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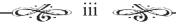
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All papers are to be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Office word document attachment to greatonyebuchi@gmail.com alongside evidence of payment of assessment fee of 5,000. Authors whose papers are accepted after the blind peer review will be required to pay a publication fee of 15,000. Authors will be communicated the decision of the editorial board on the status of their submitted papers.

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PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SELECT PRODUCTS:

A Study of Residents of Owerri Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The study was on the perception of the influence of celebrity endorsement on buying behaviour of select products. The objectives of the study among others were to: examine the perception of Owerri metropolis residents on celebrity endorsement and identity the influence of celebrity endorser on the select products like Toma-paste, Harpic plus, Maltina and Holandia. The study was anchored on social learning theory. Survey research design was adopted for this study. A sample size of 385 was drawn from the population of 555,500 using Australian online calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for this study. Findings indicated that the perception of the respondents were as follows: 63.5% of the respondents' admitted that they are familiar with celebrities that appear in the ad, 52% believed the celebrities use in endorsing these brands and 38.6% of the respondents held the brands endorsed by celebrities in a high esteem. In essence the finding showed that 57.5% of the respondents believed that celebrity endorsement influenced their purchase of the select products by enhancing recall of the products, attracting attention to the products and establishing credibility to the products. The researchers therefore, recommended the need to intensify more effort in the placement of celebrity endorsement on television.

Keywords: Advertisement, Celebrity, Endorsement, Influence, Perception

Introduction

The importance of advertising as a promotional strategy therefore, depends on its capability to influence consumers not only to purchase, but continue to repurchase and eventually develop brand loyalty. To increase consumer's expectation and demand, marketers were forced to adopt more creative advertising strategies such as celebrity endorsement to influence consumer buying behaviours. In corroborating this, Comiati and Plaias (2009) observe that consumers are constantly bombarded by messages inducing them to change their attitudes about products, services, brands, producers, suppliers, events among others. These persuasion attempt ranges from logical arguments to expressive images from regular consumer's advice to celebrities' recommendations. The endorsement of products and services in advertising has become an integral aspect of modern day advertising.

Today celebrity endorsement ads have become one of the most popular forms of advertising. Going through the various television channels, print media, radio, and social media consumers find quite a number of endorsements. The increase in popularity of celebrity endorsement can be attributed to the ability to grab audience's attention, thus giving consumers' a better chance for communicating message to consumers (Mwendwa & Mberia, 2014). The use of celebrities is believed to help consumers remember the message of the advertisement and brand name, the celebrity endorsement, helps to create the personality of a brand because when a celebrity is paired with a brand, this image of consumers (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; and Mwendwa & Mberia, 2014).The media exposes the audience to a deluge of information every day. This information has a lot of influence on the audience. People tend to believe what they see, hear or read. They take media messages with a lot of concern and put them into practice or rather give them a trial. Media play a major role in agenda setting in the society, informing and this process has a cognitive approach. In the non-celebrities ads receiver focused more on brand and its features while in celebrity endorsement ad receiver concentrate on the celebrity in the advertisement. Celebrity endorsement produced more positive attitudes towards advertising and greater purchase intentions than a non-celebrity endorser (Mwendwa, et al. 2014).

Adeyanju (2013) cited in Magaji (2014, p.2) notes that celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition possessing such attributes as attractiveness and trustworthiness. The importance of this is that celebrities are people who have excelled in their respective fields of endeavours and therefore, command respect, acceptance, popularity and fellowship within the society. According to him, an endorser is a person who makes a testimonial or a written or a spoken statement extolling the virtue of a product or services. It is believed that products or services endorsed by celebrities help such products and services to standout and attract more attention while shopping due to their improved level of product recall (Bowan, 2002). Celebrity endorsement strategy is effective in selling products and services as status symbols since celebrities are individuals of indisputably high status and in endorsements such individuals invite consumers to join them in enjoying the products.

It is to this end that this study sought to ascertain the perception of Owerri metropolis residents on the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behaviour of select products like Toma-paste –Ngozi Ezeonu; Harpic plus – Chioma Chukwuka; Maltina – Genevieve Nnaji; and Holandia- Ini Edo, Omotola Jolade Ekehinde and Segun Arinze.

Statement of the Problem

The aim behind any message is to achieve the purpose for which it was conceived. Companies, civil society organizations and government agencies spend billions of naira annually placing one form of advertisement or the other in the media. Also, companies in their bid to outsmart one another for consumers' attention, normally deploy various advertisement strategies so as to identify themselves with their products. They do this in the hope that such an appearance might instantly produce a trickledown effect of making the product become popular and ultimately influence audience to wish to purchase the product or service. However, it seems that several products in spite of celebrity endorsement have failed to attract customers' attention towards many products. This could be because celebrity

endorser is a western transfer orientation where people idolize successful, important personalities. The question is: Are residents of Owerri metropolis so impressionable about celebrity endorser? Does the average Imo residents have the same attitudes towards celebrities or are they apathetic to such appeals? Would Imo residents not consider it foolish imitation to try to purchase a product simply because somebody else endorsed it? And will the receivers not merely be lured away by the use of an attractive model? These were some of the questions posed in this study, which the researcher sought to proffer answers.

Research Questions

1.   What is Owerri metropolis residents' level of exposure to celebrity endorsement on Toma-paste, Harpic plus, Maltina and Holandia?

2.   What is the perception of Owerri metropolis residents on the use of celebrity endorsement on select products?

3.   What is the influence of celebrity endorsement on Owerri metropolis residents' attitude towards the purchase of select products?

Review of Related Literature

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behavior is considered to be an inseparable part of marketing. Consumer buying behavior is the study of the ways of buying and disposing of goods, services, ideas or experiences by the individuals, groups and organizations in order to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Consumer buying behavior refers to the buying behavior of final consumers, both individuals and household who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Kumar, 2010, p.218). Blackwell, Minard and Engel (2006) consumer buying behavior is itself a complex, dynamic issue which cannot be defined easily and commonly. It is a process of choosing, purchasing, using and disposing of projects or services by the individuals and groups in order to satisfy their needs and wants (Solomon, 1995, cited in Dudovsky, 2013, p.2).

The Concept of Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity is a well-known individual (television stars, movie actors and actresses, famous athletes, pop stars, entertaining, etc) who obliged their fame to their achievements (Parmar & Pate, 2014). Celebrity is associated with individuals who are frequently in the public eye and typically have a high profile in sports, entertainment industries among others. They are used to endorse services, products, ideas or organization(Black, 1995, cited in Mwendwa & Mberia, 2014, p. 180)). Endorsement is a channel of communication where celebrities act as spokespersons of the brands and by extending their popularity and personality they certify the brand's claim and position (Kotler, 2009). Mccracken (1989) cited in Parmar and Pate (2014, p .3) "celebrity endorser is any individual who enjoys public recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an achievement".

The Concept of Perception

Perception is a complex process we perceive with our senses, but more importantly, it is our

interpretation of events which is based on our previous experienced (Onwukwe, Okugo & Ihechu ,2014). According to Gamble and Gamble (2002, p.83) "perception is the process of selections, organizing and subjectivity interpreting sensory data in a way that enables us to make sense of our world". Watson and Hill (2006, p.212) notes that making sense of the stimuli received from our environment by the senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

The above statements indicate that perception is all about noticing, organizing and interpreting. Onwukwe, Okugo and Ihechu (2014, pp 565-566) posits that "audience engage in social perception which is an attempt to notice and understand the message and also make judgment about it which influence their attitude towards the product, services or even the key issues of the advertisement message".

Empirical Studies

Mwendwa, and Mberia (2014) in a study concluded that celebrity endorsement if used effectively, makes the brand stand out, galvanize brand recall and facilitates instant awareness thus the right choice of celebrity to use marketers; celebrity endorsement in advertisement has negative impact on the audience ranging from the morals, norms and behaviours in the society and celebrity appearance, knowledge, liking, and credibility of the celebrity are also highly correlated with advertising believability.

Jeyapalan (2015) investigated the influence of celebrity endorsement of advertisement and its impact on sales. Finding revealed that celebrity endorsed advertisement does significantly impact on buyers purchase intent. Consumers' are also influenced by simple cries such as attractive slogans, music or imagery in a commercial instead of close scrutiny of the message; endorsed advertisement by a celebrity does significantly increase the popularity and credibility of the product than when the product is not endorsed; most consumers are likely to buy the products endorsed by celebrities. Celebrity endorser does produce greater purchase intentions to buy a product than a non-celebrity endorser.

Parmar and Pate (2014) examined consumer perception for celebrity and no- celebrity endorsement in television commercials for fast moving consumer goods. Celebrity endorsement advertisement positively influenced consumers to purchase that brand. There is a significant difference for all FMG categories advertisements that have a celebrity endorser and those that don't.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on social cognitive theory. The theory was first enunciated by N. E. Miller and J. Dollard in 1941, but later broadened by the works of Albert Bandura (Okoro, Nwafor & Odoemelam, 2014, p. 125). Social learning is conceptualized as an identification by Watson and Hill (2006, p.128) and to them it means the incorporation of characteristics of an admired person into one's own identity by adopting that person's system of values". The theory explains how people acquire and maintain behavioural patterns. It states that behavioural changes depends much on three factors-environment, people and behavior. These three factors environment, people and behavior, are constantly influencing each other.

The likelihood that a person will imitate a model depends on a number of factors, such as the model's prestige, like ability and attractiveness. Whether individual actually performs, modeled behaviour depends on the behaviour's likely outcome. This outcome expectancy is, itself, often learned through an observational learning mechanism called vicarious conditioning meaning a person learns the consequences for someone else. The importance of this theory in this study is that the use of celebrity endorsement in advertisement influence audience consumption intentions because they watch, listen, observe and would want to consume what the celebrities endorse.

Research Method

The study employed survey research method, given that it would enable a quantitative data to be obtained from those who watch television in order to find out their views on the use of endorser in advertisement. From the official records of the 2016 projection of the population of the Local Government Areas that made up metropolis are as follows: Owerri Municipal- 127, 600, Owerri North- 242,800 and Owerri West-140,100 (NPC, 2016). Therefore, the population of Owerri of metropolis is 555,500. However, the population has grown since the last projection by NPC. In such a situation the research was expected to use the United Nations projected index of 2.28% to extrapolate and predict the new population from the last known figure. The projected population is 593,829. The sample size for this study is 385 using Australian online calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was use for the study. According to Onyebuchi (2016), this type of sampling technique requires the use of more stages in the sampling procedure. This became necessary because Owerri metropolis is made up of 3 local government areas or clusters with 33 wards or clusters. It is from the 3 LGAs that 5 wards were randomly selected as follows: Owerri Municipal Council- Aladinma i; Ikenegbu i, New Owerri ii and GRA;Owerri North- Egbu; Emekuku ii; Naze and Orji; and Owerri West.- Avu/Oforola; Nekede; Irete/Orogwe and Obinze.In each of the selected wards, 33 respondents were non-proportionately allotted to them and these respondents were purposively selected to reflect the sample size for this study. A closed-ended questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. A face validity test was done on the instrument and the outcome was good. A reliability test was also conducted on the instrument. Data obtained were analysed in simple percentage and frequency tables.

Results

Out of the 385 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, 4 copies were invalid. It implies that 1% of the printed copies of the questionnaire were invalid for this study. It was the 99% or 381 valid copies that represented the 100% used in this study.

Research Question One: What is Owerri metropolis residents' level of exposure to celebrity endorsement?

Table 1: Respondents' frequency of exposure to television programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	107	28%
Occasionally	169	44%
Never	37	10%
Can't say	68	18%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

The result from the table above show that majority of the respondents' that have television sets use them to watch programmes occasionally at 44%.

Table 2: Respondents awareness of celebrity endorsement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	276	72.4%
No	43	11.3%
Can't remember	62	16.3%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

The table above shows that majority or 72.4% of the respondents in the valid sample were aware of celebrity endorsement extensively. This means that a good number of the respondents are fully aware of these celebrities that were used in endorsing the select products.

Research Question Two: **What is the perception of Owerri metropolis residents on the use of celebrity endorsement?**

Table 3: Familiar with celebrity who appear in the advertisement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Familiar	242	63.5%
Unfamiliar	33	8.7%
Can't say	106	27.8%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

The result from the table above shows that 63.5% or majority of the respondents that watch television programmes were familiar with celebrities used in advertisements. The implication is that both the celebrities and the endorse products are household names.

Table 4: Believability of celebrities by respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	198	52%
No	89	23%
Not sure	94	25%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

According to the table above, 52% of the respondents believe the celebrities used in endorsing these brands. The implication is that most of the respondents had trust and believe on the celebrities used in the endorsement of the select product based on the roles they in the Nigerian movie industry.

Table 5: Respondents perception of a brand endorsed by a celebrity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
In a high esteem	147	38.6%
Esteem	110	29%
Not at all	37	10%
Low esteem	36	9.4%
Can't say	51	13%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

The table above shows that majority of the respondents at 38.6% perceived a brand endorse by a celebrity in a high esteem.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of celebrity endorsement on Owerri metropolis residents' attitude towards the purchase of select products?

Table 6: Celebrity endorsement and purchasing of a product

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	219	57.5%
No	79	20.7%
Can't say	83	21.8%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

This means that majority of the respondents believed that celebrity endorsement stimulate the purchase of a product at 57.5%. It means majority of the respondents buy certain products based on the fact on the fact that those celebrities used in endorsing such products are held in high esteem.

Table 7: How celebrity endorsement influence purchase of the select products

Response	Frequency	Percentage
By enhancing recall of a brand	137	36%
By attracting attention to a brand	110	29%
By establishing credibility to a brand	55	14%
Not at all	79	21%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2019*

The implication of the result above shows that celebrity endorsement enhanced recall of a brand, attract attention to a brand and establish credibility to a brand among viewers of such advertisement.

Discussion of Findings

Residents of Owerri metropolis level of awareness of celebrity endorsement

The finding showed that 72.2% or majority of the respondents were aware of celebrity endorsement extensively. This is 44% or majority of them were exposed to television programme occasionally. It means that one must own a television set, watch television programmes, before he/she becomes aware of celebrity endorsement in advertisement. It means that residents of Owerri metropolis are aware of celebrity endorsement to extensively. This implies that people who watch television are most likely to be aware of the celebrity endorsement. According to Makata (2012, p. 99) television do indeed induced some people to establish alternative vision of the real world, luring them into thinking that their wishes about reality constitutes itself.

How residents of Owerri metropolis perceived the use of celebrity endorsement

The finding indicates that 63.5% of the respondents' admitted that they are familiar with celebrities that appear in the ad, 52% believed the celebrities use in endorsing these brand and 38.6% of the respondents held the brands endorsed by celebrities in a high esteem. This means that the respondents held the brand endorsed by celebrities in a high esteem. According to them such celebrities are familiar to them. This finding is accordance with the basic assumption of the social learning theory that provided a theoretical framework for this study. To buttress this Onwukwe (2014) observes that audience engage in social perception which is on attempt to notice and understand the message and also make judgment about it which influence their attitude towards the product, services or even the key issues of the advertisement message. Gamble and Gamble (2002, p.83) note that perception is the process of selecting, organizing and subjectivity interpreting sensory data in a way that enables us to make sense of our world. Thus, the kind of celebrity used to endorse a particular product determines how people could perceive such a product.

The influence of celebrity endorsement on Owerri metropolis residents' attitude towards the purchase of select products

The finding shows that majority or 57.5% of the respondents in the valid sample believed that the use of celebrity endorsement stimulate the purchase of the select products. According to them, exposure to celebrity endorsement ads helping in enhancing recall of a brand, attracting attention to a brand and establishing credibility to a brand at 79%. This means that enhancing recall, attracting attention and establishing credibility to a brand makes such brand or product popular and credible before the consumers. This theory advocates that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observation learning. Humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between that behaviour and its consequences. The finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Jayapalan (2015) where he found that endorsed advertisement by a celebrity does significantly increase the popularity and credibility of the product than when the product is not endorsed. In furtherance of this, Mwenda and Mberia (2014) confirmed this in their study. According to them celebrity endorsement if used effectively, makes the brand stand out, galvanize brand recall and facilitates instant awareness. They maintained that celebrity appearance, knowledge, liking and credibility of the celebrity are highly correlated with advertising believability.

This finding is supported by the social learning theory and cultivation theory respectively. These theories that form that formed the theoretical framework for this study help to explain this phenomenon. The social learning theory posits the likelihood that a person will imitate a model depends on a number of factors, such as the model's prestige, likeability and attractiveness. The importance of this theory is that the use of celebrities in endorsement effects or influence audience consumption intentions because they watch, listen, observes and would want to consume what the celebrities endorsed.

In corroboration to this, Parmer and Pate (2014) found that Celebrity endorsement advertisement positively influenced consumers to purchase that brand. In the same vein, Jayapalan (2015) concluded that most consumers are likely to buy the products endorsed by celebrities. Celebrity endorser does produce greater purchase intentions to buy a product than non-celebrity endorser.

Conclusion

Celebrity endorsement play's significant roles in stimulating residents of Owerri metropolis purchase of a product. It means there is a positive and strong relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer's buying of a product. This is because exposure to television commercial on celebrity endorsement helps in creating popularity and building credibility for the product or brand advertised. The ability of celebrity endorsement to achieve this is because it helps the audience or consumers to quickly recall the brand, draw's consumer's attention to the product and as well as build personality or credibility for the product. It is believed that when the right celebrities that consumers are familiar with and unquestionable characters are used to endorse a brand, people tend to perceive such brand or product in a high esteem. However, the extent to which celebrity endorsement stimulates the purchase of a product is minimal. This is because majority of the residents that owned TV sets occasionally watch television programmes.

Recommendations

The researchers made the following recommendations:

1.   There is need to intensify more effort in the placement of celebrity endorsement on television. This is because most people are aware of celebrity endorsement on television.

2.   In choosing a celebrity to endorse a product or brand, there is need to examine the celebrity's lifestyle and his general acceptance by the public before the endorsement so as to avoid negative image or scandals that could have negative effect on the product.

3.   Advertisers should also ensure before using celebrity to endorse their products that there is a level of congruence between an endorser and the product to be endorsed. This is to avoid where the public image and acceptance of an endorser overshadows the products endorsed.

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TWEETING AGAINST INHUMANE ACTS:

Analysis of Twitter Users Narrative of Xenophobic Attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

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Abstract

The 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa was a topical issue that fuelled different narratives on social media. Twitter was one of the social media platforms that was used by different people to air their views. This study, therefore, investigated Twitter users' narratives on the 2019 xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa, using the content analysis research design. The researchers used the framing and the scape goating theories to situate the study. The population of the study was 286 tweets on Twitter platform for the month of September. The entire tweets were studied using the census principle. The researchers found out that majority of the twitter users, either in South Africa, Nigeria or any other country of the world, were against the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. This is based on the fact that 38.5% of the tweets were favourable to Nigerians. The researchers also found that one of the dominant frames in the tweets was the inability of the Nigerian government to take proactive steps towards ensuring the safety of her citizens in South Africa. This is based on the fact 21.9% tweets indicated government inadequacies. The researchers, therefore, recommended that the Nigerian government should make Nigeria conducive for Nigerians in order to discourage people from roam across the countries of the world in search of greener pastures. Again, the South African government must rise up to its responsibility of ensuring that the security of all immigrants in South Africa are of utmost priority.

Keywords: Xenophobia, South Africa, Nigeria, Twitter and Framing.

Introduction

South Africa experienced an apartheid period where the white oppressed, marginalized and tortured the blacks. This continued up until 1994, when President Nelson Mandela, who with his fellow freedom fighters were arrested during their struggle and fight for freedom, became the first President of South Africa after the country freed her from the apartheid rule (Dauda, Ameen & Sakariyau, 2018). Nigeria, which is considered the Giant of Africa, helped South

Africa gain their freedom by not attending the 1978 games in protest of New Zealand's games with apartheid in South Africa. Thirty-two out of 59 nations from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean joined Nigerians in staying away from the 1986 common wealth games due to the horrible government behavior towards South Africans. Nigeria also provided secret military training, materials, financial and diplomatic support to African National Congress guerilla forces. In the entertainment world, Nigerian musicians lent their voices as they sang songs. For instance, Sunny Okosun sang "Fire in Soweto" in cohesion with the fight for freedom for South Africa (Onyido, 2018: Okosun, 2017).

After the Apartheid regime, there were lots of immigrants from across the world especially the Sub Saharan Africa and the South Asian nations. These foreigners have been attacked and killed and this hostile attitude is held particularly against people from other African countries (Mantzaris & Nglamu, 2019). Since 2000 there have been increases of xenophobic attacks on indigenes of other African countries including Nigeria (Hagesen, 2014).

The 2019 xenophobic attack took a very different tone. After the killing of a government official, Uju Ndubuisi Chukwu, in June 2019 the response of the government has been more active, than the normal words of condemnation. The South African ambassador to Nigeria was summoned; the Nigerian ambassador to South Africa was recalled, Nigeria withdrew from the world foreign meeting in Cape Town, the Chairperson of the Nigerian ruling party (APC) called for South African companies functioning in Nigeria to be nationalized making reference to the British Petroleum Precedent. Nigerians were returned to their country using Air Peace airline owned by an individual Mr. Allen Onyeama. On September 2018 more than 300 Nigerians arrived Lagos and the Lagos government apparently gave $55 to the returnees and assured them that they will be transferred to the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund for skill acquisition. The reactions of Nigerian on social media could be considered as a factor that pushed the government to act up probably to prove that they are on top of the situation and handling it as much as they can (Nwanze, 2019). On social media there were lots of mixed reactions using various tunes with various harsh themes that one way or the other affected the image of Nigeria and that of South Africa. In fact, on September 4th, 2019 Nigerian musicians reacted to the xenophobic attacks (Mumbere, 2019; Shaban, 2019).

For instance, Burna Boy who is a musician that was considered the Giant of African Music after his last album released in 2019, using his twitter handle @burnaboy (2019), said "I have not set foot in SA since 2017 and I will not EVER go to South Africa again for any reason until the South African government wakes and really performs a miracle because I don't know how they can even possibly fix this". Similarly, Tiwa Savage another Nigerian Musician tweeted @tiwasavage (2019) that "I refuse to watch the barbaric butchering of my people in SA. This is SICK. For this reason, I will not be performing at the upcoming DSTV delicious festival in Johannesburg on the 21st of September. My prayers are with all the victims and families affected by this".

The xenophobic attacks against blacks in South Africa and Nigerians in particular really caused an uproar on social media. It was saddening to learn that, some South Africans were in support of these violent acts. However, majority of the South Africans supported Nigerian as they admit that South Africans have wronged Nigerians this time around and they should

accept it (Reality Check, 2019). With all of these on ground, one can say that social media played key role in the dissemination of the happenings in South Africa and also helped to bring to bear people's reactions and disgust about the issue. Twitter was one of the key social media apps used in the narrative of the attacks. Twitter users also used the opportunity to contribute to the public discourse on the xenophobic attack.

It is against this backdrop that this study analysed the views of twitter users on the xenophobic attack with the aim of identifying the tones of tweets, their directions and the dominant frames evident in the tweets on xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa.

Statement of the Problem

The xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa have become a recurrent issue (Matunhu, 2008. These present xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa which started in June 2019 has become a topic of discussion amongst the government, media, scholars, policy makers, Nigerians and South African citizens (Tapiwa, 2010; Chapeyama, 2016 and Okorie & Abiodun, 2017). Social media platforms have created avenues where individuals shared their views, ideas and identified their stand on the xenophobic issue (Seither, n.d).

Despite all effort from the South African government to prevent xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa, it has been reoccurring (Farouk, Ukeaja & Ishaka, 2019). In a bit to bring the information of the xenophobic attack to public knowledge on social media there were instances of fake news and fake videos uploaded and tagged a xenophobic attack (@MBELLOsarikwa, 2019). There were vulgar languages that were used in the reportage of the attacks (@nkosi_Dlamini, 2019). These instances were very worrisome.

Previous research on media and xenophobia by various scholars (such as Tapiwa, 2010, Chapeyama, 2016, Okorie & Abiodun, 2017, and Aden, 2017) focused on other countries and specifically on television stations and print media and its reportage on xenophobic attacks. There seem to be limited research or no study that particularly dealt with the 2019 xenophobic attack on Nigerians in South Africa. No study known to the researchers has also content analyzed twitter hash tags xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa.

Therefore, this study focuses on analysing twitter hashtags, with special interest on the tone of the tweets, direction of tweets and dominant frames in the tweets from both Nigerians and South Africans on the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa.

Research Questions

1. What is the direction of tweets from Twitter hash tags on xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa?

2. What is the tone of tweets from Twitter hash tags on issues of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa?

3. What are the dominant frames present in the tweets from Twitter hash tags on xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa?

Xenophobia Defined

Xenophobia is called the fear of strangers. It is gotten from the Greek word "Xenos" and "Phobos" meaning "Stranger" or "Guest" and "Fear" (Wicker, 2001). Relative to South Africa, the A South African Human Rights stated that Xenophobia means "deep dislike of non-nationals by national of a recipient state (Onyido, 2018).

Xenophobia can go beyond attitude and extent to a practice which escalates to violent behavior at the long run. In South Africa, there have been negative attitude towards foreigners and such practice includes discrimination, exploitation and violence (Schaller & Neuberg, 2012). Mazirir (2015) stated that jealousy from South Africans is one major factor that causes Xenophobia. The scholar explained that most immigrants from other African countries, when employed in good South African companies, are classified as people who came to steal their jobs. African immigrants are said to run the streets and also steal South African women from the South African men and to crown it all, most flourishing small scale businesses in South African are owned by immigrants. These factors have caused hatred in South Africans which finally turned to violent practices (Tapiwa, 2010)

Xenophobia, Twitter and South Africa

Over the years, South Africa has been struggling with the brunt of xenophobia. Lots of immigrants have been stripped of their lives and property, which according to Muchiri (2016) is caused by Socio-legal problems in South Africa. It is understood that the basic cause of xenophobia in South Africa is historical. This factor continues to be responsible for the hatred of foreigners in South Africa by South Africans.

Contributing to the fact that South Africans are ignoring the commonness of xenophobia, laced with the poor management of xenophobia by the government officials who own it as their duties to manage such issues, another factor is the unequal distribution of scarce resources. This has made both nationals and foreigners to compete for the available resources (Reality Check team, 2019).

On 19th of September 2019 @ayobonga-Kekan (2019) with the hash tag #xenophobicattack #xenophobia In South Africa shared a video explaining that in 2017 the deputy police minister Bongan Mknogi questioned why the Hillbrow in the Johannesburg CBD was occupied by 70-80% foreign nationals and the consequences of having such a community. The police Minister explains that this situation is dangerous, "South Africans have surrendered their country to foreigners, you will not find South Africans in a city dominating up to 80% of that city. This situation must be discussed because time will come when the future president of South Arica will be a foreign national. We are surrendering our rights. This is not xenophobia to say the truth. We fought for this land from the white minority and we cannot surrender it to the foreign nationals". This expression by South Africans gives them the room and leverage to criticize African foreigners and portraying them as economic threat. (Ayobonga-Kekan, 2019).

Review of Related Studies

Various studies have been carried out on xenophobic attacks. One of the studies carried out

by Aden (2012) explained the attacks of Somalis in Khayelistisha since 2006. Aden explained that the cause and nature of the attacks on Somali traders was lack of information. The researcher further explained that the cause of the attack was pitiable government which led to lawlessness, poverty and unfulfilled expectations which in turn led to violence.

Relatively, Chapeyama (2016), Okorie and Salawu (2017), and Mshubeki (2016) carried out studies by content analysing newspapers and explaining how different African countries covered the xenophobic attacks on Zimbabweans' in South Africa and xenophobic attacks in South Africa and its socio cultural implication to development. The aspect of news that was found news worthy was death and the media framed these violent issues as a societal problem. These studies reveal that African countries disapprove xenophobic attacks because it hinders development amongst African (developing) countries.

Gomo (2010) on the other hand through both qualitative and quantitative methods explained the role and level of media influence on xenophobia. According to the researcher, "it was difficult to establish the line between the media and violent attacks" however, the media was able to ascertain foreigners' bad behaviour. The establishment of the foreigners' bad behaviour one way or the other justified the violent attacks on the foreigners. Judging from the analysis gotten from the qualitative method (interview) respondents believed that the media has no role to play in the violent attacks and the xenophobic attacks. However, journalists believed that the media incited the people by framing stories to them. This is so because the people's previous action was not influenced by xenophobic behaviour but the media implied that it was xenophobic attacks and this caused an unstable situation in the country. This is in relation to the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. During this period there were lots of videos showing the vandalisation of properties both in South Africa and Nigerian. There was also a video of someone being burnt alive. After sometime papalito Fulani bros with the twitter handle @MBELLOsarikwa on 4th September 2019 and with the hash tag #XenophobiaInSouthAfrica explain that what about the present crisis was caused by a non-Nigerian immigrant that killed a south African and again that the video that was shared which up roared the city was an old video. Therefore, it agrees with Gomo (2010) who explains that the media frame events and incite certain actions from the people.

Mantzaris and Nglamu (2019) in their study explained that the media is very subjective in reporting the xenophobic attack in Kwazulu-Natal. According to the authors, the media increased conflicts through their sensational reports. Dauda, Ameen and Sakariyau (2018) in their study stated that South Africans are dwelling in that fact Nigerians are taking everything that belongs to them. Therefore Nigerians who are South African immigrants are the cause of their unemployment, poverty rate and the dispersing of deadly diseases in South Africa.

There have been various studies on Xenophobic attacks in South Africa like the study carried out by Gomo (2012), Chapeyama, (2016) Okorie and Salawu (2017) and Mshubeki (2016). These studies explained how the print media, radio and television stations covered these attacks. These studies also discussed the cultural and political implication of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. However, very little study is carried out on how the social media

played a role during the September 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. This study goes beyond the conventional media coverage by going to find out the narrative of Nigerians and South Africans using the twitter hashtags. This social media app has given individuals an opportunity to create content (Nadaraja, &Yazdanifard, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the framing and the scape goating theories. The framing theory was first propounded by Goffman and it is very similar to Agenda Setting theory. This theory is a step above the agenda setting theory which explains that the media tells the audience what to think about, but the framing theory goes a step further in the way events, occurrence are being represented by journalists. Simply put framing, is the way the media source creates any information given to the receiver (Arowolo, 2017).

In relation to this study, framing means arranging themes and ideas, linking them up to get stories and building a particular narrative. This is a typical South African and xenophobic case. The theme of violence has become a narrative and often in connection to xenophobia. This means that any kind of violence in South Africa with xenophobic intentions or not is considered xenophobic. This is in connection to the findings of Gomo (2010) which stated that the media incited people by framing stories that are connected to xenophobia to them. Goffman explained that frames are usually the consciousness of the source. Therefore, the media has a way to consciously incite certain actions from the audience and making them believe that they thought about it themselves and acted solely on their own.

Scape goating theory, which was propounded by Rene Girads, is the act of blaming and frequently punishing a person or a group of persons for a pessimistic, negative or depressing result that is due to, to a large extent, other causes. In most situations the scape goat is usually seen as a threat or a potential threat (Rothschild, Landau, Sullivan & Keefer, 2012: Onyido, 2018).

In relation to this study, Nigerians in South Africa are seen as potential threats. They are blamed for all the issues and negative outcomes in South Africa. South Africans blame Nigerian immigrants because they believe that they are the reason they (South Africans) are jobless since they (Nigerian immigrant) take all the nice jobs, Nigerian immigrants take their women, nice accommodation etc. This situation has gotten a lot of people angry as they consider Nigerian immigrants as factors of under development in South Africa. According to South Africans Nigerian immigrants brought corruption into their country, stole their business and destroy their youths since they sell drugs to them "make drugs easily available for the youths". Thus Nigerian immigrants are the scape goats in South Africa.

Methodology

This study used the content analysis research method to analyse the manifest content of twitter users narratives on the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. The researchers studied the month of September 2019 using #saynotoxenphobia and #xenophobiasouthafrica (Chang, 2010; Sajjad, 2017). The month of September was studied because this was the period of the uproar which is the height of the xenophobic attack on

Nigerians in South Africa.

The population of this study is 286 tweets. This population was derived from the number of tweets during the period of study which is September 1ˢᵗ to 30ᵗʰ, 2019 from #saynotoxenphobia and #xenophobiasouthafrica (Chang, 2010; Sajjad, 2017). The researcher also used the census principle to study the entire population (Lavrakaz, 2008). The researcher thought it unnecessary to get a sample size since the population of the study can be carefully and efficiently studied (Glen, 2013). The researcher studied both tweets from South Africans and from Nigerians. The #saynotoxenophobia was a hashtag for Nigerian tweets therefore representing Nigerian views, while #xenophobiasouthAfrica represented tweets from South Africans. Those behind the stories are very diverse. They were hardly victims of the attacks, rather, protesters against xenophobia and supporters of xenophobic attacks are mostly the people behind the tweets.

The researcher used the coding guide and the code sheet as the instrument of the study. Two coders were used for this study. After engaging in a mock coding, they showed proficiency in handling the actual coding. Inter coder reliability was tested on 20 coded contents using Pearson's r formula. Inter coder reliability result on each of the content categories were 0.8, 0.8 and 0.8.

The units of analysis were comments, pictures and videos. The content categories were direction, tone and dominant frames. In terms of direction, the researcher analysed the angle of tweets by twitter users while tweeting on the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. The researcher analysed how favourable, unfavourable or neutral these tweets were towards Nigerians in South Africa. Tone means the manner at which twitter users tweeted about the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. The researcher analysed how harsh or friendly these tweets were towards Nigerians. For dominant frames, the researchers looked at the common implication of the languages used by twitter users in their tweets during the period of study. The content category helped the researchers find out the party twitter users were more sympathetic to, the manner twitter users tweeted about the issue and how tweeter users considered Nigerians in South Africa using contents on various twitter hash tags. Data was analysed and presented in tables and number. Some of the tweets studied are attached as appendix to this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data was analysed quantitatively and presented in tables. Data presented answered the research questions raised in this study. Analysis of spread within the tweets indicated that 286 tweets representing 50% were text, 158 tweet representing 27.6% were pictures, 128 tweets representing 22.4% were videos. This implies that all the tweets about Xenophobic attack against Nigerians in South Africa in September 2019 be it text or videos were all accompanied with texts. Again, pictures and videos were shared by twitter users for better expression.

Table 1: Analysing the direction of tweets from Twitter hash tags on Xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

Content Category	Unit of Analysis			Total	Percentage
	Text	Pictures	Videos		
Favourable	107	63	50	220	38.5%
Neutral	102	54	46	202	35.3%
Unfavourable	77	41	32	150	26.2%
Total	286	158	128	572	100
Total	572			572	100

(Field work, 2019)

This study reveals the tweets during the September 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa were favourable to Nigerians. Twitter users did not support South Africans since tweets that were unfavourable to Nigerians is less than 26.2%. Theses tweets indicated that twitter users are very sympathetic to Nigerians because of the loss of lives and property. This implies that twitter users are very sympathetic to Nigerians since 123 tweets are favourable to Nigerians.

Table 2: Analysing the Tone of the tweets from Twitter hash tags on issues of Xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

Content Category	Unit of Analysis			Total	Percentage
	Text	Pictures	Videos		
Harsh	67	30	28	125	21.9%
Neutral	103	55	40	198	34.6%
Friendly	116	73	60	249	43.5%
Total	286	158	128	572	100
Total	572			572	100

(Field work, 2019)

This study reveals that twitter users were more friendly towards Nigerians in their tone of tweets on the September 2019 xenophobic attack. This was made evident when 43.5% of the tweets were friendly as opposed to 21.9% that was harsh to Nigerians. This implies that twitter users are being friendly to Nigerians in their tweets on the 2019 xenophobic attack.

Table 3: Analysing the dominant frames present in the tweets from Twitter hash tags on the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

CONTENT CATEGORY	UNIT OF ANALYSIS			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
	Text	Pictures	Videos		
Criminals	52	29	14	95	16.6%
Hard workers	64	23	29	116	20.3%
Peace Clamourers	69	39	25	133	23.3%
Violent	46	26	31	103	18%
Government inadequacies	55	41	29	125	21.9%
Total	286	158	128	572	100
Total	572			572	100

(Field work, 2019)

Communicating analysis from data, it was revealed that the most dominant frame is peace clamourers. This was made evident when 23.3% tweet indicated that there is need for peaceful existence between Nigerians and South Africans. This study also revealed that Nigerians in South Africa are considered as hardworking people as they are known to have shops and works in many offices, hospitals in many South African's States especially in her capital Johannesburg. This was shown when 20.3% tweets indicated that Nigerians in South Africa are hard workers. This study also found out that twitter users, during the 2019 xenophobic attack in September, lashed the Nigerian government about their incompetence. This was made evident when 21.9% of the tweets stated that the Nigerian government is incompetent. This implies that twitter users are clamouring for peace. They are using twitter to create awareness on the importance of solidarity amongst African countries. Still judging from the findings they also used this medium to speak to the Nigerian and South African governments in their inadequacies in protecting Nigerians.

Discussion of Findings

The direction of tweets from Twitter hash tags on xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

Findings revealed that 38.5% of the tweets were favourable to Nigerians. This means that most tweets either South Africans, Nigerians or any other twitter users across the globe were against South Africans and their violent attitudes towards Nigerians. This means that twitter users during the month of September 2019 were sympathetic to Nigerians. Most of the tweets were neutral as most users preached peace, while others expressed their disappointments towards South Africa. This is in relation to reviewed studies by (Chapeyama, 2016: Okorie & Salawu, 2017: Mshubeki, 2016) who revealed in their studies that African countries disapprove xenophobic attacks because it hinders development amongst African (developing) countries. Okorie and Salawu (2017) explained that the South African youths must be oriented about African solidarity. However, it is a shame that we still have cases of xenophobic attacks on Africans in Nigeria but judging from the data gotten from this study, some youths are beginning to have that African solidarity.

This is also related to the scape goating theory because South African are violent to Nigerians because they feel that Nigerians are sharing from their scare resources thereby making things difficult for them. This no doubt necessitated the hurt and hate South Africans have or show towards Nigerians.

The tone of tweets from Twitter hash tags on issues of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

Findings revealed that 43.5% of the tweets were friendly to Nigerians. This means that majority of the twitter users used friendly tones while addressing the 2019 xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa on twitter. Lots of tweets were harsh towards South Africa explaining the need for one Africa. This finding is quite clear when compared to that of Muchiri (2016) who identified South Africans as violent and hostile; he also explains that xenophobic attacks will continue in the nearest future because all plans by the government to end xenophobia has been futile. This is why Okorie and Salawu (2017) discussed the need for a united Africa. The tweets that are harsh towards Nigerians agree with the scapegoat theory which blame Nigerians for all their misfortunes (economic, political and social problems).

The dominant frames present in the tweets from Twitter hash tags on xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa

The findings of this study revealed several dominant frames, with the frames of clamour for peace and incompetence of the Nigerian government being more dominant among the frames. Twitter users expressed the relevance of peace amongst African countries. Although, some twitter users referred to Nigerians as criminals, since they come into South Africa to steal their women, business etc. Nevertheless, some of the tweets referred to Nigerians as hard workers since they are qualified for the jobs they get in South Africa.

This implies that twitter users used their twitter handles to call on the Nigerian government to do their jobs by making Nigeria comfortable for Nigerians to live in, so as to prevent Nigerians from looking for manna or striving to survive in other countries. This is in relation to the findings of Mazirir (2015) and Aden (2012) who explained that one of the issues of xenophobic attacks is because the resources in South Africa is not viably distributed amongst South Africans, so they feel robbed when non indigenes come in and take what they believe is rightfully theirs. Therefore, twitter users called out the Nigerian government to make Nigeria conducive for Nigerians. They also called on the South African government to ensure peace in South Africa and protection of black migrants. This finding is also related to the framing theory which explains that the media not only set agenda but also builds frames to create a particular narrative. For this study, the narrative built by tweeter users is the incompetence of the Nigerian government and the need for peace among blacks in South Africa.

Conclusion

Social media have been an avenue for people to create contents, share ideas and join conversations without necessarily being in a studio or an established media house. With the aid of social media anybody can be heard and people can express themselves on any given

situation/matter. During the 2019 xenophobic attack on Nigerians in South Africa, Twitter was one of the platforms that was used to share ideas and join conversations on the said matter. People had their views which they shared either through texts, pictures, and/or videos. Every individual who tweeted had their own narrative of the situation. These different narratives were either for or against Nigerians who happened to be the major victim of the attacks.

Based on the narratives of the tweets, this study was able to conclude that majority of Twitter users were sympathetic to Nigerians in South Africa and believed that Nigerians are hardworking people with the determination to succeed wherever they find themselves. The study also concludes that the Nigerian government should take a chunk of the blame for not making Nigeria conducive enough for all her citizens. Consequently, till date, many South Africans still blame immigrants for their economic and political problems not minding their sympathy to Nigerians for the loss of lives and property.

Recommendations

The researchers therefore recommend that:

1. South African youths should be educated on the importance of African harmony/unity and the dangers of xenophobia. Citizens in the rural areas should also be communicated using the proper channels to bridge the gap between twitter users and non-twitter users.

2. South African government should ensure equity in the distribution of resources amongst citizens. There should also be provisions for immigrants. This will help reduce the struggle of resources (land, shops and office space) amongst citizens and immigrant.

3. The Nigerian government should make Nigeria conducive for Nigerians. This will limit the number of Nigerians that travel across the world in search of greener pastures. Again, the South African government must rise in their responsibility by ensuring that the security of all immigrants in South Africa is of utmost priority to the Sought African government. Consequently, when a crime (xenophobic attacks) is committed the South African government should ensure speedy dispensation of justice to avoid escalation and reprisal attacks.

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SOCIAL MEDIA AS MODERN PLATFORM FOR POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The role of social media in virtually all areas of human endeavours especially in this digital age cannot be overemphasized. To this end, this study examined social media as modern platform for political discourse. Theory of public sphere was used as the theoretical framework. The survey research method was adopted. Owerri metropolis residents constituted the population of 555,500. Using the Taro Yamani formula, a sample size of 399 was derived. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The multistage sampling technique was adopted. Findings revealed that 43% of respondents to a large extent used social media for politically related information. Findings also showed that 46% of respondents said social media have influenced public participation in the democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State to a large extent. It was recommended that, owing to the low percentage of users of social media in political discourse, efforts need to be put in place by political stakeholders in sensitizing the people on the need to fully utilize the social media for political discourse especially this period when almost everything is happening online.

Key words: *political, social media, political discourse, politics, Imo state.*

Introduction

New media has made it possible for global social media use within the realm of politics (Valenzuela, 2013). The social media more than any other channel of communication, have offered unprecedented opportunity to users to contribute their own quota in political discourse (Onyechi & Adeitan, 2019). To this end, Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison and Lamp (2011) averred that social media platforms are believed to be opening up new frontiers, especially for people to participate in politics. For instance, youths who are hitherto presumed to be politically inactive are now seems to be very active in online political activities especially on Facebook where they have access to their friends and other political active people. The new media indicate the transforming patterns of media production, distribution and use. The digital revolution has facilitated dramatic changes with significant results worldwide like increased public's access to information increased opportunities of civic engagement and social networking with expanded communities (Jamil, 2018). New media is generating the new ways for politics. It is not only serving for

socializing and networking, but it is also transforming the thinking patterns of individuals for politics. Within the age of technology, the word new media is not new for the Nigeria society. However, its impacts for the extent of public participation during the country's political discussion are very noticeable (Onyebuchi, Obayi & Amadi, 2019).

However, the emergence of social media, which is specified as "platforms for interaction and information exchange", has introduced a new pathway for inducing political attitudes and participation and enhancing participatory communication, as well as faster dialoguing, and engagement (Himelboim, Golan, Moon, Suto, 2014; Ross & Bürger, 2014). In view of this assertion, Khang, Ki and Ye (2012) maintained that the advent of social media has brought around a different type of political process and campaigns referred to as political digital campaigns which requires political candidates getting acquainted with social media strategy to connect with electorates so as to influence them and the society at large. Most political parties and leaders maintain social media accounts in order to lay out their schedule. For instance, the use of social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Blogs were massively deployed in the 2015 Nigerian General elections, due to its participatory and creative nature, it turned into an utter and exceptional platform for political campaign organizers doing electioneering crusades and other ideological trumpeting exercises, as well as political contribution and mobilization among others (David, Zhitomirsky-Geffet, Koppel, Uzan, 2016; Kreiss, 2016).

Indeed, the use of web-based social networking systems, such as, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in the electioneering campaign by political figures can never be overemphasized Ajayi and Adesote (2015). According to Alfred (2016), social media was the greatest assets of Donald Trump; he made extensive and adequate use of it to reach the masses which eventually made him the winner of the 2016 presidential election. In view of this, Sophia (2016) noted that during the United States campaign, Trump had outgunned all other prospects with his usage of the social media as a tool to speak straight to his voters, to portray his own personality in extreme detail and to wage Twitter wars against his political rivals. Similarly, Suntai and Targema (2017) observed that the social media was handy for political leaders in Nigerian 2015 general elections as most of them such as Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari among other political aspirants used social media platforms for campaigning for instance in Twitter hashtags were created such as #MeetGej, #Febuhari, #Marchoutjonathan, #WhyiwillvoteGEJ, #MarchforBuhari, #GMB15, #LagosForYou and #iHavedecided were promoted by politicians and their friends; while #NigeriaDecides, #Nigeria2015, #iPledgeToVote, #MyPVCnow, #GoVote were promoted by civil society groups to increase citizens' involvement.

