. The

researchers distributed 400 copies of the questionnaires to respondents from which 290 copies were filled correctly and found valid for the study.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Respondents responses on the effectiveness of the media in Nigeria in discharging its duties in integration of migrants in host communities

Have the media in Nigeria been effective in discharge of its duties in integration of migrants in host communities?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	18.3
No	163	56.2
I don't know	73	25.2
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Field:2018

The table above shows an analysis of respondents with regards to the issue of if the media agencies in Nigeria actually have been effective in discharge of its duties in integration of migrants in host communities, 56.2% which is majority of the respondents said no that the media agencies have not been effective in the discharge of its duties in the integration of migrants in host communities, 18.3% of respondents said no while 25.2% are undecided on the roles of the news agencies. It can therefore be said that 56.2% of respondents believed that the media have not been effective in the discharge of its duties in the integration of migrants

Table 2: Respondents responses on how Nigerian media presentation of activities of migrants shapes the ways migrants are viewed by the host communities

Do you think that Nigerian media presentation of activities of migrants in both the print and electronic media shape the ways migrants are viewed by the host communities and global community at large?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	197	67.9
No	32	11
I don't know	61	21
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Field:2018

The table above shows an analysis of respondents with regards to the issue of if the Nigeria media presentation of activities of migrants shape the ways migrants are viewed by the host communities and global community at large, 67.9% which is majority of the respondents said yes that the media presentation of activities of migrants shape the ways people see migrants, 11% of respondents said no while 21% are undecided on the roles of the news agencies. It can therefore be said that 67.9% of respondents believe that the media presentation of migrants activities shape the ways people view or regards migrants in the host communities.

Table 3: Respondents responses on Nigerian Media portrayal of migrants and migrants' activities induce social inclusiveness of migrants in host communities

Media portrayal of migrants and migrants' activities induce social inclusiveness of migrants in host communities?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	17.9
No	149	51.4
I don't know	89	30.7
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Field, 2018

Table 3 shows an analysis of respondents with regards to the puzzle of if the Nigeria media portrayal of migrants induce social inclusiveness of migrants and migrants' activities in host communities, 51.4% which is majority of the respondents said no that the media portrayal of migrants and migrants' activities induce social inclusiveness in these societies, 17.9% of respondents said yes while 30.7% are undecided on the role of media portrayal and how it affects migrants in societies. It can therefore be said that 51.4% of the respondents believe that the Nigerian media portrayal of migrants and migrants activities have not induce social inclusiveness of migrants in host communities.

Table 4: Respondents responses on effectiveness of Nigerian media portrayal of migrants in shaping the perception of migrants in host communities positively

Do you think that media portrayal of migrants has been effective in shaping the perception of migrants in host communities positively?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	33.8
No	152	52.4
I don't know	46	15.9

Total	290	100
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Source: Survey Field:2018

Table 4 shows an analysis of respondents with regards to the puzzle of if the Nigeria media portrayal of migrants have been effective in shaping the perception of migrants globally and in host communities, 52.4% which is majority of the respondents said no that the media portrayal of migrants has been effective, 33.8% of respondents said yes while 15.9% are undecided on the issue. It can therefore be said that 52.4% of respondents. It can therefore be said that 52.4% of respondents believed that media portrayal of migrants has not been effective in shaping the perception of migrants in host communities positively.

Table 5: Respondents responses on the role of Nigeria media in the acceptance of migrants in host communities through its coverage and presentation of activities of migrants in the country

Do you think that Nigeria media can further smoothen the acceptance of migrants in host communities through its coverage and presentation of activities of migrants in the country?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	152	52.4
No	46	15.9
I don't know	98	33.8
Total	290	100

Source: Survey Field:2018

Table 5 shows an analysis of respondents with regards to the puzzle of if the Nigeria media can further smoothen the acceptance of migrants globally and in host communities through its coverage and presentation of migrants' activities, 52.4% which is majority of the respondents said yes that the media can further smoothen the acceptance of migrants has been effective, 315.9% of respondents said yes while 33.8% are undecided on the issue. It can therefore be said that 52.4% of respondents believed that Nigeria media play vital role in the acceptance of migrants in host communities through its coverage and presentation of activities of migrants in the country.