Ahmed, Lodhi and Shahzad (2011) noted that social media, allow users to post and read statements, thoughts, and links and this attributes have made it a user-friendly tool for political activities. According to Diana (2018), social media has transformed the political media system, and redefined the role of journalists as well as the way elections are contested, and the way citizens engage in politics. From the age of independence of Nigeria in 1960 under Nnamdi Azikiwe till date, Nigerians have always been considered politically minded people that participate actively within the political arena of the country through different forums and avenues made available by technological advancements with social media

because the most liberal platforms during which individuals are given the space to freely express their views or opinions either objectively or subjectively (Onyebuchi, et al., 2019).

New media have the potential to supply unprecedented access to information, and may reach even disinterested audience members through personalized, peer-to-peer channels, like Facebook, Twitter, Instgram among others (Hayes & Lawless, 2016). However, new media explicitly seek to directly engage the general public in political activities, like voting, contacting public officials, volunteering in their communities (Bandipo, 2016). On these bases, this study sought to look at how social media as modern platform are often utilized as a political forum for discourse in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

For both politicians and therefore the public, adapting to the present new way of communicating and receiving information has not been without a learning curve. However, Brenek (2014, as citied in Grant, 2016) observe that, social media has opened a replacement channel of communication between the candidates and therefore the public. "People can follow what their beliefs are and be more in-tuned with the candidates. When there is news or controversy, it spreads faster," Facebook and Twitter which are a number of the foremost frequently visited and used social media sites have also allowed people to engage in conversations with one another that might not have otherwise taken place (Jamil, 2018).

Nevertheless, many of the qualities that make social media unique and accessible can sometimes be a double-edged sword. One among the opposite critiques on online political conversation is how quickly it dissolves into a chaotic verbal bloodbath. While social media is not without its share of problems, it is still a useful fixture of political discourse. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook share a fantastic ability to teach and convey communities together for a political cause. Therefore, this study sought to look at how social media as modern platform are often utilized as a political forum for discourse within the country.

Research Questions

These research questions were raised to guide this study

1. To what extent has the public used social media in Imo State as a forum for discourse with regards to politically related issues?
2. To what extent social media have influence public participation in the democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State?
3. What are the challenges in the use of social media platforms for political discourse?

Review of Related Literatures
Concept of Social/ Media and Political Participation

Just like any other concept in the social sciences, it is a herculean task to arrive at a single definition of the concept of social media. Suminas (2010) sees social media as interactive technologies and ways in which they can be used when individuals interact among

themselves sharing the content generated. Similarly, Newson, Houghton and Patten (2008) assert that social media are tools and utilities that allow communication of information online and participation and collaboration. Social media include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. It is driven by the internet to bring together a community of heterogeneous people to form a close-knit who collaborate to share information on political discourses. Thus, social media is a veritable tool in bringing people together and closer with the underlying denominator of communication and interaction among them.

New media has been conceptualized differently by media and communications scholars. For some, new media have emerged from the modern information and communication technologies. On the other hand, many scholars agree that new media indicate the transforming patterns of media production, distribution and use. Therefore, it combines three elements:

(i) Computing information technology (ii) Communications networks (i.e., mobile phones, internet, cable television and interactive television) (iii) Content on digitized media (Jamil, 2018).

The term political participation is a very broad concept. Cohen and Kahne (2015) avow participatory politics as interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern. In effect, political participation is every action of ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes distribution of social goods and norms (Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003). Also, political participation is viewed as fundament about citizens and their attempts to influence politic (Segesten & Bossetta, 2016). Political participation is fundamentally about citizens and their attempts to influence politics. Despite a growing body of evidence suggesting that social media stimulate political participation, few studies have focused on how citizens are using social networking sites to influence electoral outcomes (Gibson & McAllister, 2015; Jacobs & Spierings, 2016; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Vergeer, Hermans, & Sams, 2013). Political participation is all about affecting the political system directly or indirectly by citizens or individuals. Political participation covers a broad spectrum of issues from convention participation, i.e. electoral processes to the unconventional involvement which include demonstrations, protest and movements. On the other hand, political mobilization encapsulates the sensitization of the citizenry, to cause increase and improvements in their political consciousness to effect change in a political process. It is the ability to emotionally organise people, which in the process breeds organic solidarity towards a course of action (Dungse, Mato, Makinde & Chidozie, 2018).

Empirical Review

Onyebuchi, Obayi and Amadi (2019) in a study on the use of social media in political activities x-rayed the extent to which social media have aided in the dissemination of politically related information with regards to the 2019 elections giving the people a neutral platform to air their opinion and add their inputs on who governs them and how such activities should be done. Finding revealed that social media to large extent aided in the dissemination of politically related information with regards to the 2019 elections.

In another study by Jamil in (2018), this study evaluates the public's use of new media technologies during Pakistan's 2018 election, and whether new media technologies have increased their level of participation in the democratic process and political discourse. It was revealed that in 2018 election, new media has enabled Karachiite's in Pakistan to express and reflect on political and the city's pressing issues and to participate in election process more actively. This study revealed that Twitter, Blogs, Facebook and internet have altogether facilitated the public's ability to gain political knowledge and to participate in political debates.

In another work conducted by Bandipo (2016), the researcher examined the roles new media technologies play in the electioneering process of developing nations. The chosen case study was the Nigeria 2015 presidential elections. It was revealed that practically all stakeholders that participated in one way or the other relied on the new media to improve their operational capability and judgment. It was also revealed that the new media and its ability to disseminate information in geometric proportions is one of the critical factors responsible for the avoidance of post-election crisis in Nigeria. In a study on social media and students' participation by Onyechi (2018) it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between social media exposure patterns and students' participation during the 2015 political campaigns.

Similarly, Pap, Ham and Bilandzic in (2018) did a study on how social media usage influence youth's interest in politics. It was revealed that using Facebook, not Twitter for political discussions has a significant positive influence on young people's interest in politics. Keating and Melis (2017) carried out a study on social media and political engagement and it was revealed that some young people are far more engaged in using social media for political purpose than others. Kahne and Bowyer (2018) in their own study on social media and politics it was found that the size of young people's social networks interacts with both friendship-driven and interest-driven online activity to promote political activity.

In another study on social media and youth online participation in politics by Abdulraul, Hamid, and Ishak (2015) it was revealed that Facebook and Twitter provide new avenue for political engagement which also give them good political information to enhance their participation in political activities. Onyechi and Adeitan (2019) carried out a study on social media credibility and online political participation. It was revealed that interactivity, accessibility from medium dimension and accuracy, objectivity from message dimension are the main determinant of social media credibility. Further finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between perceived credibility of social media and online participation among young adults.

Vonderschmitt (2012) carried a study on the growing use of social media in political campaigns and it was revealed that social media is highly effective in carrying out political campaign it was also revealed that social media platforms have created a more opportunity for citizens to participate, and learn more about each candidate and have easier access to the candidates themselves. Dunu (2018) carried out a study on social media and gubernatorial election in Nigeria and findings revealed that social media platforms have not only become tools for information dissemination but have been used to spread hate speech, disseminate

misinformation and/or fake news

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the theory of public sphere. This theory was developed in 1962 by Jurgen Habermas. The social media is seen as a domain of social life where public opinion can be formed. The theory holds that public sphere is mainly open to all citizens to converge and form public opinion especially on political related issues. Habermas (1991) noted that citizens hardly act in their private interest but act as one who is dealing with matters of general interest in order to form a public sphere. There is no intimidating force behind the public sphere but its citizens assemble and unite freely especially through the social media to express their opinions. According to Wessler and Freudenthaler (2018), the public sphere is generally conceived as the social space in which different opinions are expressed, problems of general concern are discussed, and collective solutions are developed on the platform of public discourse.

The term of a political public sphere is introduced for public discussions about topics connected to the state and political practice. Therefore, public opinion has to control the state and its authority in everyday discussions, as well as through formal elections. A public sphere is the basic requirement to mediate between state and society and in an ideal situation permits democratic control of state activities (Habermas, 1991). This theory is relevant to the study due to the fact that, it helps us to see how the social media as a public sphere is useful to people in expressing their opinions and participate on political related issues.

Methodology

The researchers in the course of this study adopted the survey research design using the tool of questionnaire to gather relevant data which are vital to the study. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2017), Owerri Metropolis has a population of 555,500. Using the Taro Yamani formula, the researcher arrived at the sample size of 399 for this study. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to residents of Owerri Metropolis in Imo State using the multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, Owerri which is in cluster is already divided into three namely, Owerri North, Owerri West and Owerri Municipal. In the second stage two communities from each local government area were purposively selected due to some reasons such as high level of literacy, high use of smart phones to access social media; they are, Orji, Uratta, Umuguma, Ihiagwa, Umuoyima, and Umuororonjo respectively. In stage three, having six communities the researcher distributed the questionnaire proportionately to the communities that is 399/6 =67. Therefore, the researcher gave 67 copies of the questionnaire to respondents purposively.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with data presentation and analysis. The researchers distributed a total of 399 copies of the questionnaire, out of which 375 (94%) was returned and 24 (6%) void, Therefore 375 copies of questionnaire were used for the analysis.

Table 1: Respondents response on level of participation in political related discussions in these platforms

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	163	43%
Low extent	131	35%
Can't say	81	22%
Total	375	100

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

Analysis from this table 1 revealed that majority of respondents 43% confirmed that the public used social media in Imo State as a forum for discourse with regards to politically related issues to a large extent. This means that respondents on their regularly visit to these platforms engage in one form of political discussions or debates which is directly related to political issues in the country.

Table 2: Respondents response on the extent social media has influence public participation in democratic process and political discourse among

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	174	46%
Low extent	145	39%
Can't say	56	15%
Total	375	100

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

Analysis of table 2 revealed that majority of respondents 46% said social media has influence public participation in democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State to a large extent. This implies that social media has influence public participation in democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State.

Table 3: Respondents response on which of the following is a challenge in the use of social media for political discourse

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Emotional sentiment	25	7%
Ideological differences	15	4%
Misinterpretation of ideas	40	11%
Promotion of unfounded facts	48	13%
Political propaganda	64	17%
Cyber bullying	35	9%
Lack of regulation	28	7%
All of the above	120	32%
No idea	-	-
Total	375	100

(Source: Field survey, 2019)

Analysis of table 2 revealed that majority of respondents 46% said social media has influence public participation in democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State to a large extent. This implies that social media has influence public participation in democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State.

Analysis of data from table 3 above showed that 32% of respondents were of the view that emotional sentiment, ideological differences, misinterpretation of ideas, promotion of unfounded fact, political propaganda, cyber bullying, and lack of regulation are the challenges inherent in the use of social media for political discourse. By implication, these challenges highlighted are the problems facing social media especially in the use for political discourse.

Discussion of Findings

The extent public used Social media technologies in Imo State as a forum for discourse with regards to politically related issues

The researchers with the aid of the data collected during the period of the research try to establish a fundamental truth about the relevance of social media platforms in the political drama in Imo State, Nigeria. From data collected and analyzed by the researchers, it was revealed that majority of respondents 43% use one social media app or the other, and as they surf the internet, interact, chat and so on, they come across one or two politically related information. During the course of the study, it was revealed that majority of respondents over a period time come across politically related stories on social media most of the times and this was based on the fact that election is on going in the country. Also, majority of respondents are actively engaged in political discussion on these platforms voicing their views about political issues in the country. This is in line with Onyebuchi, et al. (2019), findings which revealed that the new media platforms are veritable tool used to pass information across to the audience especially politically related information that can influence the way people view an understand political issues. In view of this, Keating and Melis (2017) findings revealed that people in recent times use social media for political engagement, though they noted according to their findings that some young people are far more engaged in using social media for political purpose than others. Supporting this assertion Onyechi (2018) in her findings showed that, due to the level of exposure to social media there was a significant participation by young people during the 2015 political campaigns. By implication of this finding people of Imo State through the social media are engage in political related issues. This finding resonates well with the public sphere theory which holds that the social media (as a public sphere) is seen as a domain of social life where citizens converge to form public opinion especially on political related issues.

The extent social media has influence public participation in the democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State

From the data analyzed by the researchers, it was revealed that about 46% of respondents said social media has influenced public participation in the democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State to a large extent. This could be seen from the angle of an improved political culture among the people hence given rise to great political awareness and discussion within the state during the period of 2019 election. No wonder, the number of political participation from the people during the election period was massive. This corroborates the findings of Bandipo (2016) which revealed that the new media and its ability to disseminate information in geometric proportions is one of the critical factors responsible for active participation in politics and helping in avoiding post election crisis in Nigeria. Supporting this finding Pap, Ham and Bilandzic (2018) in their study revealed that social media handle such as Facebook has a significant positive influence on young people's interest in political discussions; though according to them, Facebook has significant influence more than Twitter. In consonance with this finding also, Vonderschmitt (2012) noted that social media is highly effective in carrying out political campaigns and that social media platforms have created more opportunity for citizens to participate, and learn more about each candidate and have easier access to the candidates themselves. By implication of this finding it is obvious that social media has significant influence on public participation in

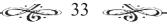democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State. This finding is in tandem with the public sphere theory because public sphere is generally conceived as the social space in which different opinions are expressed, problems of general concern are discussed, and collective solutions are developed on the platform of public discourse. The public sphere is the basic requirement to mediate between state and society and in an ideal situation permits democratic control of state activities.

The challenges in the use of social media platforms for political discourse

Communicating findings it was revealed that emotional sentiment, ideological differences, misinterpretation of ideas, promotion of unfounded facts, political propaganda, cyber bullying, and lack of regulation are the challenges inherent in the use of social media for political discourse as 32% of respondents confirmed. In as much as social media in recent times have proven to be very useful in political related matters, it is not devoid of some challenges. It is as a result of some of these identified bottlenecks that some people question the use of social media for political related issues. This explains why Onyechi and Adeitan (2019) study revealed that there is a significant relationship between perceived credibility of social media and online participation among young adults in political discourse. Furthermore, in as much as these platforms have been criticized about the lack of credibility, this study revealed that these platforms to a large extent are being used for political propaganda and sometimes circulation of unfounded facts. This finding is in tandem with Dunu (2018) findings which revealed that social media platforms have not only become tools for information dissemination but have been used to spread hate speeches, disseminate misinformation and/or fake news. From the theorical perspective this study was underpinned, these identified challenges certainly go contrary to the postulation of the public sphere theory.

Conclusion

During the course of this study, it was revealed that the social media have provided the platforms for citizenry discussion on political issues. It can be said that the misconception of social media as just a tool for fun and meeting people is long overdue and different political issues can be explored, debated on and the views of the masses across the global been put into consideration in order to explore the potential of social media in political occurrences in the country and globally
.

Recommendations

1. Given that just 43 % of respondents which is below average that used social media platforms in Imo State for political discourse, efforts need to be put in place by political stakeholders in sensitizing the people on the need to fully utilize the social media for political related matters especially now when almost everything is happening online.

2. Having seen that the social media to a large extent has influenced public participation in democratic process and political discourse among residents in Imo State, efforts need to be made by political actors to encourage and sustain the use of social media platforms on political issues by the people.

3. Users of social media platforms for political discourse are encouraged to use the platforms to promote positive political development instead of using it to propagate unhealthy political propaganda. Users should also respect the opinions of others on the same platform as regards to political issues.

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EXPLORING THE GAINS OF ZOOMING IN TELEMEDICINE COMMUNICATIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The introduction of mobile phones in Nigeria in the year 2000 was a big shift from the constraints of the traditional media of mass communication in the key areas of reach, accuracy and speed. There have been reformations in the mobile telephony so much so that it has established a strong root as an integral aspect of ICTs empowered by Federal Government of Nigeria in 2007 to transfer between a doctor and a sick person, health information for purposes of consultation, diagnosis, treatment and health check in a programme known as telemedicine. The Zoom application of the mobile phone has made it possible for video interaction between the doctor and his patient thus giving a boost to this telemedicine practice. This work anchored on technological determinism theory and technology acceptance model (TAM) studied the extent the Zoom technology can promote health care in Nigeria, extent the people will accept the technology and the problems that might arise from its use. Interview and Library research techniques were used. The researchers found out that Zoom application in spite of its limitations can be relied upon as a support for conventional face-to-face physical contact of medical examination and treatment; that it may take a little while before Nigerians embrace the Zoom Application fully as a result of adjustment to a new innovation and in line with the theories used. The challenges of Zoom Application in telemedicine were identified and included illiteracy in the handling of mobile phones for health-related functions.

Keywords: Healthcare Provider, Mobile Phone, Telemedicine and Zoom Application.

Introduction

When the government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was introducing the use of mobile phones in Nigeria in the year 2000, little did anyone know that the government was creating an integral system that would affect the health system greatly in the long run. Indeed, since this novel introduction there have been reformations in the mobile telephony so much so that the often generally believed use of the technology that is, information dissemination, appears to have been pushed to the back burner while many new uses are evolving. According to Brown (2008), the health system is one area of interest that the communication technology has established a strong root. Thus instead of limiting the use of the mobile phones to information distribution, special communication and messages are sent or shared to promote the health of individuals. This process or technique of using the information and

communication technologies to transfer health information for purposes of consultation, diagnosis, treatment and health check is called telemedicine.

In line with the postulations of Marshall McLuhan as observed by Georgiadou (1995) that the world is collapsed into a globalized village, the ICTs like the internet, the computers, the satellite communication devices and the mobile phones, are used to facilitate health services and treatment in the form of telemedicine. Within seven years of the introduction of the mobile phones in Nigeria (in 2007), the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced telemedicine to enable the use of the computers, the internet, mobile phones and other ICTs to communicate health information and treatment procedures between the care giver and the sick who may be separated geographically. This is a form of support for the conventional face-to-face method of consultation existing before then (Ezema, 2019).

Interestingly, the mobile phone is today suffused with many applications that have made it an indispensable tool in the telemedicine programme. One of such programmes is the Zoom Application which is progressively used for meetings and for real-time(synchronous) telemedicine practice, thus enabling the patient and the doctor to interact 'face- to- face' to find a solution to ailments. One of the targets of contemplating the use of Zoom is to ameliorate the chaos in the health sector in Nigeria that has existed for a long time. According to The Guardian editorial (03/04/19)   successive regimes in Nigeria have tried without success to put in place a robust health care system that will cater effectively for the health needs of the teeming population of Nigerians. For example, Nigeria is the second largest contributor to under 5 and maternal mortality rate in the world accounting for 14% of world figure. This has brought about negative heath reports about the country. According to Omorumi, Bamidele and Philip cited in Ezema (2019), Nigeria has the following grim health statistics.

Life expectancy in Nigeria has fallen from 53.8 years for females and 52.6years for males in 1991 to 46 years for females and 45years for males in 2004. Over one million children under five years die annually in Nigeria as a result of malarial infections, malnutrition and poverty. There is a global deficit of 2.4 million health workers such as nurses, doctors, midwives and the trend is worse in the third world including Nigeria (WHO,2013). The few medical experts in Nigeria are concentrated in the cities, thus, the over 65% Nigerians living in the rural areas cannot access the experts' services and die avoidable deaths. According to Ogini cited in Ezema (2019), the underserved local/rural communities receive inferior medical care or they had to travel great distances to receive care (from these specialists), which could have dire consequences for the health of the patient especially in instances requiring emergency care. With the aid of simple and ubiquitous devices like the mobile phones and Zoom Application, the face of modern medical and healthcare delivery system may change for good   and even spread to such areas as domiciliary services using body sensors monitored by doctors in distant locations. It is expected to enable doctors in rural areas of the world to observe state-of-the art medical procedures that they would otherwise have had to travel thousands of miles to witness.

Statement of the Problem

The right to life is fundamental to all humans. Everyone aspires to live to old age free from

incapacitations and infirmities. However, the predominantly poor majority in Nigeria appear unable to access the few better equipped private and specialist hospitals that are mostly located in the cities. According to the 2019 Global Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) jointly published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Nigerian population in Multi-Dimensional Poverty increased from 86 million in 2007 to 98 million (or 51.4%of the population) in 2017. The Publication entitled 'Illuminating Inequalities' reveals inequalities across countries and among the poor. The MPI examined three critical areas of life namely; health, education and standard of living. Out of the 1.3 billion people in the world that were identified as multi-dimensionally poor, Nigeria represents 7.6%.

Arising from the low standard in education especially among the rural dwellers, many do not go for medical check-up and only go to hospitals when their health conditions are in critical states. The people's cultural inclination encourages the belief that most illnesses are caused by the gods and the witches and there is a tendency to resort to prayer houses and native medications. The low level of education affects the perception of the people towards the new media of communication like the use of Zoom in mobile phones. Evidence from literature shows that most people do not know about other uses of the mobile phones beyond dissemination of information. It is doubtful if the benefits of Zoom Application are known to many users of mobile phones. Hence this paper sought to analyse issues that are likely to arise from the use of Zoom Application in accessing telemedicine services in Nigeria viz: extent the people will accept technology - mediated care, how this trend can influence the relational experiences of men and women especially in societies where it is considered a taboo for a woman to interact on phone with any person outside the family cycle and friends, and the problems that may arise with Zoom Application in telemedicine practice.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does zoom application promotes the health care delivery?

2. To what extent do Nigerians accept technology-mediated health care in real time telemedicine?

3. What problems are associated with Zoom Application in telemedicine?

Telemedicine Intervention in Healthcare

The use of Zoom is a new treatment strategy made possible by the emergence of information and communication technologies. If offers participants in a meeting (this time between the doctor and the patient) the opportunity to see themselves, hear themselves and share information, observe body languages and nuances. It is an aspect of telemedicine. Describing telemedicine generally (Bareiss, 2003; Mort, 2003, Roback and Herzon, 2003) cited in Ezema (2019), state that all the definitions relating to telemedicine provide for geographic separation of healthcare provider and patient as well as a mediated content for communication to replace in-person interaction. They defined telemedicine as the "use of telecommunications technologies primarily real-time video conferencing and asynchronous store-and-forward-system to provide healthcare remotely".

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POLITICAL ACTORS' USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA PROPAGANDA IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Political Communication can be determined not by its source, but by its contents and purposes. Political actors, media and propaganda are the most notable cum inseparable variables that describe political communication contents and purposes. In today's information society, where majority of the citizens now have variety of media platforms, government and political actors have attempted to manipulate and leverage on these multiple communication platforms to reach-out, share and sell various political ideas, information, policies and programmes to the people. But there are indeed assumptions among citizens that most government policies and information through the various media channels are laced with half-truths and propaganda and often geared towards, either casting aspersions on the opposition or covering up leadership ineptitude. Political actors in Nigeria seemed to have known how effective propaganda is in information dissemination, especially in Nigeria's political system. Since they have every need to reach and convince the populace, employing the propaganda technique, designed to actualize their ambition becomes an option that may not have a substitute. On daily basis, political actors, invariably use the media of Mass Communication – print and broadcast, traditional media, the opinion leaders and now the social media to share political information. This paper did a conceptual review of political actors' use and effectiveness of media propaganda applications in their information dissemination in Nigeria in the last few years.

Keywords: Political Actors, Media, Propaganda, Leadership and Governance.

Introduction

No democratic government all over the world can do without citizens' acceptance and positive public opinions in programme and policy constructions. Political actors, the media and propaganda are the greatest inseparable variables that aptly describe Political Communication contents and purposes in a democratic setting. But, in most cases, the methodology of applications and handling of the media and public opinions in a democratic state like Nigeria, no doubt, can make or mar government policies and programmes, as well as drastically define or redefine citizens' perceptions of leadership and governance of the society. Vivian (2009, p. 466) justifies the above assertion when he opines, "Media coverage shapes what we think about as well as how we think about it. This means the media are a powerful linkage between the government and how people view their government".

However, before the First World War, 1914- 1918, climaxing to the setting up of the League of Nations on January 10, 1920, precisely during the scramble for the partitioning of Africa, the driving force which led to the war was the inordinate desires among the most powerful nations of Europe and America to expand their territories and foist political and economic control over Africa, hence, natural resources became the basis for struggle to win and control the people. Recently, the era of Information and Communication Technologies has exposed the wide information and knowledge gap among nations, especially in the developing societies, such as Nigeria. However, within the less developed or developing political economies, the political actors and government in power have leveraged on the extant information and knowledge gap or lack of media literacy among citizens to manipulate public opinions in line with the desired objectives of both government and political actors. Today, any political actors, political organizations or the government that can effectively manipulate the people through the media and propaganda, could rule and sustain favourable public opinions on policies and programmes. This is rather a complete paradigm shift from resource control to mind management cum public opinion control through information.

In a democratic polity, the mass media and other media are seen as the 'market place of ideas', both the people and the government use the media in an expressive ways. But given the multi-faceted media platforms and the fact that in democracy, the government alone cannot decide media contents, individual citizens now participate actively and share their opinions in media contents and discourse with ease.

Political Actors

Political Actors are politicians, those elected or appointed and those aspiring for political offices. Political actors through their various organizations, political parties, unions or institutions struggle to hold political powers, control the polity and influence the people and government policies and programmes. Political actors are individuals who aspire through organizational and institutional means to influence the decision making process through attaining political power in government or constitutional assemblies through which preferred policies can be implemented. (www.answers.com/Q/What_are_political_actors). Agbanu (2014, p.161) defines political actors thus:

> … The political actors here include both those in government and those in opposition. While those in government take the decision that affect the lives of the electorates, and aspire to remain in office, those in opposition try to disrupt the existing power structure and through the democratic process, replace those power holders. Both groups try to influence the electorates and win them to their sides.

From the foregoing explanations, political actors in Nigeria include all present and past leaders, political activists, such as the embattled Nnamdi Kalu of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), all politicians in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), both those appointed to head various government ministries, agencies and parastatals, and those elected at various levels of government in local and national levels. Others are politicians in opposition parties, such as the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), The Social Democratic Party (SDP), as well as individuals who

have latent or overt political aspirations and those who lead political Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Liberty Groups, among others. They aim at influencing decision making processes in Nigeria, as well as struggle to win political power or disrupt government of the day.

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Political Communication Platforms: The Role of Mass Media and Social Media

Many political leaders are preoccupied with media coverage because they know the power media messages exert on human beings. Over the years, they have developed mechanisms to influence coverage to their advantage, Vivian (2009, p.470).   In Nigeria, there are established print and broadcast mass media organizations that government and political actors utilize as platforms to propagate political activities.

Some of these mass media (print media) include: Sun, Punch, Vanguard, This-Day, The Guardian, the Authority newspaper and other online print media like the Sahara Reporters, the Premium Times, Leadership newspaper etc. For the broadcast media, the NTA, Channels TV, AIT, TVC, Silverbird TV, FRCN, Sapientia FM, Odenigbo FM, Metro FM, among others are frequently used. Each of the mentioned electronic and print mass media has spaces for both on-the-spot, live and recorded political news, political editorials, columns, articles, news commentaries, political debates, discussions, analysis of political events, adverts and commercials etc.

For instance, the Channels TV has programmes, such as: "POLITICS TODAY", anchored by Mr. Seun Okinbaloye, and another one called "FACE-OFF", as well as SUNRISEDAILY. The African Independent Television (AIT) has "KAKAKI…THE AFRICAN VOICE". In these programmes, guests and analysts on political issues and events are often invited to analyse, interpret, discuss and debate on variety of topics, while members of the public participate through phone calls, and other social communication channels. Aside the commonly known information, education, socialization and entertainment functions, the mass media have a lot of roles it plays in political communication. Both the APC-led Federal Government of President Mohammadu Buhari, the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), other political organizations and political actors across Nigeria, use the mass

media to reach out to their supporters, present their candidates for campaigns, woo potential followers and bring their political policies and programmes to limelight.

Government and political actors also appear on television to discuss political issues, make press releases, organize and showcase press conferences and political rallies for and against political programmes, events and candidates (a case in point here is the broadcast on Channels TV, and Leadership newspaper report of the advocacy rally held concurrently on Thursday, 30ᵗʰ March, 2017 in Biu and Abuja, by the people of Southern Borno State against the Senate's suspension of the former Senate Majority Leader, Senator Ali Ndume). The Leadership newspaper edition of Thursday, 30ᵗʰ March, 2017, reported on its headline thus, "Borno Residents Protest Senate Suspension of Ali Ndume". Government and political actors also sponsor political adverts and purchase airtime for commercials, on pages of print and broadcast media respectively. This is where mass media play the roles of political advertising and agenda setting to the government and political actors. No wonder, while writing on political advertising, Agbanu (2014, pp. 210 -211) states:

> Political advertising is one of the functions of the mass media especially in an era of party politics where different political parties and candidates contend for attention and endorsement of the people…political advertising has become so essential and plays an important role in the political system that political aspirants, candidates and political parties budget millions if not billions of naira for advertisement.

Agenda setting on the other hand is the mass media role of bringing an issue to attention of the people. Dominick (2002, p.492) captures agenda setting in these words, "When we say that the media have an impact on agenda setting, we mean that they have the ability to choose and emphasize certain topics, thereby causing the public to perceive these issues as important". Government and political actors use the mass media to highlight issues they deem worth talking or thinking about. No doubt, a flurry of events – socio-political activities and economic malpractices, happen in Nigeria, but government and political actors always use the mass media to highlight only the issues they want the people to know or focus their attention. Observations have shown that whenever government and political actors want to divert attention on severe national issues, it picks on a supposed to be trivial matter and put it to limelight, using all mass media posts available.

Another role of the mass media which is related to agenda setting is framing. The mass media present certain topics in a certain way that the government and political actors want the people to perceive such topics. Framing goes beyond mere telling the people what to think or talk about, as in agenda setting, but tells people how to think about certain topics. Framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue to provide a particular meaning, Dunu (2014, p.57). This is further described as 'information distortion', by Udeze (2005, p.23).

It is against this backdrop that one can unarguably assert that some latest news reports on conventional mass media, as well as unchecked, unedited, and unfettered posts and

comments on the social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+ and even on WhatsApp)for and against certain issues and events in Nigeria, are not only a case of media 'warfare', but also framed reports; a blatant way to cover up government's poor handling of the economy, levity and laxity, as well as divert attention of the people from the current economic conundrum faced by many Nigerians today. There is, therefore, a boom in information bombardment for and against people, issues and events across Nigeria on daily basis through the mass media. Too many information flood the Nigerian mass media space on different events, even as such events happen live, hence, the Nigerian public are often confused about what to accept, thereby, floundering in 'the more you look, the less you see' kind of scenario.

The Role of Social Media in Political Communication

Social media or new media play very important role in political communication. The social media otherwise called the pull media have sustained and given greater boost to political communication, especially in this 21st Century information society.

Political Communication is now more massive, expressive and expanded, as well as accommodating flurry of users cum participants. With the advent of these software media (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter etc.) citizens can now make informed choices and decisions as they wish. One of the most significant and humdinger roles of social media in political communication is that social media provides means for political participation of citizens in political activities, irrespective of distance. Some functions of social media in political communication are discussed thus:

1.   Citizens' Political Participation

Thanks to ICTs! Americans and some other advanced countries in Europe now talk about e-politics and electronic voting. Politically, apart from encouraging live coverage of global political activities across the world, social media have also enhanced global knowledge of political events and situations across countries of the world, as well as ensured citizens' active participation in political events of their home countries, despite their geographic distance. For instance, one can stay at home in Nigeria and follow up political activities in America, Europe, Asia or other African countries, or even join political discussions about Nigeria from America, by simply tuning in or following online discussions on BBC, CNN, Sky News, Channels TV, NTA, CCTV, Aljazeera or log-on to political websites, or go to social media- YouTube channels, Facebook pages etc. On social media, intending participants in political discussions can tweet through the official Twitter handles of political institutions and new media organizations on politics matters. For instance, the Nigerian Channels TV has its Twitter handle, '@CTVpolitics' for citizens' participation in political discourses.

In March 2015 and February 2019, with mobile phones, tablets, laptop computers, among others, Nigerians, both at home and in the diaspora were able to follow 'live' coverage and participate actively in various political discussions, during Nigeria's 2015 and 2019 general elections. Many active Nigerian social media users followed political debates involving presidential and vice presidential candidates of political parties 'live' on international news

media, through the social media on their Smartphones and other mobile technologies. Another example of the political role of social media was evident in the United Kingdom's (UK) 2015 Parliamentary elections and the United States of America's Presidential election, between Donald John Trump and Hillary Clinton. Didiugwu (2008, p. 320) in agreement to the above views states:

> International communication (social media) affords various countries of the world the opportunity to follow political events and developments like elections in other countries like Britain and United States of America. During such elections, debates organized for presidential candidates cover a wide spectrum of issues in the political, social and economic life of these countries. Such information in turn set the political and economic tone in other countries as well as set patterns of relationship between the developed and developing countries.

2.   Live Coverage and Transmission of Political News and Events

Today, with the advent of Electronic News Gathering, (ENG) and Satellite News Gathering technologies, live coverage and transmission of breaking and on-the-spot national and global occurrences and political news events have become possible. People, irrespective of their locations can now read and watch breaking political news events across the world, while such events are happening live on-line and on Digital Cable Televisions at the comfort of their homes, even with mobile devices while in offices, market places, viewing centres or while on transit. The social media have facilitated 'live' coverage of national and global events such as: Syrian War, religious activities like pilgrimages in Mecca and Israel, sports events (e.g. FIFA World Cup, UEFA Champions League, English Premiership, Spanish La Liga, Europa League and African Nations Cup etc.), entertainment, international diplomatic, security, economic and political summits, among others, (e.g. the United Nations Economic Summit in Davos Switzerland, Global Conference on Climate Change and Terrorism in Paris, London and Iran). Also, the first visit of the Roman Catholic pontiff, His Holiness, Pope Francis, to Africa- Kenya, Central African Republic and Uganda from November 25-30, 2015, was beamed live through satellite technology to the world by CNN, BBC, CCTV, TVC Africa, MBI, Channels TV; AIT, some online newspapers, Radio stations and on the social media- YouTube, Facebook. Other global issues that attract live coverage through social media include environmental threats and natural disaster, Tsunamis, political interregnum etc. People can now watch different videos of events posted on their Facebook walls and Instagram. Dike (2007, p.254) affirms these assertions thus:

> Coverage is another aspect in which the relevance of the new information technologies to broadcasting expresses itself vividly. Radio and TV stations are always concerned with the extent of their coverage. Satellite technology offers TV and Radio stations the opportunity to take their programmes to all nooks and crannies of the globe.

3.   Tool for Socio-Political Crusading and Public Opinion Formation Political Issues

Social media are desideratum for socio-political activism. This is where social media play

agenda setting, public opinion formation and crusading functions. Social media can be used to crusade for change –negative and positive in the status-quo and cause certain opinions to be widely shared by majority of the people across the world on an issue. There are too many issues that happen at local levels without global awareness and attention; such issues can be maladministration, human right violation in the hinterlands, child abuse and neglect, rape of minors, gender inequality and other unhealthy social vices against humanity. Against this backdrop, social media, with the aid of ICTs have given voice to the voiceless by creating a platform for socio-political crusading, revolt against injustice, as well as public opinion formation on national and global political issues. Hence, it is very common all over the world today for certain groups of people to converge and protest against certain wrong doings of their governments. In many cases, these groups are not often given the opportunity to express themselves through the mainstream media; they are always described by the most powerful ruling class as renegades or detractors. To such groups, social media- especially Facebook and Twitter have become tools for social crusading and invitation of international community to form opinion, and share in their plights. Application of social media in this regards, has been evident in Nigeria, since 2014.

After the purported abduction of about 219 Chibok school girls in Chibok, a town in Borno State, a group led by the Nigerian Former Minister of Education, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, emerged to campaign for the release of the kidnapped girls, with the hash tag, #BBOG# (BringBackOurGirls). This campaign has since become a household name all over the world, courtesy of the social media. Also, as tools for political revolution, Nigerians and supporters of the All Progressive Change (APC) used the ICTs-social media to kick against the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and government of former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and eventually opposed his re-election bid before and during March 2015 general elections. Another vital reference point is the failed attempted military coup which took place in Turkey, on 15ᵗʰ July, 2016, during which the Turkish President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had earlier clamped down on social media usage in Turkey, urged the Turkish nationals to protest against the failed coup, through a nationwide "social media" live broadcast.

Social media have dramatically changed the way in which modern political campaigns are run. With more people coming into the voting population, social media is the platform on which the politicians need to establish themselves and engage with the voters. In a digital age, social media remain more important than traditional media to the politicians. On the Twitter for instance, political parties and political actors have Twitter handles through which they reach out to the voters and followers.

Some of such political Twitter handles are: @OfficialPDPNig, @APCNigeria, @ApgaHQ, @femigbaja, @dino_melaye, @NGRSenate etc. However, political actors and government utilize many other platforms to propagate political activities and seek support from the people. Apart from the conventional mass media and the new media or social media, government, political organizations and actors, also use pathways such as: interpersonal communication, Machine-Assisted Interpersonal Communication (SMS, E-mail etc.), small group, as well as macro group (town hall meetings), among others, to reach their followers. Today in Nigeria, the emerging trend in political communication is the use of religious

organization platforms – churches and mosques. Government, political actors and their supporters now sponsor and attend crusades, adorations and prayer rallies, and other religious programmes, with a view to reaching out or canvassing supports from hordes of religious faithful. Each of the platforms mentioned, distinctly assist the government and political actors to inform, educate, sensitize, mobilize, influence attitude of their followers and interact with the people etc.

Political Actors and Government Manipulation Strategies: A Discourse on Propaganda Techniques

Political actors and government adopt different strategies to manipulate the people and win favourable public opinions. Some of the propaganda techniques often used in political communication and advertising include:

i.   **AD HOMINEM:** Ad hominem is a tactical attempt to shy away from taking responsibility on an issue. This is a propaganda device in which a propagandist deviate or move away from a question, issues raised, point of discussion or message put forward to him or her to attack the messenger. The use of ad hominem is very common to Nigerian political actors, commentators and government spokes persons. During media interviews by reporters to find out certain information on a nagging national problem, political actors at times resort to name-calling or verbal attack on reporters and perceived opponents, instead of addressing the issues being raised.. For instance, recently, Nigerians reacted on the health of President Muhammadu Buhari, following his long medical vacation to London, many questions were raised as Nigerians sought clarity about the health of their President, but instead of addressing the main issue, which is PMB's health, Premium-Times of February 25, 2017, reported Mr. President as saying that Nigerians who talk about his health are 'mischief makers'. Those speculating about my health are 'mischief makers' — Buhari.

ii.   **CARD STACKING:** Card stacking technique is often used in political advertising, lobbying and Public Relations to advocate supports, acceptance and approval of a political candidate, a policy, idea, product or service.

In advertising, card stacking is synonymous to Unique Sales Proposition (USP). It is a systematic and careful presentation of one-sided statement, usually positive sides of an idea, policy, candidate or a product, in order to sell the candidate, policy, product or service to the public. Card stacking becomes more effective in political communication, especially during electioneering campaigns and town-hall meeting with a view to gaining massive support. This is the process of choosing from a variety of facts, only those, which support the propagandist's purpose, Nwammuo (2007, p. 281).

iii.   **BANDWAGON:** During electioneering campaigns, political parties adopt bandwagon techniques to woo more followers. Bandwagon is an emotional social

appeal or call by a candidate or a party to the people to join their party, simply because others are joining. It is an invitation to create a mass movement or simply join 'the winning team', because others are joining. For the APC, very often during party rallies, members display brooms and dance to party songs to invite others to join the party.

iv. **PLAIN-FOLKS:** Writing about this propaganda device, Offor (2007, p. 166) opines, "Any propagandist is aware that his problems are compounded if he appears to the audience as a foreigner or stranger. He seeks, therefore, to identify as closely as possible with the values and style of life of the targets by using local slang, accent and idioms". Plain-Folk is also called the 'Common Man' approach. By using Plain-Folk, political actors and government attempt tactfully to show the common man-target audience that the government feel their pains. This approach is highly deceptive because in reality, the propagandist only wants to use and dump the people as soon as objectives are achieved. In most cases, we see the Governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose and other politicians eating roasted corns and akara or doing some local assignments with the local people even in market places. These acts are simply Plain-Folks technique to hoodwink and gain advantage from the people.

v. **GLITTERING GENERALITIES:** This is the use of strong emotional appeal words or phrases to describe a policy, programme, a concept or sometimes a person's profile in order to influence or manipulate members of the public. Glittering generalities are usually used in advertising and political communications. When political actors in their speeches use words or phrases such as: democracy dividends, patriotic zeal, nationalism, defence of freedom, rule of law, justice for all, peace, interest of womanhood, integrity, fairness etc., they are using glittering generalities. As put by Agbanu (2014, p.29), "They are also called virtue words… Often, these words and phrases are values that cannot easily be pinned down and connotatively suggest different things to different people".
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vi. **TESTIMONIAL:** Testimonial is also known as 'endorsement'. It simply denotes the use of quotations, autographs, statements or images of a reputable individual to endorse a product, idea, a candidate or a party programme. In the wake of Nigeria's 2015 general elections, the PDP repeatedly used quotations and images of a former Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, to endorse former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Also today, images of the Late Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and other notable political actors are used on political party logos, T-shirts and billboards, by politicians to gain support from the public.

vii. **NAME-CALLING:** Name-calling is a deliberate attempt by political actors and government to use negative words to discredit an opponent in order to make the public reject or form bad opinions about the opponent, an idea, a policy or programme. The aim is that the label or bad names will cause the audience to construct a negative opinion or feeling about the person, idea or belief that

the   propagandist wants them to denounce, Agbanu (2014, p.33).

Other means by which government and political actors manipulate the people through the media, apart from propaganda are discussed by Vivian (2009, pp.471-472) as follows:

a.   Trial Balloon – A deliberate leak of a potential official policy, usually from a diversionary source to test public response or reactions. Trial balloon is usually a barometer for public opinions on an issue.

b.   Leak – A deliberate disclosure of confidential or classified information by someone who wants to advance the public interest, embarrass a bureaucratic rival or political   opponent or supervisor or disclose incompetence or skulduggery.

c.   Stonewalling – To refuse to answer questions, sometimes refusing even to meet with reporters or speak with the media on certain national issues. It is a deliberate attempt to create 'sealed lips' when asked to explain certain political or economic situations   in the polity.

d.   News Blackout – This is when political actors or government decide to issue no statements on matter of public concern, despite public interest and also decline news media questions on a certain issue. For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari decided not to speak to Nigerians from London when rumours of his purported death spread all over the conventional and social media.

Conclusion

Political communication is so powerful that it propels and sways many people, especially the most gullible citizens to accept everything or information from government and political actors. The manipulative strategies of political actors in the 21 Centuries are gradually approving the fact that the media have powerful effects on the people, as obtained during the 19 Century Mass Society Era of Media Theory, when media was seen as influential but negative, hence, the adoption of mind management strategy and propaganda by political communicators, political actors, as well as successive government, in leadership and governance.

Recommendations

The citizens should be educated to use the same media and other available means such as picketing, protests, letters-to-the- editor and in most cases, voting rights during elections, to express public opinions for or against certain political issues, thus, making political communication more expressive and participatory.

The researchers also recommend a high level of media literacy among citizens against the powerful manipulative tendencies of government and political actors who know that media propaganda is effective in creating positive image of themselves before the public.

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ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ON IMMUNIZATION AMONG YOUNG MOTHERS IN IMO STATE.

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Abstract

Childhood immunization has been shown to be the most successful and cost effective public health intervention in the 20th century. Its coverage and timeliness is a very health policy objective in many developing countries. In Nigeria although vaccines are provided relatively free by the government its coverage has remained low. Efforts have focused on the health worker, health system and logistics with little attention being paid to maternal factor like knowledge, perception, beliefs and practice. This paper assessed the knowledge and information on immunization among young mother in Imo State. The theory for the study was anchored on risk communication theory while the survey is the research design used. A sample of 322 mothers was drawn from 29,930 house hold in Owerri, Imo State. A structured questionnaire was employed as instrument of data collection. Findings showed that 72% of the mothers find it necessary to immunize their children as against 8% that seems not to find it necessary. 30% get their immunization information through the radio while 28% get theirs from health officials. Thus the study concluded that mothers should be educated more on immunization while information on it should be disseminated through health official and radio because of its accessibility to them.

Keywords: Immunization, vaccination, young mother and knowledge.

Introduction

Immunization is the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infections disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine (WHO 2005). Vaccine stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease (WHO, 2005). Immunization is one of modern medicine's greatest success stories and cost effective public health intervention in the 20th century. Though its practice dates back hundreds of years. Edward Jenner is considered the founder of vaccinology in the west in 1976, after he inoculated a thirteen-year-old boy with vaccinia virus (cow pox) and demonstrated immunity to small pox (Fullford & Lee 2000).

In 1978 the first small pox vaccine was developed, over the 18th and 19th centuries, systematic implementation of mass small pox immunization culminated in its global eradication in 1979. Since Jenner's discovery, governments have often invested, albeit unevenly and incompletely in vaccines. Initially vaccines were considered a matter of national pride and prestige. They quickly became integral to utilitarian and public health notions of societal

security productivity and protection. In the twentieth century as the standard battery of childhood immunization, including diphtheria, measles, mumps, and rubella was developed, vaccination was frequently managed or adjudicated by government entities (Lambert & Marked, 2000).

The expanded programme on immunization introduced in 1979 with the aim of providing routine immunization to children less than the age of two years recorded initial but intermittent success. The optimum level was recorded by the early 1990 with the country achieving a universal childhood immunization coverage of 81.5%. (Journal of Applied Pharmaceuticals, 2017). But since that period of success, Nigeria has witnessed gradual but consistent reduction in immunization coverage. By 1996 the national data showed less than 30% coverage of all antigens and this decreased to 12.9% 2003 (Babalola & Olabisi, 2004).

Immunization coverage in Nigeria has remained low although vaccines are provided relatively free by the government. Efforts have focused on the health workers, health system and logistics with little attention being paid to maternal factors like knowledge, information awareness, perception, beliefs etc. Parents especially mothers do not get their children immunized simply because of their superstitious beliefs that disease are caused by witches and wizards. Some mothers know where and how to obtain the immunization but do not take their children to the clinic for immunization while others that made attempts to take their children for immunization may start and not finish, that is completing the required dosage.

To this end Nigeria through partnership with international organizations, and comprehensive multi-year strategy was embarked upon to strengthen the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) Federal ministry of health Nigeria (FMHN 2011). The strategy aimed at truncating the spread of the poliovirus, introducing new vaccines and improving immunization coverage generally, among others. One of the goals of achieving this aim was to ensure that members of the community were aware of significance of completing the immunization schedule (National Primary Health Care Development Agency 2011). In may 2012 Nigeria joined other member states of the World Health Assembly to endorse the Global Vaccine Action plan; in agenda for universal access to immunization by 2020 (Global Vaccine Action Plan, 2020).

Despite government efforts to maintain high immunization rate, so as to eradicate vaccine preventable diseases, it has still remained low. Research points to incomplete vaccination among infants as the likely cause for occasional recurring of our breaks of vaccine preventable diseases in Nigeria (Shen, Fields & McQuestion, 2014). In response, the government has implemented several strategies with mothers to promote immunization coverage. However, wide gap still exists for them to actualize their vision.

Statement of Problem
Mothers are the major players in deciding for or against the health activities that target their children. Despite all the efforts of the government, and the vaccines free there seems to be low coverage, the researcher wants to find out why this so. Is it that the young mothers do not have correct understanding of the benefits of child.

Immunization, the understanding these mothers have on how does it impinge in their acceptance or immunization refusal of it. The government have strategies they are working with the eradicate poor immunization coverage, the researcher wants to find out if these strategies are really working or not.

Research Questions

In other to carry out this study, the following research questions were asked.

1. Do mothers' understanding of the benefits of immunization determine their acceptance of it?

2. What source of information on immunization is more assessable to the mothers?

3. Do mothers' understanding of immunization determine their perception of it?

4. What methods can be used in educating mothers on immunization?

Immunization Framework

Immunization is the process whereby a person is made immune to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine (WHO 2018). This vaccine stimulates the body's own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or diseases. Immunization is a proven tool for controlling and eliminating life-threatening infectious diseases and it is estimated to avert between 2 to3 million deaths each year (WHO and UNICEF, 2009). With the help of immunization when your body comes in contact with foreign molecules, the immune system will be able to respond quickly and guard your system. Immunization is carried out using several methods but the most common technique is vaccination. The vaccines keep your body geared up for any future threats, protecting it from almost all infections or diseases.

There are two types of immunization, they are passive and active immunization (WHO, 2007). In passive immunization, the immune system doesn't have to produce any elements to fight disease. This is because external immune boosters are transferred into an individual's body to execute the action of fighting or immuring against infection. In active immunization the immune system of our body create its own defence mechanism when it comes in contact with a germ.

Vaccination is one of the most important things that helps to boost our immunity. When this is done several infections which leads to various complications and even death can be altered. There is need to review related studies on assessing the knowledge and information on immunization among young mothers to know what previous studies have found out. Vinodkumar, Chandrabhotla, Kaja and Machara (2017) found out that the association between gender and immunization status was found to be statistically significant while association between other demographic variables, like mothers' education, area of residence and birth order was found to be statically not significant. Other related studies like (Mabrouka, 2011) and (Fatima, 2013) found out that uneducated mothers were less conscious about the immunization of their children as compared to the mothers who were highly educated.

For the information about immunization as conducted by (Nath, Singh, Anasthi, Blushari and Kumar 2008) in Lucknow found out that health workers and health personnel were the major source of information regarding immunization. It is heartening to know that doctors are responsible for informing a majority of respondents about immunization but a need exists to work further in this area. This result is contrast to the study conducted by (Al-zahrani 2013) to assess parental knowledge and altitude regarding vaccination and their effects on vaccination practice, in which the media is noted to be strong source for providing awareness among the respondents about immunization.

Parents' knowledge about immunization and their attitudes towards them are likely influence uptake. In the study conducted by (Theeta and Newell, 2008) revealed misconceptions on parents' knowledge and negative attitude towards childhood immunization. Mothers' knowledge about vaccination was found to be quite low and their education was significantly associated with child's coverage, (Siddigi & Nisar, 2010). According to (Tagbo, Uleanya, Nwokoye, Eze and Omotowo 2012) most mothers had good knowledge, positive perception and practice of immunization. The proportion of mothers with wrong knowledge and poor perception of immunization require policy attention.

Theoretical Framework

They theory under pinning for this research is the Risk communication theory. This theory emanated in the mid-1980s as a necessary component in risk management and community decision making in environmental and occupational health. The National Research Council (NRC) desert that risk communication is an interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups and institutions. Covello 1993 defined risk communication as a two way exchange of information between interested parties about the nature significance and control of risk. It involves discussion about risk types and levels and about methods for managing risks. Specifically, this process is defined by levels of involvement in decisions actions, or policies aimed at managing or controlling health or environmental risk (Odphposophs 2017). Problems for risk communicators involve how to reach the intended audience to make risk comprehensible and related to other risk, how to pay appropriate respect to the audience's values related to the risk.

The main goal of risk communication is to improve collective and individual decision making. According to National Research Council (NRC) Risk communication process can be considered successful only to the extent that it first improves the base of accurate information that decision makers use, be it government officials, industry manager or individual citizen, and secondly satisfies those involved that are adequately informed within the limits of available knowledge. Crisis and emergency risk communication is the attempt by science or public health professionals to provide information that allows an individual's, stake holders or an entire community to make the best possible decisions during crisis emergency about their wellbeing. Often this communication must be done within early possible time and requires public acceptance of the imperfect nature of the available choices for action (Sandman, 2003).

Methodology

The survey research design was considered appropriate for this study and was therefore adopted. The design was preferred to obtain diverse information about the knowledge and information level on immunization among young mothers in Imo State. The survey method was used in drawing up a set of questions that relate to the issue of study to which selected number of young mothers reacted to. The study had 67,945 women of the reproductive age group 18-49 years in 29, 930 households in Owerri, Imo State. Most women in this region are civil servants and traders. The sample size of 322 was arrived at Taro Yamani's formula. Owing to the fact that the population is known, the researcher adopted the multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up to two sections section A and B.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 322 copies of the questionnaire were administered to young mothers who had under five children. After the distribution, the respondents were guided by the researcher for them to fill it. However out of the 322 copies of the questionnaires distributed 295 copies were retrieved and used for this study, 27 copies were discarded because of wrong filling and mistakes.

The demographic features of the mothers used for this study shows that the age of the mothers are 18-21 years are 20%, 22-25 years are 31% 26-30 years are 49%. The educational attainment of the mothers are as follows; primary qualification 7%, secondary qualification 58% and tertiary qualification is 35%.

Table 1: I believe its important for my child to receive all the necessary immunization.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	212	72%
Agree	50	17%
Not sure	18	6%
Disagree	15	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	295	100%

From the above table, the respondents that believe it is important for their child to receive immunization is 72% as against 5% that say they don't know.

Table 2: my children have received the complete dosage of immunized

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	148	50%
Agree	62	29%
Not sure	41	14%
Disagree	27	9%
Strongly disagree	17	6%
Total	295	100%

From the above table 50% of the respondent have completed their child's immunization while 6% have no completed it.

Table 3: How do you get information on immunization?

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	89	30
TV	32	11
Friends	27	9
Health professionals	82	28
Social media	62	21
Others	3	1
Total	295	100

The above table shows that 89% of the respondents which is the majority get their immunization information through the radio, while 82% get the information through health professionals, 32% get the information through television, 62% get the information through social media while 27% get their through their friends, Only 3% of the respondents get their information through other means.

Table 4: News media exaggerate report about the changer of not immunizing children.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	12%
Agree	56	19%
Not sure	44	15%
Disagree	86	29%
Strongly disagree	74	25%
Total	295	100%

From the above table 12% of the respondents strongly agree that the media exaggerate news in the dangers associated with immunization, 19% Agree, 15% into the category of not sure, 29% disagree while 25% strongly disagree, that the media exaggerate news on dangers of immunization.

Table 5: Immunization prevents childhood diseases

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	174	59%
Agree	71	24%
Not sure	27	9%
Disagree	17	6%
Strongly disagree	6	2%
Total	295	100%

In the table 7 above, 59% strongly agree that immunization prevents childhood disease 24% Age, 9% are not sure, whether immunization prevents childhood disease or not, and only 2% strongly disagree on this.

Table 6: I did not complete my child's immunization because:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I was too busy	118	40%
Health center is too far	56	19%
Vaccine was not available	74	25%
Other	47	16%
Total	295	100%

In the above table 40% of the respondents said they were too busy to complete the immunization of their child, 19% said the health center is too far from where they are, 25% said, the vaccine was not available when they went and 16% had other reason why they couldn't complete their child's immunization.

Table 7: Immunization has negative side effects

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	44`	15%
Agree	65	22%
Not sure	35	12%
Disagree	65	22%
Strongly disagree	86	29%
Total	295	100%

From the above table 15% of the respondents strongly agree that immunization has negative side effects, 22% agree, 12% are not sure whether there is any negative side caused by immunization 22% disagree, and 29% strongly disagree on this.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of data in the study revealed that majority of the mothers know how important it is for their child to receive all the necessary immunization, this was deduced from the high percentage of 72% as against 8% that doesn't find it necessary for their child to receive all their immunization. This is actually in order with the study carried out by (Roodpeyma, Kamali, Babai & Tajik, 2007) where a significant relationship was observed between level of education and awareness of immunization and between age and attitude to immunization.

On their source of information on immunization, it was revealed that 30% get their information from the radio, while 28% from health professionals. This means that the campaign and awareness being carried out on radio has positive effects on the mothers and they are more accessible to radio and health officials than other means of information

dissemination.

The researcher also found out that 15% of the respondents believe that the news media exaggerate report on the dangers of not immunizing children, while 33% disagree on this. It can be deduced here that some of them do not fully understand immunization that is why they have the perception that the media report about its danger is exaggerated.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Immunization as we all know is an act of being inoculated against vaccine preventable disease especially in children. Which goes a long way to prevent morbidity and mortality rate in children. The young mothers especially the literate ones know the danger of not inoculating their children, they try as much as possible to immunize them. The researcher recommends that:

Mother should be continuously educated on the dangers associated with not immunizing their children. They should be made to know why it is necessary to ensure that their children receive all the necessary immunization dosage and at when due.

More seminars should be carried out by the health workers and also the radio used to discriminate information about immunization, since it found out that the mothers are more accessible to it.

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PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM:

A Study of Residents in Owerri Municipal

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Abstract

The study examined the public acceptability of citizen journalism in Owerri municipal. The objectives were to find out the knowledge level of the residents in Owerri Municipal on citizen journalism practice, examine how the residents in Owerri Municipal perceive citizen journalism viz a viz mainstream journalism, ascertain the extent the residents in Owerri Municipal accept news from citizen journalist. The study was anchored on Democratic participant theory and Public sphere model. The mixed method research design was adopted. The population of Owerri Municipal residents comprised of 172,600 residents and the Taro Yamani's formula was used to determine the sample size of 399. Questionnaire and Interview guide was used as the instruments for data collection. The purposive sampling technique was adopted. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents 51% confirmed that they have high level of knowledge on citizen journalism practice in Owerri municipal. Finding also revealed that 66% of respondents have positive perception/attitude towards citizen journalism hence they indicated that citizen journalism is a good effort by individuals and that 53% of respondents accept news from citizen journalism in Owerri municipality to a large extent. The researchers recommended that given the high level of knowledge of citizen journalism by the people, those who are involved in it should thread with caution so as not to mislead good number of people who are exposed to news coming from citizen journalism. Given the fact that the public accept citizen journalism to a large extent it should be sustained. However, the proponents of the practice should not abuse it by flooding it with unverified news.

Keywords: *Citizen journalism, journalists, public acceptability, Owerri Municipal*

Introduction

Citizen journalism is a concept in media that refers to journalistic activities of ordinary people using new media devices (Noor, 2017). It means citizens themselves report the issues confronting them. Citizen journalism has enabled people to raise their voice on what they feel need attention. These people are, thus, termed as citizen journalists.

Citizen journalism is a tag that gained enormous popularity in the first decade of the 21st

century as an amateur modality of the profession called to address the generalized mistrust generated by the media in society. With the inclusion of citizens in the informational process, a greater aperture in the configuration of the public agenda was fostered, the contribution to wider plurality of sources before the entrepreneurial monopolies and journalism became renewed to a large extent in virtue of the possibilities opened by the new digital technologies (Suárez-Villegas, 2017).

In citizen journalism anyone can be a journalist, any citizen with a cellular phone or a camera can be a witness of an event, record and disseminate that material for the rest of society to consume. Not only videos and photographs, but also stories from the place of the events by means of which fill in for the professional journalists. Supporting this argument Adogla (2006) as cited in Sibanda (2019) posits that adoption of mobile phones transcends the class and economic strata granting access to even the poorest and marginalized to become a journalist. Participants also noted that citizen journalism monitors the activities and behaviours of people; it has the ability to tell people what is wrong or right. With access to a camera and a smart phone one can be a citizen journalist. But then someone parading himself as journalist without training can be disastrous as Sibanda (2019) opines citizen journalism is done by people who are not professional journalists. People who are seeing events through their own eyes and experiences. Smart phones and social media are revolutionizing the understanding of journalism. The participants postulated that the fact that anyone can be a journalist through upholding the new forms of communication poses a threat to the practice and profession of journalism where ethics and legal issues are questionable.

Willson (2012) postulated that citizen journalism is a source of news that lacks credibility. Lara (2013) accused citizen journalists for disseminating obscene material and spreading violence through videos and pictorial presentations. Journalists cited that they are inhibited in terms of what to report and what not to report in their publication and this is through stringent laws enacted to guide the operation of media houses.

In other cases, citizen journalists were not even welcome on the playground. Instead, their content was dismissed or roundly criticized, viewed as unethical, untrustworthy, too subjective and emotional, said to be of poor technical quality or simply of no real news value (Niekamp 2011; Pantti & Bakker 2009). Sometimes citizen journalism is described as simply too incomplete to provide a coherent picture of crucial news events (Nip 2009). Another line of research shows that non-professionals may not produce much "real" news, as they are interested mainly in soft or non-news items (Holt & Karlsson 2014; Jonsson & Ornebring, 2011). Even in cases of crisis coverage, which is said to be citizen journalism's key area of contribution, citizen content often has been more focused on sharing emotions than providing helpful facts or information (Nip 2009). But the citizen–professional conflict was not simply about quality or resources.

At the present moment in which information professionals and citizens have hold more horizontal positions in the public debate, the preponderance of the professional as a gatekeeper of information has been broken, as it can be disseminated over different channels (Dahlgren, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Citizen journalism has attracted mixed reactions. While the proponents say that it is good for the society, the opponents hold that it is injurious to the peace existence and governance of the society, reason being that some of their reports can be misleading. Also, considering the fact that, most of them lack professionally training. In this technological age that everyone seems to be a citizen journalist even without proper training. But the question is how do the public see the news coming from citizen journalism? Do they see their news as objective enough? This critical questions form the problem this study sought to investigate. This study, therefore, aimed to examine public acceptability of citizen journalism practice in Imo State.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine public acceptability of citizen journalism. Other specific objectives were to:

i.   Find out the knowledge level of the residents in Owerri Municipal on citizen journalism practice.

ii.   Examine how the residents in Owerri Municipal perceive Citizen journalism

iii.   Ascertain the extent the residents in Owerri Municipal accept news from citizen journalist

Research Questions

The following research questions form the basis of this study.

1.   What is the knowledge level of the residents in Owerri Municipal on citizen journalism practice?

2.   How do the residents in Owerri Municipal perceive citizen journalism

3.   To what extent do the residents in Owerri Municipal accept news from citizen journalists?

The Status of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria

Citizen journalism is now a popular brand of journalism in Nigeria. This development is attributable to the overwhelming use of the social media in the country. Both the political leaders and the electorate in Nigeria use the social media for various reasons. In his study of the rise for citizen journalism in Nigeria – a case study of Sahara Reporters, Dare (2011, p.44) stated that "National recognition came for social media when on June 28, 2010, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, launched his Facebook fans page to reach out to the youth and Nigerians with a view to getting feedback on electoral reform and other national issues." He reported that Nigerian politicians employed the social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and SMS messaging to advance their campaigns and deliver their manifestos to boost their followership during the country's 2011 general elections.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Webster (2010), cited in UNDP (2010, p.67) observed that

"President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria was said to have "more Facebook fans than the combined tally of British Prime Minister, David Cameron, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and South African head of state, Jacob Zuma" As a result of the ubiquitous adoption of social media for public communication in Nigeria, citizen journalism has gained currency in the country. Nigerian citizen journalists report events in their localities and comment on national issues, using the social networking sites.

Today, there are popular citizen journalism websites in Nigeria. The Sahara Reporters, one of such websites, is noted for its timely reports on issues and events. In a study conducted by Dare (2011, p.44), 86 of the 120 respondents surveyed cited the Sahara reporters as a source of breaking news.

By its interactivity and ability to deliver news in split seconds, citizen journalism has posed a serious challenge to the mainstream media in Nigeria. Before press time, citizen journalists in Nigeria had reported the Dana airline crash of June 3, 2012, which claimed the lives of over 150 passengers on board. Not only did the social media give timely report of the plane crash, they also gave the audience the opportunity to ask questions and exchange views on the national calamity.

This challenge posed by citizen journalism appears to have forced the traditional media in Nigeria to embrace citizen brand of journalism. However, experts have called the genre of citizen journalism practiced by the mainstream media in Nigeria to question.
In his study of citizen journalism off-line, with a focus on the Nigerian punch model, Salawu (2011, p.192) found that, "despite the newspaper's claim of creating an opportunity for readers to create their own news, the punch's model of citizen journalism was still with some limitations". According to him, "compared with online citizen journalism, especially one that is done through blogs, the punch model is with inadequacies. In the model, the professionals in charge of the page would still play the role of gatekeepers." He explained that the professionals would "determine what stories to go public and what should not go. Even, for those that would go public, some editing would have been done on the stories, thereby robbing them of their originality, and in a way distorting the actual reports of the contributors."

The above picture painted by Salawu is different form CNN'S brand of citizen journalism tagged "ireport". In the "ireport", stories retain their originality; there is no sort of distortion. As a result, credit or blame goes to the contributor of a story in "ireport".

Criticisms of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria

Citizen journalism has been criticized by its opponents in Nigeria. Some of the critics believe that citizen journalism lacks veracity. Dare (2011, p.44) found that only 33 respondents of the 120 surveyed trusted Sahara reporters. This, according to him, shows that most Nigerians do not believe stories from citizen journalists. It is believed in some quarters that they spread false hood.

Other critics argue that citizen journalism fuels civil unrest, political instability and ethno-religious crisis. This angle of criticism peaked during the nationwide protests that greeted the

removal of fuel subsidy in January 2012. It was believed in some quarters that citizen journalists misinformed the activists, making them to now gang up against the government. However, that was perceived, the aim of the protest was partially achieved as there was a huge reduction in the pump price of fuel (Nnanyelugo, Diri & Odii, 2013).

Again, citizen journalism has also been criticized for trivializing issues of national interest, including national calamities. There was an outcry; especially by national leaders against the conduct of citizen journalists during the Dana Airline crash of June 03, 2012. It was said that while rescue operators were sweating profusely to see if there could be any survivors, citizen journalists were busy taking and uploading gory pictures to their friends (Lara, 2013).

Empirical Review

Nnanyelugo, Diri and Odii (2013) in their study on Possibilities and Challenges of citizen journalism, evaluated the possibilities and challenges of citizen journalism in Nigeria and discovered that Citizen Journalism is emerging as a powerful phenomenon across Nigeria as showcased by popular citizen journalism websites. Apeh, Andrew C. and Didiuwu, Ifeanyi (2017) in their work, examined the implications of Citizen journalism on the main stream journalism and discovered that Citizen Journalism is emerging as a powerful phenomenon across Nigeria as showcased by popular citizen journalism websites.

Dare (2011) did a study on citizen journalism and it was revealed that in as much as citizen journalism in Nigeria has broadened people's access to a variety of news, its interactivity and ability to deliver news in split seconds, citizen journalism has posed a serious challenge to the mainstream media in Nigeria.

Suárez-Villegas (2017) carried out a study on the opinions of journalists on citizen journalism. It was found out that one of the most significant changes in journalism over the last decade has been the participation of citizens in the information process, establishing various forms of interaction with professional journalists and the media. This development has established a new journalistic culture based on dynamic interaction with the audience that improved information processes in various ways. However, this active role of the audience can not substantiate the so called citizen journalism, because it lacks the necessary conditions to ensure quality information that secures constructive and civilized public debate.

Hood (2011) conducted a study on the ethical standard of citizen journalism and professional journalism. It was found that news consumers do not see professional journalists as more credible than citizen journalists, although news consumers do see traditional journalists' content as more professional.

Noor (2017) did a study on citizen journalism vs. mainstream journalism and it was revealed that citizen journalism is a rapidly evolving form of journalism, which has enabled ordinary people to report newsworthy situations around them and that citizen journalism does not pose any imminent threat to mainstream journalism since it is just in its formative years. In fact, citizen journalism holds potential benefits as a source of news. It proves to be useful to bring to fore the stories that are inaccessible to professional journalists.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the public sphere theory. The theory was propounded by Jurgen Habermas in 1962. According to the World Bank (n.d), the notion of the public sphere is at the center of participatory approaches to democracy. The public sphere is the arena where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate, and eventually form public opinion (Wessler & Freudenthaler, 2018). This arena can be a specific place where citizens gather (for example, a town hall meeting), but it can also be a communication infrastructure through which citizens send and receive information and opinions. This theory is relevant to this study based on the fact that it gives room to citizen journalists to participate in public affairs through their electronic gadgets thereby bringing how they feel about a particular event in form of news to the public.

Methodology

The researcher adopted the survey method and the In-depth interview method in carrying out the research. These methods were considered appropriate because the study was an audience research that involved ascertaining opinions, perception attitudes and knowledge of the respondents on the subject matter.

Population of this study comprises of residents in Owerri municipal that are 172,600 according to Citypopulation, (2016). In selecting the sample size for this study the researcher used the Taro Yamani's formula to determine the sample size of 399 with the confidence level of 95% 0.5 error limits. While five (5) persons formed the sample size for the qualitative study.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select 80 respondents each from the five communities in Owerri Municipal namely Umuoyima, Amawom, Umuonyeche, Umuodu and Umuororonjo. For the qualitative angle, one person (1) was selected from each of the communities. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire and interview guide and they were face validated by two research experts in the field of Mass Communication. As regards the technique of data analysis the researcher used simple percentages and tabulations for the quantitative analysis while for the qualitative analysis the explanation building technique was used.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaire which serves as the instrument of data collection in this study was administered to 399 respondents in Owerri municipal. However, 17(4%) copies of questionnaire lost and 382 (96%) returned, data presentation was based on 382 respondents.

Table 1Citizen journalism has to do with citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information through new media platforms

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	87	23%
Agree	146	38%
Disagree	80	21%
Strongly disagree	69	18%
Total	**382**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 1 showed that 38% of respondents agreed that citizen journalism has to do with citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information through new media platforms. This simply means that the respondents are knowledgeable about what citizen journalism mean.

Table 2: Assessing the knowledge level of respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
High	242	63
Moderate	145	30
Low	25	7
Total	**382**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Analysis of data from the above table 2 showed that 63% of respondents have high level of knowledge on citizen journalism practice in Owerri municipal. This implies that the residents in Owerri municipal have high knowledge of citizen journalism practice.

Table 2: Respondents perception towards Citizen Journalism

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Good effort by individuals	252	66%
Junk journalism	109	29%
Indifferent	21	15%
Total	**382**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data revealed that 66% of respondents have positive perception/attitude towards citizen journalism hence they indicated that citizen journalism is a good effort by individuals. This implies that majority of the respondents see citizen journalism as a good effort by individuals.

Table 3: Respondents Acceptance of News from Citizen Journalism

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	202	53%
Moderate	115	30%
Low extent	50	13%
Can't say	15	4%
Total	382	100

Source: field survey, 2019.**s**

Analysis of data from the above table 3 revealed that 53%of respondents accept news from citizen journalism in Owerri   municipality. By implication of this analysis the residents of Owerri municipality extent of acceptance of citizen journalism is high.

Interview Data

A summary of in-depth interview conducted in the five Communities in Owerri Municipal.

The researcher interviewed five community members selected purposively from each of the communities because they have smart phones and are literate. The interview was necessary to gather adequate data for answering the research questions and meeting the objectives of the study.

The first question was what is the knowledge level of the residents in Owerri Municipal on citizen journalism practice? According to the first interviewee "I have smart phone and most times I read a lot of stuff by citizen journalists. Sometimes I write some stories myself and post on my Facebook wall for people to read". Other interviewees confirmed that their knowledge level is high.

Another question that bordered on the how do the residents in Owerri municipal perceive citizen journalism viz a viz mainstream journalism was posed. Interviewees noted that they see citizen journalism as a welcome development and that it gives room for people to participate in the news process. Though, two interviewees were of the views that citizen journalism has been abused by people hence giving rise to junk journalism but then they still accept some verifiable news coming from citizen journalists especially, if they share similarities with news from the mainstream journalism.

Concerning the extent residents in Owerri accept news from citizen journalist, in the words of Interviewees from Umuoyima and Umuronronjo "of course yes, I accept news from citizen journalists, they make you know the trending things" another confirmed that " I accept news from citizen journalism because they keep you up to date… I see nothing wrong with citizen journalism because myself in some occasions is involved in it"

Discussion of Findings

The knowledge level of the residents in Owerri Municipal on citizen journalism practice

From the data gathered and presented in table 1 and 2 it can be deduce that about an average of 51% of the respondents confirmed that they have high level of knowledge on citizen journalism practice in Owerri municipal. In line with Noor (2017) findings, the knowledge level of citizen journalism has induced a rapidly evolving form of journalism, which has enabled ordinary people to report newsworthy situations around them. Nowadays mainstream media do not serve as the only source of news. Qualitative findings equally revealed that the knowledge level is on the high side, this could explain the reason why in citizen journalism anyone can be a journalist, any citizen with a cellular phone or a camera can be a witness of an event, record and disseminate that material for the rest of society to consume. This support the assumption of the public sphere model this study was anchored on.

The residents in Owerri Municipal perception of citizen journalism

Analysis of data revealed that 66% of respondents have positive perception/attitude towards citizen journalism hence they indicated that citizen journalism is a good effort by individuals 29% confirmed that it is junk journalism, while 5% of respondents where indifferent. Qualitative findings on the other hand, revealed that citizen journalism is a welcome development and that it gives room for people to participate in the news process. Though, two interviewees were of the views that citizen journalism has been abused by people hence giving rise to junk journalism but then they still accept some verifiable news coming from citizen journalists especially, if they share similarities with news from the mainstream journalism. Suárez-Villegas (2017) in his study argues that this development has established a new journalistic culture based on dynamic interaction with the audience that improved information processes in various ways. However, this active role of the audience can not substantiate the so called citizen journalism, because it lacks the necessary conditions to ensure quality information that secures constructive and civilized public debate.

The Extent Residents in Owerri Municipal Accept News from Citizen Journalist

Analysis of data from table 3 further revealed that 53% of respondents accept news from citizen journalism in Owerri municipality. From the analysis it is obvious that the residents in Owerri municipal embrace citizen journalism practice to a large extent. Qualitative findings also showed that they accept the practice. Supporting this finding, Hood (2011) found out that because of the advent of the internet, traditional journalism is changing. Advanced technology includes the tools for everyone to publish their thoughts, feelings, photos, and videos, allowing individuals to be citizen journalists. The public sphere theory as reviewed in this study gives serious backing to this finding; essentially, the theory assumes that as citizens embrace citizen journalism for communication purpose it will give way for public discourse in public sphere which the theory postulates.

Conclusion

In this digital age everyone strives to be journalists so as to make contributions to the news process for the public to appreciate and from the findings of this study one can see the extent the practice of citizen journalism is accepted. Based on the findings we can therefore conclude that the level of acceptance of the practice of citizen journalism by the public is on the high side.

Recommendations

Base on the findings the following recommendations are hereby made

1. Given the high level of knowledge of citizen journalism by the people, those who are involved in it should thread with caution so as not to mislead good number of people who are exposed to news coming from citizen journalism.

2. Considering the fact that 29% of respondents confirming that it is a junk journalism, efforts need to be made by those who practice it to give in their best so as to meet the set standard of mainstream journalism.

3. Given the fact that the public accept citizen journalism to a large extent it should be sustained. However, the proponents of the practice should not abuse it by flooding it with unverified news.

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EFFECT OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS PRACTICES ON THE PATRONAGE OF SELECT BANKS IN UYO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the effect of customer relation practices on the patronage of four select commercial banks in Uyo metropolis, which are: First bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank and Guaranteed Trust Banks. The study set out to identify such practices and how effective they are. To achieve these objectives, the survey method of enquiry was adopted by the researcher and questionnaire and personal interview were the primary instruments used for gathering data from respondents and interviewees. The interview was conducted on the customer relation officers of the four select banks. The population of study was an annual average of the four banks customers and their customer relation officer. This added up to 19,072. Using Philip Meyer's guide for sample selection a sample size of 370 respondents was drawn. Findings revealed that placement of suggestion box, emails/felicitation SMS/phone calls, high quality service, friendliness, gifts/promo, were the main customer relations practices adopted by the four select banks in Uyo, metropolis. The study also showed that the practices are very effective to turn in patronage for the banks as perceived by customers in Uyo metropolis. The researchers recommended that the organization customer relations department should be more communication-oriented by providing an in-house journal where programmes and policies are explained to the customers.

Keywords: Customer Relation, Patronage, Effectiveness, Public Relation

Introduction

Before the internet era in the world, customers largely selected their banks based on how convenient the location of the branches was to their homes or offices. With the advent of new technologies in the business of banking, such as internet banking and Automated Teller Machines, (ATM) customers now can freely choose any bank for their transactions (Sugandhi, 2002).

Over the years it has become needful for organizations to relate with their customer. Frustration and anger was however illustrated in some banks due to the lack of customer

service and relations as a result of the merger (access bank and intercontinental bank) and failure which is undeniable. Many customers today are not satisfied and do not trust their banking service provider because of the perceived lack of fulfilment. Some have argued that the quality and level of customer service has decreased in recent years and this can be attributed to lack of support or understanding at the executive and middle management levels of a customer service policy.

To address this argument, many organizations have employed a variety of methods to improve their customer satisfaction levels such as small scale loan scheme, loan (car, house) promotions, interest rate etc. The fundamental purpose of customer relations practice is to establish a two-way flow of mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information between an organization and its customer.

Customer relations practices in all aspects of human life and other activities is very important, so it can only be a success if the groundwork is properly done and the highest standards are maintained. Customer relations start from good manners of approach of an organization to all other advanced forms of customer relation. "There is an adage that says good words bring kola from the pockets, while bad words bring machete". A company or organization that relates well with the customers will enjoy good patronage from its customers. A customer relations practice is an effective means of gaining and retaining customers. According to Ogunsanya, (2011) many organizations are becoming more successful as a result of the implementation of strategic customer relations practices. A successful business enterprise or an unsuccessful one makes the difference between good public relations or customer relations practices and poor approach.

The British Institute of customer relations (2003) defines customer relations as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its customer. The part of this definition which requires more emphasis is the need for customer relations practices to be deliberate, planned and sustained. Relationship between an organization and its customers is fundamental to the growth and survival of the organization, especially an organization that deals with the production of goods or services for people consumption.

Mutual understanding and motivation are the potent factors for success, and strategic customer relations can bring in these potent factors. Customer relations refer to communications within the company or organizations network, that is, employees, employers, and existing customers. Customer relations practices are widely implemented strategy for managing a company's interactions with customers, clients and sales prospects. It involves using technology to organize, automate and synchronize business processes – principally sales activities, but also those for marketing, customer service and technical support, (Shaw, 2000). The overall goals are to find, attract and win new clients, nurture and retain those the company already has, entice former clients back into the fold, and reduce the costs of marketing and client services.

Statement of the Problem
In the banking environment, public relations emerged as one of the areas that have attracted

management attention in recent years. In the past, public relations managers in the banks did not attempt anything practices more ambitious in creating mutual understanding in the public than to engage in publicity and press. Today, with intense competitions and innovations by banks to attract and maintain customers, there is an increasing effort by banks to improve their customer relations practices based on trust, respect and value.

Given this, the following question becomes pertinent: what are the customer relations practices adopted by the select banks in Uyo metropolis? And to what extent have these practices influenced customers' patronage? This study, therefore, sets out to address these crucial issues.

Research Questions

     i.   What are the kinds of customer relations practices that exist in the select banks in Uyo metropolis?

    ii.   How do customers rate these practices?

    iii.   Is customers' patronage influenced by these customer relations practices?

    iv.   What is their perception of these practices?

Review of Literature

Modern markets are rediscovering the ancient mantras for success in the corporate world and blending them with contemporary marketing practices. Long term survival and competitive advantage can only be attained by establishing an emotional bond with the customers. A shift is taking place from marketing to anonymous masses of customers to developing and managing relationships with more or less well known or at least some identified customers (Gronroos, 2004).

The 1980s saw the emergence of database marketing, which was simply a catchphrase to define the practice of setting up customer relations groups to speak individually to all of a company's customers. In the case of smaller clients, however, it tended to provide repetitive survey like information that cluttered databases and did not provide much insight. As companies began tracking database information, they realized that the bare bones were all that was needed in most cases: what they buy regularly, what they spend, what they do.

In the 1990s companies began to improve on customer relations practices by making it more of a two-way street. Instead of simply gathering data for their use, they began giving back to their customers not only in terms of the obvious goal of improving customer service, but through incentives, gifts and other perks for customer's loyalty. This was the beginning of the now-familiar frequent flier programmes, bonus points on credit cards and a host of other resources that are based on customer relations practices, tracking of customer activity and spending patterns. A customer relations practices is now being used as a way to increase sales passively as well as through active improvement of customer service.

Real customer relations practices as it's thought of today began in earnest in the early years of this century. As software companies began releasing never, more advanced solutions that

were customizable across industries; it became feasible to use the information dynamically.

Customer Relations Practice

Customer relations practice is the core business strategy that integrates internal processes and functions, and external network, to create and deliver value to targeted customers at a profit. It is grounded on high-quality customer data and enabled by "IT" (Burtle, 2004). Customer relations practice is also a business strategy to identify cultivate and maintain long-term profitable customer relationships. It requires developing a method to select your most profitable customer relationships and working to provide those customers with service quality that exceeds their expectations (Mc Donald, 2002).

An organization's survival depends largely on harmonious relationships with its stakeholders in the market. Customers provide the 'lifeblood' to the organization in terms of competitive advantage, revenue and profits. Managing relationships with is imperative for all types and size of service organizations. A sound base of sissified customers allows the organization to move on the path of growth, enhance profitability, fight out the competition and carve a niche in the market place.

Bennett (2006) describes that customer relations practices seek to establish long term, committed, trusting and cooperative relationship with customers, characterized by openness, concern for the delivery of high-quality services, responsiveness to customer suggestion, fair dealing and willingness to sacrifice short term advantage for long term gains.

Schneider and Bowne (2009) advocated that service business can retain customers and achieve profitability by building a reciprocal relationship founded on safeguarding and affirming customer security, fairness and self-esteem. It requires that companies view customers second. Trust, commitment, ethical practices, the fulfillment of promises, mutual exchange, emotional bonding, personalization and customer orientation has been reported to be the key elements in the relationship building.

Customer relations practice refers to all business activities directed towards initiating, establishing, maintaining and developing successful long term relational exchange (Reinartz and Kumar, 2003). One of the results of the customer relations practices is the promotion of customer loyalty which is considered to be a relational phenomenon. The benefits of customer loyalty to the provider of either services or product are numerous, and thus organizations are eager to secure s significant a loyal customer base as possible.

Recent developments in interest technology have given the internet a new role to facilitate the link between customer relations practices and customer loyalty; it is common knowledge that a dissatisfied and unhappy customer will share his unfortunate experience more than a satisfied customer. It has also been obverted that a fraction of unhappy customers choose to complain while where simply switch their loyalty to other service providers, Loss of customer is a loss of business along with the opportunity for business growth and profitability, Feedback collection from the customer is essential for the supplier to ascertain customer satisfaction and scope for improvisation.

The fundamental reason for companies aspiring to build relationships with customers is economics. For survival in the global market, focusing on the customer is becoming a key factor for companies big and small. Establishing and managing a good customer relationship is a strategic endeavour. Having a customer relations practices software installed does not ensure a successful customer relationship. For this to happen business processes and company culture have to be redesigned to focus on the customer. Customer relations practices software can be only a tool to implement a customer strategy. It is known that it takes up to five times more money to acquire a new customer than to get an existing customer to make a new purchase. Improving customer retention rates increase the size of the customer base. Thus, customer retention is essential.

Review of Related Study

In a study done by Akshay, J (2001) A survey of customer relations in the Luxury segment of the Hotel industry. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Nottingham**.** The study was geared towards explaining the effect of poor customer relation practice in the luxury segment of the hotel industry. The study from its findings revealed that good customer relation practice with effective communication with its customers could bring a wealth of gain to an organization. The practice of customer relations in the organization had enhanced the image of the organization and greatly improve the service quality that exceed the customers' expectations. The study also revealed that effective customer relation practice could help maintain good report between an organization and its customers. He concluded that each organization has its peculiarities as also is their customers thus, a better understanding of their customers may cause a slight change from the strategies to one that will understand the attitude and feelings of their customers to make for efficiency.

Another study on "Customer Relations Strategies in Banking Institutions: A comparative study of First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Uyo and Africa Bank Nigeria Plc, Uyo" (2007), the researcher seeks to find out the customer relations strategies used by two different banks (First Bank and Afri Bank, Uyo) to also find out which bank has an edge over the other in terms of customer relations practices and to find out if the bank-customer relationship does in anywhere affect the image of the two banks. Based on the findings by the researcher, it was discovered that both banks have different strategies that they adapt to, for First Bank, their strategies are: sponsorship of sports competitions, donations to charitable organizations, advertisements, sponsorship of television soap operas. While in Afri Bank, they are: production of Afri Bank brochure called AfriBank much you need to know, House Journal, Afri Bank news, annual report, advertisements, calendars and diary. Afri Bank has an edge over the first bank in terms of customer relations practices. Judged by the findings of the work, it is established that the bank-customer relationship can affect the image of the bank.

Theoretical Framework

In a study that has to do with the organization's public relations practices and customers' patronage, the social exchange theory could be best applicable. The theory was proposed by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley. This theory also known as the theory of economic behaviour is premised on the notion that relationships are based on the exchange of values between two or more parties.

According to the theory, whatever constitutes the nature of the exchange between the participants, equality or satisfaction must be felt as a result. An absence of equality or satisfaction means that an advantage might have been gained by one party and this will automatically result in negative consequences for another. Fill (2005, p. 240) states that whether in personal or inter-organizational relationships, exchanges are considered to have two main elements. First, there are value exchanges that are based on the exchange of resources (goodwill for patronage) and secondly, there are symbolic exchanges where, in inter-organizational contexts, goods services and goods are purchased for their utility plus the feelings and associations that are bestowed on the user.

Griffin (2010, p. 132) add to this by saying that the social exchange offers two standards of comparison that could be used to evaluate outcomes. The first deals with the relative satisfaction – how happy or sad an interpersonal outcome makes a participant feel and the second standard is hinged on the best payoffs available outside the current relationship. Thus, when a relationship is not satisfying the person involved looks outside to find an available and more satisfying option.

As it relates to this study, the theory serves to explain that to positively influence customers' patronage, an effective customer relation strategies should be put in place by the organization. This means that the attitude of the organization and the way it relates with its publics must go beyond the selling of its products and services to an interpersonal relationship with its customers. This will help to boost the organization's image as perceived by its publics and bring about a sense of satisfaction in the relationship between the organization and its customers.

Methodology

This research seeks to assess customer relations practices of select banks in Uyo metropolis. The survey method of interview and questionnaire was employed in the data gathering process. The survey method was useful in this study because the population involved was too large to be observed directly. The population of this study included the customer relations officers and customers of the select banks (First Bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank, GT Bank) in Uyo metropolis. The population of this study was 19, 072, a total of the customers and customer relation officer of each of the select banks. This list was gotten from the customers register kept at the customer relations unit of the select banks in Uyo metropolis. From the list, First Bank had a total number of 5,880 customers, Zenith bank registered a total of 4,232, while Access bank had a total of 4,122 and finally GT Bank recorded a total number of 4,834. For each of this bank, they had one Customer relations officers which rounded up to 4 customer relation officer. An addition of this created a basis for the population which added up to 19,072

The sample size of this study was drawn from the population of this study which included the customer relations officers and customers of the select banks. Using a purposive sampling procedure for the selection of the banks, the Philip Meyer's standard of sample size selection, a sample size of 370 was chosen for the study. The measuring instruments used for getting information for this study are: personal interview and the questionnaire. The personal interview questions were directed at the customer relations officers of the select banks. The

interview consisted of six open-ended questions designed to obtain information on the customer relations practices, while copies of the questionnaire were administered to the customers of the select banks. The questionnaire consisted of ten items which were made up of the open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This study set out to assess the Customer Relations Practices and patronage of First Bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank and GT Banks in Uyo metropolis. Survey method was used to carry out the study and the instrument used in gathering data were the questionnaire and personal interview. This chapter presents an analysis of data gathered from the questionnaire retrieved from 347 respondents in Uyo metropolis. The responses from the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed using the simple percentage formula. The interview was analyzed using explanation building method.

Interview schedule Data Presentation/ Analysis

This section discusses the interviews conducted with the Customer Relations Officers of First Bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank and Guaranty Trust banks in Uyo metropolis. The following reports are based on the interviews with four customer relation managers of the aforementioned banks.

Interview report of First Bank-Oron Road, Uyo.

The first question sought information on the objectives and functions of the department, Mrs Elizabeth Akpan, said they attend to customer's complaints, attract and retain customers as well as put smiles on customers' faces in attempting to satisfy them.

When asked about Customer Relations Practices that First bank adopt, Mrs Akpan said they include: well-wishing text messages, e-mails and even calls on customers' special events, high-quality service, friendliness during bank transactions.

Asked on how these strategies have been effective in terms of customer patronage, she said, the strategies have been very effective because they help the bank record new customers almost on a daily bases while the existing ones remain happy. When she was asked on how customers perceive these strategies, she said, they have a good perception since they respond positively to the strategies they adopted. Again, she was asked if these practices have helped the organization portray itself in good light, the Manager's response was yes.

Interview report at Zenith Bank Oron Road Uyo

When asked the Customer Relation Practices adopted by zenith bank, the customer care manager Mrs Stella Thompson stated that the bank had adopted many customer relation strategies such as giving gifts, text message, email alerts, phone calls on customers, speedy service delivery, enabling environment etc.

When asked how effective these strategies have been, she said they have been of tremendous help especially in their quest to be where they currently are. When asked if they helped project the organization with a better image, she said yes. When asked about customers' perception of the customer relations practices adopted by Zenith Bank she said "though not

all the customers will be able to understand or identify the customer relations practices, but from all indications, she knows from the level of patronage enjoyed by the bank that the customers are satisfied with the practices.

Interview report of Access Bank Barracks Road, Uyo

Answering the first question, Mrs Blessing Ekpenyong the Customer Relations Officer of Access Bank stated that the customer relations practices adopted by the bank include Annual reports, special events and transaction alerts, sponsorship of competitions (e.g polo), emails, phone calls, promotions, discount services. The practices are very effective she added when asked about their effectiveness. She explaining that "some individuals would not do certain things without something or someone to motivate or encourage them", when asked if the customer relations practices help turn in patronage for the bank.

The Customer Relations Officer of Access Bank also stated that she believed that customers are impressed with the customer relations practices because of the improvements of effective communication and keeping to promise made by the bank.

Interview Report at GT Bank Abak road Uyo

When asked about the customer relations strategies adopted by Guaranty Trust Bank, the bank's Customer Relations Officer Mrs Minika Ekpenyong stated that they include placement of suggestion boxes, emails, text messages, phone alerts, calls keeping customers updated, rendering high-quality services, annual reports etc. She revealed that Management is satisfied with the level of the bank's success over the years and that the success of the bank is attributed to the customer relations practices, which innovations and dynamic approaches to customers' needs. She said she feels the customers' perception of the customer relations practices of the bank are very effective, accepted and reciprocated by continuing business transactions with the bank.