Discussion of Findings

The Role of the Nigerian Media in Integration of Migrants

Analysis in respect to the role of the media in integration of migrants revealed that 59.7% of the respondents said that Nigerian media houses play roles in integrating migrants in host communities. It was also revealed that though the Nigerian media have roles to play in the acceptance of migrants in different host communities, it has not actually fulfilled its part effectively as it was revealed that 56.2% of the respondents said that the Nigerian media have not effectively discharged its duties in the integration of migrants in host communities. It can therefore be said that the people are of the belief that the Nigerian media played a role in migrant's acceptance in host communities. For example, in the North East crises (Boko Haram) of 2014, the internal displaced people (Migrants) were accepted in other host communities and states because the Nigerian media gave a reliable coverage of the inhuman activities in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. Take a step back and imagine if the recipients of these migrants weren't informed or aware about these happenings, they may end up with animosity towards migrants thinking they have come to occupy where they didn't labor. Therefore, it can be said that the media plays a vital role in the integration of migrants and ensuring inclusiveness in host communities as seen in the study by Vihalemm (2017) entitled "The role of media in migration and integration" which was of the view that media is an important co-influencer of the migration and integration process of migrants in host communities. Also in work "Public Perception of A8 migrants: The discourse of the media and its impacts" by Semotam (2019) is of the view that the mass media most often act as a bridge between private lives and their relation to the public world: it is through the mass media that we learn about our place in the society which can be said that the media is both a force for integration and dispersion of individuals in a society, the media may not persuade the public directly: nevertheless they affect what people know, and what they think is important. It can therefore be said that Nigeria media play vital role in the integration of migrants in host communities though can be done by the media to ease the path of acceptance and inclusiveness of migrants in host communities.

South East Residents Views of how Nigerian Media Portrayal of Migration issues Influence their Perception of Migrant in their Communities

Analysis in respect to the Nigeria media influence on perception of migrants by host communities in the country based on different media reportage of issues concerning migration and inclusion these migrants in host communities revealed that 67.9% of the respondents believed

the media presentation of activities of migrants' shape the ways people see migrants in host communities especially in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria based on reportage of different contents and issues seen or reacted to with regards to migration and inclusion such as discrimination in work places, settlement and acceptance issues, religious crises, ethnic disparities, acceptance by host communities, attacks of various kinds and so on. It was also revealed that 52.4% of the respondents said that the media can further ease the acceptance of migrants. This means that media coverage and presentation of migrants and migrants' activities can go a long way to affect how they are viewed and accepted in the host communities. Over a period of time, information rejection and acceptance has been ingrained on individuals based on media's framing and presentation of these information can also be said about migration which as old as man. Therefore, the way in which media channels across the nation frame and present activities of migrants across the nation can lead to social inclusiveness or hostility which is also known as social exclusion, leaving migrants to the mercy of the host communities.

It can be said that the Nigerian media influence public perception of migrants in host communities positively or negatively as seen in the study by Lawrence (2016) entitled "Negative media portrayal drive perception of immigration policy". Lawrence study found that the media have a central place in shaping the public's views of immigrants and immigrations, laws are critical, but media creates and passes them to be implemented. Also Menjivar (2016) "Media coverage and political debate in immigration from 1999 to 2012" found that media messages were often powerful reminders to immigrants that they don't belong and they are unwanted, news outlets are where attitudes are shaped and through which politicians' actions are conveyed. In another work entitled, "Media and Migration" by Jacomella (2010), it was found that the voices of the migrants are highly under-represented regardless of the political orientation of newspaper. It can therefore be said that the media portrayal of migration issues influences peoples' perception negatively or positively depending on the framing, packaging and presentation of news stories with regards to migration.

Conclusion

Considering the fact that over 56% of the respondents were of the view that the media played an important role in the integration of migrants, it is safe to conclude that that media coverage on

migration issues have not been on the hostile side against the migrants. This means that the media take into cognizance the fact that the migrants are humans, and have migrated as a result of factors out their own control. Nigerian media play vital role in sharpening the future of migrants in the society and establishment of possible sustainable mutually beneficial relationships between migrants (new-comers) and home-based occupants of the society.

It can also be concluded that the media have aided shaping the perception of host communities to tolerate and accept these migrants within their environment. This conclusion is based on the fact that 52.4% of the respondents said that the media have further ease their acceptance of migrants' in their areas. This means that media coverage and presentation of migrants and migrants' activities have gone a long way to affect how they are viewed and accepted in the host communities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Migration and social inclusion goes hand in hand, a such, the media should understand that they play important roles in ensuring integration and social acceptance of migrants by the messages they package and transmit to audience especially to the host communities who these migrants occupy a quota of their society to ensure equality and equity amongst both host communities members and the migrants.

- Media coverage and presentation of migrants and migrants' activities go a long way to affect how migrants are viewed and accepted in the host communities. Information rejection and acceptance has been ingrained on individuals based on media's framing and presentation of these information can also be said about migration which as old as man. Therefore, the way in which media channels across the nation frame and present activities of migrants across the nation can lead to social inclusiveness or hostility which is also known as social exclusion, leaving migrants to the mercy of the host communities. Media should be careful in the choice of words used in reportage of migration issues because their messages or portrayals of migrants go a long way in the formation of perception positively or negatively in the minds of the people.

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