Presentation of Quantitative Data

Table 1: Responses on what informed respondents' choice of the bank

Good quality service	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Good service quality	14	27	33	38	112	32
Promo	2	7	1	3	13	4
Good customer relationship	61	43	54	43	201	48
Friends/family/ associate	4	9	2	6	21	6
Short distance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 2: Responses on factors which influence respondents stay with their banks

OPTION	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Good quality service	12	25	30	34	101	29
Promo	59	43	54	38	194	56
Good customer relationship	3	4	3	-	-	5
Friends and family	7	14	3	347	100	10
Short distance	-	-	-	-		
Total	81	86	90	90		

Source: field survey 2016

Table 3: Responses on how respondents rate their bank's customer relations practices

OPTION	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Very effective	67	52	52	90	261	75
Poor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Effective	14	34	38	-	36	25
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 4: Responses on whether the customer relations practices influence their patronage

OPTION	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Yes	74	62	61	90	287	83
No	7	24	29	-	60	17
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 5: Responses on customer relations practices adopted by respondents' choice bank

OPTION	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Suggestion box	3	6	8	11	28	8
Mails/text/calls	21	15	16	19	71	21
High quality service	43	51	40	43	177	51
Friendliness	10	7	12	9	38	11
Gifts/promo	-	1	3	-	4	1
All of the above	4	6	11	8	29	8
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 6: Respondents' perception about the strategies of their chosen commercial banks?

Option	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	28	33	27	26	114	33
Good	53	53	63	64	233	67
Fair	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016   .

Table 7: Respondents relationship with staff of their chosen commercial bank

RESPONSES	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Cordial	50	51	62	63	226	65
Very cordial	31	35	28	27	121	35
Not cordial	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 8: Respondents responses on the area where they think their chosen bank should improve on their customer relation strategy

OPTION	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Suggestion box	1	4	1	3	9	3
Mails/text/calls	2	7	11	9	29	8
High quality service	9	19	23	21	72	21
Friendliness	23	17	19	21	80	23
Gifts/promo	5	9	7	1	22	6
All of the above	41	30	29	35	135	39
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 9: Responses on whether the chosen banks maintain good customer relations with customers

RESPONSES	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Yes	81	86	90	90	347	100
No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 10: Respondents responses on whether they would want to continue patronizing their chosen bank

RESPONSES	FIRST BANK	ZENITH BANK	ACCESS BANK	GT BANK	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Yes	81	86	90	90	347	100
No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	81	86	90	90	347	100

Source: field survey 2016

Discussion of Findings

The customer relations practices adopted by commercial banks in Uyo metropolis

In the course of the investigation, using the questionnaire and interview with the four select banks in Uyo, namely: First, zenith, Access and Guaranty trust Banks, it was found that the four select banks in Uyo adopted various and almost the same customer relations practices

such as: placement of suggestion box, e-mails, text messages/phone calls, high-quality service, promos, friendliness according to question 5 and 8 of the questionnaire and question one (1) of the interview.

Table 5 showed that the majority of respondents with 51% (177) said the strategy mostly witnessed at their bank is the high quality of service delivery. According to the customer relations officer of First Bank Mrs Elizabeth Akpan, said promos, transaction alerts, congratulatory messages, journals, friendliness, high-quality service and suggestion box. Customer Relations Officer at Access Bank, Mrs Blessing Saviour stated that the customer relations practices adopted by the bank include: suggestion box, sustaining friendly environment, Alerts, sponsorship, speed and quality service. Mrs Minika Ekpenyong, Customer Relations Manager in GT bank said the organization makes use of friendly-banking environment, quality service, gifts on special events as well as congratulatory alerts and emails.

From the above, it could be said that suggest box, emails, text messages and phone calls, high-quality service, friendliness and gifts/promos are the main customer relations practices adopted by the four select commercial banks in Uyo metropolis. Table 8 also provides backing as it shows responses on area where the organizations should improve on their customer relation practices. Out of 347 (100%) respondents, 28 (8%) indicated improvement in the area of suggestion box, 71 (21%) said in the area of mails/text messages/phone calls, 177 (51%) went for high-quality service, 38 (11%) said in the areas of friendliness, 4 (1%) said gifts and promotion, 29 (8%) respondents said all the strategies. This finding agrees with Umoren, Lawrence Titus, in his study on public relations strategies in multinational companies. A study of U.A.C Lagos, which revealed that customers patronize the organization because of the strategies they adopted.

Customers rating of their banks customer relations practices

Findings of the study showed that the customer relations strategies such as suggestion box, emails, text messages/calls, high-quality service, friendliness, gifts/promotions were rated very effective. Answers to interview question two also revealed that these strategies are very effective in terms of customers' patronage because it gives them a sense of satisfaction. This is reflected in tables 3 and 10. Table 3 shows that 261 (75) of the respondents rated the strategies as being effective. Table 10 revealed that all the respondents 347 (100%) would want to continue patronizing their bank of choice due to the effectiveness of the customer relations practices adopted.

How customers' patronage influence customer relations practices

Data from the interviews reveal that the level of patronage enjoyed by the bank over the years is enough indication that customers' patronage is influenced by the practices adopted by the banks. Also, that management of the banks is satisfied with the level of the bank's success which is attributed to the effectiveness of these customer relations practices adopted.

This is confirmed in Table 4 as it reveals that 287 (83%) of the respondents responded in the affirmative that their bank's customer relations practices influence their patronage, while 60 (17%) said No, it a does not. According to studies conducted by Cronin and Taylor (1992) in-service sectors such as banking, it was found that customer satisfaction has a significant

effect on purchase intentions. Therefore, this finding agrees with Cronin and Taylor study findings that customer relations practices influence customers' patronage.

Customers perception of the customer relations practices of banks in in Uyo metropolis

In answering this research question, the answer to interview question 3 (three) reveals that the customer relations practices of First Bank is perceived positively since customers respond positively to the strategies according to the First Bank Customer Relation Officer Mrs Elizabeth Akpan.

In Zenith Bank, the Manager said customers perceive them as excellent because there have not any complaint about them by the customers. The opinion of the customer relations officer in Access Bank goes in line with that of the Manager of Zenith Bank. While in Guaranty Trust (GT) Bank, the Officer said their customer perceive the practices as very good because they make them feel comfortable and important as well as help the organization grows. This is reflected in tables 3 and 6. Table 3 shows that out of 347 (100%) respondents, 261 (75%) rated the practices very effective while 86 (25%) respondents rated them effectively. On perception about the strategies, table 6 showed that 114 (33%) of the respondents perceived them as excellent while 233 (67%) indicated they are good. This means that the customer relations strategies are generally good as claimed by respondents.

Conclusion

The tools and technique to achieving effective customer relations have been an important part of the weaponry in modern business management. This study set out to investigate the customer relations practices and patronage of select commercial bank in Uyo metropolis. In other words, its purpose was to identify the kind of customer relations practices and their level of influence on customers' patronage. These banks include First Bank, Zenith Bank, Access Bank and Guaranty Trust Bank. The study centred on the strategies adopted by these banks to promote and sustain customer's patronage.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

The organizations should have a forum where the staff, customers and other publics of the organization can meet from time to time for a face-to-face interaction. This action will be more effective in promoting friendship, attract more patronage, create better understanding between the organization and its customers and above all neutralize the impact of future mishaps.

The customer relations department should be more communication-oriented by providing an in-house journal where programmes and policies are explained.

The organization should build a good corporate image by sponsoring developmental projects to involve a large segment of its external publics.

Though existing public relations practices may be effective and good, the banking organization if room permits should improve on its customer relations practices to make more customer and make existing customer valued and happier.

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FRIENDSHIP AT THE BEAT AND THE QUEST FOR OBJECTIVITY IN REPORTING: THE CASE OF THE RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY (BEAT)

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Abstract

News is about people, the people who make the things happen and the people whose lives are affected by what happens. Beat reporters have the advantage of getting to know the people on their beats and therefore able to tell the story in details, which affords the reporter an opportunity to become an expert in that field. Thus, the first duty of the beat reporter is to the public and not the contact, hence, the call for objectivity in his reportage. This paper examined how friendship at the beat can affect objectivity in reportage, using the Rivers State House of Assembly beat as the focus of the study. The in-depth interview and observation research designs were adopted while population was the 25 accredited members of the Rivers State House of Assembly. The work is anchored on the Absolutist Theory propounded by Emmanuel Kant. Findings of the paper show that friendship at the beat affects objectivity and that reporters remain at a particular beat for a long time without being changed. It concluded that familiarity with beats and friendship is inimical to effective practice of journalism as reporters tend to dance to the whims and caprices of their pay masters, thereby dampening their reports, while it recommended among others that beats should be rotational to de-familiarize a reporter with a particular beat.

Keywords: Objectivity; Beat; Legislature (RSHA); Absolutist Theory

Introduction

One of the advantages of having reporters assigned to a beat is to make them become more knowledgeable in the field. Beat reporting in Nigeria, according to Adeniyi and Suleiman (2017, p.1), grew from the early 1980's onto the 90's and onwards. They further stated that it was out of an attempt to perfect news reporting, by encouraging specialization amongst reporters that it started. Reporters would need to take every opportunity to become knowledgeable and better educated about their beats as they need to read books and magazines on the subject, attend conferences, to enable them understand the beat, and report it better. To report effectively, specialization is required in beats. Thus, according to Obe (as cited in Adeniyi & Suleimam, 2017), "Specialised Reporting" simply means reporting from

special areas or fields. They maintained that it is a clear departure from the general type of reporting that is not focused on particular fields or areas. It is therefore referred to as reporting specialties. Adeniyi & Suleimam, (2017), posit that specialization is not unique to journalism alone. Other professions like law and medicine also have their areas of specialization. For law, some lawyers specialize in maritime law, company and allied matters, criminal law, civil law, jurisprudence, etc.

The news beat shoulders an enormous responsibility on the journalists. This is as it concerns the watchdog, agenda setting and social responsibility function of the press. According to Akabogu (2005) the Journalist as a member of the society is expected to maintain some ethical codes of conduct as he discharges his duty or responsibility of informing the members of the public objectively and accurately. He noted with dismay that some Journalists have thrown these ethical standards to the dogs. Buttressing this fact, Ashong (2017, p. 1) states that it is trite that every journalism course of study or code of practice accords objectivity in reporting pride of place. Whether it be under the communist press or the libertarian (free) press system which represent the two extremes of the continuum of control, there is usually a commitment to certain of "objectivity".

Beat reporting is more like division of labour. Responsibility is shared between reporters for efficiency, increased productivity, and better enterprise promotion. It helps quick execution of assignments and enhances acquaintance ability.The beat system has numerous advantages that can also become counterproductive if not properly managed and can then be dangerous. According to Saxena (2013), the three dangers of a beat system are;

- **Complacency:** A major danger of beat reporting is that a reporter may become too complacent. He knows where to get his information, and when. The excitement and challenge of cultivating sources and digging up information dies down after the first few months. A reporter starts taking things for granted.

- **Excessive familiarisation:** Another disadvantage of beat reporting is that the reporter may come too close to a source, and may avoid doing stories that may hurt the source.

- **Source becomes the control:** Sometimes, the source starts taking advantage of their relationship with the reporter, and might not give him the desired information needed to do his job.

Assembly reporters can be told things in confidence by lawmakers who are politicians, sometimes this can be a subtle attempt to exert control over them. At other times politicians may try to exert very obvious control over journalists, by buying them gifts or giving them other favours. Therefore, instead of telling the news objectively in terms of who make the news and the people affected by it, the beat reporter may begin to tell the news only in terms of the people who make it, (Ene, 2019).

Thus, this paper assesses the effect of friendship at the beat on news objectivity in the media, with particular reference to the Rivers State House of Assembly beat.

Statement of problem

Modern day journalism practice tends to negate the ground norms of journalism practice which is objectivity by fraternizing at the beats. Friendship at the beats often leads to lack of objectivity which is the problem that this study concerns itself with.

Receiving of payments in form of stipends, white envelope and gifts will lead to playing to the gallery by satisfying the dictates of the pay masters and rendering objectivity to a nullity. The retention of a reporter on a particular beat for ages, breeds familiarity and friendship, thus, making it difficult for a reporter to independently report objectively without biases.

Happenings within the Assembly gallery, need to be objectively reported, but with gratifications it becomes a problem. The question therefore is, can familiarity with the source, affect objectivity in reporting the beat, especially as it affects the Rivers Sate House of Assembly?

Research Questions

1. Does friendship at the beat influence reporters of the Rivers State House of Assembly from being objectives?

2. Does friendship by media owner, managers and editors affect objectivity in news stories emanating from the Rivers State House of Assembly?

3. What are the challenges facing reporters from accessing news from the State House of Assembly beat?

The concept of Beat Reporting

Beat reporting, also known as specialized reporting, is a genre of journalism that can be described as the craft of in-depth reporting on a particular issue, sector, organization or institution over time (Wikipedia 2019). A beat reporter is someone who is specialized in covering a particular segment of the population or a select geographic area, neighbourhood or business sector. Alao and Olawunmi (2014, p. 44) posit that beat reporting is a system of segmenting into specific areas of coverage where reporters are deployed over an extended period of time for them to gain better understanding of such deployment with a view to facilitating a more informed reporting. Abrahamsen (2017) sees beat reporting giving journalists the opportunity to focus on one area.

According to him beat reporters develop in-depth knowledge, know experts related to their beat and create a thorough contact list of people to help them tell compelling and credible stories. This Journalist will cover a district locale that defines his or her beat, such as the crimes courts or the police, education or perhaps the schools, religion or the Church, sports, business happenings in local or State government, medicine or healthcare, the environment or science, the beat reporter is much more than someone that delivers news associated with the day's events in local politics or the criminal justice system. Beat reporters build up a base of knowledge on and gain familiarity with the topic, allowing them to provide insight and commentary in addition to reporting straight facts. According to Aloa & Olawunmi (2014, p. 33) beat reporting is aimed at creating a pool of well-informed journalists who will be able to

intelligently report on the growing complexities of relations among peoples, businesses, governments and nations by reporters to specific areas of news coverage for an extended period of time for them to gain deeper knowledge of those areas.

Generally, beat reporters will also build up a rapport with sources that they visit again and again, allowing for trust to build between the journalist and his/her source of information. This distinguishes them from other journalists who might cover similar stories from time to time. Journalists become invested in the beats they are reporting for, and become passionate about mastering that beat. Beat reporters often deal with the same sources day after day, and must return to those sources regardless of their relationship with them. Those sources may or may not be pleased with the reporting of the reporters. It is pertinent that beat reporters contact their sources quickly, obtain all necessary information, and write on deadline.

Beat reporters collect information from each person they meet while reporting. They routinely call, visit, and e-mail sources to obtain any new information for articles. When reporters have experience on a specific beat, they are able to gain both knowledge and sources to lead them to new stories relating to that beat. Beats are able to help reporters define their roles as journalists, and also avoid overlap of stories within the newsroom (www,nraismc.com, 2018).

The role of the beat reporter is also to interpret, translate into a comprehensible story. Much like the legal profession has its own proprietary language, so too do many regions, neighbourhood, sectors and specialized businesses. It is the role of the beat reporter to understand the language and convert it for general consumption for the reader. They further explained that there are traditional beats which include the national assembly and the state houses of assembly, the state house and government houses, politics, energy, maritime, aviation, the capital market, the courts, religion, and education.

Objectivity in Reporting

Journalism objectivity or news objectivity had its origins in Western media cultures, especially in the United States, in the early 20th century. The principle, however, has found its way into codes of ethics and journalism education in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Ward, 2019). He stated that, in 2018, objectivity is a controversial norm. Within the field of journalism ethics, the issue is whether objectivity as traditionally understood—a neutral reporting of "just the facts"—remains a valid ideal. In society, the debate swirls around the future of democratic public spheres and the need for reliable news sources. Misinformation and partisan voices threaten to swamp public channels of information. How can citizens distinguish truth from falsity in journalism? Objective from subjective reports? Informed analysis from biased opinion?

According to Hackett (2015) the concept of objectivity connotes a set of practices and ideas, such as a stance of neutrality or balance in relation to the people and events being reported. The prehistory of objectivity is, in large part, the history of objectivity, truth, and fact in the culture. This is because journalists defined their notion of objectivity by adapting notions from philosophy, science, and the ambient culture. For a reporter, its not hard to find things to write about when a big news story is breaking. But what about those slow news days when

there are no fires, homicides or press conferences to cover? Those are the days when reporters must dig up stories on their own, stories not based on press releases but on a reporter's own observation and investigation, (Rogers 2019, p.1).

The central notion of news objectivity is that reporters should be neutral stenographers of fact, eliminating their opinions and interpretations from their reports. By the middle of the 1900s onward, this idea of objectivity as just the facts was subjected to a withering critique by journalists who sought a more engaged journalism and academics who rejected the idea of neutral facts. Also, the early 21st-century digital revolution created online communication that favored an interpretive journalism skeptical of neutrality and objectivity.

The Legislature.
The Legislature according to Aloa & Olawunmi (2014, p. 124) is a generic name which is domesticated under various labels in any countries – National and State Assemblies in Nigeria, Parliament in Britain and Congress in the United States, among others. They further noted that in a democracy, the Legislature, the law making arm of government, can be regarded as the ultimate state authority given its two fundamental roles. These are the powers to override a President's objection to a bill and still get the bill passed into law once the legislature can muster a two-thirds vote in favour of such bill and the power to impeach the President for contraventions which the Lawmakers consider impeachable offence(s). "In this way, we can say 'Parliament' means the place where deliberations are held. Combining the two views, we can say Legislature or Parliament is that branch of government which performs the function of lawmaking through deliberations" (Ghai, 2015). Therefore, in reporting the Legislature such as the Rivers State House of Assembly, it is important to be conversant with the hierarchy that is the leadership structure in the chamber, the proceedings as well as the oversight functions under which house committees are set up to oversee the activities of relevant ministries, parastatals and relevant agencies of government. Hence the responsibility of the beat reporter who would have lasted some time at the legislature to understand legislative lingo and with the ability to explain them to the public.

But the danger of this according to Open School of Journalism (2013) is that it is hard to spend so much time getting to know people without starting to feel like one of them. The danger is that the beat reporter forgets that he/she is an observer of the beat, looking after the interests of the reader or listener and starts looking after the interests of the key people in the beat. Potter (as cited in Uzochukwu, 2014) laments:

> Ethical lapses do occur in journalism. Reporters have accepted payments from sources. News organizations have published advertisements in the guise of news. When this happens, the publics have the right to question everything that appears in the news media. All journalists and all news organizations, suffer when journalists behave unethically because that behaviour calls the profession's credibility into question. When credibility suffers, so does a news organization ability to survive economically.

Also Wilmot (as cited in Uzochukwu 2014) in his comparative analysis on the consequence of unethical behaviour among journalists maintains:

you have a choice; you can work in a supermarket, a bank, or a surgery. As long as you choose to do a job where truth is the measure of Professionalism, you must resist whatsoever the sacrifice. You cannot offer the excuse that you tell lies to feed and house your family because by lying to defend a disastrous government you sacrifice the futures of your children and grandchildren. Doctors, architects, builders and other professionals have codes of conduct as well as professional competence, violation of which leads to deaths and collapse of buildings. Doctors, lawyers and engineers can be sued or jailed for professional malpractice (p. 25 – 26).

Beat and the quest for Objectivity in reporting

The constitutional and legal protections for a free press as well as access to government-held

information give journalists not only the right, but also the tools with which to monitor government. The checks and balances inherent in the representative system also legitimize journalistic inquiry as part of a broader framework of government accountability to citizens. According to Nwanne (2007, p.444) "perhaps one of the strongest arguments against objectivity is rooted in what Lichtenberg refers to as the "sociology of knowledge". He further explains that this sociology finds its fullest expression in postmodernism; it is shared by many sociologist, humanists, legal scholars and other social critics. They believe that the idea of objectivity rests on an outmoded and untenable theory of knowledge, according to which objective knowledge consists in correspondence between some idea or statement and a reality out there in the word.

Media freedoms are not guaranteed and journalists, especially those in the beats can count on few protections. Apart from physical attacks, beat reporters have also been subjected to jail terms and harassment lawsuits as well as laws that restrict information access, all of which impede their ability to expose wrongdoing. Beat system of reporting is expensive and

time-consuming. It requires an investment in the journalist and resources to make him bold.

Udeajah (2004) insists that the media cannot be considered separately from political system in which they operate because political forces of the society direct and constrain the choices of those who operate and administer media services. He further acknowledged that not every political culture encourages the media to set their own public agenda. For instance, in a multi-cultural context, politicians and bureaucrats often reserve for themselves the power to set agenda, although they use broadcast media and other institutions as deemed appropriate to each situation.

This researchers corroborates with the fact that some prominent people in society influence

the media by telling them what they want them to go public with, for instance a Lawmaker in the Rivers State House of Assembly Hon. Kelechi Nwogu in July 2014 made a statement against the then administration of Governor Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, when he realized himself, he called back members of the Rivers State House of Assembly Press Corp who were present at the instance and asked them delete part of what he has said which to the media is main meat of the news. In another instance, when the power players in the society wants their opinion to be heard, they go to straight to any media of their choice not minding what the beat reporters think. Perilla (2018) posits that objectivity is not being a mouthpiece for rich and powerful interests, neither is it just promoting their personal politics but to criticize and report on those things that are clearly affecting the lives of people in their communities.

Objectivity in reporting entails the responsibility for Journalists as fourth estate of the realm, besides the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. This requires that Journalists wherever they found themselves should not take sides in their reportage. Objectivity according to Calcutt& Hammond (2011) is a complex and dynamic idea that refers to three distinct, yet interrelated concepts, truthfulness, neutrality and detachment.

Consequences of objectivity failure in Beats

The failure of many journalists to abide by the professional code of ethics which emphasises objectivity, balance, fairness, thoroughness, honesty and relevance have led to the perception that many of our journalists through their coverage of Legislative activities often de-emphasize how to make a contribution towards the information that would bring about sustainable development. Instead they raise issues that will please their pay masters (Pate &Dauda 2015).

Though, the above problems may not all be deliberate, but a manifestation of mental laziness, professional incompetence, poor research and analytical skills and very disturbingly, arrogance among some media personnel. Journalists reporting biased information or not accurate sometimes maybe counterproductive because to pretend or look away from important information that could benefit the public rather than the legislature will be dangerous. Instead it could be reported accurately with diplomacy. "Nothing has a greater capacity to undermine the moral and ethical credibility of a writer of the media than evidence of distorted reporting of factual events. This is because in journalism what is omitted is sometimes of greater value than what is reported" (Sankore as cited in Pate &Dauda 2015, p. 221).

Meanwhile, looking further into the challenges of Nigerian journalists, it is discovered that some of them work in very stringent conditions. They are handicapped with poor living conditions, inadequate facilities, poor remuneration, and absence of proper working tools and lack of security or insurance scheme etc. based on this they are left in the hands of incompetent sources of information. Those in the Rivers State House of Assembly for instance are left in the hands of the Lawmakers who by providing some of the facilities buy their consciences.

Similarly, some of the journalists who appear competent are subdued by the attitudes of their individual media organizations to the detriment of their professionalism. This is because

some of the media managers, editor or the owners are so familiar with the leadership of the institutions in Nigeria that when a story concerning them comes to their desk, they are killed instantly not minding the effort of the journalist that brought the story. For instance the government owned media in the State will never air anything negative about any lawmaker in the Rivers State House of Assembly. The private owned media on their own part finds it difficult to publish because of their familiarity with the lawmakers who solves their financial needs. The survival instinct pervading most media organizations, in their desire to sell copies and attract viewers and listeners, they violate journalistic ethics through "colourful, unique and unexpected" stories which may have negative consequence on society, (Pate &Dauda, 2015, p. 221). Based on this fact, Ekeanyanwu (2007) advised that media editors and owners are expected to avoid the practices of fraternization with political aspirations of their owners. According to him they are expected to shun all forms of subjective or bias reporting to political events and issues. He however concluded that Nigeria Journalists has allowed their employers, families, relatives and friends as well as type/nature of society to influence the way and manner they carry on with their professional duties.

It is also common knowledge that most journalists are afraid of being recalled back to the office because of the stipend gotten at the end of the month while media owners and editors seek financial help from these lawmakers at the detriment of objectivity. Most media owners are politicians directly in government or outside the government, but with active support for the government with various motivations for the support, (Akpan & Nwosu, 2015, p. 269). For instance, Mr. Ngo Martin Yellow was the Chairman Civil Service Commission in Rivers State and owns the "Top News" newspaper which also has a correspondent in the Rivers State House of Assembly. The paper created a full page column for the activities of the Assembly.

> Tinubu (as cited in Akpan & Nwosu, 2015) noted:

> While a section of the media has performed creditably well, a growing section is besotted with power, often crossing the line. The newsrooms have become shopping centres where interests shop for the most pliable editor or reporter to push their points of view or story. The investigative knack gone. The fire of patriotism continues to be extinguished and tat of professionalism is now only a flicker. Journalism has become not just a danger to itself as a profession, but inflicts harm to the Republic by knowingly feeding the people half-truths, innuendos and outright falsehood. When reporting and reality are too far apart, journalism has ceased and propaganda has begun. A nation awash in propaganda is a nation dry and devoid of democracy much like a desert is devoid of water. (p. 269).

Theoretical Framework

This Paper adopted the absolutist theory as its tool of analysis. This theory argues that there are moral universal which should guide all human beings no matter the place, time or age. It is also based on the fact that a good action should be right everywhere in the World, at all times and in all circumstances. Kant (as cited in Marbaniang, 2012) assumed that reason imposes moral obligation and that reason reveals that morality is a matter of moral duty

rather than consequences , since circumstances sometimes prevent "us from performing our moral duty. It is the view of Merril (as cited in Pepple and Acholonu 2018, p. 58) that the ethical absolutist believes that there is one universal and eternal code that basically applies to everyone in all ages, that changing opinions, traditions and conditions make no significant differences in this absolute moral code.

Fab-Ukozor (2004, P. 15) states that in the field of journalism, the professional who believes in this theory accepts in principle that there are absolute and universal journalistic ethics which should guide the practicing journalists everywhere in the World and which should equally form the basis for the articulation of a universal and eternal code in journalism. The ethical moral universals are truthfulness, fairplay, accuracy, balance and objectivity. Therefore, for a Journalist, especially beat reporter or Media Organization to maintain its integrity, objectivity in news must be maintained.

Methodology

This paper adopted the in-depth interview (IDI) technique alongside participant observation as research designs. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.139), IDI "is a qualitative method which provides detailed background information about respondents and elaborate on data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivation, reconciliations, experiences and feelings". Therefore, the Indebt Interview technique was used for the study in order to get information from those directly involved in the issue.

The population of this study comprised all accredited members of the Rivers State House of Assembly beat who were selected because of the focus of the study. A total number of journalists in the Rivers State House of Assembly beat as at January 2020 is twenty-five (25). Therefore, the population of the study is 25 accredited members of the Rivers State House of Assembly Press Corp.This implies that the 25 accredited Journalists in the Rivers State House of Assembly beat were all sampled. This is known as census survey, where the entire population is sampled because of the small population size. According to Nworgu (2008) when the population of study is small, the entire population can be sampled.

The Participant Observation is the second method used in this study. It is an added advantage when a researcher undergoes participant-observation because the researcher has to be there to observe what is actually happening Lindlof and Taylor(as cited in Acholonu, 2019). They explained that qualitative observation is primarily done in naturalistic settings in which the researcher observe her/his subjects performing and interacting in a natural environment. They highlighted that qualitative observers have the advantage of observing without being governed by specific procedures. Researchers conducting qualitative participant-observation note broader trends, styles, and patterns correlated with the way their subjects behave.

Qualitative Data Presentation of the In-depth Interview.

The analysis of data was presented qualitatively. This section presents an analyses and explanation of the qualitative information collected during the interview with the various respondents in the Rivers State House of Assembly beat. An explanation does not exist in and

of itself, it explains something. The formulation of the question identifies the interest of the researchers, the aspects of the case they are concerned with and the direction of the research. It also suggests what would provide a satisfactory explanation, Andrade (as cited in Acholonu, 2019, p. 159).

In the analyses done in this section, the researchers tried to make sense out of the responses of the respondents. This entail searching for similar patterns of thinking that is within the bounds of the questions asked. In the qualitative analysis of the various responses made by the participants during the interview session, the researchers used a constant comparison method which involved the probing for common words, phrases and concepts in the discussions and responses of the participants.

Secondly, the participant's responses were then contrasted and categorized carefully in line with the various themes identified and highlighted in the research objectives. This entails highlighting the key responses that agreed with the research objectives of the study, in such a way as to enable the researchers to sift through the responses and take away irrelevant portions and analyse the portions highlighted. , while focusing on the critical issues that has bearing on the research objective.

The 25 respondents were interviewed properly with an average of 5 minutes for each person. Due to length of the interview, a summary of the responses were presented with few facts introduced in indented form. The responses were presented according to how they answered the research questions raised in the study.

Research Question One: Does friendship at the beat affect objectivity in reporting the Rivers State House of Assembly beat?

Most of the respondents at the Rivers State House of Assembly beat agreed that friendship at the beat affects the way the way the reporters write their stories. Some of the respondents evaluated whether familiarity with lawmakers at the Rivers StateHouse of Assembly affect their reportage.

They said it does sometimes as they tend to dance to the whims and caprices of the lawmakers who sometimes pay them for their coverage. They also said overtime, it is almost as though, they are a family with the lawmakers as they are involved in activities of their personal lives, apart from official duties, hence the friendship created therefrom. Reporter from Rhythm 93.7 FM explained that, "covering a beat almost every other day makes you familiar with the beat and sometimes subjects you to their dictates".

In discussing the what extent friendship at the beat deprive beat reporters of the Rivers State House of Assembly of objectivity role? One of the respondent attested to the fact that familiarity/friendship at the beat makes one to be less objective in reporting issues that concerns the lawmakers, thereby affect their objectivity role of the media.

> "Sometimes when we remember that we are always here with the lawmakers, it becomes difficult to report negative things against them" Wave Fm reporter.

> "The truth is that there are a lot of things they do here that we don't report, sometimes not really about friendship but because you will be afraid that when you report they will threaten to de-accredit your station". Classic FM reporter.

The other respondents supported the views above on how familiarity with lawmakers affect objectivity role of the media. A respondent particularly made reference to the fact that they do not have much of an option. According to the respondents.

> "...it is a case of he who pays the piper dictates the tune, as you can see it will not be easy to be truly objective, we must report to suit them because we will like them to be angry with us"

Some other respondents who did not differ from other ones agreed that friendship at the beat affects the way the reporters write their stories.

> "the familiarity of some of our reporters with lawmakers here in the Rivers State House of Assembly makes it difficult to report them in negative light. Infact, there a lot of ills in the legislature that are left unreported for fear of being singled out or punished". "It may be that some of the lawmakers have in one way or the other rendered favour to the some of the reporters which can prevent them from being objective in their reportage".

Research Question 2: Whether friendship by media owners, managers and editors affect objectivity in news from the Rivers State House of Assembly beat?

In discussing whether friendship by media owners, manager and editors affect objectivity in news from the Rivers State House of Assembly beat, the respondents contends that the media owners, managers and editors affect objectivity in news stories as brought by the beat reporters in the Rivers State House of Assembly. They stressed as follows:

> "...these media owners do not allow to do our job as required, they are always patronizing one lawmaker or the other, especially if they from the same constituent"

> "infact, these media owners are part of our problem, because they are friends with these lawmakers, they see them as untouchables.

The other respondents echoed the thoughts above on the influence of the media owners, managers and editors on objectivity of their reportage. A respondent from Radio Rivers 99.1FM particularly made reference to the fact that the news editor and General manager makes sure that no negative thing is written about the government, as according to them "lawmakers are part of government" these news stories are screened before they go on air. According to the respondent "the influence of media owners weakens the ability of reporters to be objective for fear of being termed as 'insubordination'". Some respondents, particularly those in the private media in their answers indicated that the media owners, managers and editors influences to a lesser extent the objectivity of the stories brought in by beat reporters.

They stated thus: "the influence of the media owners will not have any significant impact at all on the objectivity of news stories because they do not know what we do here, except they are been told". "Of course, you know that some of these media owners are politicians themselves, they know where they meet, you cannot tell me that somebody like the owner of National Network Newspaper will be objective, when he actually works with a politician". "The General Managers of the State Broadcast stations are afraid of being removed from office, so cannot be objective, so they must be sure a reporter writes in favour of the lawmakers"

Research Question 3. The challenges facing reporters in accessing news from the Rivers State House of Assembly beat?

The reinvents highlighted some challenges facing reporters in accessing news from the Rivers State House of Assembly beat. The views expressed by the respondents on the challenges ranges from poor remuneration, ignorance, ownership influences, poor working conditions, inadequate facilities. The views are presented as: "presently, at the Rivers State House of Assembly, the recording room is out of place, and speakers are not working, making it difficult for especially the electronic to operate. the electronic media such as the Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation, Cool/Wazobia/Info, Rhythm and Love FM etc need voice inserts for actuality reports". "The correspondents of these media organizations would be moving from one office to the other to record the voices of Lawmakers who spoke at plenary. this is one situation that no organization should allow, they anomaly should be corrected without delay". "The stipends that are given to reporters as transport allowance is no longer regular even after being slashed". "Most lawmakers are press shy, so it is becoming difficult to access information from them. Some of the respondents contends that "unprofessional attitude of some reporters also makes it difficult for reporters to access information from lawmakers. "Some lawmakers run away at the sight of a reporter believing they are coming to beg for money" this is because some of us are uncultured, believing they have come here to make money instead of facing their work" "my dear if you see where some of our reporters are rushing money, you begin to wonder"

Data from Participant-Observation

The observations were noted and written down on sheets of papers describing how the members of the Rivers State House of Assembly Press Corps were talking and communicating with each other or to lawmakers. The observer focused on the interactions of Press corps members and the notable incidents, behaviours, actions, stories, and events that are associated with their activities and interaction with lawmakers at the Rivers State House of Assembly.

The type of stories they write, the comments they make and their interactions were observed. To provide data showing how members of the Rivers State House of Assembly beat go about their activities of reportage, one of the researchers was part of the beat to enable her get access to the activities and also interact with them. the researcher attended plenaries, oversight functions, public hearings, wrote stories and made comments.

The report's findings show that friendship at the beat affects objectivity in reporting the

Rivers State House of Assembly beat. The beat reporters stated that some of them have stayed so long in the beat that it becomes difficult to report objectively, rather they are choosy in their reportage. For example, Ngozi Anosike, a reporter with National Network Newspaper who has spent over 10 years reporting the Assembly, attends the same with church with the lawmaker representing Asari-Toru 2 constituency. AllwellEne of the Classic FM became very close to the Deputy Speaker that he call him "my Oga". AllwellEne became so close to the lawmaker that he coordinates other reporters when, the Deputy Speaker has other events outside the plenary.

The current study's findings show that media owners, managers and editors, influence affects objectivity in reporting the Rivers State House of Assembly beat. For instance, in trying to inform members of the public on the effort of the Rivers State House of Assembly in the fight against covid 19, the chairman House Committee on Information and training, Hon. EnemiAlabo George, invited the Managers and News editors for a briefing and specific instruction were issued to them, this is despite the fact that there is press corps. In some other instances, the lawmakers send stories directly to the General Managers and News editors not minding the fact every media organization has a representative in the press corps. Kelvin Nengia and Ijeoma Tubosia who both work with owned media noted that sometimes before a story by the House Committee Chairman on information and training gets to them, their GMs have already received them via WhatsApp. This is because they see him as their boss, due to the fact that the state parastatals are under his office.

Announcements for screaming and public hearings from the House of Assembly are most times sent directly to the bosses as a means of familiarization, ignoring the fact that it should come from the reporters.It was observed that before now every announcement that will emanate from the Assembly passes though the reporter. According to IjeomaTubosia, during the 7ᵗʰ Assembly in Rivers State, every announcement goes through reporters and not the other way round. Even when lawmakers call the bosses they are told that there is a representative of the organization there, "but now it's no longer like that".

The findings of the study also revealed that beat reporters face a lot of challenges at the Rivers State House of Assembly such as poor remuneration, victor James, a reporter with Beacon Newspapers and Wariso Wariso of Independent Monitor have been at the Rivers State House of Assembly for over 9 years. They use to five hundred (500,000) thousand naira as allowance for the Press Corps but has been reduced to three hundred (300,000) thousand naira and recently slashed to two hundred (200,000) thousand naira. This is difficult because most of the reporters are not being paid in their various organizations, especially those in private outfits. Hence, it is difficult to be objective since they are looking up to the lawmakers for some gratifications.

The facilities at the Assembly, especially the speakers at the Press gallery are old and begging for repairs. Most of the reporters who need voice inserts go from lawmaker to lawmaker for a repeat of what they said at the plenary. Most the reporters manage the old speaker that is hung at the top of the gallery by raising their midgets although the Assembly sitting.

Findings also revealed that most lawmakers are afraid of reporters for fear of being tasked.

Ngozi Anosike said immediately they see you, they will tell you they don't want to talk before they will not want to drop money. Therefore, even when you are not expecting anything from them they still avoid you. Hence making it difficult for reporters to get exclusives from them. recently the 9ᵗʰ Assembly ended its first session without any Press briefing, there is supposed to be a briefing by the House Leader or House Committee Chairman on information.

Discussion of findings.

Three research questions were formulated for the study. The analysis of the data was done qualitatively based on the data collected through in-depth interview and participant. Data collected were transcribed and presented according to each respondents' view of the subject under investigation. The summary of the results according to research questions, were captured for analysis.

Research Question 1: whether friendship at the beat influence reporters of the Rivers State House of Assembly from being?

Finding to research question one revealed that that friendship at the beat affect objectivity as reporters dance to the whims and caprices of the pay masters at the beats they cover, thereby dampening their reports to suit their friends at the various beats. According to them, friendship at the beat is inimical to objectivity. Journalists should de familiarise themselves with beat as too much familiarity affects objectivity. Therefore, periodic review of reporters' beats is needed to create room for objectivity, fairness and balance in reportage. This result collaborates the statement of Jensen (2016) that NPR's ethics code does not address friendships with sources, only conflicts with family relationships, but many journalism ethics guides counsel against becoming too close to sources or those one covers. According to Poynter (as cited in Jensen, 2016) "Getting too close can jeopardize your objectivity. If you become friends, you may find yourself telling that source's side of the story — to the detriment of the other sides. You may withhold important information to protect the source unnecessarily. You may even avoid writing news articles because your source wants to suppress information."

Research Question 2: whether friendship by media owner, managers and editors affect objectivity in news stories emanating from the Rivers State House of Assembly?

Findings to research question two revealed that the media owners, managers and editors affect objectivity in news stories as brought by the beat reporters in the Rivers State House of Assembly. These media owners do not allow to do our job as required, they are always patronizing one lawmaker or the other, especially if they from the same constituent. It was observed that announcements for screaming and public hearings from the House of Assembly are most times sent directly to the bosses as a means of familiarization, ignoring the fact that it should come from the reporters.

Research Question 3: whether there are challenges facing reporters from accessing news from the State House of Assembly beat?

The result to research question three show that, it was agreed that there are challenges faced by beat reporter in reporting the Rivers State House of Assembly. Respondents have challenges such as poor allowances, in some cases non- payment of stipends, ignorance,

ownership influences, poor working conditions, inadequate facilities. Some of them pointed to the fact that presently at the Rivers State House of Assembly, the recording room is out of place, and speakers are not working, making it difficult for especially the electronic to operate. This is because the electronic media such as the Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation, Cool/Wazobia/Info, Rhythm and LoveFMetc need voice inserts for actuality reports. The correspondents of these media organizations would be moving from one office to the other to record the voices of Lawmakers who spoke at plenary. According to the respondents, this is one situation that no organization should allow, they anomaly should be corrected without delay. All these challenges makes it difficult for beat reporters to operate on their own.

Conclusion.

Familiarity with beats and friendship is inimical to effective practice of journalism as reporters tend to dance to the whims and caprices of their pay masters, thereby dampening their reports. It is argued that for journalists to be objective at the beats, periodic change from their organizations should be made, this will reduce the degree of familiarity and bring about balance, fairness and sound judgement in reporting events at the beats. Therefore, reporters need to be reshuffled from beat to beat to de-familiarise them and to enable them achieve balance, fairness and objectivity in their reportage, though it is often said that attaining objectivity and balance is difficult due to human frailties and negates the principles of specialization in reporting.

Recommendations

It is recommended, that:

1. Beats should be rotational to de-familiarize a reporter with a particular beat while ethical standards and considerations, should be the guiding principles of every reporter to enable objective and balance reporting at all times.

2. Media owners, News managers, and editors should keep their distance and help the reporters maintain their standard.

3. The Rivers State House of Assembly and indeed other State Assemblies should provide adequate facilities to help reporters perform their duties objectively

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THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In any nation, the media plays a vital role in creating, moulding and reflecting public opinion. Over the years, the media became so popular that it earned the status "Fourth Estate of the Realm". The media's crucial role in national development is not in doubt. The positive role of media in national development has been recognized in developing countries because information dissemination plays a key role in bringing social change among the receivers. Over the years, development communication has been engaged in finding a niche in the efforts to tackle the formidable problems of underdevelopment and marginalization of millions of people and thousands of communities worldwide through a process of directed social change. The media's role in national development was explored in this paper from the political, national security, educational, economic and social perspectives and hinged on the development media theory. Using the desk research method, the study concluded that the role of the media cannot be divorced from the essence of government itself which is for the betterment of the lives of the people or a given nation. The media performs the role of not only being the fourth estate of the realm but acts as a bridge between the government and the people it governs and represent.

Keywords: Role, Mass Media, National Development, Development

Introduction

The mass media, which include the whole entity of newspapers, radio, television and the Internet, are important in shaping the development process of a country. National development involves changes or advancement in a nation aimed at improving the political, economic and social lives of the people (Khalid, Ahmed & Mufti 2015). It is a holistic process of action, organization and communication and involves economic, political, social and cultural factors. Development means change that is beneficial to man. Development refers to a change process geared at improving or making better, the life and environment of man. Dudley (1985) cited in Khalid et al posited that development involves the creation of opportunities for the realization of human potentialities. Development is neither a simple nor straightforward linear process. It is a multidimensional exercise that seeks to transform society by addressing the entire complex interwoven strands, living in pulses which are a part of an organic whole (Haqqani & Abdul, 2003). Where the media comes in development process is through what is called "development communication".

Development communication is the type of communication which is consciously packaged by the sender such that the message content or the information sent could persuade, encourage or convince the receiver or target audience to adopt an attitude and participate in actualizing a development plan or goal. More specifically, development communication refers to the practice of systematically applying the processes, strategies and principles of communication to bring about positive social change (Quebral, 1972). At certain instances, the message sent aims at making the target audience adopt a positive attitudinal change towards a development purpose. Over the years, development communication has been engaged in finding a niche in the efforts to tackle the formidable problems of underdevelopment and marginalisation of millions of people and thousands of communities worldwide through a process of directed social change.

More than three decades ago, Omu (1978) cited in Okoro (2013) emphasized that the press in Nigeria should be an effective and vibrant independent entity that could be instrumental to achieving sustainable developmental goals. The real influence of the media in national development can be said to be peculiar to the media themselves, the societies in which they operate, and the audience they reach. None of these factors are the same everywhere, at all times, or all conditions. The media in dictatorships or traditional monarchies for example, are not likely to exercise the same influence as those in democratic societies. The Media's crucial role in national development is not in doubt. The role covers the political, national security, health sector, economic and social spheres, to mention but a few. The media set the public agenda and act as the gatekeeper of public issues. They perform the watchdog role especially in political transparency and fight against corruption. As the fourth estate, the media provide the checks and balances in relation to the three branches of government, as created by the constitution. Media are particularly important in facilitating nation building especially of post-colonial societies and those experiencing ethnic and religious diversities. In the context of a nation, Eapen projected that three major factors must be considered in any discussion on development. These factors are economic growth, self-reliance, and social factors. Development is a qualitative change, which entails changes in the structure of the economy, social environment, educational system and political disposition. The overall object of national development is human development, the purpose of which is to enlarge people's choices for-- greater access to knowledge; better nutrition and health services; more secure livelihoods; security against crime and physical violence; political and cultural freedoms; and a sense of participation in community activities. The media have been variously described as the fourth estate, agenda setter, watchdog, force multiplier, and gate-keeper, all in an effort to demonstrate their influence on society (Khalid, Ahmed & Mufti 2015). Alternatively, the media have been perceived as a venue for sensationalism, propaganda, and bias, factors hostile to national development. Given these perceptions about the media, the extent to which they contribute to national development wherein the targets of national development are the people have been the object of empirical inquiries. Media's role in national development are analysed in this paper from political, national security, educational, economic and social perspectives.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The media is crucial in national development since it influences and shapes public opinion, behaviour and attitudes of the public. Despite the constraints confronting the various

mediums of the press in the discharge of its functions as the fourth estate of the realm, the role of the mass media in the national development process is enormous. The need to examine the specific roles which the media play in supporting development agenda at sectorial levels of government therefore becomes imperative. Accordingly, the study is set to examine and possibly establish the relationship between the mass media and national security, political, educational and economic development.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper explored the role the mass media plays in a nation's development with emphasis on selected developmental sectors.

Specifically, this paper therefore sought to answer the following questions:

(a)   To what extent do the media contribute to national security development?

(b)   How do the media influence the national economic development?

©   In what ways do the media influence educational development in the society?

(d)   What are the key roles of the media in the political development in a nation?

THE MASS MEDIA

Media is a truncation of the term media of communication, referring to those organized means of dissemination of fact, opinion, entertainment and other information, such as newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio, television, the World Wide Web, billboards, CDs, DVDs, videocassettes, computer games and other forms of publishing (Ndolo 2011). Ojo (1999) says the mass media is grouped along three other main estates viz: the executives, judiciary and the legislative while the agents of mass media are regarded as the fourth estate of the realm in any nation. The mass media have been grouped into two classes: the print media which includes newspaper, magazines, circulars, pamphlet, direct mail, bill boards, sky writing and technical device that carries a message to the masses by appealing to their sense of sight. The second category is the electronic media, under this we have radio, television, motion pictures and video recording (that appeal to both the sense of sound and vision); indeed mass media are said to be modern principle papers, magazines and the internet media (Uyo 1987, Blank and Harolsen 1975 cited in Ojo 1999 and Ajibade, 2010).

The mass media, according to C. Wright Mills in the power elite (1956) have two important sociological characteristics: first, very few people can communicate to a great number; and second, the audience has no effective way of answering back. Media output is regulated by governments everywhere, but the restrictions vary from very light advisory regulation (for example no cigarette advertising or nudity on TV) to the most comprehensive forms of censorship in totalitarian societies (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology 2005). The mass media are crucial in nation building. Governments can hardly survive without effective use of the mass media. The press are so powerful in any society that Edmund Burke, an 18th century politician first described it as the Fourth Estate of the realm, referring to the three major powers in Medieval times in European society which are the Lords, the Clergy and the Commons (Nwabueze 2014). Today, the mass media are still called the fourth estate of the realm, the other estates being the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The traditional

roles of the mass media in any society which are to inform, educate and entertain are so crucial that societies can hardly progress meaningfully without these channels of mass communication.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Ali A. D (2013) examined The Role of Media in National Security in Nigeria 1960-1999. The study focused on the role of the media in national security in Nigeria in the period 1960 and 1999.The study stated that The Nigerian mass media since independence has faced the greatest challenge of how to make itself relevant to the Nigerian society. The study argued that newspaper orientation in Nigeria shifted towards reinforcing tribal and sectional loyalties in preference to national unity and integration. This in itself is a threat to security. Media reports greatly heightened tension since Nigeria's independence. On the whole, the media contributed more than any other sector to restoring the current democracy in Nigeria. The study recommended that security operatives should work with media practitioners as watch dogs. The media should rise to their expectation and use their power judiciously or else national security will continue to be threatened. Newsmen are expected to feed the public with information capable of promoting peace and development.

Similarly, Nwaolikpe O.N focused on The case of 'Baby Factory' Activities in Nigeria while studying The Mass Media and National Development. The paper argued that though the mass media have the power to easily propagate ideas on social change, they do not perform their functions and objectivities fully in Nigeria due to political, economic and social conditions in the country and in the mass media organizations. The paper concluded that the media should be allowed to promote national identity of Nigeria through the in-depth coverage of societal issues that may be detrimental to the country's growth.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is hinged on the development media theory. The role of the mass media in national development process is hinged on what Denis McQuail called 'Development Media Theory'. It was propounded in 1987. This theory is quite influential because it sees the media as a pivot for national development especially for developing countries of which Nigeria is one. McQuail (1983:131) stated that the central thesis of the theory is that the mass media in developing nations should be used for 'the primacy of the national development task (economic, social, cultural and political); the pursuit of cultural and informational autonomy; support for democracy; and solidarity with other developing countries'. He outlined six main principles/tenets of the theory; they are as follows:-

- Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.

- Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development need of the society.

- Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and languages.

- Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically.

- Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
- In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in or restrict media operation and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.

Primarily, development media theory is rooted in modernization/functionalist paradigm of mass media's role in development. It presupposes the use of mass media in achieving development in developing countries. The assumption is that the mass media are part of the instruments for achieving development in developing nations like Nigeria. According to Domatob and Hall (1983:10), the late Kenyan nationalist of repute, Jomo Kenyatta urged the press to "…positively promote national development and growing self-respect since in Africa, it can have a tremendous influence on nation-building. It may constantly inspire or could set out to frustrate the spirit of national unity which every young country needs as the fundamental of its progress."

The Media Development Theory is critiqued on the basis of being an updated version of authoritarian theory as it allows that media should never surrender its powers to criticize government policies even if it risks causing the policies to fail. Media is no doubt given power but there is no check kept upon it and instead of being led by the government it may be led by another ideology that may be business minded which would have nothing to do with the betterment of the society as for the sake of business it would always be in favour of keeping the business profitable rather than paying attention to the duties and accountability issues of the media (Rahib Raza, 2013).This can only prevail in a society with a weaker judiciary as the shift of power from government goes into the hands of the bureaucrats and the rich. For this reason it is more vulnerable for the third world countries rather than the more developed ones yet they were introduced and created by the developed countries. Despite the critics' opinion about this theory, the underlying fact behind the genesis of this theory was that there can be no development without communication. The weakness of this theory is that "development" is often equated with government propaganda.

METHODOLOGY

The desk research method was used for this study. The desk research method otherwise known as the secondary source of information is the method where the researcher obtains information from the data that has already been collected by other sources such as data disseminated in a scientific journal, books, internet, scholarly works (Mesly, 2015) in (Ajayi 2017).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

THE MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria's national security means the protection of its resources, territory, sovereignty and lawful institutions of the country. The aim of national security is to secure the just and equitable living conditions of the country (Danladi, 2013). The mass media is a principal player in the arena of national security. Nigeria's National security has been greatly

threatened since independence. When Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the mass media orientation shifted towards reinforcing tribal and sectional loyalties in preference to national unity, identity and integration. The media became parochial in their content. They dedicated themselves to the articulation of particular ethnic interest (Udoudo & Asak 2008:4). Press reports during this period greatly heightened tension, which created suspicion among the citizenry and almost led to the disintegration of the corporate existence of the country. Security is part of public interest and media professionals must have genuine interest in people. The primary focus of any mass media should be on issues that benefit the general public and uphold fairness, justice, national unity and international co-operation (Gambo in Akinfeleye, 2003:12). The function of the press in any given society includes surveillance of the environment, correlation of the component of society in responding to the environment and transmission of the social heritage (Wali, 2003: 17).

The media functions as a watchdog capable of blowing the whistle to call attention to serious national issues. This implies a clear recognition of the fact that the media plays an important role on issues of national security. The power of the media to decide what the people should read, see or hear has never been in doubt. What has been in the centre of controversy is the capacity of those in whose hands reside such enormous powers to use that power judiciously and in public interest. Media professionals have the options to use the power of media instruments in their hands either to serve the nation or indulge in self-propelled interest. The media ought to be objective as it carries out its functions. Mainly because of its social role in informing and educating the masses the Nigerian press is always made to be seen at the centre of any national crisis. This has caused the Nigerian media to be reduced overtime to mere tools in the hands of the governing class to legitimize and perpetuate their illegitimate rule. The political class has found it easy to impose its will on the media because of the challenges that media practitioners had to face in the course of discharging their duties. Such challenges include poor remunerations, poor conditions of service, job insecurity, nepotism, exposure to hazards, inadequate facilities for research and development and so on (Ofuafor 2008:1).

It is in the enlightened self-interest of media practitioners to contribute, as well as protect National Security. Although as members of the fourth estate of the realm, the performance of the Nigerian press has been commendable overall; the activities of some journalists, particularly in the so called new or social media, have undermined National Security, in the reckless way and manner they go about their duties by sometimes openly seeking to bring down a government, whether they are legal or not, elected or unelected. National Security in the true sense is of utmost importance and editors must carefully scrutinize what they put out in their newspapers and or newscasts, as the case may be, in order not to jeopardize the peace and tranquillity of the nation. Complex conflicts are full of pitfalls for journalists, but the more one understands what is really going on in a conflict, and the role of the conflict journalist, the better coverage one can do. In other words understanding what is going on in a conflict zone is critical in managing this often-complicated relationship. Many difficult and intractable conflicts involve whole communities or nations. People get their information about what is going on in these conflicts through the mass media, so the media plays a critical role in either the escalation of the conflict or dousing the tension.

THE MASS MEDIA AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The mass media, whether public or private, plays an important role in any economy by garnering support or opposition for those who govern, by highlighting or failing to highlight the views and/or sins of industry, by providing a voice for the people or not doing so, and by simply spreading economic information. For their ultimate survival the media depend on the state that regulates them, on the firms that pay to advertise through them, and on the consumers they serve. Balancing these different interest groups is a difficult task and how the media industry does so, determines not just its ability to survive, but its effect on economic performance (Roumeen Islam 2002 WBI). Clearly as important providers of information, the media are more likely to promote better economic performance when they are more likely to satisfy three conditions: the media are independent, provide good-quality information, and have a broad reach. That is, when they reduce the natural asymmetry of information between those who govern and those whom they are supposed to serve, and when they reduce information asymmetries between private agents. Such a media industry can increase the accountability of both businesses and government through monitoring and reputational penalties while also allowing consumers to make more informed decisions. The media can pressure corporate managers and directors to behave in ways that are socially acceptable, thereby avoiding actions that will result in censure and consumer boycotts. A recent survey in Malaysia of institutional investors and equity analysts asked which factors were most important to them in considering corporate governance and the decision to invest in publicly listed corporations. Those surveyed gave more importance to the frequency and nature of public and press comments about companies than to a host of other factors considered key in the academic debate. However, the dissemination of credible information in a timely manner depends critically on how the media business is managed and regulated (World Bank 2001).

As has been aptly demonstrated around the world, the media influence economic, political, and social outcomes. The information industry, in which the media play a key role, tends to develop faster in democratic societies that generally foster freer information flows. However, the media industry can also promote greater degrees of freedom and stronger democracies over time. While each affects the other, the important question for those who are involved in designing policy is what types of discreet steps might be taken to establish and maintain free and independent media. This is a concern for all countries, rich and poor. Arbitrary actions by government are always to be feared. If there is to be a bias in the quantity of information that is released, then erring on the side of more freedom rather than less would appear to cause less harm. Even nascent media in countries with non-democratic and arbitrary governments stand a chance. Progress may occur in small steps, and may even be reversed temporarily, but if the people fight for a free press, there is hope. At some point the media reach and sustain what one might call a critical or threshold level of freedom when the people have become accustomed to this freedom, and constraints on this freedom are no longer possible.

In essence, the mass media and its professionals are crucial in addressing the economic challenges currently bedevilling developing economies like Nigeria. However, the mass media do not hold the key to satisfying the economic yearnings of Nigerians but are facilitators of the process and are teachers of socioeconomic actions (Umaru & Sharafa 2013).

MASS MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education is a very integral part of our society, a social institution that shapes individuals and teaches them how to act and behave in certain situations. Education, for a very large part, can be credited with the advent of technology and technological boom that allowed human beings to speed up their discoveries and innovations, in a manner that has left no field untouched by technology. The role of the media in the development of education has been imperative. It has played an important part in influencing the underprivileged and the socio-economic backward sections of the society in recognizing the significance of education (Kapur 2018). In todays advanced world where everything keeps changing at a lightning speed, mass media plays an important role in education which is also advancing day by day. The media has the power of educating people, the good and the bad. Since it affects the eyes, the ears and the mind simultaneously, nothing can overcome the influence of the media. Education is no longer confined to the four walls of the classroom anymore with the mass media being responsible for it. The technological innovation in the mass media of educational communication can now be transmitted to far off places without geographical hindrances. Somebody sitting in Abuja can for instance benefit from a lecture being delivered in the United States and this saves a lot of time and money. This means that education can now be transmitted in real time over computer supported media solutions from faraway places. Media technologies according to Moerdyk (2012) have made real inroad into education as mobile phone and internet applications has made it easy for students, teachers, parents and authorities to communicate almost instantly thereby increasing the efficiency of education.

The use of mass media in educational development in Nigeria has contributed a lot in the widening of the peoples knowledge in the society and also the scope of mass media in the society, media equipment are things like the television, radio and other electronic sets which are meant to give out information objectively through their effective usage to educate the poor masses. Even the role of social media in education has become undeniable. Many students use social media and the information they gain from it as their primary source of knowledge. Random facts and news headlines designed to give away the most information in the shortest amount of time is how the newer generation is programmed to take in bits of information. Social media is a tool that organizations use to ensure communication with their stakeholders. Today, social media has become a terrifying force, being used to correct social ills. So many public officials resign when their scandals get leaked on social media. Mass media has the following specific roles which it has played towards the growth of education and they are Universal Reach, organised influence, fruitful results and storage of information. Mass media has made the world smaller and connected people like never before. Since the target of education is universal coverage, media helped tremendously bridge the gap.

THE MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the past decades, the relationship between the mass media and governments in Nigeria has been a highly contentious issue, drawing attention from a wide range of communication scholars, political scientists, and independent research institutions. While perspectives and findings differ on the role of the press in the country as well as its relationship with

governments, there is a consensus that the concept of sustainable development and governance will be an unrealistic proposition without effective and uncontrolled participation of news sources in disseminating national and political issues (Okoro 2013). Stakeholders in urban and rural communities are not fully and actively engaged in development needs and planning. The citizens of Nigeria to the grassroot, in particular, must be made to appreciate the importance of participating in the political process and challenging unpopular government decisions and actions. The national press and other news sources should play the crucial function of advocating for citizens' understanding of government activities, public policies, and development plans. More than three decades ago, Omu (1978) cited by Okoro emphasized that the press in Nigeria should be an effective and vibrant independent entity that could be instrumental to achieving sustainable political development goals. For much of the twenty century, news sources in Nigeria was involved in promoting political awareness, encouraging civic engagement, sensitizing citizens to national issues, and shaping public opinions on a variety of political issues. But it was noted that this role was played under a controlled, confrontational, controversial atmosphere which compromised the effectiveness of news sources and made objectivity of the press exceedingly difficult.

The limited functional scope of communication channels in the country's development efforts through many government administrations was attributed to the censorship and intimidation that were used to curb and control political coverage and the independence of news sources. As discussions on Nigeria's development crisis continue to take an expanded dimension, recent studies clearly reinforce the position of previous researchers that a robust and free press is quite capable of dismantling negative images and stereotypes which the country has faced over a number of years both at home and abroad (Bennett, 2003; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Diamond, 2004; McCombs & Reynolds, 2009). In a comprehensive report, The World Bank (2009) explained that early development efforts in Nigeria and other emerging African nations were grossly unsuccessful and unattainable largely because of the inadequate role which the news sources were relegated to play, and which resulted in the widespread criticism of the national media as ineffective to gather and analyse salient issues. Furthermore, Okoro (1993) stressed that the establishment of government newspapers in the country weakened the credibility and competitiveness of communication channels, demoralizing the citizens from depending on national news and information. For one thing, government newspapers were better funded, strategically positioned, and adequately staffed to cover news and events. While in recent years there has been a proliferation of news sources in the country, it remains to be seen whether their journalistic political content, analysis of government programs, and political actions and policies will be objectively and critically explained to the citizens.

Several studies have substantiated the contributions of news sources in national development, and stressed why the mass media cannot be divorced from the implementation of development objectives and initiatives. Further, with the advent of new media technology in the twenty-first century, there has been a strong speculation that this advancement in communication network, especially the Internet, will be used to sustain public interest in politics and current affairs, and to increase participation of stakeholders in political strategies as well as foster their commitments to democratic values. The new media

technology will have a tremendous impact on democratic communication in increasing the diffusion of knowledge as well as fostering political consciousness.

CONCLUSION

The positive role of media in national development has been recognized in developing countries because information dissemination plays a key role in bringing social change among the receivers. Besides being a powerful news gathering and news disseminating platform, media is an institution with a deep social foundation. A relationship of reciprocity between media and society lends it the strength it enjoys. Whether print or electronic, media in its appeal is massive and profound. From individual behaviour to social norms, the gamut of media is vast and deep. The role of the media in the development of any nation is very vital and cannot be over emphasized and so they must strive to fulfil their obligations with respect to satisfying both the people and the government without bias. As the Fourth Estate of the Realm, they must be ready to perceive news worthy events with due considerations to their environment and developmental needs of the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The media play a vital role in the area of setting agenda for the public to see, read and talk about therefore they must at all times ensure that they discharge their duties objectively, in all fairness and unbiased.

- The government should understand that the media is part and parcel of them, and therefore give the media the sole right to carry out their activities without fear of having their heads on the line.

- The government must understand that the safety and total well-being of media practitioners are important and as such, should be treated with all sense of responsibility

- There are other areas that pertain to national development which this study did not cover; subsequent studies are encouraged to look at those areas.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTITUDE OF SMOKERS TO THE SLOGAN, "SMOKERS ARE LIABLE TO DIE YOUNG"

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Abstract

The daily lives of the ordinary consumer are one that is faced with a mass of risks. Although these risks are chiefly the resultant outcome of their actions and consumption decisions, most prominent among these risks in recent times has been smoking cigarettes. In addressing the risk of cigarette smoking, hazard warnings, advertising bans and widespread adverse publicity about its dangers have all been accompanied with tobacco. One of those warnings in Nigeria is the slogan, "smokers are liable to die young," which is almost always engraved on cigarette packs, etc. The question of if and to what extent individuals understand the health implications of smoking cigarettes is inextricably connected to how much their smoking behaviour is strongly influenced or otherwise. The purpose of this paper is to assess how Nigerian smokers respond to the warning label of "Federal Ministry of Health warns that smokers are liable to die young" with emphasis on smokers in Imo State. In this descriptive survey study, a sample size of 385 was drawn from a projected population of 5, 781, 372 for the assessment. A validated copy of questionnaire was the data gathering instrument, designed to capture the meat of the study. Findings showed that 69%, the majority of participants smoke cigarette on a daily basis. It is confirmed that smokers at a percentage of 35.7 are aware of the health risks of cigarettes but at the percentage of 62.7, this high awareness has little or no influence on their smoking behaviour. The majority of participants at 32.8% indicated that their source of exposure to the warnings of the dangers of smoking is cigarette packs. Smokers in Imo State still "puff the smoke" in spite of the apparent knowledge of the health risks because they believe that they can cope with the dangers of smoking.

Keywords: Assessment, Smokers, Attitude, Health risks.

Introduction

Individuals are faced with a plethora of risks on a daily basis. While some of these risks are not man made, but for the foremost part, these risks arise as a result of the particular actions they take and their consumption decisions. In recent years, the prominent amongst these consumption risks has been cigarette smoking. The level of risks cigarette pose has made the consumption of required hazard warnings, partial advertising bans, restrictions on public smoking, and widespread adverse publicity (Vicussi, 1990). One of such hazard warnings is the slogan; Smokers are liable to die young.

In concurrence with the prominence of the risks cigarette pose, a significant amount of attention has been centred on the question of whether individuals understand the implications of smoking cigarettes (Schoenbaum, 1997). This is primarily due to the fact that the extent to which smokers understand the magnitude of these health risks has a strong influence on their smoking behaviour (Hammond, Fong, McNeill, Borland., & Cummings 2006; citing Janz 1984; Bandura 1977; Ajzen 1991). Put in a better way, smokers who perceive very high risks from smoking are very likely to successfully quit smoking (Romer & Janieson 2011; cited in Hammond et al., 2006).

Several studies show that most smokers concede that using tobacco poses health risks; however, there remains a lacuna in smoker's understanding of these risks posed by tobacco use (Environs Research Group 2001; Stretcher, Kreuter & Kobrin, 1995; Lee 1989; McCoy, Gibbons, Reis, et. al., 1992; cited in Hammond et al., 2006). The problem of understanding these risks manifests in inability of smokers to recall specific health effects and majority of these smokers tend to underestimate how far reaching the effects are (Environs Research Group, 2001, 2000, 1999; Ayanian, 1999; Hyland, Li, Bauer, Giovino, Steger & Cummings, 2004). One would think that in countries like Canada, the case would be different given that Canada is among the foremost progressive tobacco control policies. Yet, a high proportion of smokers there are in perpetual denial of the health risks associated with smoking and are still underestimating the seriousness of risks such as heart disease, stroke, and respiratory disease that are caused by smoking (Environs Research Group 2001; Schoenbaum, 1997).

In order to tackle this menace, a more comprehensive approach has been taken by countries geared towards warning labels (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Although Canada has been the leading nation in warning label regulations on cigarette, taking into consideration the font size, location, text colour and content of the warnings (O'Hegarty, Pederson, Nelson, Mowery, Gable, Wortley, 2006; citing Kaiserman, 1993), the warnings have been moved from bottom to the top of the pack and covered 25% of the front and back faces. As recent as the year 2000, Canada implemented a new regulation that would see the highest front and back of the packages incorporate updated and youth-orientation messages as well as information on toxic substances (Health Canada, 1999), with cessation and specific health-risk information inside the package (Hammond, Fong, MacDonald, Brown & Cameron, 2004).

A close observation of cigarette packs in Nigeria indicates the adoption of this model, except for the absence of any cessation and specific health-risk information inside the packages. This is contrary to the stark reality of the tobacco epidemic predictions for developing countries such as Nigeria. According to Mathers and Loncar (ibid) cited in Fawibe and Shittu (2011), 80% of the 100 million smoking related deaths in the world (W. H. O., 2008), are going to be in developing countries. Fawibe and Shittu (2011) bemoan the precarious situation as most African countries including Nigeria for failing to respond appropriately to the growing epidemic. This failure they attributed to the revenue generated from tobacco.

However, the essence of warning labels is to promote cessation and educate smokers on the effects of tobacco to health amongst other things. To this end, there are indications that new warning labels in Australia and Canada attract the attention of smokers (Hammond, et al.

2003), increase awareness of health effects of smoking (Mohood, 1995; Tandemar Research Inc, 1996), and decrease cigarette consumption (Borland, 1997). Perhaps the most important aspect of the influence of these warning labels is that smokers are motivated to quit smoking (Tandemar Research Inc, 1996; Environs Research Group, 2001; Hammond et al., 2004). What then is the case in Nigeria? Could it be said that these warning labels motivate smokers to quit smoking?

Unfortunately, little studies have been carried out in this area and they are mostly old and might not reflect the current trend of smoking behaviours as it relates to warning labels (Fawibe & Shittu, 2011). It is this obvious gap that this study sought to close. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess the response of Nigerian smokers to the warning label, "Federal Ministry of Health warns that Smokers are Liable to Die Young," in view of determining their attitude towards smoking.

Statement of the Problem

Communicating the health implications of smoking cigarettes remains the priority of tobacco control policy. This is the reason behind the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Control (FCTC) which states as it's first guiding principle that: "Every person should be informed of the health consequences, addictive nature and mortal threat posed by tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke" (Article 4.1) (Frank, Denniston, & Pederson, 2002).

Part of the earliest widespread policy towards teaching smokers is the cigarette warning labels (Hammond, Fong, McDonald, Cameron & Brown, 2003; Hammond, Fong, McDonald, Brown& Cameron, 2004; Borland, 1997). Currently, there are warning labels on cigarette packs virtually in every country (Aftab, Kolben, & Lurie, 1999), and studies show that these warning labels are capable of increasing the cessation behaviour among smokers (Hammond, et. al. 2003; Hammond, et. al. 2004; Borland, 1997). Deductively, warning labels are aimed at increasing awareness of health related diseases from smoking with the end purpose of discouraging smoking among smokers and would-be smokers. How far has this been achieved amongst smokers in Nigeria?

Contrary to the strategy of other countries, the strategy in Nigeria is the advocacy and promotion of voluntary adoption of behaviour change through warnings of dangers and banning of smoking publicly devoid of any legal backings (Onyeonoro, Chukwuonye, Madukwe, Ukegbu, Akhimien, Ogah, 2015). Which means the entire cessation of smoking is entirely up to smokers but they certainly would be educated on the dangers of smoking. This has seen anti-smoking messages on warning labels of cigarette packs changed from "smoking is dangerous to health" to "smokers are liable to die Young" by the Federal Ministry of Health (Onyeonoro et al., 2015).

Despite the low prevalence of smoking within the studied population of Fawibe and Shittu (2011), yet there seems to be no end to the number of persons still smoking. Are smokers in perpetual denial that the health hazards associated with smoking cannot affect them? How candid can Fishbein (1977) be in arguing that people may accept that information is true in a general sense, while still not accepting that it may have any personal relevance? Perhaps, it is

the natural tendency to perceive oneself as immune, at least in part to, health risk.

However, despite the prominence of these warning labels among tobacco control policies and on cigarette packs, radio and television adverts, newspapers and magazine adverts, etc., only a handful of studies have evaluated the impact of these labels on consumer knowledge about tobacco risks and subsequent change in behaviour in Nigeria. Whereas studies on the prevalence of smokers amongst youth in the face of warnings and restrictive measures of these warning labels have been conducted on the North Central, South-South (Momoh, Imhonde & Omeigbe, 2008) and South-West Nigeria (Oladele, Asaolu, Toriola, Arogbonlo & Moselakgomo, 2007; Osungbade & Oshiname, 2008), and the South East (Onyeonoro et al., 2015), an opportunity now presents itself to examine the attitudes of smokers towards smoking as a result of their exposure to the warning labels on cigarette packs. This is timely given that studies in this area are old and might reflect the current reality of the impact of these warning labels on smoking behaviour. At this point, it raises the question of why people are still smoking despite the warnings. Hence, the assessment of the attitude of smokers to the warning label "Smokers are liable to die young."

Research Questions

1. What is the level of smokers' awareness to the slogan, "Smokers are liable to die young?
2. What is the smokers' attitude/perception of smoking as a result of their awareness of the slogan, "Smokers are liable to die young"?

Review of Related Literature and Studies

The relationship between smokers and the warning labels has been a subject of significant interest by communication scholars. In order to establish a basis for cigarette smoking, several scholars have in the past investigated the prevalence of smokers in different climes of society as well as the characteristics. This perhaps is to create a launching pad for other studies in similar areas. One of such studies is that of Fawibe and Shittu (2011), which sought the rate at which students of the University of Ilorin smoke cigarettes and their characteristics. According to this study, the prevalence rate of current smoking was 9.7%; and smoking was more common in non-medical students. This suggests that students in the medical field rarely smoke because they know better hazardous effects of smoking. Their study further showed that at 83.8%, the majority of the smokers had already started smoking by their eighteenth birthday and a handful of them smoked over 5 sticks of cigarettes daily. In spite of this, the majority of the students who smoke weren't willing to quit. This Fawibe and Shittu (2011) attributed to the low perception of the negative effects of smoking. What could be responsible for the low perception of the negative effects of cigarettes even as the warnings are boldly written on the cigarette packs?

In answering the question of low perception, O'Hegarty, Pederson, Nelson, Mowery, Gable and Wortley (2006) conducted a study which sought to unravel the perception of young adults towards the warning labels on cigarette packs. Quitting cigarette smoking is almost always a function of how these warning labels are perceived. To this end, O'Hegarty et al., (2006), found out that smokers perceived warning labels to be highly effective precisely in

the areas of smoking-related health effects, prevention, cessation and maintenance of abstinence. Contrary to this, Borzekowski and Cohen (2014) explain that health warnings labels featured on cigarette packages aren't effectively reaching young children with anti-smoking messages. However, their study noted that both current and former smokers thought that cigarette warning labels (both text and graphics) were massively more deterring than text-only labels. One may ask, why the discrepancies in the effectiveness of graphics and text-only labels? As the saying goes, pictures speak a thousand words. But this aphorism does not necessarily provide the empirical answers desperately needed to put this point to bed.

The study of McCool, Webb, Cameron and Hock (2012) and Adebiyi, Uchendu, Bamgboye, Ibitoye, and Omotola (2016) justifies the difference in effect between graphic and text-only warning labels when their textual analysis showed that graphic warning labels may influence adolescents by reiterating a negative image of smokers. Their study further showed that graphic warning in clear cigarette pack increased the eye paid to graphic warning labels which are responsible for the smoker's perceptions of the harm caused by cigarette smoking. This invariable reduces the social appeal of cigarette smoking. Corroborating this finding, on the other hand, Germain, Wakefield and Durkin (2010) assessed the effects plain packaging would have on adolescent perceptions of smoking. According to Germain et al., (2010), when graphic warning labels (such as colour, branded fonts, imagery) were progressively faraway from cigarette packs, adolescents perceived packs to be less appealing and such attributes of a typical smoker of the pack would be less positive.

In a somewhat general sense, Hammong et al. (2006) assessed the effectiveness of cigarette warning labels in informing smokers about the risks of smoking in a general sense with a focus on knowledge level. Hammond et al (2006) revealed that there are significant gaps in the knowledge of the risks associated with smoking. But smokers who notice the warnings were significantly more likely to endorse health risks. McCool et al (2012) and Germain (2010 agrees with Hammond et al (2006) in pointing out that warnings that are graphic in the content are simpler in communicating the health risks of smoking.

In the light of the above, few studies have been audacious enough to move away from the effectiveness of these warning labels to the testing various specific variables within smokers preventing the effectiveness of these warning labels. First of which is the age variations in risk perception and smoking decision (Viscusi, 1991). To Viscusi (1991), risk perceptions of smoking followed an expected pattern according to differences in age. The risk perceptions are greater in younger age cohorts and successively have a negative effect on smoking decisions. From a different perspective, Harris, Mayle, Mabbott and Napper (2007), sought to shed light on how smokers answer graphic messages of warning labels. Harris et al. (2007) tested whether smokers respond defensively to such images and whether allowing them to self-affirm reduces their defensiveness. Their study showed that self-affirmed participants rated the pictures as more threatening and personally relevant and that participants reported more negative thoughts and feelings and better levels of control, self-efficacy, and intentions.

Based on this reviewed literature and studies, it is clear that scholars have done justice to

demystifying the correlation between the perceptions of smokers about warning labels. Still, the prevalence of smoking in society is staggering. It raises the question whether smokers think they are immune to the hazardous effects of cigarettes. Lee (1989) though an old study, aver that indulging in a dangerous behaviour will end in an unpleasant state of "cognitive dissonance." In order to deal with such an unpleasant state, smokers may deny the risks of smoking. Evidence of perception of immunity to the health dangers of smoking was found in their study.

Having assessed these empirical studies, it is observed that the majorities of these studies investigated foreign participants and are quite old. This presents an obvious gap that by assessing the attitude of smokers in Imo State to the warning labels of cigarette packs, this study will fill.

Theoretical Framework

Health Belief Model

This study is anchored on the Health Belief Model framework that seeks to explain health behaviours. The HBM was first developed within the 1950s by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegels working within the U.S. Public Health Services. The Health Belief Model (HBM) may be a psychological model that attempts to elucidate and predict health behaviours. This is done by those specialized in the attitudes and beliefs of people. The model was developed in response to the failure of free tuberculosis (TB) health screening programme. Since then, the HBM has been adapted to explore a spread of long- and short-term health behaviours, including sexual risk behaviours and therefore the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and lastly, the Ebola killer virus (Jones, Jesen, Scharr, Brown, Katheryn & Weaver, 2015;

The HBM is based on the understanding that a person will take a health-related action (i.e., stop smoking) if that person:

i.   Feels that a negative health condition (i.e., Contracting lung cancer) can be avoided,

ii.   Has a positive expectation that by taking a recommended action, he/she will avoid a negative health condition (i.e., being free from smoking), and

iii.   Believes that he/she can successfully take a recommended health action (i.e., he/she can practice cessation measures to stop smoking).

The HBM was spelt out in terms of 4 constructs representing the perceived threat and net benefits: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, and perceived barriers. These concepts were proposed as accounting for people's "readiness to act." another concept, cues to action, would activate that readiness and stimulate overt behaviour. A recent addition to the HBM is the concept of self-efficacy or one's confidence within the ability to successfully perform an action. This concept was added by Rosenstock to assist the HBM better fit the challenges of adjusting habitual unhealthy behaviours (Becker, 1974; Champion & Skinner, 2008; Rosenstock, 1974)

Table 1: The HBM at a Glance

Concept	Definition	Application
Perceived Susceptibility	*One's opinion of chances of getting a condition*	Define population(s) at risk, risk levels; personalize risk based on a person's features or behaviour; heighten perceived susc eptibility if too low.
Perceived Severity	*One's opinion of how serious a condition and its consequences are*	Specify consequences of the risk and the condition
Perceived Benefits	*One's belief in the efficacy of the advised action to reduce risk or serious ness of impact*	Define action to take; how, where, when; clarify the positive effects to be expected.
Perceived Barriers	*One's opinion of the tangible and psychological costs of the advised action*	Identify and reduce barriers through reassurance, incentives, assistance.
Cues to Action	*Strategies to activate "readiness"*	Provide how-to information, promote awareness, reminders.
Self-Efficacy	*Confidence in one's ability to take action*	Provide training, guidance in performing action.

Source: Glanz et al, 2002, p. 52

The relevance of this theory to the study is that it will help people to understand the severity of a given health danger that smoking presents and also inform them smokers are truly liable to die young.

Methodology
This was a descriptive survey study among smokers in Imo State. The choice of descriptive survey is informed by the nature of this study which sought the opinions and attitudes of smokers towards the warning message of "Smokers are liable to die young" as recommended by Federal Ministry of Health. Imo State is one of the five states that make up the South-East geopolitical zones in Nigeria. As of the 2006 population census, it had the population of Three Million, Nine Hundred and Twenty-seven Thousand, Five Hundred and Sixty-three (3, 927, 563). However, when projected by a 2.8% growth rate in 2020, the projected population of the state would be Five Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty-One Thousand, Three Hundred and Seven-two (5, 781,372).

With an online Australian sample size calculator, the sample size of this study is 385. For the purpose of this study, the purposive or judgmental sampling technique was employed to arrive at a sample frame based on certain criteria:

- Respondents must be a current smoker, smoked before, and a potential smoker
- Respondents must be youth. This is selected due to the target market of tobacco manufacturers.

Therefore, only those that selected yes to the above criteria were included in the study. The instrument used to obtain information from the participants in this study is the questionnaire.

The questionnaire contained questions on the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as the gender, age, marital status, occupation, religion, cigarette smoking status, average number of cigarettes smoked daily. The questionnaire also contained questions on the psychographic data relevant for this study.

In testing the validity of the questionnaire, the face validity method was adopted. This method demands that the instrument be submitted to communication lecturers/research experts to ensure that the instrument sets out to get what it ought to get. Moving on, the reliability of the study was ascertained by conducting a pilot study on 21 respondents who filled the questionnaire. Upon retrieval, it was observed that their responses were uniformed and consistent. For easy retrieval, the researcher made use of a face-to-face method of administering the instrument. This method ensures that the researcher collects the questionnaire immediately after being filled for analysis. Finally, presenting and analysing the data from the questionnaire, the simple percentage frequency method was used. This entails the placement of tested variables into a table with the frequencies of occurrence and percentages ascribed to each continuum.

Data Presentation and Analysis
This section of the paper concerned itself with the analysis of the data gotten from the field. Out of the 385 copies, 381 copies were returned and found valid. This represents 98& response rate. Therefore, the analysis was done based on the returned copies of questionnaire.

Demographic Data
The socio-demographic spread of respondents revealed that there were more males (75.9%) than females (24.1%). The huge gap in the gender distribution is as result of the criteria used in this study, which is that respondents must be either one of a smoker, former smoker or intending smoker. Even as there was a deliberate bias in the distribution of data which saw the researcher ensure that equal copies of questionnaire is shared to male and female participants evenly. Therefore, this implies that men smoke cigarettes more than women in this part of the world. This is in contrast to the studies of Onyeonoro et. al. (2015) and Brewer, et. al. (2016) in which findings revealed more female smokers than male.

Moving on, the demographic data also revealed that the majority of smokers were within the age bracket of 25 – 35 years old. This is a clear indication that the target market for tobacco manufacturers are youths who are mostly students given their ages. This is in agreement with the study of Fawibe and Shittu, (2011), which confirms the smoking prevalence amongst undergraduate students. Finally, the above tables showed that majority of respondents are

middle income earners who are mostly married.

The data also showed that at 56.9%, majority of the respondents are educated with monthly income between Fifty Thousand Naira and Ninety-nine Thousand Naira. It is worthy of note that all participants are smokers. This was purposively done to ensure that the study sampled the attitudes of the required participants.

Table 1: Respondents' level of awareness on the slogan, "Smokers are liable to dies young"

Smoking Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	263	69
Nondaily	118	31
Level of aw areness of the slogan, "Smokers are liable die young"	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
High	136	35.7
Moderate	129	33.9
Low	77	20.2
Not sure	39	10.2
Sources of exposure to the warnings against smoking	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Television/radio adverts	90	23.6
Cigarette packs	125	32.8
Newspaper/magazine	52	13.6
Friends/relatives	42	11
Billboards	26	6.8
Health care workers	22	5.8
Others	24	6.3
Total	**381**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In ascertaining the extent of awareness that the warnings against smoking cigarettes has been able to create amongst smokers, the above table showed that there is a correspondence between the majority of the smokers that smoke cigarettes on a daily basis and those who are highly exposed to the messages. The correspondence further connects with the revelation that their sources of exposure to the warnings against smoking cigarettes (i.e. smokers are liable to die young) are mainly cigarette packs of their favourite brand. The implication is that cigarette packs are the most viable means to warn smokers of the danger in smoking tobacco. This is in part because at the point of purchase, the warnings are constantly staring them at the face, burying these messages in their subconscious. If this is the case, then the question of why smokers still puff cigarettes couldn't be more timely and pertinent. A good suggestion would be one that highlights the tendency to perceive oneself as somehow

immune, at least in part, to health risks.

Table 2: Respondents' attitude/perception of smoking as a result of the warning slogan, "Smokers are liable to die young"

Option	Frequency	Percentage
There are chances that long and term negative consequences would occur if I smoked cigarettes.	119	31.2
There are chances that the long and short term negative consequences of smoking would not affect me personally.	239	62.7
Not sure	23	6
Total	381	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In assessing the attitude/perception of smokers towards smoking as a result of their exposure to the warning slogan, "smokers are liable to die young," the above table revealed that the majority of smokers are of the view that the long and term negative consequences of smoking would not affect them. The implication is that smokers are likely not going to change their attitude towards smoking as long as they feel they are immune to the health risk of tobacco. This perhaps is responsible for the negative cessation behaviour smoking. It is however strange to note that the majority of the smokers believe that there is hardly any benefit derivable from smoking, yet erroneous underestimation of the risks smoking poses. The perception of personal immunity makes it more difficult to motivate risk-takers to change their behaviour. To these lots, the slogan is likened to pouring water on the stone. The self-immunity phenomenon is not new. This is what happens when one gives an assessment of the danger before him not to affect him as it affected others. Call it faith or optimism but, they are smokers.

Discussion of Findings

The socio demographic data showed that there were more males (75.9%) than females (24.1%). The huge gap in the gender distribution is as result of the criteria used in this study, which is that respondents must be either one of a smoker, former smoker or intending smoker. Even as there was a deliberate bias in the distribution of data which saw the researcher ensure that equal copies of questionnaires are shared to male and female evenly. Therefore, this implies that men smoke cigarettes more than women in this part of the world. This is in contrast to the studies of Onyeonoro, et. al. (2015) and Brewer, et. al. (2016) which they both revealed more female smokers than male.

Moving on, the above table revealed that the majority of smokers were within the age bracket of 25 – 35 years old. This is a clear indication that the target market for tobacco manufacturers are youths who are mostly students given their ages. This is in agreement with the study of Fawibe and Shittu, (2011), which confirms the smoking prevalence amongst

undergraduate students. Finally, the above table showed that the majority of respondents are middle income earners who are mostly married.

Smokers' Awareness level to the Slogan, "Smokers are liable to die young"

In ascertaining the extent of awareness that the warnings against smoking cigarettes has been able to create amongst smokers, the above table showed that there is a correspondence between the majority of the smokers that smoke cigarettes on a daily basis and those who are highly exposed to the messages. The correspondence further connects with the revelation that their sources of exposure to the warnings against smoking cigarettes (i.e. smokers are liable to die young) are mainly cigarette packs of their favourite brand. The implication is that cigarette packs are the most viable means to warn smokers of the danger in smoking tobacco. This is in part because at the point of purchase, the warnings are constantly staring them at the face, burying these messages in their subconscious. If this is the case, then the question of why smokers still puff cigarettes couldn't be more timely and pertinent. A good suggestion would be one that highlights the tendency to perceive oneself as somehow immune, at least in part, to health risks.

Understanding factors influencing tobacco use are important in developing measures to regulate it. Some known determinants of tobacco use are sociodemographic factors like age, sex, religion, and socioeconomic status like the urbanity, environmental factors as use by parents, friends or school teachers, exposure to media, and advertisements. Other factors include low awareness regarding tobacco hazards and behavioural intention to use (Owie, 1984).

The study of McCool, et. al. (2012) highlighted the importance of cigarette packs as a veritable means of conveying warning messages of the harm in smoking. Their study offers evidence on how adolescents are appraising and interpreting graphic warning labels, and explores how dominant appraisals may affect the role graphic warning labels play in preventing smoking. Not only would plain cigarette packaging enhance the salience and impact of graphic warning labels, but it might potentially bolster the general message that cigarette smoking is harmful. In the context of a comprehensive tobacco control programme, graphic warning labels on plain cigarette packaging present a particular message about the risks (to health and image) related to cigarette smoking.

Smokers' attitude/perception of smoking as a result of the warning slogan, "Smokers are liable to die young"

In assessing the attitude/perception of smokers towards smoking as a result of their exposure to the warning slogan, "smokers are liable to die young," the above table revealed that the majority of smokers are of the view that the long term negative consequences of smoking would not affect them. The implication is that smokers are likely not going to change their attitude towards smoking as long as they feel they are immune to the health risk of tobacco. This perhaps is responsible for the negative cessation behaviour smoking. It is however strange to note that the majority of the smokers believe that there is hardly any benefit derivable from smoking, yet erroneous underestimation of the risks smoking poses. The perception of personal immunity makes it more difficult to motivate risk-takers to change their behaviour. To these lots, the slogan is likened to pouring water on the stone. The self-

immunity phenomenon is not new. This is what happens when one gives an assessment of the danger before him not to affect him as it affected others. Call it faith or optimism but, they are smokers. Who much needs both faith and optimism more than smokers?

Fewibe and Shittu (2011) agrees with these findings in their study by affirming that despite the low prevalence rate of smoking in the studied population, a majority of them were not willing to quit due to a coffee perception of the negative effects of smoking on their health and quality of life. Perhaps, it is a Nigerian thing that something must kill a man. At least it probably explains the reason for the negative effect of cigarettes when the awareness level of the dangers of cigarettes is on the high side. Maybe it is a Nigerian thing, otherwise, Hammond, et al. (2006) revealed that smokers who noticed the warnings were significantly more likely to endorse health risks, including lung cancer and heart disease. In each instance where labelling policies differed between countries, smokers living in countries with government mandated warnings reported greater health knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought the attitudes of smokers towards smoking as result of their exposure to the slogan, "smokers are liable to die." Its major concern was on finding out the reason smokers still continue to puff smokes even as recommended by the Federal Ministry of Health, smokers are being educated on the health risks that accompany smoking. The findings showed that there were more male smokers than females, and were mostly within the age of 25 – 35. There is a high level of awareness of the health risks in smoking which cigarette packs served as the main sources of exposure to respondents. In spite of the high level of awareness of the dangers in smoking cigarettes, smokers' misperception towards smoking implies that they are not likely to cultivate a cessation attitude towards smoking. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that smokers in Imo State still puff the smoke because they believe that they can cope with the dangers of smoking. The researcher therefore made the following recommendations:

1. Comprehensive antismoking campaigns are urgently needed to control cigarette smoking in Imo State and Nigeria at large.

2. Warning labels on cigarette pack should be accompanied with colourful graphics that is capable of delivering a strong message

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BREACH OF MEDIA ETHICS AND THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: AN APPRAISAL OF AKWA IBOM BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the areas in which media ethics were breached during the 2019 presidential elections, the extents to which these breaches were visible and ways unethical and unprofessional conduct in the media can be stopped, especially during elections. This study used a descriptive survey design. Using the Meyer's statistical guide for sample size, 382 respondents were drawn out for the study from the total population of 373,929. Using the multistage sampling technique, the researchers administered copies of the questionnaires on the respondents. This study found that there was a high record (48%) of unethical and unprofessional conduct in the media during the 2019 presidential elections. Among the factors that cause these unethical conducts were: ownership influence (30%), poor remuneration (30%), greed (16%), and pressure (10%). The researchers, therefore, recommend that employers should set up a benchmark for journalists' welfare package and other remunerations such as a fix salary scale, housing loan/ grants, medical welfare for journalists.

Keywords: Ethics, media, politics, journalist welfare, elections

Introduction

All-round the world, journalists are obligated to certain expectations and moral obligations because of the pivotal role they play in society – media have become as necessary as clothes and food these days. They have also played significant roles in strengthening society. The media are concerned as "the mirror" of modern society. Being the watchdogs or gatekeepers of society, because they decide what news is and make many important decisions about what society says to itself. Journalism is guided by certain code of ethics. This is to ensure that journalists perform their job within the context of acceptable set of values and norms on which society thrives (ProjectClue, 2019). Media in Nigeria, as well, is generally governed by the same laws and ethics. As such, all media professionals (journalists) in the country are guided by the same code of practice.

After the press was granted freedom, it became expedient for journalists to conduct themselves in a manner that presented them as accountable, credible, reliable and worthy of society's trust. The media were from thence taken to be for the people and society. At such, the task of the press was to make a code of conduct and follow it, to develop a standard in

journalism, to make journalism better, to protect journalists from themselves and from the government and to have penalties if any journalist violates the code of conduct (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014; Ethical Journalism Netwrok (n.d.); Collins, 2002). This way, the facts provided by the media are analysed and interpreted so that the people it serves get true and credible information and understandable news (Bajracharya, 2018; ProjectClue, 2019).

The media do not only analyse and interpret information so that the people it serves get true and credible information and understandable news; the media perform other very important roles in society such as: to inform people about current news affairs and tell them about the latest gossips and fashion; it can change opinion because it has access to the people and this gives it a lot of strength. This strength can either be used constructively by educating the people or it can be used destructively by misleading the innocent people. Considering these vital roles of the media, there is, therefore, a need for ethical issues to be critically considered especially during elections.

A general examination indicates that although Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation was not sanctioned by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) for breach of media ethics that it seems to operate and practice outside the bounds of the journalistic code of ethics during the 2019 presidential elections. Thus, some of the activities carried out by the station during the elections were observed as clear breach of media ethics. These activities such as writing articles and stories to express their sentiment and inclinations to the party in power; airing foul and strong languages; inappropriate allocation of air time among political parties among others. Thus, this study seeks to access whether Akwa Ibom Broadcasting critically considered and observed ethical standards in their political reportage during the 2019 presidential elections.

The Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation, with the popular acronym AKBC, was established by Edict No. 4 of April 1988 (NBC webpage, 2016; Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation, "About" page). AKBC, which provides both Radio and Television Services in Akwa Ibom, is christened, Voice of Promise. It was officially commissioned on July 27, 1991, by the Military Governor of the State, Idongesit Nkanga (then a Commander), transmitting on the frequency modulation of 90.528MHZ. Culling from the About page of the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation website, the radio station christened, Radio Akwa Ibom, The Voice of Promise, transmits on the frequency 90.5FM with the vision of becoming a one-stop station for the best in entertainment, news and programmes that creatively galvanize Akwa Ibom people and positively project the rich cultural heritage, cherished values and potentials of the State for enhanced image and respectability within and outside Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

There seems to be a persistent betrayal of freedom of the media in many African countries including Nigeria (Chiyamwaka, 2008). According to Chiyamwaka (2008, p.4), opines that these betrayals including the freedom of expression and the public right to freely receive and impart information and opinion that ultimately hinders professionalism. Chiyamwaka observed thus:

> The chief of this betrayal is the one upheld by journalists themselves with the adage: "Who eats ethics?" This is an operating maxim that guides some media practitioners, especially during the election period. It is the motto of the antithetical media profession that operates in the opposite direction to media ethics. Journalists who adhere to this adage, against all forms of ethical codes and clear conscious guiding the performance of theirs, succumb to various pressures ranging from poor remuneration packages, ambush managers, tight lips, political pressure, commercialism and ownership. They give in to the brown envelope syndrome at the detriment of fairness, objectivity and accurate reportage. This negligence of a professional code of ethics becomes rampant during the critical period of elections when ethical and professional conduct of media professionals become crucial for fair and peaceful general elections (p.4).

This study assumes that if there are such betrayals still persist in the media in Akwa Ibom state, then they should be brought to the fore of scholastic debate and dealt with immediately. Therefore, this study seeks to look carefully and empirically into this matter. The study poses the following questions: what were the areas of these breaches of media ethics in the 2019 presidential elections, to what extent were the breaches visible, and how can unethical and unprofessional conduct in the media be stopped, especially during elections?

Media Ethics

According to Ekpoudom (2009, p.26 as cited in Asemah, 2011a), ethics is derived from the Greek word, *Ethos* and Latin word ***Moralia*** which means customs, habits, conduct, norms or accepted ways of behaviour. He goes on to postulate that ethics "studies human actions in terms of their being right or wrong, good or evil." Also, Ozumba (2008, p.16, as cited in Asemah, 2011a) avers that ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with what is morally good or bad. For him, ethics is focused with the judgment of rightness or wrongness, virtuous or vicious, desirability or undesirability, approval or disapproval of human actions. He is also of the opinion that ethics as a philosophical ladder is concerned in attaining the good life which can be auspicious and congenial to the enhancement of a virtuous religious life.

In corroboration to this, Ekpoudom (2009, p.27, as cited in Asemah, 2011a) asserts that ethics is concerned with the good life as it focuses on how man ought to live a good life, thereby, teaching a man how to live aright, for only by living can happiness be achieved. Furthermore, Etuk (2006, p.6, as cited in Asemah, 2011a) opines that ethics is concerned with the determination of right conduct; studying the fundamental principles of morality; enquiring into theories of what is good or evil, right or wrong; as well as raising questions about the morality of human conduct and entails the question of the purpose, end and goal of human existence. However, we can aver here that ethics is the judgement and evaluation of right and wrong actions and conducts as it relates to the co-existence of human beings in society.

Without much ado, media ethics may be described as moral principles that guide media men

in their professional conduct. They are normative ethics that prescribe the dos and don'ts of media practice. According to Baran (1999, as cited in Asemah (2011a, p.375), media ethics specifically refers to the application of rational thought by media professionals when deciding on what should be the right or best answer to a challenging professional problem.

Theoretical Framework

Social Responsibility theory of mass media was designed formally by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. It is relatively a new concept which started in the mid-20th century and is used mostly by developing and least developed countries. Asemah (2011b) contends that The Social Responsibility Theory is an offshoot of the Libertarian theory. The theory emerged because the press abused the freedom, which they enjoyed as a result of the free press. However, the theory started in Europe and took a shape with the Commission on the Freedom of Press that happened in the United States in 1949 (Bajracharya, 2018).

This theory encourages total freedom to press and no censorship, but it proposes that the free press should be regulated according to social responsibilities and external controls. Thus, the content of the press is filtered through public obligation and interference. A major quote of the proponents, according to Bajracharya (2018), to show the essence of this theory reads thus: "freedom of expression under the social responsibility theory is not an absolute right, as under pure libertarian theory. Ones right to free expression must be balanced against the private rights of others and against vital society interest."

This theory relates to this study as it proposes that media should be regulated with code of conducts to ensure that it operates in a way that is in line with the ideal moral values of the context within which it operates.

General Unethical Practices in the Mass Media

Unethical media practice simply means a situation in which a journalist does not practice either according to the media ethics, press laws or NBC codes. However, unethical practices in journalism do not exist in isolation, but as part of the overall ethical issues and societal problems in the world (Pepple, & Acholonu, 2018). Mass Communication is a social process and the mass media works in conjunction with other social institutions that make up the social system (Sage Publications, 2019; Hjarvard, 2008). According to (Hjarvard, 2008, p.105), this is because, "Contemporary society is permeated by the media, to an extent that the media may no longer be conceived of as being separate from cultural and other social institutions". Thus, it will be meaningless discussing an institution such as Mass Communication as though it operates in isolation unconnected to other social processes. Every society has its moral problems, and a journalist is a member of the society. The type of society which the person comes from or in which he operates determines the individual's behaviour.

The Nigerian society, for instance, is filled with all sorts of ethical and social maladies that have defied all cures over the years. Most of these problems are in one way or another related to the all-encompassing problem of materialism. What journalists write inevitably touches other people's lives, and that information can ruin lives just as it can mend them.

Consequently, no other profession is neither obsessed with ethics nor so roundly condemned for its transgressions (Kant, 1959).

People in different parts of the world are becoming increasingly vocal in their condemnation of the transgressions of the press, which, as an institution, is becoming more and more powerful with the increasing sophistication of new information technologies. Despite the introduction of a code of ethics for Nigerian journalists and the setting up of the Nigerian Press Council, however, there are other ethical issues which are part of the overall problem in the society. These include: sycophancy, character assassination, pressure, Afghanistan, bribery, moonlighting, sensationalism, self-censorship, deception, freebies and junket journalism, brown envelops, faking stories; and, hacking.

Electoral Act 2010 and Ethical Provision for Media during the 2019 Presidential Elections

Section 100, sub-section (1) of the Electoral Act 2010 provides that "a candidate and his party shall campaign for the elections in accordance with such rules and regulations as may be determined by the Commission". Sub-section (2) provides that apparatus owned by the state including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election.

Sub-section (3) urged the media to equally allocate its time among political parties or candidates at similar hours of the day. Sub-sections (4), and (5) provided specific details as regarding the allocation of time and space on the media, respectively, thus: "At any public electronic media, equal airtime shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours each day, subject to the payment of appropriate fees. At any public print media, equal coverage shall be allotted to all political parties.

Sub-section (6) provides the penalty to any public media that contravenes subsections (3) and (4) of this section. It asserts that so doing is an offence and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N 500,000 in the first instance and to a maximum fine of N1,000,000 for a subsequent conviction.

Section 101, sub-section (1) provides that a person, print or electronic medium that broadcasts, publishes, advertises or circu1ates any material for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate over the radio, television, newspaper, magazine, handbill, or any print or electronic media whatsoever called during 24 hours immediately preceding or on polling day commits an offence under this Act.

Section 102 condemns the use of religious or ethnic groups for the campaign. It states that "a candidate, person or association who engages in campaigning or broadcasting based on the religious, tribal or sectional reason for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate, commits an offence under this Act and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of ₦ 1,000,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months or to both.

Breach of Media Ethics during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) sanctioned 45 broadcast stations, including NTA, AIT, Channels and TVC News, for alleged ethical infractions in relation to the 2019 presidential elections. The Director-General of the commission, Malam Is'HaqModibbo, made this disclosure at one of the news conferences in Abuja during the period of the elections. Kawu said the erring stations, which cut across the country, violated provisions of the Nigerian Broadcasting Code and were fined N 500,000 each (Sahara Reporters, 2019; Punch newspaper (online edition), 2019).

The reasons for sanction were all connected to breach of media ethics during the elections. The sanctioned stations allowed politicians to utter abusive, inciting and provocative statements during rallies. This happened on several radios and television stations, particularly and unfortunately on the big nation network such as NTA, AIT, Channels, TVC News. Also, there were several radio and TV stations involved in this various infraction (Sahara Reporters, 2019; Punch newspaper (online edition), 2019).

The following are the areas where the affected stations breached media ethics that provided reasons for NBC to sanction them: partisan comments in phone-in programmes less than 24 hours to the election, use of campaign headlines on newspaper review, use of partisan SMS and endorsement of candidates, display of party logo and partisan social media content, partisan political broadcast, use of political campaign jingle and campaign message in news, political jingle less 24 hours to the elections, use of campaign really in news, the illegal announcement of election results by a caller in a phone-in programme, broadcast of political personalities with attires bearing party symbols and identification, use of hate speech at a live political rally; and, use of party logo less than 24 hours to elections (Sahara Reporters, 2019).

Reasons Journalists Carry Out Unethical Practices

So many reasons have been discovered to be responsible for unethical practices. As identified by Asemah (2011, p.402), some of the reasons are:

- **Pressure**: This entails any force or influence which makes a journalist feel strongly compelled to act in a manner desirable to the source of such force or influence. It is worthy to note that pressure could be internally that is, it emanates within the journalist's place of work or externally that is, it originates from the journalist's work environments. Pressure may cause a journalist to be irresponsible and unethical if the source compels him to carry out actions that are contrary to the journalistic ethical principle. For example, most journalists often carry out the wishes of their employers because of the fear of being punished physically or otherwise.

- **Poor remuneration**: The journalist who is not well paid is likely to be unethical. He might be tempted to collect brown envelopes due to his family's financial obligations.

- **Greed**: No matter the amount of money a greedy man has, he will not be satisfied. So, as a result of greed, most journalists go against the ethics of journalism. This also

can be manifested in the collection of brown envelopes, free gifts, etc, by the journalist.

- **Expectations from society**: The society expects certain things from people once they are working; such expectations are houses, cars, good dresses, etc. in order to meet up with these expectations, the journalists go against the ethics of the profession.

Other reasons why journalists breach codes of ethics of journalism profession include: lack of principle, clash of interest, and knowledge of the power of the press among other factors.

Review of Empirical Studies

The axiom that no study exists in isolation is true. Various studies on media ethics have been carried prior to this study. Pepple and Acholonu in 2018 carried out a study entitled, "Media Ethics as Key to Sound Professionalism in Nigerian Journalism Practice". The study was to examine the implications of ethics as key to sound professionalism in Nigerian journalism. They set out to assess how ethics affect the standard of journalism practice in the country, using media practitioners in Rivers State, Nigeria as case study. Their population of the 300 registered journalists in Rivers State of Nigeria, including the editors and managers. They revealed that despite the importance of ethics to journalism practice, journalists' adherences to the ethical codes were low. According to Pepple and Acholonu (2018, p.56), "journalists most times go against the ethics of the profession due to sycophancy, security reasons, desperation, greed, ethical dilemmas, and ignorance of the code of ethics".

Based on the findings of the study, they recommended that media establishments should liaise with the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ) to ensure that only trained journalists are employed to work as journalists. Again the NUJ, it should institute standing disciplinary committee to discipline erring journalists both at the State and National levels. The Ethics Committee of the Nigeria Union of Journalists should regularly review the ethical conducts of journalists and encourage them to adhere to their code of practice.

Also, Nasidi carried out a similar study in 2016 on "Media and ethics: journalism ethics in Nigerian news media" to explore the Journalism ethics in Nigerian news media. He used the discourse analysis as yardstick. His major finding revealed that "Nigerian journalists do not obey the codes; journalists are expecting to be moral-crusaders but some time they are doing otherwise" (p.5). The research exposed that the reason behind this is the complex nature of the Nigerian state. Oso (2007, as cited in Nasidi 2016) highlights the following as factors that can lead to unethical practices in Nigeria are: poor technical knowledge, conflict of interests, ownership pattern and control, pressure of the market, poor pay, weak professional regulation, and loose organizational policies and control.

In addition, a similar study appears on the Ghana media space too. Tuurosong and Faisal (2014) carried out a study entitled, "Ethical violations in press coverage of 2012 elections", to analyse the content of political stories which appeared in newspapers during the most serious campaign season from 1st November to 6th December, 2012. It was meant to investigate the extent and nature of ethical violations, the nature of coverage accorded political stories and the amount of news-hole devoted to the various political parties. The

study found that newspapers routinely violated Article 1 of the GJA Code on balanced and fair coverage since they often published allegations made by one political party against another without first obtaining a response from the accused party.

Methodology

The survey research design was selected for this study. The population of this study was made-up of the residents of Uyo metropolis; which, according to the 2012 projected population in Directorate of Statistics, (2013, p.2) was 373,929 in number. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents were selected as sample for the study using Meyer's statistical guide for sample size. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select participants for the study for the study. Uyo was divided into groups using the major roads/streets in the metropolis as clutters. Data for this study were collected personally by the researcher using a structured questionnaire. The process took the researcher one week to go round the various prominent streets and locations within Uyo metropolis to distribute the questionnaire. Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using simple percentage and the frequency distribution table.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The focus of this research was on Breach of Media Ethics and the 2019 Presidential Elections: An Appraisal of Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation. To obtain data for the study, 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the sample of the study. The researchers had a 100% return and validity rate because they administered the questionnaires personally and painstakingly guided respondents throughout the process. Data were analysed using percentage and table distribution.

Table 1: **Respondents Awareness and Perception towards the breach of media ethics by AKBC during the 2019 presidential elections**

S/N	Options	Responses	Freq.	Per cent
1.	To what extent do you think AKBC was ethical in the performance of their duties during the 2019 presidential election?	Very Large Extent	23	6
		Large Extent	44	11
		Unethical	184	48
		Little Extent	56	15
		Very Little Extent	77	20
		Total	*384*	*100*
2.	What were the areas you noticed the unethical performance of journalistic duties by AKBC during the 2019 presidential elections?	Partisan comments in phone -in programmes less than 24 hours to the election	75	20
		illegal announcement of election results by a caller in a phone -in programme	57	15
		Use of campaign really in the news	33	9
		Broadcast of political personalities with attires bearing party symbols and identification	54	14
		Use of hate speech at a live political rally	64	17
		Display of party logo and partisan social media content	60	16
		Endorsement of candidates	41	11
		Total	*384*	*100*
3.	What do you think made AKBC journalists carry out unethical and unprofessional conduct during the 2019 presidential elections?	Pressure	38	10
		Poor remuneration	97	25
		Greed	63	16
		Expectations from society	13	3
		Lack of principle	29	6
		Clash of interest	20	5
		Ownership influence	116	30
		Knowledge of the power of the press	18	5
		Total	*384*	*100*
4.	What, in your opinion, should be done to reduce the level of unethical and unprofessional conduct in AKBC especially during elections	Structured welfare package for journalists	135	35
		Less interference in media activities by media owners	150	39
		The sanction for defaulters of ethical code of conducts	99	26
		Total	*384*	*100*

(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

The table above addresses the four basic questions used by the researchers to access the breach of media ethics on AKBC, the state owned broadcasting station of Akwa Ibom state. First, the table considered the extent of ethical performance of AKBC during the 2019 presidential elections. Almost half of the respondents (48%) opined that the station was unethical in its performance during the elections. This goes against 6% of the respondents who said that station was ethical to a very large extent.

Secondly, the table reveals that there were more partisan comments on the station (20%) than other areas of ethical breaches such as illegal announcement of election results by a caller in a phone-in programme (15%), use of campaign really in the news (9%), broadcast of political personalities with attires bearing party symbols and identification (14%), use of hate speech at a live political rally (17%), display of party logo and partisan social media content (16%), and endorsement of candidates (11%). So, hate speeches rate the second area of media bias with 17% of the respondents affirming.

On the factors harnessing unethical practices, the majority of the respondents (30%) opined that the government who own and manage AKBC influenced it greatly. This means, the government being the incumbent political party in power in the state dominated the media. Lastly, a great number of the respondents (39%) suggested that less inference in media activities by the political power in government during election periods will go a long way to help the state-own station to be more ethical in subsequent elections.

Discussion of Findings

From the table above, this study found out that AKBC was unethical in the performance of their duties during the 2019 presidential election. Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the respondents opined that the station was unethical. This finding is similar to the findings of Pepple and Acholonu in 2018, Nasidi in 2016 as well as Tuurosong and Faisal in 2014. With this consistency in finding, it is simple to assume that the issue of unethical practices in the media is persistent. This problem cuts across nations and continents. At such, something should be done to handle this menace bugging our media space as suggested earlier on in the statement of the problem. Nasidi (2016) clearly puts it that Nigerian journalists do not obey the codes. He said that even though they are expected to be moral-crusaders but they, some time, do not adhere to codes of conduct and ethics.

From our data analysis, the study also found out that partisan comments in phone-in programmes less than 24 hours to the election (20%); and, use of hate speech at a live political rally (17%) were the most common violations of the ethical provision of the Electoral Act 2010 which guided the elections. Based on the findings here, the report by "Sahara Reporters, 2019" as culled and documented under the heading "Breach of Media Ethics during the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria" is to a greater extent upheld to be genuine as it agrees with the present finding of this study. According the Sahara Reporters (2019), NBC sanctioned broadcast media for a couple of media bridges including partisan comment on programmes. Partisan comment refers to comment that promotes a political party, figure or ideology openly (Merriam Webster dictionary, online edition). It is used for political comments that strongly support a party's policies and are reluctant to compromise with their political opponents (Wikipedia.com).

Further, this study discovered that ownership influence on media activities played a vital role in promoting the aforementioned unethical conduct of the media. Being a state-owned media, the government of the day greatly influenced the activities of the media house in its favour. On the other hand, poor remuneration was held as another basis for unethical behaviour among journalists in AKBC. These findings give credence to that of Asemah (2011, p.402), which he opined that, so many reasons have been discovered to be responsible for unethical practices and these are: ownership influence, greed, pressure, poor remuneration among others. More so, it affirms this claim by IPDC (2015) that journalists sometimes compromised by betrayals from associated staff, which could expose journalists to kidnapping and consequential ransom demands. According to Pepple and Acholonu (2018, p.56), "journalists most times go against the ethics of the profession due to sycophancy, security reasons, desperation, greed, ethical dilemmas, and ignorance of the code of ethics".

Finally, the study found out that lesser government interference on the media activities of government owned-media (39%) will help in curbing unethical practices by government-owned media such as AKBC. Following closely after is the assertion that having a well structured welfare package for journalists (35%) will also go a long way to minimise the rate of unethical practices especially those practices that are related to wellbeing such as collecting brown envelops and unsolicited gift and appreciations which affects objectivity and accuracy in news reportage.

Conclusion

It is clear for the analysis of data collected that there is a persistent evidence of breach of media ethics in the activities of AKBC during the 2019 presidential elections. Relevant sources were consulted with the purpose of getting accurate information, and to get acquainted with some of the works already done in the area by different people. The review of empirical studies shows that these issues of breaches of media ethics are not peculiar to Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation or Nigeria alone. It showed that there are cases of violation of ethics even in other African countries such as Ghana. These previous studies agree with the findings of our study that there is a significant evident of the violations of media code of ethics.

To salvage the situation, this study was well as the study before it, has suggested measure to be take to minimize the level of violation of media ethics affecting our media sphere locally, nationally and as a continent. A few of the suggests include structured welfare package for journalists, less interference in media activities by media owners, the sanction for defaulters of ethical code of conducts among others. Although it shares great similarity with previous studies in terms of findings, theoretical frameworks and methodology, this study was unique in its scope. It was delimited to AKBC. The context scope was built around the sanction of various stations in Nigeria by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)

Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are important:

    i.   The employers of journalists should ensure that remuneration for journalists is

commensurate with the work they do. That is, there should besalary scale, housing loan/ grants, medical welfare for journalists.

ii. Owners of media organizations should allow journalists to perform their duties according to the ethics of the profession.

iii. Journalists should also follow the laid down laws and ethics of the profession and use them as a guideline in their day to day activities. They should always have it in mind that they serve as a bridge between the government and the public.

iv. The government should reduce the level of influence they exert on the media especially during elections.

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ATTITUDE OF RESIDENTS OF IMO STATE TOWARDS "GOGE AFRICA TV SHOW": IMPLICATIONS FOR CULTURAL REAWAKENING

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Abstract

The study examined "attitude of residents of Imo State towards Goge Africa TV show: implication for cultural reawakening". The objectives of the study among others were to: find out if Goge Africa TV show influences residents of Imo State participation in the promotion of cultural values like dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities. The study was hinged on uses and gratifications theory. The survey research method was adopted in the study. A sample size of 400 was drawn from the projected population of 806622 of Imo state. Close-ended questionnaire was administered. Data retrieved were analyzed using simple percentage in tables and frequencies for research questions. Finding indicated that Goge Africa TV show promotes cultural values like dressing, food, marriage and festivities at 53%. It was also found that Goge Africa TV show influenced residents of Imo state participation in the promotion of cultural values at 50.2%. The study therefore, recommended the need for more programmes that portray authentic Nigerian traditional cultures. It was also, recommended that television presenters and newscasters should dress in traditional attire when appearing on the screen.

Keywords: Attitude, Cultural, Reawakening, Goge Africa, Reality show, Television

Introduction

The audience represents one of the cardinal constituent elements without which the process of mass communication is incomplete. This is because every mass media message must have or anticipate those for whom it has meaning and for whom it must be of use (Konkwo, 2011, p.37). Today's audiences are being bombarded with deluge of programmes. Each of these programmes beckon on the audience for their existence. Okunna and Omenugha (2012, p.246) posit that "what the head does not know the heart do not grieve about". This applies to the influence of programme content which the individual has come in contact with in terms of exposure to that content. However, the programme content which the individuals have not been exposed to have lost its intended message on the individuals. This basically applies to a media content which the individual have not been exposed to. The audiences are indirectly part of decision makers in programme production. Even the most potent media content cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has no 'use' for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. People value their interest, association, social roles are pre-potent and that people selectively fashion what they hear or see in accordance with

their interest (Katz in Konkwo, 2003).

The audiences choose to watch programmes that give gratifications and satisfaction of their social and psychological needs. In accordance to this, Owuamalam (2007, p.51) posits that "programme effects are opinion- related and circumstantially determined. The opinion stem from how the audience perceives the programme, as satisfying its purpose for attending to the presentation". The readiness of the audience to desire broadcast programme shows the programme exposure and popularity. The lethargy for watching certain programmes by an audience, suggests their removal from such programme content.

It is when the essence of programme content goes to generate the desired audience response, which such a programme can be said to be efficient in influencing attitudinal and behavioural changes expected to result from programme consumption. Programme producers must, of necessity, seek to formulate and organize or package their message in such a way as to appeal to the wishes and aspirations of certain groups of people that constitute the prime consumers of a certain programme. The success or failure in this endeavour will depend on the ability of the programme producer to grasp the general dynamics of society in its process of growth, development and modernization (Konkwo, 2011).

This is why a research exercise is conducted to ascertain if a television show, like Goge Africa, achieved its purpose of propagating cultural heritage. Goge Africa is a television programme aimed to propagate African cultures. At a time when the Nigerian airwaves were dominated with the Goge Africa, "tourism and cultural TV show aimed at showcasing Africa heritage to the rest of the world". Exactly 15 years after it hit the screen in 1999, the programme has become a household name and one of the most watched TV programme on the content. Its perspective on the African among Africans, Nigeria and Imo state in particular.

The programme showcases the importance of culture of a given people and the need for propagating such culture (Ilonze, 2013). Hanson (2005, p.256) observes that "in the past people were limited to interacting with those whom they can see and hear face-to-face. But the coming of electronic media and television in particular, changed this". It means that people equally interact with television. In essence, the above submission is pointed out to understand how powerful the television is as a socializing agent. Television has the ability to make or mar a society. And it all depends on how the producers are able to manipulate the content for specific purposes. The medium has the ability to make the viewers replicate actions they got exposed to either in part or whole. That is why television has become a very strong medium to propagate culture.

It is to this end that this study seeks to ascertain how influential Goge Africa is influencing cultural propagation among television viewers in Imo state.

Statement of the Problem

Residents of Imo State are, to a very large extent, dependent on regular access to the mass media for information, entertainment, opinion which enables them to choose how to behave and react towards TV programmes watched by them. Therefore, most of their lifestyle is shaped more or less, after what they hear, read, and see in the media. It is in the light of these

developments that there is the need to examine the role of Goge Africa TV show cultural content production in promotion of culture among the residents of Imo state, and the implications or effects of such developments on the people considering the alarming rate at which traditional cultural values are diminishing among the residents of Imo state especially on cultural festivals, dancing, dressing, food, marriage rites.

This study is therefore aimed at examining the role of Goge Africa TV show in propagating cultural values like dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities among residents of Imo State with a view to ascertain the extent of such influence on cultural values. However, what is the attitude of Imo Residents towards Goge Africa TV show and what is the implication for cultural re-awakening?

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

1.   Ascertain if residents of Imo state are aware of Goge Africa TV show.

2.   Find out the extent of Goge Africa TV show viewership among residents of Imo State.

3.   Find out if Goge Africa TV show promotes cultural festivals, dancing, dressing, food, marriage rites in Imo State.

4.   Determine if the cultural values of residents of Imo State were re-awakened through Goge Africa TV show.

5.   Ascertain whether exposure to Goge Africa TV show significantly influences cultural participation among residents of Imo state.

Television and Culture

Television is the principal medium for obtaining visual entertainment and information which are presented through various programme genres such as: News, Sports, Documentary, Interviews, Drama, and Music, et cetera. It establishes a direct relationship which presents particular sets, values and attitudes to its mass audience. Fiske (1987) cited in Chioma (2013:5), defines "television as a popular cultural medium, with programmes that are disseminated to a mass audience from numerous subcultures; who have a wide variety of social relations, socio-cultural experience, and discourse".

Television contents represent real life and fictional world to its viewers. Its visual and aural nature affords its viewer the opportunity to participate as they watch and afterwards, as they are able to perceive, interpret, and accept or reject images as real or imaginary. However, beyond this, television contents as likened by O'Donnell (2007) cited in Chioma (2013, p.6), are strategies through which a society's cultural values, norms, practices, fads, interest, and trends are developed. Television broadcasting in Africa began in Nigeria, as a major step toward the modernization of the traditional system of communication and the development of the continent".

 In 1959, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) was established by late Chief Obafemi

Awolowo (then Premier of the region). It was the first the first television (Lasode, 1994) in Chioma (2013). At the time, the aim of broadcasting was to: provide adequate services in education, agriculture, politics and cultural development. Electronic media in particular provide a global view that has allowed us to become involved in concerns far beyond the scope of earlier generations. Cultural, moral and community opinions have been changed largely by the fact that the mass media can provide seemingly uninterrupted news that has influenced community life, indigenous culture and morals as well.

History of Goge Africa TV Show

Goge Africa is a culture and Tourism media brand on TV and print. This TV show is produced and anchored by couple who are Nneka and Isaac Moses both native of Anambra State. This passion of theirs, which made its debut on 1ˢᵗ October in 1999, has seen the couple traversing the continent of Africa, digging out the rich traditions, festivals, fabric design, sculpture, carving, painting, photography, literature and hand-crafts like bead-making and basket weaving, dances and music of Africans and showing it to the world in order to change the often negative perception of our cultures and traditions by outsiders.

 Goge Africa TV show has been in existence since 1999. Over the years, this TV programme has grown in its concept, span and reach. In Africa, Goge Africa has an extensive network in Nigeria and covered many nations from all the 4 corners, north, south, east and west of Africa. Today Goge Africa is broadcast in 3 continents (Africa, Europe & US) and reaches out to more nations than ever before. It is shown on over 33 local and international TV channels. Goge Africa also has a companion magazine with circulation in Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ethiopia, United Kingdom and USA. According to the interview the presenter of the TV show "GOGE Africa" had with vanguard newspaper, published on June 5ᵗʰ, 2015 on trips they were invited some time ago to Ethiopia, by an individual who felt he's been watching 'Goge Africa' for a while but Ethiopia was not featured. "We got to Ethiopia and we were offered this strange food, raw meat, which is a special delicacy there. They did that out of love for us. I couldn't bring myself to eat raw meat spiced up. But Nneka said, this people went through so much stress to prepare this, why can't you eat? I said if you can eat, go ahead. Once you have eaten, I have eaten. I couldn't bring myself to eat it. They were so hospitable that they went through so much to take care of us".

In Ethiopia, we got things for free. Young girls selling water offered us water for free by just recognizing us and these people are poor. I felt very touched. We were invited by a community that had to contribute money to buy us soft drinks! Then, when we went to Cape Town, the sheer beauty of Cape Town, the topography, mountains, you can't beat that. If I tell you Africans are hospitable people, you'd say it's because it's 'Goge Africa'. But by and large, Africans are nice people. "In South Africa, they call it Obuntu. There is no English word for it. They explained it this way: that it is that act of you leaving your bedroom for your visitor because a visitor is like a messenger from God. So, you have to give the best of what you have" (Ekunkunbor, 2013*)*.

A copy of the last edition of Goge Africa Magazine is included with this package. Over the years, Goge Africa has won various awards some of which include: Best Entertainment /Music Programme - Nigerian Television Authority (2000); Best Entertainment /Music

Programme - Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (2004); Award of Recognition at Black Music Awards Republic du Benin (2005); Best TV Programme - Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (2006); and Best over All Programme (TV And Radio) In Africa - (URTNER), Now African Union Of Broadcasters In Conjunction With NBC (2006)

Goge Africa crew travels far and wide to promote tourism while capturing the culture and festivals of Africans and the Diaspora. It worked and partnered with many Governments and corporate bodies that have been a part of our internationally acclaimed projects. Goge Africa Foundation (GAF) was established in 2004 by the founders and producers of the award winning culture and tourism TV programme, "Goge Africa". It is an educational foundation that also teaches African youths the history and heritage of our continent while creating awareness about social ills like AIDS, child abuse/trafficking etc. and catering to the needs of the less privileged in the society. Through the foundation, we hope to empower the youths of Africa towards building and sustaining a strong economy for our continent.

Goge Africa aims to further expand its network through the 'Goge Goes Global' (triple G) project coming up under the premise that Goge Africa opens a window to the varied cultures of the world to its African viewers and provide the world a perspective of Africa from African worldview, thereby promoting peace, cooperation and integration while developing diverse channels for tourism, communications, trade, commerce and economic development worldwide (Ekunkunbor, 2013*)*.

Empirical Studies

Akpan (2012) in a study on "Television programmes and cultural proximity: A panacea for violence in a multimedia cultural society" found that a majority of the respondents get exposed to Western TV channels (which contain a lot of violence) more than the local ones it was also found that infusing lifestyles that are peculiar to the local setting helps to create closeness between programmes and viewers.

Ilonze (2013) examined the role of FRCN in propagating culture in Nigeria. The study found that FRCN through its various propagating had really impaled positively in propagating culture among the people.

Chioma (2013) in a study on "television local contents; conduit for cultural learning in Nigeria" indicated that cultural learning is concerned through television local content in Nigeria is concerned; government owned television is doing a good job far better than private television stations. Based on the NBC cultural objectives more on public than the private television stations. This shows a significant connection to the promotion of the cultural learning of norms and values. The areas promoted would be dressing, music or food.

Andah and Laninhun (2012) assessed the structure and content of locally produced children's television programmes in Nigeria. The study found that entertainment-education content of the programmes were geared towards meeting the socialization needs of the child audience and some programmes lacked professional packaging as evident in poor post production such as missing inter-links, substitution of closing mortgages with captions as

well as poor and unstable timing.

Apuke and Dogari (2017) examined the influence of television programme on youth dressing pattern in Taraba State University Jalingo. The study revealed among other things that entertainment/musical programmes are the most preferred and watched programmes by youths. It was revealed that youths imitate the hip hop/hippies and make up/hair styles show on television programmes than any other forms of dressing and imitating such dressing makes them appear indecent.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Uses and Gratification Theory. This theory emanated during the late 1950s, the 1960s when there was general disappointment of researchers with the result obtained from measuring the short-term effects of exposure to mass media campaigns. Researchers desired to understand the level of audience involvement in the mass communication process, in accordance with -the user's own experience and perspective than the effects tradition could have made possible (Konkwo, 2003, p.164).

Katz (1959) cited in Konkwo, (2003, p.164) posits that less attention should be paid to what media do to people and more to what people do with the media. He maintained that such an approach assumes that even the most potent media content cannot ordinarily influence on individual who has no use' for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. Katz further notes that the 'uses' approach assumes that people values, their interest, their association, their social roles are pre-potent and that people selectively "fashion" what they see and hear to accord with these interests. The objective of uses and gratification theory, according to Burgeon, Hunsaker and Dawson (1994) cited in Udende and Azeez (2010, p. 34), is to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs. Putting it analogical, the theory explains why one person rushes home, for example, to stay up late at night to watch the local news or read a medium. It also highlights the positive consequences of individual media uses.

This indicates that television viewers choose to tune in or watch any particular television reality show based on the ability of such programme to satisfy their needs. It implies that people can only view Goge Africa TV show when such programme is capable of satisfying their needs, interest and desire. He/she chooses to watch or Goge Africa TV show in preference to other programmes aired at the same time.

Methodology

The study employed survey research method as enabled a quantitative data to be obtained from those who watch television in order to find out their views on the Goge Africa TV show. Owuamalam (2012, p. 103) posits that "survey enables the researcher to deal with the characteristics of the chosen set of people whose opinion, behaviour and attitudes are essential for the collection of information, required by the study". With regard to the 2006 National census report, of National Population Council (NPC) on the population of Imo state is 3,896,724. However, nine years have elapsed since the last census, so there is need to project the current population of Imo State to reflect the time of this study, using the UNDP's population extrapolation index of 2.28% per annum. This assumed the result in the

population for the state. It means that an addition 80662 persons were added to the actual or given population to give 4703346, which is an estimated population. It is from this population that the sample and sample size can be drawn and calculated. The sample size was statistically determined using Taro-Yamane's formula and arrived at 399.96 which was adjusted to the nearest whole number of 400.

Multistage sampling technique was used based on the Senatorial zones and 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State. Two LGAs were selected from each senatorial district and one autonomous community was chosen randomly from each LGA. Imo State was divided into 3 senatorial districts or clusters. The 3 zones or clusters were further divided into 27 Local Government Councils or clusters. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two Local Government Area from each of the senatorial districts. The researcher purposively selected one community from each of the selected local governments in each of the senatorial districts. The selected local governments were as follows: Agbaja-Ehime Mbano; Okata-Ihitte/Uboma; Imerienwe-Ngor-Okpala; Okirika Nweke-Ahiazu Mbaise; Mbala/Uba-Oguta; and Obitti/Mgbaishi -Ohaji/Egbema Local Governments Areas. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. A face validity test was done on the instrument and the outcome was good. A reliability test was also conducted on the instrument. The data obtained were analyzed in percentage and tables.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Respondents' access to TV set

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	299	80%
No	75	20%
Total	**374**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The result above shows that majority had access to television sets.

Table 2: Respondents viewership of TV show programmes

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	299	80%
No	26	7%
Can't say	49	13%
Total		100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The obtained result shows that 80% of the respondents watch the TV programmes. This implies that majority of the respondents watch TV programmes.

Table 3: Respondent awareness about Goge Africa TV show

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	239	64%
No	51	14
Not sure	84	22%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

From the table above reveals that the majority of the respondents were aware of Goge Africa TV show.

Table 4: Extent of Respondents' level of awareness

Responses	Frequency	percentage
To a great extent	112	30%
To an extent	89	24%
A little	24	20%
Never	65	17%
No opinion	34	9%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The result shows that majority of the respondents aware of Goge Africa to show.

Table 5: Respondents level of exposure to Goge TV show?

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Regularly	166	44.4%
Sometimes	83	22.2%
Never	75	20%
No response	50	13.4%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The result indicates that majority of the respondents watch Goge TV show regularly.

Table 6: Respondents' knowledge about Goge Africa TV show and promotion of cultural values

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	210	56%
No	87	23%
Can't say	77	21%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The obtained result shows majority of the respondents believed that Goge Africa TV show promotes indigenous cultural values.

Table 7: Knowledge about Goge TV show promotion of dressing, food, marriage rites and cultural festivities

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	197	53%
No	77	20%
Can't say	100	27%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The result shows that majority of respondents believed that Goge Africa TV show promotes indigenous dressing, food, marriage rites and cultural festivities.

Table 8: Cultural values of respondents of Imo State were re-awakened through Goge Africa TV show.

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	201	54%
No	93	25%
Can't say	80	21%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The above result shows that a good number of the respondents believed that the cultural values of Imo State were re-awakened through Goge Africa TV show.

Table 9: Relationship between Goge Africa TV show and Imolites participation in the promotion of cultural values

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	189	50.5%
No	92	24.5%
Can't say	93	25%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The obtained result implies that majority of the respondents believed that Goge Africa TV shows influences their participation in the promotion of cultural values.

Table 10: Respondents' position on if the programme should be sustained

Responses	Frequency	percentage
Yes	213	57%
No	50	13%
Can't say	111	30%
Total	374	100%

Source: *Field Survey, 2015*

The result shows that a good number of the respondents on the average believed that the programme should sustained on the fact that it promotes our cultural values.

Discussion of Findings

Imo State residents level of awareness of Goge Africa TV show

The finding depicts that majority of Imo State residents were aware of Goge Africa TV show to great extent at 30%. Sequel to the fact, that Imo State residents watch the TV show programmes which made them to become aware of such programme like Goge Africa TV show at 64%. The uses and gratification theory explained how exposure to television influences awareness of TV programme. Burgeon Hunsaker, "explained how individuals use mass communication to meet their needs". The theory explains why one person rushes home to watch a TV programme while another will not take cognizance of that same programme. For instance, when one stays up late at night to watch local news or read a medium. It also highlights the positive consequences of media uses of Individuals. Hanson

(2005) observes that in the past people were limited to interacting with those whom they can see and hear face-to-face, but the coming of electronic media and television in particular, changed this. It means that people equally interact with television.

To buttress this, Okunna and Omenugha (2010:46), posit that what the head does not know the heart do not grieve about. They maintained influence of programme content which the individual has come in contact with in terms of exposure to that content. It is that perception can only take place when the audience, as come in contact with such programme.

Extent residents of Imo State view Goge Africa TV show
The finding shows that majority of Imo State residents were heavy viewers of Goge Africa TV show at 44.4%. A good number of Imo State residents adequately expose themselves to the programme. This finding is in accordance with the uses and gratification theory. According to the theory television viewers choose to tune in or watch any particular television show based on the ability of such programme to satisfy their needs. It means that Imo State residents choose to watch Africa TV show in preference to others because the programme was able to satisfy their needs, interest and desire.

To buttress this, Nwabueze (2014, p.62) posits that "mass media exposure refer to the act of reading, watching or listening to the mass media. It is a conscious effort directed at accessing, selecting and consuming contents of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, bill boards, posters books and the new media". Exposure here refers to the amount of time spent in reading, watching or listening to a medium. So level of exposure is a stronger indicator of media effectiveness than exposure. (Baran 2004, cited in Nwabueze, 2014). In the same vein, Nwabueze (2014, p.62) asserts that "exposure is crucial to understanding what possible impact mass media messages could have on the society". The level of exposure determines what types of effect mass communication messages could have on the audience.

Roles Goge Africa TV play in the promotion of cultural values
The findings show that Goge Africa TV show promotes cultural values especially dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities. It means that Goge Africa TV show played a significant role in the promotion of cultural values.

To buttress this, Chioma (2013), found that as far as cultural learning is concerned television play significant role to the promotion of cultural learning of norms and values. The areas promoted were dressing, music and food. The finding was supported by Ilonze (2013), according to him Goge Africa TV show is a television programme, aimed at propagating various African culture. The programme show cases the importance of the culture of a given people and the need for propagating such culture. In collaboration to this, Chioma (2013) observes that "television has the ability to activate, localize, homogenize and even adapt people to their own culture. It has the ability not only to reflect but also shape opinion, and to play a part in forming attitudes, which affect morality" she maintained that Nigerian television has not lagged behind in revitalizing the nation's cultural heritage and promotion of the musical and dramatic talents.

Exposure to Goge Africa TV show broadening residents of Imo State's knowledge about cultural dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities

The finding in this study shows that Goge Africa TV show exposes the residents of Imo State's knowledge about cultural dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities. The respondents' knowledge about their traditional attire, food marriage rites and festivities were influenced by their exposure to Goge Africa TV show.

With reference to the theoretical framework, Gerbner, Gross, Signorelli and Morgan (1980) cited in Ndolo (2006, p.32), "opines that mass media especially television exerts a tremendous influence by altering individual's perception of reality". According to them, people watch a lot of television which subsumes other sources of information, ideas and socialization like religion, family and schools. The effects of all these exposures consequently produce cultivation or teaching of a common worldview, common roles and common values. This depicts that mass media especially television influence message consumer's knowledge about social realities. In corroboration to this, Ilonze (2013), found that radio through its various programme had really impacted positively in propagating cultural values among the people. According to Chioma (2013), electronic media in particular provide a global view that has allowed us to become involved in concern far beyond the scope of earlier generations cultural moral and community opinions have been changed largely by the fact that the mass media can provide seemingly uninterrupted news that have influenced community life, indigenous culture and morals as community life, indigenous culture and morals as well.

Exposure to Goge Africa TV show significantly re-awaking the residents of Imo State participation towards the promotion of cultural values

The finding revealed that Goge Africa TV show re-awakes the residents of Imo State's participation towards the promotion of cultural values. This clearly portends that a relationship exists between Goge Africa TV show and Imo State residents' participation in the promotion of cultural festivities, marriage rites, dressing and food.

This study's theoretical framework supported the above finding that Imo State residents, who are heavy viewers of Goge Africa TV show were re-awakened in their participation towards the promotion of their cultural values. In the same vein Adewoye and Jimoh (2010), found that "the mass media to a reasonable extent influenced the life style of Nigerian youths".

Conclusion

Goge Africa is a television programme, aimed at propagating various African cultures. The programme showcases the importance of the culture of a given people and the need for propagating such culture (Ilonze, 2013). The portrayal of Africa indigenous cultural values like dressing, food, marriage rites and festivities indicate that Goge Africa TV show is a major source through which residents of Imo state realized and appreciate their cultural values. Most of the people became aware of the indigenous cultural values for the first time considering their exposure to the programmes. Therefore, the familiarization within and participation in the promotion of indigenous cultural values among residents of Imo state can largely be attributed to their exposure to Goge Africa to show. This may be due to the of

manner presentation of the programme. The presenters Isaac and Nneka, who youth could be major motivating factors for the residents of Imo state to emulate this couple in the promotion our indigenous cultural values Goge Africa show influenced the cultural reawakening of the people by reminding them some of the cultural values that have been then some of the cultural values that have been forgotten and emphasized the need not been forgotten and emphasized the need not one their cultural identity to go into extinction.

Recommendations

1. Television presenters and newscasters should dress in tradition attire when appearing on the screen. This is clearly evident as most residents of Imo State look up to these television personalities as role models, particularly in the aspect of dressing.

2. There is need for more programmes that portray authentic Nigerian traditional cultures. This will go a long way in familiarizing the residents with these cultural values, products and practices.

3. Producers and planners of television local cultural content should always put the tastes and preference of television into consideration when packaging such products. This will go a long way in making such programme production more appealing to the residents of Imo state, thereby attracting their patronage.

4. The Nigerian broadcasting cooperation (NBCs) should intensify efforts to ensure the strict compliance with the mandatory local and foreign programme air time allocation quota as contained in the (NBS) code

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INFLUENCE OF AIT'S "FOCUS NIGERIA" PROGRAMME ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN ORLU LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study was on the influence of African Independent Television "Focus Nigeria" programme on youth development. The objectives of this study were to: ascertain Orlu youths' level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme; examine the perception of Orlu youths about AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme; and determine if AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme influence Orlu youths' engagement in the development activities. The survey research method was used for this study. Australian online calculator was used to derive a sample size of 385 from the population of 210,165. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Cluster and simple random sampling techniques were adopted in the selection of the various youths in selected communities in Orlu, Imo State. The finding showed that the level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme among youths in Orlu is moderate at 44.5%%; the perception of the youths in Orlu were thatAIT "Focus Nigeria" programme is educative and discusses issues of public interest; most of their discussion center on politics and gives them opportunity to contribute on burning issues that concern their development at 72%. Also, it was found that AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme has influenced youths' development positively at 56.5%, by re-awakening their political consciousness, socio-economic among others. It was therefore, recommended that Government and other stakeholders on development communication should continue to use current affairs programmes to educate, inform, empower and encourage the youths on the need to accept and participate fully on projects, policies and programmes geared towards their development.

Keywords: Development, Influence, Television, programme, Youth

Introduction

The field of youth development sits at the frontier of new opportunities for research and practice. Also, sustainability of development has remained a key area of interest for discussions and debates among researchers. In advanced economies, development has been successfully sustained for long but difficult to actualize in developing economies like Nigeria (Jegede, Irewole & Dada, 2019). They maintained that though government and non-governmental agencies and well-meaning individuals have employed different strategies to

empower the youths, yet the resultant effects are not sustainable as evident in the high level of poverty and unemployment. This is because the wheel of development of any country depends on how productive and creative the youthful populations are. The youth in any society are the oxygen of growth and development. For instance, they provide the labour force for production of goods and service to take effect. And also, are the critical masses of people, whose action and inaction can develop or destroy the hegemonies/fabrics of their society. The youthful population constituted over 70% of the 2006 census figure (Odoh ***& Eme, 2014)***. According to them, this quantum of population is a great asset for the Nigerian state if they are harnessed and utilized in the right direction. Interestingly, the transition of society from one generation to another is critical to the formative and developmental aspiration of such society. That, is why society that prepare their youth for the sake of future aspiration will not only secure her future development; but, will prepare her next set of leaders with the challenges of national reconciliation and development. So, therefore, the role of youth on national development is sacrosanct to the whole developmental aspiration of any society. The youth are the cornerstone to societal rejuvenation. Societies are not only recreated through the youthful population, but, youth are often referring to as leaders of tomorrow (Odoh, ***& Eme***, 2014*)*.

Therefore, communication is vital for harnessing human capital for development. It plays a crucial role in the transmission of knowledge, skills, ideas and information that sharpens and re-orders the perceptions of the readers and viewers on a particular event or happening in the society and serves as a reservoir of knowledge of the past and current events (Edim, Odok & Osaji, 2016). They maintained that the critical role of the media is encapsulated in its impulsive tendency to direct and redirect the course of attitudinal change and building public perception towards societal affairs. The mass media set agenda for public discourse. It is the media that sensitize Nigerians on the need to be active participants in the development programmes and policies of the government (Sambe, 2008).

Television as medium of communication has contributed to overall development of the nation in no small measure. When any developing country opts for television, it definitely must be because, among other things, TV has an important role to play in advancing the process of national development. It has and is still making a lot of import; social, cultural and educational advancement of the nation (Akpan, 2012). The television is regarded as one of the most powerful media of mass communication. According to him, the enormous power from its audio-visual properties, which command instant modern means of mass communication, its effectiveness following attributes: TV can present things as they really are; (realism); events can be shown as they are happening; it can address the whole person, since its range of subjects is both comprehensive and flexible; it can also address both the literate and non-literate; it can speak to the individual (intimate); and it has both intellectual and emotional appeal. As a development agent, television has done much and can do much to activate human intention had cultural development through serious educational programmes which happily are now a feature of Nigerian television. Learning by television is not limited to schools broadcast; other socio-cultural programmes such as drama pass information across to viewers (Akpan, 2012).

Apuke and Dogari (2017) in a study concluded that exposure to television had influenced

young men and women attitude and behaviours especially in their dressing style. Therefore, it becomes necessary to ascertain how African Independent Television programmes *" Focus Nigeria"*, has been useful in discussing issues, events and happenings that concern the youth in Orlu. Focus Nigeria is a one-hour News and Current Affairs Discussion programmes on weekdays. It runs between 10 and 11a.m. it was introduced in January 2006 and anchored by Gbenga Mike Aruleba. Hence, it is our desire in this study to ascertain the influence of this TV programmes in the attainment of youth development in Orlu Local Government Council.

Statement of the Problem

Obviously, a key issue in enhancing youth development after the provision of necessary developmental projects and programmes to improve the living standard of the youths is information. Though, it appears that most of the youths in Orlu lack basic knowledge about developmental programmes, projects and policies going on in the state as well as in their localities that are meant to foster their socio-economic wellbeing. It is also, not clear if AIT's "Focus Nigeria" programme provides the information required by the youth to participate in the development programmes and projects, given the fact that most information reaching them are not organized in such a way as to achieve defined development objectives. The question is: Does exposure to "Focus Nigeria" influence the participation of the youth towards embracing development programmes and projects meant for them?

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1.   What is the level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme among Orlu youth?

2.   What is the perception of Orlu youths about AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme?

3.   What is the influence of AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme on Orlu youths' engagement in the development activities?

Background of Focus Nigeria

Focus Nigeria is a one-hour News and Current Affairs Discussion programmes on weekdays. It runs between 10 and 11a.m. it was introduced in January 2006 and anchored by Gbenga Mike Aruleba. It is a public affairs programme which features public officers, civil society activists, experts, professionals, private and ordinary people, to discuss issues especially current and burning ones which are of public or national interest. It is divided into 2 or 3 segments where the first 5 to 10 minutes are used to recap major public and political developments in the country since the last edition and take a prologue to set the agenda from the issue or topic of the day. The rest of the time is used for discussion moderated by the presenter. The third segment is occasional when there is a sponsored spotlight or documentary. The discussion segment can also be sponsored by an interested party or stakeholder, but if allegations are made against other people or institutions, such are invited and given the right to reply. Moreover, viewers are encouraged to call certain numbers or sent text messages in reaction to issues discussed.

Effectiveness of Television in Promoting Youth Development

Nsikan-Abasi, and Miriam (2016) examined "audience participation and perception of AITs current Affairs programmes "Focus Nigeria". The findings revealed that majority of the respondents watch the programme "focus Nigeria" on daily basis but they rarely participate in the programme.

Similarly, Akoja (2016) revealed 71.4% had access to development programmes through radio and television. Radio remained a popular medium for disseminating development messages in Nigeria. It also showed that majority of the respondents indicated that media programmes encourage participation in national development. It was therefore, concluded that the media have been effective in supporting the national objectives.

In corroborating this, Gever and Nwabuzor (2014) in study on "security USA through the airwaves: analysis of the influence of broadcast media security awareness campaigns on security Awareness among Enugu State residents" indicated that there is significant relationship between broadcast media campaigns and audience security alertness. It also revealed that the relationship through significant, is weak, while factors that enhance audience understanding of broadcast security awareness campaigns are; frequency, simplicity of language richness of content and persuasiveness. The researchers conclude that following the perceived ineffectiveness of security intelligence among security agencies in Nigeria, the broadcast media should deploy its immediacy strength with a view to implanting a sense of security alertness among Nigerians as a deliberate way of addressing the security intelligence.

In relation to this, Ajaero, Okoro, and Ajaero (2016) investigated the perception of and attitude toward mass media reportage of the 2012 flood in Rural Nigeria. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents at 75% received information about the flood from either radio or television, and there significant spatial variations in perceptions of flood reportage. Also, the finding indicated that generally, mass media reportage of the flood was not two effective in influencing people's attitude.

Again, Omolade (2013) in a study on the influence of broadcast economic programmes on rural community development in Lagos and Oyo States, Nigeria. The findings showed that broadcast media do perform effectively within the rural communities as far as matters of economic programmes are designed and disseminated to their respective homes; broadcast media perform effectively within the rural community, and the rural communities receive the broadcast message which enables them to have exposure to economic programmes disseminated by the broadcast media specifically radio and television. It was also found that the dissemination of economic programme has brought about development within the community.

In the same vein, Usadolo and Gwanya (2012) examined television violence: a reflection of the views of children in South Africa. Findings revealed about younger participants in the study shows that they believe television violence is real as opposed to older ones. The children's view about the wrestling is real as opposed to mainly young girls of older ages. Regarding their favouurite characters, the female participants prefer characters who are

funny, nice and with good personality. Boys on the other hand prefer characters with actions and full of energy finally, the finding revealed that the children would imitate their favourite characters based on their discernment of what is good. The researchers concluded that children are able to make critical judgment of television character behaviours.

In relation to this, Kakembo (2012) in a study revealed that televised HIV/AIDS educational messages are occasionally detached from the experiences and world views of the youths. On the other hand, it was evident that youths benefited more from HIV/AIDS concepts conveyed through commercial television soaps. It was therefore, concluded that some of the propagated values in televised education programmes clash with the symbolism and subcultures of the urban youths.

Also, Aririguzoh (2011) in a study on "television influence on political knowledge of the 2007 Nigeria Presidential Elections among Residents of Ado-Odalota, Ogun State", concluded that Television made voters in Ado-Odo-Local government to know about the last Nigerian presidential election; the information offered through television broadcasts increased the knowledge base of the respondents by making them to know about this particular election, the contesting candidates and the various political parties and television broadcasts also improved voters' awareness of specific contents names, their political parties, their different party Logos or distinguishing marks and where to thumbprint in the election.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on development media theory. The development media theory was formulated by McQuail in 1987. This theory seeks to explain the normative behaviours of the press in countries that are conventionally classified together as developing countries. The theory owes its origin to the UNESCO's MacBride Commission set up in 1979. This theory is opposed to dependency and foreign domination and to arbitrary authoritarianism. It accepts economic development and nation building as overriding objectives. Press freedom should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and the development needs of the society. In the interest of development ends, the state has the ultimate control (Ndolo, 2005).

The theory holds that the media have a role to play in facilitating the process of development in the developing countries. The basic tenets of the theory are that the media are to be used to serve the general good of the nation. The media are seen as agents of development and social change in any community thus, the theory says that the media should be used to complement government's efforts by carrying out programmes that will lead to positive behavioural change among the people (Asemah, Anum & Edegoh, 2013, p. 19).

The theory is relevant to the study because it lays emphasis on using the media to promote develop in the society especially as concern the youths. This implies that the media have the capacity to positively foster youth development. Thus, the media need to be employed to bring about social, political and economic development among youths.

Research Method

Survey was used for this study. The survey research method is apt and suitable for this study, given that opinion, views, feelings and thought of youths in the select area of the study was sought. From the official records of the 2016 projection of the population of Orlu Local Government Area is 196, 600 (NPC, 2016). However, the population has grown since the last projection by NPC. In such a situation the research was expected to use the United Nations projected index of 2.28% to extrapolate and predict the new population from the last known figure. It shows that an addition of 13,565 persons was added to the actual population (196,600) to obtain projected population of 210,165; which is an estimated population. The sample size for this study is 384.This was determined using Australian calculator cluster sampling technique was used for this study. This is because Orlu Local Government Area has 13 districts or clusters. It is from these clusters or wards/districts that 4 wards/districts were selected purposively selected. The wards/districts selected were as follows: Amaifeke; Owerri-Ebiri; Ihioma; and Umuna ward. The researchers allotted 96 persons to each of the selected wards. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: What is the level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme among Orlu youth?

Table 1: Respondents' ownership of TV sets

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	299	79.7%
No	76	20.3%
Total	**375**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019.

According to the table above majority of the respondents had TV sets at 79.7% had TV sets. This is implies that a good number of the respondents had access to watch TV programmes. Even those who do not own TV sets are likely to watch it from their neighbours, friends and relatives.

Table 2: Respondents' viewership of AIT programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	290	77.3%
No	85	22.7%
Total	**375**	**100**%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The table above shows that majority of the respondents at 77.3% watch AIT programmes.

This indicated that the AIT programmes are such popular among respondents in the study area. People who do not have TV sets can equally watch the programmes from others.

Table 3: Respondents' viewership of AIT's "Focus Nigeria" programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	220	58.7%
No	155	41.3%
Total	**375**	**100**%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

From the table above reveals that majority of the respondents admitted that they watch AIT Focus Nigeria programme at 58.7%. The implication is that on the average, most of the respondents that have TV sets and who enjoy watching AIT programmes choose to watch "Focus Nigeria" outside other programmes that are being aired on the station.

Table 4: Respondents' level of exposure to AIT Focus Nigeria programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	43	11.5%
Moderate extent	167	44.5%
Little extent	38	10.1%
Can't say	127	33.9%
Total	**375**	**100**%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

From the table above, indicates that the level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme among the respondents is moderate at 44.5%. It means that the respondents have not fully being exposed to AIT Focus Nigeria programme.

Research Question Two: What is the perception of Orlu youths about AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme?

Table 5: Respondents' perception of AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
It provides opportunity for them to contribute on burning issues	25	6.6%
It is educative and discusses issues of public interest	157	42%
It focuses more on p olitical issues than other issues	88	23.4%
Not sure	105	28%
Total	**375**	**100**%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The table above indicates that majority or 42% of the respondents agreed that the programme is educative and discusses issues of public interest, followed by it focuses more on political issues than other issues. It means that the programme mostly gives adequate attention to political issues. This is important because other developmental issues revolve around politics.

Research Question Three: Respondents' view on whether exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme influence their engagement in the development activities?
Table 6: Respondents' view on whether AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme influence youth engagement in the development activities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	59	15.7%
Agree	153	40.8%
Not sure	47	12.5%
Disagree	67	17.9%
Strongly disagree	49	13.1%
Total	**375**	**100**%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

From the table above, majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme influenced their participation towards development activities. The implication is that through this programme the respondents were induced to take decisions and actions that would enhanced their wellbeing.

Table 7: Respondents view on the areas the programme has influenced their lives

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Political life	129	34.4%
Cultural/religious life	14	3.7%
Economic life	52	13.9%
Educational life	22	5.9%
All of the above	59	15.7%
Can't say	99	26.4%
Total	**375**	**100%**

Source: Field survey, 2019.

From the table above reveals that majority of the respondents at 75.6% agreed that exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme has influenced their political, economic, educational, cultural lives. However, the programme impacted mostly on the political life of the youths.

Discussion of Findings
Level of exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme among Orlu youth

The finding indicated that majority of the residents at 44.5% believed that they got exposed to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme to a moderate extent. This is justified were majority or 58.7% admitted that they watch AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme. It is obvious that the majority or 79.7% have TV sets and which most of them use to watch AIT programmes at 77.3%. This means that people that own TV sets, watch AIT programmes. Although, the level to which they got exposed to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme is moderate. The implication is that the respondents are yet to fully expose themselves to the programme. This could because as result of the uninterrupted power supply as associated with nation.

This finding is in tandem with the earlier study conducted by Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) revealed that majority of the respondents watch the programme "focus Nigeria", but their level of participation and contribution is not encouraging. Also, to support this finding, Akoja (2016) revealed 71.4% had access to development programmes through radio and television. Radio remained a popular medium for disseminating development messages in Nigeria. In relations to this Ajaero, Okoro, and Ajaero (2016) revealed that majority of the respondents at 75% received information about the flood from either radio or television,

The perception of Orlu youths about AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme

The finding showed that majority or 42% of the respondents agreed that the programme is educative and discusses issues of public interest, followed by the fact that it focuses more on political issues than other issues at 23.4% while 6.6% agreed it offered them the opportunity to make meaningful contributions on issues that concern them. It means that the programme mostly give adequate attention to political issues. It means that majority of the respondents perceived the programme to be educative in discussing issues of public interest which entail politics, socio-economic issues among others. Therefore, the educated ones among the youths get the best of information that affect their wellbeing from this programme.

This finding is in agreement with the finding of Nsikan-Abasi, et al. (2016). In their study they found that the audience perceives the programme as being highly political. It was supported by the finding of Omoera (2010), which revealed that radio and television through certain programmes, have helped in the dissemination of relevant information on family planning in rural settings just as they have purportedly done in urban centers in Nigeria. Similarly, Omolade (2013) findings showed that broadcast media do perform effectively within the rural communities as far as matters of economic programmes are designed and disseminated to their respective homes; broadcast media perform effectively within the rural community.

Orlu youths influence through exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme and their engagement towards development activities

Finding indicated that majority or 56.5% believed that AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme influenced youth development and 75.6%% agreed that their political, economic, educational, and cultural lives have been bettered as a result of their exposure to the programme. It means that TV programmes have significantly influenced their behaviour positively. The programme has raised the political consciousness of the people. The youth now participate actively on the political activities going in the state.

In-line with the above finding, Nsikan-Abasi et al (2016) concurs that the respondents participation is influenced by their need and willingness to contribute to national discourse. Akoja (2016) revealed 71.4% had access to development programmes through radio and television. Radio remained a popular medium for disseminating development messages in Nigeria. It also showed that majority of the respondents indicated that media programmes encourage participation in national development. It was therefore, concluded that the media have been effective in supporting the national objectives. In relation to the finding, Apuke and Dogari (2017) concluded that television do influence young people's behaviour. This is because exposure within youths increases the likelihood of physically and verbally aggressive behaviour, aggressive thoughts and aggressive dress patterns which may not go well with our norms and culture. Similarly, Omolade (2013) concluded that the rural communities receive the broadcast message which enables them to have exposure to economic programmes disseminated by the broadcast media specifically radio and television.

Conclusion

Television significantly play important roles in educating, empowering and encouraging youth participation in development activities like political participation, economic empowerment, cultural re-awakening among others. Exposure to AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme had influenced youths' participation in the development activities. This is because the programme dwells on critical issues that concern youth development. It is believed that the programme will go a long way to boast youth participation towards developmental programmes and projects meant for them if prudently utilized. However, the contributions of AIT "Focus Nigeria" programme on youths' participation in the developmental programmes and policies have not been fully utilised as the level of exposure to the programme among youths is minimal.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Programmes meant for youths' participation and consumption should be presented during the early hours of the day and late evening, so as to attract high level of exposure to the programme from them. This is because youth who are mostly traders and workers are always busy in the day time and are barely at home in the day time.

2. Network providers and owners of TV stations, should endeavour to make network services and signals available to the youth in order to encourage their participation and contributions on issues of national interest extensively.

3. Government and other stakeholders on development communication should continue to use current affairs programmes to educate, inform, empower and encourage the youth on the need to accept and participate fully on projects, policies and programmes geared towards their development.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE ADHERENCE TO JOURNALISM CODE OF ETHICS BY JOURNALISTS IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

Journalism like other profession has ethical codes that guide its activities. The increasing rate at which journalists neglect these ethical guidelines calls for concern. Hence, this study examined the adherence to journalism code of ethics by journalists in Bayelsa State. The study was anchored on absolutist and social responsibility theories. Survey research design was adopted. The population comprised of the 320 registered journalists in Bayelsa State and the census principle was adopted. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Findings of the study revealed that 45% of respondents have high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. It was also revealed that the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice is low. The researchers therefore conclude that given the fact that just 45% of journalists have good knowledge of some journalistic ethical code, the issue of non adherence will keep being a problem therefore it was recommended that there is the need to constantly awaken the consciousness of journalists to these ethical codes and encourage them to adhere strictly to it. Considering the fact that the rate of adherence to journalistic ethical code by journalists in Bayelsa State is low journalists need to be encouraged to adhere to the journalistic codes so as to maintain the credibility of the profession before the general public.

Keywords: Journalism, journalists, ethical codes, ethics, Bayelsa.

Introduction

Like every other discipline, there are "dos" and "don'ts" in journalism practice, that is, codes of conduct that guide the practitioners of the discipline. Here, emphasis is given more on what should be avoided rather than what should be done. Ethics are rules or principles of behaviour that are purported to guide actions (Marcel, 2009). Going by Marcel, things that violate the guiding principles are unethical and hence, should be avoided entirely.

Challenges come mainly when issues revolve around individuals or group and, at that point, the media, in its entirety, is overwhelmingly castigated over the perceived offence or professional misconduct of few practitioners (Alete, 2013).

According to Tsegyu and Asemah (2014), one of the recurrent problems that have continued to plague media practice the world over is the observance of professional ethics by journalists. Research findings attest to the fact that most media practitioners are found of breaching the canons of the profession. Even though this problem vary from one society to the other, as moral values and media regulations differ from one social setting to another, evidence abound that most journalists are not living up to the ideals of the profession. Alemoh (2011, p. 305) asserts that "in Nigeria today, as it is elsewhere in the world, a violation of ethics of journalism has almost become the rule, rather than the exception."

Sambe (2009, p. 60) equally confirms that "the most disturbing phenomenon in the practice of journalism in Nigeria today is non-observance of ethical practice by journalists." The consequences of this have led to dwindling performance and credibility crises among media organisations in Nigeria.   Lamenting on this situation, Utor (2009, p. 129) notes that "Nigerian mass media organisations have lost to a great extent; a large readership, listenership, as well as, viewership, because so many Nigerians are sick and tired of its lack of credibility."

Also, the condemnation of journalists by those not favoured by news reports is always total. Few people are objective in their assessment of journalists' performance when they are directly involved in a report. They are stingy with praises when due but generous with condemnation (Sunday & Tommy, 2011; Okwurumara, 2013). However, the journalism profession occasionally experiences credibility problem, which seems to hinge on lack of adherence to its ethical demands by practitioners. This is undesirable, though, a good relationship between the media and its audience is an imperative if society must grow.

Statement of the Problem
Just like every other profession, journalism has guiding principles and rules governing the profession to ensure journalists do not cross the line. It is therefore, expected of journalists to observe these ethical codes cum moral obligations as bestowed on it by society.

Unfortunately, media practitioners who are expected to be an example of integrity, honesty and truthfulness to the society seem to be fast losing their credibility among right thinking members of the public because of cases of unethical behaviour. Over the years, there have been reported cases of unethical and professional misconduct against media practitioners in Nigeria. Most of the unethical problems are associated with sensationalism, character assassination, bribery, corruption, sycophancy, conflict of interest, and lots of other ethical issues (Asemah, 2011).

Despite the ethical codes it is still disturbing that media practitioners' attitude in the conduct of their activities is problematic hence given rise to numerous regulatory bodies in order to checkmate the excesses of media practitioners. For example, the mass communication policy which was adopted in 1990 created two regulatory bodies to monitor the print media and the electronic media. These are the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Subsequently, a more comprehensive code of ethics for journalists was formulated in 1998 by the Nigeria Press Organisation (NPO), comprising the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria

(NPAN), Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE) and the Nigeria Press Council (NPC) (Egbon, 2006, p. 10, as cited in Tsegyu & Asemah, 2014). Despite the emergence of professional code of ethics, media practitioners seem to continue flouting these professional codes with impunity.

It is based on this, that the study sought to examine the adherence to Journalism Code of Ethics by Journalists in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice?

2. What is the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice?

3. What are the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices?

Ethics

Ethics is based on the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or what a person is or does in order to have a good character; it deals with choosing among the good or bad opinions that individuals face (Tsegyu & Asemah, 2014). It may be seen as being concerned with that which holds society or a profession together or provides stability and security to social or professional cohesion (Kayode, 2011). Merrill (1982, as cited in Sunday & Tommy, 2011, p. 67) defines ethics as "a branch of philosophy which aids in determining what is right." This perhaps explains why Asemah (2011) avers that "ethics may be described as the systematic study of the principles and methods for distinguishing right from wrong and good from bad." Dominick (1996, as cited in Tsegyu and Asemah (2014) see ethics as rules of conduct, principles of morality that point us towards the right or best way to act in a situation. Hence, media ethics is a set of principles of conduct governing media profession. Media ethics regulate the conduct of media professionals and as such, provide standards for judging their actions (Okwurumara, 2013). To Ogunsiji (as cited in Agbanu, 2011, p. 305), ethics is not laws in application but is binding on all members of the profession once it has been officially adopted. A member may be disciplined or reprimanded for contravening the ethics of his profession. He may also be blacklisted or expelled from the profession. Ethics controls those individual behaviour not controlled by law, since law cannot take care of every aspect of human behaviour. Ethics serves as a guide to human conduct in a desirable way. Ethical principles serve as ideals which allow the individual to act according to the dictates of his conscience and judgment (Tsegyu & Asemah, 2014).

Journalism Code of Ethics

Journalism like any other profession has ethical codes that guide them in their activities. This code of ethics consists of moral principles, guidelines, and rules that guide the behaviour of journalists in course of their practice as well as their relationship with the public (Pepple &

Acholonu, 2018). Journalism code of ethics therefore is the set of moral principles guiding the journalism profession. According to the Nigerian Press Council [NPC] as cited in Pepple and Acholonu (2018), have this to say on some of the journalism ethical codes, according to them editorial independence entails that decision concerning the content of news and how it should be the responsibility of a professional journalist. Regarding accuracy and fairness they noted that the public has a right to know factual, accurate, balanced, and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

Commenting on the journalism ethical code Alete (2013) aver that a journalist should not identify, either by name or picture or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses, or defendants as it will cause great damage as they grow old. A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information. A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good. A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace, and international understanding as his social responsibility. As matter of professionalism a journalist should not copy, whole or in part, other peoples work without attribution and/or consent. And in a situation where a journalist reproduces a work, in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgment should be accorded the author. A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

According to Ukozor (2011), journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person's ethnic group, religion, sex or to any physical or mental illness or handicap to suggest discrimination. Regarding violence, they maintained that a journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.

Akakwandu (2013) observed that as part of the ethical code journalists should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest. In other words, information on the life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest. Also, in respect to privilege/non-disclosure he equally maintained that journalists should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.

Regarding decency as an ethical code of journalism Onyebuchi, Obayi and Anoruo (2018, p.135) noted that "a journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms to public taste". A journalist should neither solicit not accept bribe, gratification, or patronage to suppress or publish information (Onyebuchi, Obayi & Anoruo, 2018).

Empirical Review
Alete, (2013) conducted a study on ethical challenges in journalism practice and findings revealed that there are discrepancies in the internal and external factors affecting journalism practice in Nigeria. It also found that managerial incompetence poses a great challenge not just to the performance of journalists based on ethical principles but also on the image of the journalism profession. Alete's study is majorly based on journalists working in the electronic

media unlike this current study that the population spanned across both electronic and print media journalists.Pepple and Acholonu (2018) did a study in the area of ethics and it was revealed that despite the importance of ethics to journalism practice, journalists' still indulge in some unethical practices. The study also revealed that journalists most times go against the ethics of the profession due to sycophancy, security reasons, desperation, greed, ethical dilemmas, and ignorance of the code of ethics. The study done by Pepple and Acholonu focuses on how ethics can be a guide to sound journalism practice and it was carried out in Rivers State unlike this present study that focuses on knowledge level of journalists on ethical codes and how that knowledge can translate to good ethical practice.

Oberiri (2016) carried out a study on media ethics using a qualitative approach and it was found that among other things that Afghanistanism is the practice of concentrating on problems in distant parts of the world while ignoring controversial local issues, character assassination is damaging the reputation of an individual, while junk journalism otherwise known as sensationalism is the tendency to publish information that causes any interest or emotional reaction. There is a methodology difference between this study and the current study.

Tsegyu and Asemah (2014) did a similar study on ethical issues in journalism and findings revealed that media practitioners were involved in several unethical practices and hardly adhere to some journalistic codes that have resulted in the dwindling standard of the noble profession in the public domain and the loss of credibility on the activities of media practitioners in the country. The study of Tsegyu and Asemah was conducted way back in 2014 and in the northern part of Nigeria hence this current study is being undertaking to confirm if similar ethical issues is still obtainable in the South-south.

Anyanwu (2019) carried out a study on ethical area in journalism, in his findings it was revealed that ethics and truth in journalism have assumed global concern as scholars recognize that their basic constituents of objectivity, accuracy, fairness and balance have merely assumed mythical qualities as journalists battle to assign credibility to their news. Anyanwu's study is different from the current study in the area of methodology and it focuses on how journalists treat objectivity, accuracy, fairness and balance as a result of news commercialization.

Tong (2015) did a research work on journalism ethics using the in-depth interview method it was revealed that although objectivity is central to journalistic ethos, the participants see it as ethical to organize reports within a framework arising from their personal judgments of news events. It was also revealed that journalists undermine ethical standard set in their profession. This study has methodological difference and the study is focuses on how journalists act regarding objectivity in news.

Nasidi, (2016) carried out a study on ethical issues in Nigeria, using a critical discourse analysis on Leadership newspapers. It was revealed that Nigerian journalist do not totally obey the ethics of the profession and the issues have however been a concern based on the ethics meant to be followed by journalists in Nigeria. It was also revealed that ethnicity and religion play a vital role in Nigerian press. As the research revealed, Nigerian journalists

violate journalism ethics, especially on editorial independence because of the ownership pattern. So also, Nigerian journalist engaged in discrimination violation, because of the complex nature of the country in terms of religion and multi- ethnicity. This study methodological approach differs from that of Nasidi, (2016) study.

Abubaka (2019) did a study on the relationship between news media and violent extremism to explore the ethical issues emanating from it. Findings from the study revealed that journalists face dilemmas in content selection, source relationship, framing stories, and dealing with victims; and that terror reporting impacts on their personal safety and professional sustainability. And that element of newsworthiness push the media toward excessive reporting of extremism but journalism ethics plays restraining roles. The difference of this study lies in the methodological approach as Abukar made use of mixed method research design in his study.

Akowe, (2017) carried out a study in the area of ethics. Findings revealed that while attaining absolute objectivity in the media may be difficult, it is however achievable only if the reporters shy away from prejudices, pre-conceptions, feelings and ambitions. He must be able to keep his biases in check. The researcher also revealed that even though absolute objectivity may not be possible, proper adherence to ethics and the gatekeeping functions of the media can go a long way to actualize the objective principle of journalism profession. The study of Akowe adopted mixed method research design meanwhile this current study adopted the survey method research design hence the difference between the two studies is in the methodology.

Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) conducted a study on unethical practices among journalists, it was revealed that brown envelop syndrome has remained a controversial issue in any debate centred on the Nigerian press, media professionalism and media ethics. And it is one of the major setbacks of media growth in Nigeria and has continued to plague the Nigerian media industry over the years. This study focuses on one of the ethical problems of journalism while this current study assessing adherence to journalism ethical codes.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on absolutist and social responsibility theories. The absolutist theory argues that there are moral universal values which should guide all human beings no matter the place, time, or age. It is also based on the fact that a good action should be right everywhere in the world, at all times and in all circumstances (Ukozor, 2015). It is the view of Merrill (1974) that the ethical absolutist believes that there is one universal and eternal code that basically applies to everyone in all ages, that changing opinions, traditions and conditions make no significant differences in this absolute moral code.

Fab-Ukozor (2015, p. 15) posits that "in the field of journalism, the professional who believes in this theory accepts in principle that there are absolute and universal journalistic ethics which should guide the practicing journalist everywhere in the world and which should equally form the basis for the articulation of a universal and eternal code in journalism." The ethical moral universal codes are truthfulness, fair play, accuracy, balance, and objectivity.

A good practice of journalism demands high compliance with ethical dictates of the profession. Thus, this paper is hinged on the ethics of journalism profession.

In order to give the study a focus in the light of related concepts and principles, the study is based on a second framework of the social responsibility Theory. This theory, according to Tsegyu and Asemah (2014, p. 11), has its beginnings from the Hutchins Commission of 1947 and has its basic postulation that freedom carries a concomitant obligation.

The press is responsible to the society by carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication. While the theory emphasizes the need for independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate news reports (Pepple & Achulonu, 2018). The most innovative feature of Social Responsibility Theory was the call for media to be responsible for fostering productive and creative great communities (Baran & Davies as cited in Tsegyu & Asemah, 2014, p. 11). Social Responsibility Theory asserts that media must remain free of government control, but in exchange media must serve the public (Baran, 2004, p. 477). According to Owolabi (2007, as cited in Pepple & Achulonu, 2018) there must be development of professionalism as a means of achieving higher standards of performance while the media maintain self-regulations.

These theories are relevant to this study because if the media is to be responsible to the society, it must adhere to the ethical codes of the profession as the absolutist theory recommends. On the other hand, journalists need be cautious and responsible while carrying out their function as the social responsibility theory stipulates. Therefore, absolutist theory helps us to understand why journalists need to adhere to the universal ethical codes while the social responsibility theory makes it clear that journalists need to be socially responsible all for the good of the profession and the society at large.

Methodology
The researchers adopted the survey research design. This method was considered appropriate because it allow for the study of people's opinions and perceptions on a given issue of public interest (Anyanwu, Okoro, Iheanacho & Obi, 2017). The population of study comprised of 320 registered and practising journalists in Bayelsa State (NUJ Bayelsa fact sheet, 2019). As a result of the manageable size of the population, the census principle was adopted. Damico (2016) observes that when a population is small and well defined, the entire population is often studied. Therefore, the sample size for this study is 320. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection.

Data Presentation and Analysis
This section deals with presentation and analysis of data. Out of the 320 copies of questionnaire distributed, 303 (95%) was valid for analysis while 17(5%) was voided. The simple percentage method of data analysis was used to analyse the data.

What is the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice?

Table 1: Respondents response on journalism code of ethics are guide that direct all who engage in journalism to act responsibly as they carry out their duty

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	90	30%
Agree	120	40%
Disagree	55	18%
Strongly disagree	38	12%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 1 revealed that at mean score of 2.50 which is above the benchmark score of 2.0 the respondents agreed that journalism code of ethics are guide that direct all who engage in journalism to act responsibly as they carry out their duty. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa have knowledge of the journalism ethical code.

Table 2: Response of respondents on ascertaining the level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	79	26%
High	150	49%
Moderate	51	17%
Low	23	8%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data presented in table 2 shows that 49% of respondents have high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa State have high knowledge concerning the code of ethics of journalism practice.

What is the degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the code of ethics of journalism practice?

Table 3: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	26%
No	160	53%
Can't say	65	21%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 3 shows that 53% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy. This implies that journalists in Bayelsa state hardly adhere to the ethical code of reward/gratification and privacy.

Table 4: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	175	58%
No	90	30%
Can't say	38	12%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 4 shows that 58% of the respondents indicated that journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence. This means that journalists in Bayelsa state hardly adhere to the ethical code of privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence.

Table 5: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	105	34%
No	160	53%
Can't say	38	13%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 5 shows that 53% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility**.** By implication journalists in Bayelsa state do not adhere to the ethical code of accuracy/fairness; press freedom and responsibility**.**

Table 6: Response of respondents on do journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	87	29%
No	170	56%
Can't say	46	15%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 6 shows that 56% of the respondents confirmed that journalists in Bayelsa State do not adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest**.** This means that journalists in Bayelsa state rarely adhere to the ethical code of discrimination and public interest.

What are the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices?

Table 7: Response of respondents on the factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor remuneration	73	24%
Pressure from colleagues	30	10%
Personal interest	32	11%
Delay payment of salary	62	20%
All of the above	106	35%
Total	**303**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from the above table 3 shows that 35% of respondents confirmed that poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, nonpayment and delay in payment of salaries are some of the factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices. This means that among other factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices, poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, delay and nonpayment of salary are the major challenging factors.

Discussion of Findings

The level of knowledge of journalists in Bayelsa State on the code of ethics of journalism practice

Analysis of findings revealed that at an average of 45% of respondents has high level of knowledge on the code of ethics of journalism practice in Bayelsa State. From the analysis it is quite revealing that the 45% of journalists have a good knowledge of some of the ethical precepts guiding their profession. However the case, it is important to note also that the percentage of journalists who have high knowledge on some of these ethical codes is worrisome. The problem is that in a case like this, journalists who lack knowledge of these ethical codes are bound to act contrary to the laid down principles of the profession. This point of view is supported by Pepple and Acholonu (2018) who noted that ignorance of the code of ethics by journalists can lead to actions totally against the prescribed guidelines. Corroborating this also, Tsegyu and Asemah (2014) maintained that most media practitioners are found of breaching the canons of the profession. Even though this problem varies from one society to the other, as moral values and media regulations differ from one social setting to another and in a situation like this the image of the profession suffers greatly. Journalists who lack adequate knowledge of the ethical code of journalism are certainly

bound to act in a way contrary to the theoretical principles of social responsibility and absolutist theories which this work was anchored.

The degree to which journalists in Bayelsa State adhere to the applicable code of ethics of journalism practice

Analysis of findings revealed that among the journalistic ethical codes used in this study only privilege/non-disclosure and editorial independence that journalist in Bayelsa State adhere to strictly among other ethical codes like privacy, accuracy/fairness, reward and gratification, public interest, press freedom and responsibility. From this finding it is clear that the degree of adherence to some of the journalistic ethical codes by journalists in Bayelsa State is low. This finding is in line with Tsegyu and Asemah (2014) findings where they asserted that media practitioners were involved in several unethical practices and hardly adhere to some journalistic code that has resulted in loss of credibility on the activities of media practitioners in the public domain. By implication, it means that over the years the issue of non-adherence to the journalistic ethical code by journalists is still very disturbing. In view of this finding, Oberiri (2016) noted in a finding that the non-adherence to the ethical precepts has led to journalists engaging in some unethical practices such as Afghanistanism, character assassination, junk journalism otherwise known as sensationalism among others. From the theoretical perspective, a journalist as matter of duty is expected to act in a way that is universally accepted as the absolutist theory recommends. Also, in carrying out his responsibility he should bear in mind the importance of public interest so as to be socially responsible.

The factors that influence media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices

Analysis of findings revealed that several factors such as poor remuneration, pressure from colleagues, personal interest, nonpayment and delay in payment of salaries are some of the factors influencing media practitioners in Bayelsa State to engage in unethical practices as confirmed by 35% of respondents studied. This means that some of these challenges identified contribute greatly in compelling journalists to succumb to unacceptable practices in the profession. Supporting this finding Alete (2013) in a finding observed that some of these ethical challenges in journalism practice are as a result of discrepancies in the internal and external factors affecting journalism practice in Nigeria. He went further in noting that managerial incompetence poses a great challenge not just to the performance of journalists based on ethical principles but also on the image of the journalism profession. In essence, managerial problem such as delay in payment of salaries and/or poor remuneration to journalists have the propensity to influence journalists in indulging in unethical practices as Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2012) noted that, delay in payment of salaries and/or poor remuneration will lead to brown envelop syndrome that has continued to plague the Nigerian media industry over the years. Apart from that, journalists can also be pressurized by colleagues to see nothing wrong in some of the unacceptable practices. Again, going by the sacred principle of universal rightness of the absolutist theory, journalists are bound by their profession to do what is always right no matter what and as the theory recommends, personal interest should be sacrificed for public interest.

Conclusion

Like every other profession, journalism has its ethical codes guiding the profession. These ethical codes are set in order to guide the professionals as they carry out their duty. However, over the years, some of these ethical codes that are supposed to guide practitioners are being disregarded. Based on the findings of this study, the level of adherence by journalists in Bayelsa State is low and in a situation as this, a lot of unethical practices are bound to happen and when such practices take place the profession will be at the receiving end. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that if this non-adherence to ethical precepts continues unabated then the image of journalism profession will be affected negatively and then the public will lose their trust on the profession.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the recommendations are hereby made

1. Given the fact that just 45% of journalists have good knowledge of some journalistic ethical code, the issue of non-adherence will continue to be a problem. Therefore, there is need to constantly awaken their consciousness to these ethical codes and encourage them to adhere strictly to it through seminars and workshop on Media ethics.

2. Considering the fact that the rate of adherence to journalistic ethical code by journalists in Bayelsa is low journalists need to be encouraged to adhere to the journalistic codes so as to maintain the credibility of the profession before the general public.

3. A good salary package should be designed for journalists in Bayelsa State. There welfare package should be looked into and journalists should be encouraged to place public interest above personal interest.

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ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND WORKERS' PERFORMANCE IN AKWA IBOM STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Organisation sets itself specific objectives to meet the better success, and to gain comparative advantage over competition. For these objectives to be achieved, of crucial importance is organisational communication per se which implies communication among employees, as well as communication between different hierarchy levels in the same organisation. Hence, while much is known about the dimensions of job satisfaction, the relationship between work performance and organisational communication remains relatively uncertain. This, therefore, leads to the purpose of this study which was to investigate the relationship between dimensions of workers performance and organisational communication. A survey was conducted on workers in Akwa Ibom State University. This served as the population for the study. The workers were a total of 1108 workforce of which 375 were teaching staff while 733 were non-teaching staff. Using the Philip Meyer's standard of sample size selection, a sample size of 248 respondents was chosen for the study. However 86.96% questionnaire was retrieved where 3.04% was not returned and 10% was unduly completed. The cluster sampling technique and the simple random technique was used in analysing the data. The cluster sampling technique enabled the researcher to properly divide the workers into units based on their department of operation while the simple random technique was used for the selection of the workers. Findings from the study revealed a clear relationship between communication flow and organisational output. It also showed that communication predicts all dimensions of work performance which could be influenced either positively or negatively depending on the mode of communication and message circulation. This study, therefore, contributes to having a broader knowledge and better understanding of the nitty-gritty involved in information flow as well as the influence organisational communication holds on workers performance among members of university or tertiary institution.

Keywords: Organisation, Communication, Influence, Performance**.**

Introduction

In our today's world communication has taken a universal level in human activities. Communication has not only spanned beyond interpersonal communication, it has advanced

to cover a wider range of human communication of which organisational communication can be numbered. Organisational or workplace communication is vital as communication is an inevitable aspect of organisational functioning and can occur under various forms and aspects: written, verbal, and nonverbal (gestures or facial expressions). The functions and importance of communication for organisations have been examined by researchers in various ways (Wang, 2011, p. 12). According to Femi (2014, p. 75), "it has an important role in all activities aimed at gaining organisational objectives." Recent studies have shown that managers spend 70% to 90% of their day engaged in communication in the workplace (Eccles and Nohria cited in Barrett, 2006, p. 19). These managers do not just spend this large percentages of time communicating for nought, attention has been drawn to the significant results of communication in organisations; improves job satisfaction, improves productivity, improves employees job performance, etc. (Hotlzhause, 2002; Goris, 2007 cited in Femi, 2014, p. 75).

For effective communication to occur, managers must develop a system of information exchange that is both understood and accessible to their employees (Richason, 2012). One challenge faced by managers and owners involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of communication within their respective organisations. This is particularly important in situations where tasks are labour intensive, employee turnover is high, customer interaction is frequent, and high quality is expected (Chiang, Jang, Canter, and Prince, 2008). Accordingly, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour".

Through effective communication, managers can reach their organisational objectives, in another sense; it fosters trust, understanding, inspiration, and allows employees to effectively follow (Barrett, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary for managers and employees alike to understand the principles of communication, the potential barriers to communication, and communication satisfaction in the workplace. Concurringly, much of the excelling organisations in the country can trace their success to be on effective communication. Research on communication within the workplace can be traced to the early 1900s (Carriere and Bourque, 2009) and has produced an extremely large and diverse body of work. Notwithstanding, history about the formation of Akwa Ibom State University reveals that much of the progress made has been based on agitation and dialogue from different bodies, hence, the concept of Akwa Ibom State University which started in November 2010, can be seen as an endearing progress in communication which came into limelight given the socio-economic realities in the state, and the need to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the totality of Akwa Ibom people.

Accordingly, one of the philosophies of Akwa Ibom State University is "to ensure that the University is well focused, and produces graduates that are not only readily employable, but are capable of generating employment, by making use of the vast natural resources and opportunities available in Akwa Ibom State". At this level, one must understand that this philosophy cannot be attained without proper communication of the message to the student and employees in the organisation. Invariably, much of the progress to be acquired in the university is dependent on both the students and the workers, with a higher percentage lying

with the workers. As a result, this research is centred on the need to comprehend the relevance of communication to goals attainment. More so, this research seeks to examine how internal and external influences workers performances as well as how communication channel affect information dissemination and organisational progress in universities.

Statement of the Problem

Undoubtedly, development at every level requires the passing of knowledge that ensue progress. Where the purpose of organisational communication is to determine the level of communication within an organisation, analyse its effectiveness on work sphere and finally determine if its influence on result performance, where this is not achievable, the operations of the workers, the management and the organisation as a whole can be said to be lacking in goal achievement. If this occurs, what is the fate of the organisation towards achieving its objectives? Is there any importance or relevance of communication in such an organisation, if there is what communication strategy should be employed, how does it influence its workers, and to what extent does it affect job performance.

Research Questions

1.   What channels of communication is used in Akwa Ibom State University?

2.   What is the role of this communication in Akwa Ibom State University?

3.   How does information flow within Akwa Ibom State University?

4.   What is the relationship between information flow and workers performance in Akwa Ibom State University?

5.   To what extent does this communication affect work performance in Akwa Ibom State University?

Organisational Communication in view

Since the concept of communication and organisation has been discussed, further discussions will then look at the term organisational communication. As argued by Deetz, (2001) in his book, 'Conceptual Foundations', defining what is meant by the term "organisational communication" is only half the question. Deetz asserts that:

> A more interesting question is, 'What do we see or what are we able to do if we think of organisational communication in one way versus another?' Unlike a definition, the attempt here is not to get it right but to understand our choices (p. 5).

In Jablin and Putnam (2012, p. 13 in Deetz 2001, p. 5) recommends that we attempt to understand the three conceptualizations that are available to "organisational communication" scholars and students: the discipline, ways to describe organisations, and a phenomenon within organisations. Thus, this research would define organisational communication based on the following**;**

"Organisational Communication" as a Discipline

The first way the term "organisational communication" is commonly used is as a descriptor

tool that refers to a specific sub-division of the communication field. However, organisational communication is not an academic area of study unique to the field of communication studies. According to Mumby and Stohl (1996, p. 52), "A community of scholars constitutes a disciplinary matrix when they share a set of paradigmatic assumptions about the stud of a certain phenomenon". In essence, organisational communication is a discipline because people who study it share a common conception of the study of the term.

"Organisational Communication" as a Descriptor

The second way, the term "organisational communication" can be view is as a descriptor for what happens within organisations. Deetz (2001, p. 7) explains that, "to think of communication as a way to describe and explain organisations. In the same way that psychology, sociology, and economics can be thought of as capable of explaining organisations' processes, communication might also be thought of as a distinct mode of explanation or way of thinking about organisations" (Deetz, 2001, p. 7). Hence, organisational communication under this category is a phenomenon that grows out of other related studies in the field of communication.

"Organisational Communication" as a Phenomenon

The final way is to view the term "organisational communication" as a specific phenomenon or set of phenomena that occurs within an organisation (Deetz, 2001, p. 8). In this aspect, he implies that every form of communication that occurs within the organisation can be seen as organisational communication. For instance, when two workers are fighting or quarrelling in the organisation; the exchange of words that occurs between them is seen as organisational communication. Also, when the vice-chancellor is reading his speech in regards to a new project in the university or when the lecturer is lecturing in class; that speech or lecture at that moment is classified as a form of organisational communication.

What's more, organisational communication is a process which enables groups and partners to learn from each other through developing and maintaining a viable relationship (Robson, Skarmeas, and Spyropoulou, 2006, p. 585). More so, Abugre (2011, p. 7) sees organisational communication as a process by which language is used to create different kinds of social structures, such as relationships, teams, and networks.

Forms of Communication Flow in Organisation

Information flows in a spherical layout, just like water flows from one place to another even into people's houses, shops and offices like crude oil flowing in pipelines into people's cars and generators, so does information pervade every facet of society (Oyadonghan, 2010). According to Opara (2003) information is the lifeblood of modern organisations. That is to say that without information, an organisation is bound to collapse. Information is needed to control the day-to-day running of an organisation. Olowu (2004) says that information entails data, facts, imaginations, ideas, opinions, cultural values in a variety of media sent across various channels such as Memos and circular, Letters, Mouth-to-mouth, text-messages, Calls, emails etc.

On the other hand, "Communication in the organisation represents a complex system of the

flow of information, orders, wishes and references made out of two partially complementary systems: formal communication network and informal communication network." Fox (2001, p. 41) where formal communication is a step by step flow of information which is either written or spoken in respect to the need of the organisation and informal communication is an undisturbed communication between particular groups within the organisation. This moves to suggest that the process of communication in an organisation involves several elements which can be seen as a motivating factor towards achieving a flow in organisational communication. Hence, communication flows from the sender which is the source of the communication down to the recipient using a particular medium. Communicational flow in the organisation can develop into many different directions: upward communication, downward communication and sideward communication. The interaction within the organisation is usually based on an established system of communication between employees that takes place in four directions of communication flows:

i. Vertical flow of communication, ii. Horizontal flow of communication iii. Diagonal (Lateral) flow of communication and iv. Informal flow of communication

1. Vertical flow of communication is communication between managers and workers. This flow is divided into two which is vertically downward and upward communication. Where the upward communication flow is used to generate feedback from the employees in the organisation the downward flow is used to send information from the top to the bottom. Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn (2005, p. 298) mentions however that upward communication can be an instrument to control and regulate subordinates as "upward communication keeps higher levels informed about what lower-level workers are doing, what their problems are, what suggestions they have for improvements, and how they feel about the organisation and their jobs." Nonetheless, downwards and upward vertical communication is exceptionally important for general decision making because it enlightens the management about the organisational problems.

2. Horizontal flow of communication: this type of communication occurs between people of the same level. Kralev, (2001) informs us that conversation in this aspect occurs among employees working in the same or a different organisational unit, who are equal in status and hierarchy. She further states the contents of their messages to be either request of assistance towards the completion of their task or any other personal, social and emotional advice which allows coordination of activities. Horizontal communication indicates the lateral exchange of information, which flows following the functional principle among people on the same level within an organisation.

3. Lateral (diagonal) flow of communication: this sort of communication flow in the organisation is particularly important in circumstances where employees cannot communicate effectively through other flows of organisational communication. This aspect of information flow holds an advantage over vertical and horizontal communication flow in certain situations especially when it's used to minimize the time and effort required for communicating messages in extensive organisational units. Lateral communication may occur in two types of communication: - communication between employees of different levels of hierarchy, and - communication between

employees from different organisational units (Kralev, 2001).

4. The informal flow of organisational communication: This allows for informal transmission of information between employees, through informal, unofficial ways, and serves as a bypass mechanism in certain situations that is significantly faster than the formal communication system flow. Although, the attitude of the management structures of organisational systems to the informal flow of communication can be different. In larger organisational systems, management may consider informal communication for faster and efficient means of message transmission.

Role of Communication in Organisations

The association between employee satisfaction and job performance suggests that an important contributor to the employee's engagement within the organisation is the leading employee relationship. "Communication is the process of conveying the message from one person to the other however the recipient of the information must understand the content and the meaning of the message" Weick and Browing (1986, in Trajkova, Andonov and Mihajloski 2014, p. 521). The function of communication in an organisation is to connect the employees of that organisation to reach mutual goals. There are different reasons why organisations cannot survive without communication; Rouse and Rouse (2005, p. 40 in Željko and Ivana 2006, p. 34) puts them as thus:

- Communication helps in setting the company's goal and carrying them out

- It severs as a tool used for the development of goals and objective realisation

- It assists human and other resources management most successfully and appropriately

- Provides a standard for the evaluation of progress and performance of organisation members

- Helps the management in guiding, motivating and creating a climate in which people want to contribute.

Organisational communication and Workers Performance

Communication takes a universal aspect in the work of management and manager in any organisation. Altin (2014, p. 3) records that everything and everyone in the organisation, is linked to a network of decisions and information, which are in an uninterrupted interaction and totally interdependent on each other. Arnold (2011, p. 23) suggests that for communication to be successful in an organisation, it has to meet certain criteria which will enable it meet its goals. Through communication the basic functions of management such as planning, organising, and control are easily transmitted to the employees. Accordingly, the first thing to consider is the decision-making process. Arnold (2011, p. 27) opines that decision making is an art of thinking with one's mind upon a cause of action which involves two or more alternatives towards solving the problem. The process of decision making in an organisation allows for the careful identification of the organisation goals; problems; solution to the problems; selection of the most promising course of action; implementation of decisions made and evaluation of result. All these are necessary problems which require

adequate information for management to procure solution.

The second essential criterion for organisational communication is the structure of information flow. The way the organisation is structured for communication most often affects the organisation. Studies on organisational communication presuppose the existence of flow; that is, the information should flow through the organisation in such a way that it reaches all levels, to achieve the goals originally proposed. On a final note another key factor required in organisational communication is the mood of distribution. It is how an organisation distributes information internally because organisations need to absorb needed information to function effectively. Some information can be shared through memos, letters, emails, social network etc.

Amidst these criteria results shows that it is not only the medium of effective communication, but the way communication process is built among workers as well as the amount of information circulated. Concurringly, DeCenzo, (2011) affirms that the whole system is based on - communication:

> "...everything that makes a manager involves communication. Not some things, but everything! A manager cannot formulate strategy, or make a decision without information. That information should be communicated. Once a decision is made, communication occurs again. Otherwise, no one will know what decision is taken. The best idea, suggestion with creative or more subtle plan may not take shape without communication" (DeCenzo, 2011).

Content of these reveal that organisational communication should reflect the specific plans and goals of the organisation which covers everyone in that organisation. The involvement of every employee in the process of implementing the strategy and planning of the strategic change is also a means of communication and can be very effective. (Johnson, Scholes, Whittington, 2006). This involvement of members not only leads to a better recognition from them, but also serves as a process of awareness for their work, leading to positive changes and increase in performance. "How well you perform your task to meet your goal will depend upon how well you design your initial communication, how rigorously you follow up, and how successful you are at responding to the concerns of those who have reservations about adopting a new process." (Moore, 2013)

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Organizational Information Theory. Organizational Information Theory (OIT) as cited by Weick's has been noted as a strong and reliable theoretical framework that explains organization's ability to make use of required information necessary for organizations success. Organization Information Theory draws from other theories to explain how organizations receive input from others. The theory assumes that organizations, although with structures, are always transforming and changing through the interaction of its members. That is only possible by the instrumentality of communication process. This theory therefore, emphasizes the process of communication as central and very important more than communication itself. It is the process that explains how members of the organization engage in collaborative efforts which translates into organizational success.

Simply, Organizational Information Theory is primarily concerned with how organizations process information to make sense of it. It explains how individuals within organizations communicate vital information in order to guarantee success and efficiency in their environment. Within organizations, different systems regulate and control the organization as a whole, helping it to deal with information and consequently achieve its goals and function effectively. The emergency of new technologies has revolutionized the ways in which organizations manage information. This is a common example of a change in organization information processing, which results in constant change of the organization itself as well. Organizations are "works in progress".

There are basically three assumptions upon which the OIT evolved. These are: The present study on organizational communication and workers performance in Akwa Ibom State University draws heavily on OIT in that it deals with processes of communicating effectively. Again, the OIT presupposes that the workers are driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. Organizations members do what they feel are good whether there is a check or not. Sometimes they do it simply because others have done them and that necessarily because they are acceptable or most suitable in any circumstance. The accuracy of actions taken is therefore given second consideration in most cases. Workers' chooses communication processes acceptable to them in any given relational situations and depending on the nature of information and the response sought for rather than seeking for the accuracy of the processes.

Review of Empirical studies

A significant amount of research has been carried out to appraise the importance of organisational communication. Empirical studies of the effect of communication on organizational performance abound within the Asian, European and the African contexts. In Europe for instance, Mehmet and Hasan (2011) investigated the effect of organizational communication on employees' perception of justice in Turkey. Using a survey design approach, they show that there is a significant relationship between communication and interactive justice. The study concludes that, communication is one of the basic tools to perform management functions effectively and efficiently. In India, Rajhans (2012) demonstrated that clear and honest communication helps to encourage and strengthen relationship and concludes that employee communication has a crucial role to play in the management effort to reorient employees' perplexity by changes, or inform and motivate those who adapt more readily. Ray (1993, p. 108) in his study on "organisational communication and employee productivity" he concludes that poor organisational communication has the potential to increase employee burnout, individual stress, and doubt in oneself or relationships within the organisation. Therefore, maintaining a high level of communication satisfaction through quality organisational communication must be a high priority for businesses who wish to avoid these negative outcomes.

Pettite, Goris, and Vaught (1997, p. 87) explored "the influence organisational communication on employee job satisfaction and performance". The survey which was carried out among 302 employees of two manufacturing firms indicate that an employee's job performance can be influenced by the accuracy of the information shared in the workplace, and high job performance was related to high job satisfaction. The researchers

pointed out that employees' who received clear and accurate communication performed at higher levels and were more likely to experience high job satisfaction. If employers provide consistent, proper, and precise information to their workforce, the organisation is more likely to perform at higher levels, thereby increasing efficiency, productivity, and employee morale.

Also, Madlock, (2008) in Ali and Haider (2012, p. 41) on the impact of organisational communication on employee's job satisfaction reveals that there is in indeed a significant relationship between a manager's leadership styles (task or relational), conflict management (no confrontation, control, compromise, and collaboration), communication competence, and employee job satisfaction. The results indicated a direct association between leadership style (task and relational) and conflict management (compromise and collaboration) and both communication competence and job satisfaction separately. But, when communication competence was included in the model, the association between leadership style and conflict management and job satisfaction became not significant.

In addition, Tseng (2006) study on "**communication factors that promote employee job satisfaction and performance in Taiwan High-Tech Industry**" indicates that there is a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and work performance in general. The researchers also emphasized that significant correlations may be due to the influence of a supervisor on employee, thus, we must note that organisational communication is a highly contextual and cultural phenomenon which can be affected by other ideologies such as leadership style, organisation culture, etc.-

Concurringly, Banihashemi (2011) also concluded that managers, who want to have an appropriate communication, after selection of communicational channel, should have a comprehensive plan according to their environment and organization. In Nigeria and other African countries, empirical studies abound also. Akintola , Udegbe, Ogundipe and Kareem (2012) conducted a research on the "Impact of business communication on organizational performance in Nigeria companies, Nigeria". The study used a descriptive quantitative survey research design. The research revealed that in the survey carried out communicating effectively in the business environment is greatly encouraged no matter the size and nature of business. The study concludes that business communication generally affects organizational performance to a reasonable extent in Nigerian companies. Ojo and Oladejo also conducted a research on "communication approach and firms' performance: appraisal of Nigeria Bottling Company (coca-cola)" in Nigeria. The researchers stayed with the workers in the plant watching their activities for fourteen days. The result revealed that there is significant relationship between communication approach and the performance of the company. Conclusively, in a study of First Bank of Nigeria, by Nwagbara, Ugorji, Oruh and Ennsra similar results emerged because communication was identified as the key to resolving issues and creating a desired relationship in the workplace for both the managers and subordinates

Methology

This resarch seeks to evaluate the implications of organisational communication on Akwa Ibom State University workers performance. Akwa Ibom State University is a new university founded by the state government. Located both in Mkpat-Enin and Abak local

government area of Akwa Ibom state, the university has two campuses which run simultaneously. As at this study, its work force consists of a total of 1108 workers. This included both teaching and non-teaching staff under the payroll of the university. This information which was retrieved from the university payroll list gotten from the Bursar, constituted the population of this study. Of the 1108 workforce, 375 were teaching staff while 733 were non-teaching staff.

Using the Philip Meyer's standard of sample size selection, a sample size of 248 was chosen for the study. The sampling technique employed in this study was the cluster sampling technique and the simple random. The cluster sampling technique enabled the researcher to properly divide the workers into units based on their department of operation while the simple random technique was used for the selection of the workers. In order to aid this research, the measuring instrument used in the collation of data was a structured questionnaire administered to respondents. This was necessary so as to ensure clarity, conciseness, and brevity of information. The questionnaire consisted of a closed-ended question which was analysed using the frequency distribution table.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The essence of this study was to analyse the effect of organisational communication on workers performance. The following table gives an analysis of how data was distributed to the respondent. Data gotten from the field survey was analysed using the frequency distribution table as shown below.

No Of Departments Distributed	No of Questionnaire Distributed	No. Returned	Percentage (%)
A.) Faculty of Agriculture	8	8	4
B.) Faculty of Arts	12	12	6
C.) Faculty of Education	14	12	6
D.) Faculty of Oceanography and Naval Architecture	8	8	4
E.) Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences	8	8	4
F) Faculty of Engineering	10	10	5
G.) Faculty Of Social And Management Sciences	18	12	6
H.) Non Academic Staff	168	130	65
Total	248	200	100

Source (field survey 2018)

The table above shows how questionnaires were distributed per faculty. The questionnaire was evenly distributed among the different department within each faculty. Each department in a faculty was given at most two questionnaires. The highest number of questionnaire **168** was distributed to non-academic staff in the university. While a total number of **78** questionnaire was evenly distributed to academic staff within the departments in the faculty. However a total number of 200 questionnaires was properly filled and returned to the researcher.

S/N	Table responses	Options	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
1.	Respondents Communication Rapport with Your Supervisor	Yes	140	70
		No	28	14
		Undecided	32	16
		Total	**200**	**100**
2.	Flow of Important Information between Supervisors and Respondents	Yes	134	67
		No	37	18.5
		Undecided	29	14.5
		Total	**200**	**100**
3.	Platform to Make Suggestions to Process and Procedures within the Organisation	Yes	51	25.5
		No	102	51
		Sometimes	47	23.5
		Total	**200**	**100**
4.	Level to which Suggestion are taken into Consideration	Never	115	57.5
		Sometimes	68	34
		Always	17	8.5
		Total	**200**	**100**
5.	Employee/Employer interactions	Yes	56	28
		No	48	24
		Sometimes	51	25.5
		Undecided	45	22.5
		Total	**200**	**100**
6.	Working without any form of official communication from Supervisor	Yes	21	10.5
		No	124	62
		Sometimes	47	23.5
		Undecided	8	4
		Total	200	100
7.	There is an existing channel of communication in your department	Yes	188	94
		No	0	0
		Don't know	12	6
		Total	**200**	**100**
8.	Media Channel regularly used in Circulating Information	Memos & circular	56	28
		Letters	20	10
		Mouth-to-mouth	72	36
		Text-messages	28	14
		Calls	24	12
		Emails	0	0
		Total	**200**	**100**
9.	Ability of communication channel in existence to satisfy communication need	No	128	64
		Yes	41	20.5
		Sometimes	20	10
		Undecided	11	5.5

Source(field survey, 2018)

Discussion of Findings

The relationship between information flow and worker's performance

From the data collected and analysed it was discovered that the majority of the workers in the university had a good communication relationship with their superiors as well as their fellow workers. It was observed in table 1that information flow between the workers in the institution was on a high value and result collated simply proves that communication is a web that binds people of different entities and body together. It was noticed that 140 (70%) of the respondent which represents the majority of the total respondent had good communication relationship with their superiors and with such communication rapport, work performance among staff is highly viable.

None the less, despite this relationship, data collated showed that despite having a good work relationship with their superiors, most of them are not given the platform to air out their opinions. The data revealed that more than half of the workers which represented 102(51%)of the respondents sampled are not usually allowed to suggest their thoughts towards some policies, processes or procedures practiced in their units.

The effect of this communication in Akwa Ibom State University worker's performance

To address the importance of communication and its effect on work performance, the workers were asked if they could work without any form of information from their heads; the result showed that about 21(10.5%) respondents affirmed that they could; 124(62%) respondents said no to the question, 47(23.5%) respondents said sometimes while 8(4%) respondents were undecided. However, a good number of persons said they could not work without any form of official communication from their superior. This goes in line with Ray (1993:108) who concluded that, maintaining a high level of communication satisfaction through quality organisational communication must be a high priority for businesses who wish to avoid negative outcomes. More so, from the survey, it was shown that most of the workers enjoy receiving regular information from their superior rather than working on their own. About 128(64%) of the respondents were of the view that positive comment can ignite them to work more and develop a great interest for the organisation as against 20(10%) respondents who said it doesn't.

Extent this communication affect work performance in Akwa Ibom State University

It was gathered that communication affects the workers performance. Analysis of data collected revealed that comment from superiors, head of department, colleagues, or even a stakeholder in the organisation can affect the performance of the workers. It was observed that more than half of the respondent expressed difficulty in work progress when working without any form of information. This study agrees with that of Ali and Haider (2012:41) on the impact of organisational communication on employees job satisfaction. In the study, the researcher reveals a significant relationship between a manager's leadership styles (task or relational), conflict management (no confrontation, control, compromise, and collaboration), communication competence, and employee job satisfaction. The results indicated a direct association between leadership style (task and relational) and conflict

management, communication competence and job satisfaction separately.

Channels of communication used in Akwa Ibom State University

Another relevant finding in this study rises from the communication channel used in the dissemination of information to the workers, though a good number of them attested to the fact that there is an existing channel of communication in their department, most of them revealed that they are not satisfied with this medium. As confirmed by respondents in their answers, when there is an unfair organisational communication there could never be a positive work attitude, but when it is fair, the work performance becomes good too. For that reason, there is indeed no doubt that organisational communication enhances work performance. Thus, not having a quality communication media to aid the circulation of information within the institution can lead to workers treating certain information as not important which in the long run will lead to slow performance.

Conclusion

The main concern of this research was to examine the influence of organisational communication on workers in Akwa Ibom State University. From the study, it is no longer contestable that organisational communication is indeed an essential tool for organisational success. This form of communication which provides updates, such as progress on fulfilling organisational goals or reasons for policy changes and slow performance has grown beyond the point of being one-sided.

Of concern, organisational communication has been revealed to be a prudent part of organisations, especially the tertiary institution. Though it has another aspect which should be consider but research shows that these form of communication cannot be eliminated if workers performance and production output is to be on the increase.

Recommendations

For organisational communication to ensue, effective communication strategies towards providing frequent pertinent information and suggestions from staff must be encouraged. Thus, this study recommends the following:

- Employees' expertise should be encouraged and utilized at every level.

- Proper communication channels such as emails and memos should be adopted for information dissemination

- Information delivery should always take into consideration timing and the organisation's structure as it has a significant impact on the communication and strategy implementation process.

- The study finally recommends that the management should enhance information sharing as it makes employees feel empowered and trusted, increases cohesion within a team and ensures easy decision making.

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PERSUASIVE APPEAL IN NEW GENERATION CHURCHES IN NIGERIA: A PERCEPTIVE STUDY OF PENTICOSTALISM IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The power of persuasion cannot be overemphasized even for religious purposes. To this end, this study sought to examine persuasive appeal in new generation churches in Nigeria particularly, in Port Harcourt. This study was anchored on Cognitive dissonance theory. A mixed method research design approach using in-depth interview and focus group discussion (FGD) was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 1,148,665 residents in Port Harcourt metropolis. The study has 20 respondents as the sample size and it was selected using the purposive sampling technique. The in-depth interview and FGD guides were used as the instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that people who reside within the Port Harcourt metropolis see miracle in their various churches as a money venture affair and have ugly experience of miracle in their church. It was also revealed that Pastors of the new generation churches use persuasion, cajoling and threatening words during sermons or in personal encounter with member than allowing people to decide for themselves. It was recommended that government must as a matter of urgency set up taskforces to investigate the veracities of these miracles we see and or hear daily; this will help ease off the religious tension and also create an atmosphere of cordiality and respect. And any pastor found wanting of fake miracles should be sanctioned. Pastors should be mindful of their language when communicating with members; they should avoid threatening their members or cajoling them unnecessary against their will.

Keywords: Persuasive appeal, Pentecostalism, Perceptive study, Christians, church

Introduction

On the 24ᵗʰ of October 2019, Nigerians woke up to watch five (5) different videos on social media, of one Dr. Chris. Okafor, performing healing miracle, on a woman that had a stunted right arm. The evidence from the videos showed that the same "spiritual miracle" was repeatedly performed at different stages because, the pastor; woman with the stunted right arm and congregation, wore five different outfits. The incident created hoopla and comments on social media and the conventional media, as to how Dr. Chris Okafor will embarrass the body of Christ with an obvious deception?

Suffice it to say, that Nigerians are always inundated with daily stories of pastors using people to fake miracles; pastors having sex with their female members and impregnating them; pastors using church members for rituals; pastors extorting monies from their flocks, all in the name of sowing financial seeds unto the Lord; pastors using church funds without

proper accountability and so many ills in the church (Jando, 2014).

According to *Daily Trust Newspaper* (2019), on the 20ᵗʰ of November, 2019, the Enugu State Police command arrested one pastor Sunday Egbo, General overseer of Christ Mercy Ministry, after multiple female braziers, pants and a small coffin was recovered from his residence. The popular pastor landed into trouble after allegedly raping a female member of his church, who went to his house for deliverance. According to the pastor "I paid the native doctor #20,000, to get the coffin and a flute. He told me to do certain things, after which I will get a Ghana-Must-Go bag full of money in my room. But after two weeks, the money did not come as the native doctor told me". It is so unfortunate that the evolution of Pentecostalism resonated the style of worship and tomfooleries, we are witnessing presently in Rivers State.

According to Ogbu (2008), Pentecostalism started in the early 70s, as a result of the post-civil war. Nigerians at that time, saw the church as a place of solace hence, some scholars decided to come together to encourage one another through prayers. The oil boom in southern Nigeria, at that time, also brought a rebirth in the economic fortunes of the country, as many Nigerians began to make huge money from the oil business. Some Pentecostal pastors at that time, capitalized on this huge success of these Nigerians, and started using persuasive rhetoric to advance their course of extortion. The sermons of the pastors gradually changed from winning souls to Christ to praying for the rich (Mckenna, 2005).

The African aphorism that says "when a man is rich, he is always afraid" cannot be over stressed here.Back then, prayers, tithe, offering, faith in God and believe in the bible was the sermonic techniques employed by the Pentecostal pastors. For those rich men that needed special prayers for God's protection, of course, special offerings and donations were made to the pastors for their efforts. But as the year progressed, some voracious and garrulous persons joined the Pentecostal space to up their games, by introducing magical miracles (Edem, 2012).

Today, the Nigerian evangelical space is awash with persuasive and cajoling preaching, fake miracles, extortion, rituals and sex. According to Pew research, Nigeria is the second most religious country in the world. Unfortunately, there is no correct statistical data of registered churches with the corporate affairs commission, as over seventy percent (70%) of the new churches are yet to the documented.

Though, it is believed that we have over ten million churches and still counting in Nigeria. The bible in second Corinthians 5:10 says, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us, for the things done, while in the body, whether good or bad".

According to Webster Encarta dictionary (2005), persuasion means, the act of persuading somebody, to do something; either by word of mouth or gesticulations. This simple definition goes a long way to tell us that without persuasion, there will be no relationship between the speaker and the listener and or the encoder and decoder. Persuasion is an act to influence the mind of the listeners; it is a tool used by politicians, teachers, pastors, traders, individuals, parents and even government (Ogbu, 2008).

This is to say that every homo sapient uses persuasion in order to convince the listener or audience to accept the views of the speaker. Persuasion in communication is important because, it is the sole condiment used to get the attention of the listener to support and transform their thinking in favour of the presenter's perspective. Therefore, persuasion is about creating an attitudinal change to influence social behaviour hence; it is sine-qua-non in dialogical communication (Wariboko, 2017; Camaroff, 2012).

Statement of Problem

The emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria in the early 70s followed a period of immense post-independence instability, characterized by the violence of the civil war, political corruption, and rise of the military government. Nigerians at that time saw the church as a place for solace, where people pray together, encourage one another and help each other. In the early 70s, the Pentecostal style of sermon was mild "Repent and accept Christ as your Lord and personal saviour, so that you can make heaven". The church therefore, allows you to decide on which part to follow. But as the year progresses, the methodology of the Pentecostal activities changed with crusades, healing with heavy donations, using all the media available at their disposal (Ogbu, 2008).

Presently, persuasive appeal, threats, heavy tithes, offerings, illicit sex, deceptions and heavy donations has become a trajectory in the Pentecostal churches. So many local and foreign Christian books have been written about the activities of the Pentecostal church, but there has been no book and or publication on persuasive appeal in new generation churches in Nigeria, that will get hidden details from a perceptive and objective point of view (Fehlauer, 2018).

Research Questions

1. What is the miracle experience of people in their churches?

2. Do churches give yearly or quarterly account of her income and expenditure?

3. Do pastor use persuasion, cajoling and threatening words during sermons or allows people to decide for themselves?

Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Ogbu (2008), says Nigerian Pentecostalism emerged in the 1970s as university-educated, charismatic youths began creating their own spaces for worship. Its roots are in the African Initiated Churches (such as the Aladura) and especially in American and British Evangelical and Pentecostal of the 1960s, which Nigerians encountered through international studies, Pentecostal outreach, and American televangelism and other Christian media.

As such Nigerian Pentecostalism combines elements of African worship while emphasizing its place among transnational Pentecostal networks, which have grown through conversion as well as robust immigration (Jando, 2014). The success of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria inspired widespread 'charismatization' of Nigerian churches, which, by the late 1970s, widely attracted members of the Christian upper middle class. The emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism followed a period of immense post-independence instability,

characterized by violence (the civil war, especially), political corruption, and rise of the military government (Edem, 2012). The oil boom of the 1970s transformed the Nigerian landscape, particularly in the south, where well connected elite profited and conspicuous consumption blossomed.

On the one hand, this made life more difficult for the vast majority of people who increasingly turned to religious organizations to provide for their basic needs. In years that followed, some Pentecostal leaders became wealthy themselves, because, they directed their services to the wealthy; emphasizing a prosperity gospel, which holds that faith is the key to prosperity in this world (Kitause & Achunike, 2015).

In so doing, these pastors contextualized the privilege of Nigeria's Christian elite, and attracted hundreds of thousands of poor and middle class Nigerians aspiring to greater wealth (Jando, 2014). Nigerian Pentecostal Christians are partly responsible for the rising inter-religious violence between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria. Both Pentecostal and Islamist movements of the 1970s were largely youth-based and offered an exclusivist message that frequently demonized the other. In particular, Pentecostal theology condemned Islamic healing practices (the use of amulets, etc.), Sufi rituals, symbols such as the star and crescent, and characterized Islam as a threat to Christians and Christianity (Hasu, 2012).

Empirical Review

But a related publication, titled "Figures of rhetoric in the languages of Nigerian Christians sermons" by two scholars; Dr. Adedu E.A. and Dr. Mekiliuwa O.O, will be used to draw positive inference to this research. According to Adedu (2010), rhetorical figurations, in discourse rhetoric, is that field of language often associated with the uses of languages, for the intent of persuading. Adedu and Mekiliuwa, citing Burke (1969, p. 43), defined rhetoric as "the use of language, as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings; which by nature respond to symbols." They concluded by saying that rhetoric in public speaking, implies the skill of elegant and persuasive speaking; which is the ultimate goal of rhetoric. Ogbe (2019) carried out a study on pentecostal churches and human development. The study investigates the role these Pentecostal churches play in either enhancing or further exacerbating the Human development of the people. The results revealed that these Pentecostal churches engaged in activities such as building entrepreneur skills, running of clinics and schools, and the beneficiaries are both members and the non-members. Obiefuna, Nwadialor and Umeanolue (2014) did a study on the proliferation of Churches in Nigeria. The study also tried to explore Church proliferation in Nigeria pointing out its costs and benefits. It was revealed that Nigerian society today is undergoing significant constant proliferation of Churches which has brought not only changing values, but also source of solutions to people's problems. Meyer (2004) carried out a study to show how research on African Independent Churches has been reconfigured by new approaches to the anthropology of Christianity in Africa, in general, and the role of religion in the public sphere in postcolonial African societies. It was revealed that the recent salient popularity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in particular. If the adjectives "African" and "Independent" were once employed as markers of authentic, indigenous interpretations of

Christianity, these terms proved to be increasingly problematic to capture the rise, spread, and phenomenal appeal of in Africa. And that religion has a tremendous role in virtually all human endeavour in Africa.

According to Pew Research Center [PRC] (2015), on its study of religion and public life in sub Saharan Africa, the study project that Christianity and Islam "are expected to have more than twice as many adherents in 2050 and Christians are expected to increase in number to remain the "region's largest religious group, growing from 517 million in 2010 to more than 1.1 billion in 2050"). Obayi and Onyebuchi (2013) carried out a study on public relations techniques in promoting pastoral communication and it was revealed that priests sampled have engaged in one form of evangelization or the other using public relations principles. And that public relations techniques can serve as effective approach in grassroots evangelism. Jando (2014) did a research work on growth and expansion of Pentecostal churches in Tivland 1975- 2005. The study revealed that Pentecostal activities started in Tivland in 1972 as a fellowship meeting that was later converted to a church. After that many other Pentecostal churches began to come through. These churches expanded very fast because of their enthusing style of worship and theology. Also, Pentecostal churches appear very fascinating and the people patronize them in great numbers because unlike mainline churches, they allow a greater degree of lay participation. The study further showed that Pentecostal churches face challenges such as lack of finance, manpower and converts that will stand the test of time.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical orientation of this research is based on Cognitive Dissonance, which refers to a situation involving two conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviours. Saul McLeod (2018), quoted Leon Festinger (1957), who propounded the theory, that cognitive dissonance is a conflict of mental discomfort, leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes and elevating the other to create balance. For example, when people smoke (behaviour) and they know that smoking will cause cancer (cognition); they are in a state of cognitive dissonance.

In the new generation churches, the pastors are very much aware that their sermonic styles (behaviour) are at variance with the practice of Christ, but preferred to go ahead with it because, of the gains (cognition). To them, they believe they are covered by Luke 6:37 "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned..." These new generation pastors, haven taking into cognizance, how Nigerians adore the word of God, have continually applied persuasion in their preaching.

Methodology

This study adopted the mixed method research design using in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Due to the nature of this study the researcher used the population in Port Harcourt metropolis and according to Worldmeters (2019), the population of Port Harcourt metropolis is 1,148,665. From the population 20 persons were purposively selected to form the sample size of the study, for the focus group discussion they were 12 participants, while for the in-depth interview they were 8 persons. The whole respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique because they were literate and they attend Pentecostal

churches. The researcher made use of interview guide and focus group discussion guide as the instruments for data collection. The researcher adopted the explanation building technique as the method for data analysis. The sample size was used in order to examine the persuasive appeal in new generation churches in Nigeria. It is important to note that, this study is limited because the number of persons that formed the sample size is not a true representation of the population.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with presentation and analysis of data from both interview and focus group discussion.

A summary of in-depth interview and focus group discussion conducted with the 20 respondents.

The first question that was posed was what is the miracle experience of people in their churches? The first interviewee responded by saying "he wondered why the new generation churches will sell anointing oil, salt, handkerchief, cap, perfume, stickers, etc inside the church at an exorbitant price; making you believe that your miracle is dependent on the item(s)", another participating FGD1 in responding to the question observed that "Church is a body of Christ Jesus. Whosoever that decimate the body of Jesus, for his or her selfish gains has God to contend with." The second interviewee has this to say "you go to church with a problem; the pastor will tell you to buy olive oil that cost two hundred naira (#200) in the open market for two thousand naira (#2000) all in the name of miracle." FGD3 maintained that "Some churches will tell you to buy their stickers for protection against armed robbery, accident and other evils vises; meanwhile, the pastor of that church uses police as protection. FGD6 "Some churches will tell their members to have faith on the words that comes out of the mouth of the pastor for their healings, while the same pastor and his family visit the hospital, if they fall sick". Similarly, interviewee 4 said "This is the height of deceit that I have seen and witnessed in some of these new generation churches". Another interviewee talking on miracle experience he said:

> "I and my family were attending a church, here in Oyigbo. "We believed the man of God, because of his spiritual prowess and the type of fast miracles he performs. "My wife had serious malaria and typhoid; that was in July 2000, and we were seriously praying that the God of our papa, will heal her. "Now, when I saw that she was not improving, rather than take her to the hospital, I took her to our church, so that my papa will lay hands on her and give her anointing water and oil. "Kai! Kai! Kai! May God forgive me; Three weeks later, my wife's situation was extreme, so I had to take her to the hospital. "I took her to the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital; after the test, it showed that my wife had BP, malaria++ and typhoid, and that it has eaten deep into her system. "Three weeks later, my dear wife passed on, due to our negligence, leaving me with three children to cater for. Oga, (crying), I no trust any pastor again. "I have gone back to my Catholic faith and I think I am comfortable there. People need to learn; all that

glitters on television are not the same in real life"

According to one of the interviewee who happened to be a pastor said Jesus Christ, in Mathew 7: 21 said, "*Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father, which is in heaven*". From the data presented above it implies that most of the respondents have ugly miracle experience in their church.

Another question that centred on churches gives yearly or quarterly account of her income and expenditure was posed. Responding to this question FGD8 a member of one of the Pentecostal churches maintained that "Pastor most times will tell church members that "the financial decisions of the church is not a public matter because, the congregation doesn't have the spiritual insight or maturity to understand the dynamics of church finances". Interviewee 7 also said "Secrecy may also cloak the area of finances; Pastors make brazen appeals for donations, ranging from papa's day, mama's day, church anniversary, launchings etc; yet some churches offer no assistance to members that needs financial assistance or give periodic accounts of the church funds". Similarly, another participant FGD12 is of the view that "we are made to contribute on buildings, vehicles of the G.O, schools and other projects, yet, no proper accountability." A respondent interviewed who is a Pastor said that "on financial accountability of the church, actually, it doesn't matter what the church does with the church funds. The responsibility of members is simply to give." However, the Bible commands us to be good stewards". On the contrary, FGD6 said

> "As a good Christian and a good steward, when one becomes
> aware of financial mismanagement in an organization, such as
> the church, one should be responsible enough, to take proactive
> actions, rather than keeping mute".

Interviewee 5 has this to say "it is very simple, money represents power; therefore, it should be no surprise that controlling leaders will use unbiblical means to manipulate people into giving; sowing financial seed of faith to get miracles. Other respondents were of the same view that financial matters should not be a thing of secret in the house of God. By implication of this analysis it is obvious that churches especially Pentecostals hardly give quarterly or yearly account of its expenditure.

Lastly, a question on do pastor use persuasion, cajoling and threatening words during sermons or allows people to decide for themselves was asked. The responses from the respondents were as follows: Interviewee 2 a top member of a Pentecostal church sais "their General overseer, most times would tell them how God spoke to him about some members of the church and how members must adhere strictly to his instructions or loss going to heaven". In the words of FGD4:

> "At some times our head pastor times, he would make comments
> that would result in one staff member becoming suspicious of
> another. The atmosphere in my former church, most often than not,
> put us in fear and also fueled selfish ambition and competition
> amongst the staff and members. It became the pastor's way of

maintaining control and ensuring that his staff could never challenge his authority and or leave the church. Unfortunately, when some of the assistant pastors discovered what was happening, five of them eventually resigned and left the church. That was how I left the church"

Regarding the question asked Interviewee 8 maintained that "Pastors must learn to deal with such questioning in a compassionate, positive manner. However, in these new generation churches in Port Harcourt, most questions are considered threats to the pastor's authority. Members who dare to question their pastors or who do not follow their directives often are confronted with severe consequences". In the view of FGD9 he maintained that "We were told by our general overseer, that it is more important to obey leaders than to question what they are doing. It was unthinkable to question the motives of the pastor, as we were made to take all sermons hook line and sinker." In the words of Interviewee 3 she said:

> "Pastors operating under this persuasive and manipulative precept are often convinced that they are the only ones who can accurately hear from God. Under the constant exposure to this idea that "The spirit of God speaks through me", church members often become convinced that they indeed need their pastor to think for them. In essence, their personal fellowship with the Lord has been abdicated for a relationship with a man. As a result, they lose their confidence in being able to discern the will of God for their lives."

Explaining further FGD11 said "But in the new generation churches in Port Harcourt, pathos is the most adopted psychology by church owners, to create believability and acceptability. This is because; their style of miracle and manipulation makes their members bow to their whims and caprices without questions. For instance, a pastor will call a woman out of the congregation and tell her the problem(s) that brought her to the church. He then prays for her; she falls to the ground "under the anointing" and she is healed. No member of the congregation will want to ask questions because; they have been persuaded and cajoled by the performance of the pastor, whom they see as the man ordained by God. This is the extent Pathos can play on the emotions of people.

Bothering on the same question, Interviewee 1 said "These new generation pastors will not preach about tithe without mentioning Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee, in tithes and offering?" because, it is in their favour. Nobody in the congregation would want to ask what gave rise to Malachi 3:8. How can man rob his creator? Does God need our money? God is a giver not a taker".

Also speaking on the same subject FGD2 maintained that "The new generation churches, in Port Harcourt, use the miracle tactics (Pathos- emotions) to control their members and make them believe that the church is the only place they can get their victory, through the man of God whom they believe, acquired the power from God.

On why the new generation churches in Port Harcourt use persuasion, prosperity and threats

of hell fire on their flocks, a pastor who heads a church in Port Harcourt who was an interviewee has this to say:

> "Fear is a great manipulative instrument of persuasion force; with it, you can make people do a lot of things that ordinarily they won't do, because, they are scared. Almost all religions of this world are built on the foundation of fear in order excesses of man's based nature. It is this aspect of persuasive threats that most religious leaders and church owners use to their advantage. However, there are many people who prefer to believe in the very things that keep them enslaved in the name of belonging to a religious sect. These persons are too scared to ask questions on what they hear from the pulpit, for fear of going to hell. This, indeed, is another invention to scare people into religious captivity. For me, everybody has a personal relationship with God, so nobody or pastor should tell you that without his church, you cannot get victory, or sow financial seed for your healing; that is also a sin unto God he concluded."

By implication of this data presented it implies that Pastors of the new generation churches use persuasion, cajoling and threatening words during sermons or in personal encounter with member than allowing people to decide for themselves.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of findings revealed that people who reside within the Port Harcourt metropolis see miracle in their various churches as a money venture affair. They express bitterness over the issue. This could be seen in the expression of the respondent *Interview1* interviewed "I wondered why the new generation churches will sell anointing oil, salt, handkerchief, cap, perfume, stickers, etc inside the church at an exorbitant price; making you believe that your miracle is dependent on the item(s)" Similarly to this claim, *Interviewee2* puts it succinctly that "you go to church with a problem; the pastor will tell you to buy olive oil that cost two hundred naira (#200) in the open market for two thousand naira (#2000) all in the name of miracle." Though, another participating *FGD1* in responding to observed that "Church is a body of Christ Jesus. Whosoever that decimate the body of Jesus, for his or her selfish gains has God to contend with." From the data gathered it is obvious that some of the men god seem not to fancy this biblical instruction. From this finding it implies that most of the respondents have ugly miracle experience of in their church. The finding of this study disagrees with the finding of Obiefuna, Nwadialor and Umeanolue (2014) where they asserted that the proliferation of Churches in Nigeria has brought not only changing values, but also source of solutions to people's problems. In line with this study's finding Kitause and Achunike (2015) in their study noted that this has made life more difficult for the vast majority of people who increasingly turned to religious organizations to provide for their basic and spiritual needs. This finding is in consonance with the cognitive dissonance theory the research work was anchored. The theoretical orientation of this research is based on cognitive dissonance, which refers to a situation involving two conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviours.

Findings from data analysed revealed that it was difficult for churches and pastors to give

yearly or quarterly account of its income and expenditure. In responding to the research question 2 *FGD8* a member of one of the Pentecostal churches maintained that "Pastor most times will tell church members that "the financial decisions of the church is not a public matter because, the congregation doesn't have the spiritual insight or maturity to understand the dynamics of church finances". The respondents do not see it this way, they feel it is expected that such information is made public. However, a respondent interviewed who is a Pastor said that "on financial accountability of the church, actually, it doesn't matter what the church does with the church funds. The responsibility of members is simply to give." In the view of *FGD6* "As a good Christian and a good steward, when one becomes aware of financial mismanagement in an organization, such as the church, one should be responsible enough, to take proactive actions, rather than keeping mute". By implication of this finding, it is obvious that churches especially Pentecostals hardly give quarterly or yearly account of its expenditure. In line with this study, Ogbe (2019) in his study, noted that in as much as churches sometimes do not reveal their financial status Pentecostal churches engaged in activities such as building entrepreneur skills, running of clinics and schools, and the beneficiaries are both members and the non-members. It is quite clear that pastors do not like maintaining good financial relations as the study revealed. Disagreeing with this Obayi and Onyebuchi (2013) in their study noted that public relations techniques can serve as effective approach in maintaining good pastoral communication between a clergy and its members.

Analysis of findings revealed that Pastors of the new generation churches use persuasion, cajoling and threatening words during sermons or in personal encounter with member than allowing people to decide for themselves. In line with this study, Adedu and Mekiliuwa, (2010), noted that rhetorical figurations, in discourse rhetoric, is that field of language often associated with the uses of languages, for the intent of persuading. They also revealed that rhetoric as the use of language, as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in humans; which by nature respond to symbols." They concluded by saying that rhetoric in public speaking, implies the skill of elegant and persuasive speaking. This is supported by the view of *FGD11* who said "But in the new generation churches in Port Harcourt, pathos is the most adopted psychology by church owners, to create believability and acceptability. This is because; their style of miracle and manipulation makes their members bow to their whims and caprices without questions. For instance, a pastor will call a woman out of the congregation and tell her the problem(s) that brought her to the church. He then prays for her; she falls to the ground "under the anointing" and she is healed. No member of the congregation will want to ask questions because; they have been persuaded and cajoled by the performance of the pastor, whom they see as the man ordained by God. In line with this view *Interviewee3* said "Pastors operating under this persuasive and manipulative precept are often convinced that they are the only ones who can accurately hear from God. Under the constant exposure to this idea that "The spirit of God speaks through me", church members often become convinced that they indeed need their pastor to think for them. In essence, their personal fellowship with the Lord has been abdicated for a relationship with a man. As a result, they lose their confidence in being able to discern the will of God for their lives." In similar vein *FGD2* maintained that "The new generation churches, in Port Harcourt, use the miracle tactics (Pathos- emotions) to control their members and make them believe that the church is the only place they can get their victory, through the man of God whom they believe, acquired the power from God. The new generation churches in Port Harcourt use

persuasion, prosperity and threats of hell fire on their flocks, as the study revealed. Perhaps this trend could be why Meyer (2004) in her study noted that African Independent Churches has been reconfigured by new approaches to the anthropology of Christianity in Africa, in general. From the theoretical standpoint, in the new generation churches, the pastors are very much aware that their sermonic styles (behaviour) are at variance with the practice of Christ, but preferred to go ahead with it because, of the gains (cognition) as the theory this study was pegged postulates.

Conclusion

It is disturbing that churches especially Pentecostals that are supposed to be a place of worship is turning into a business venture where miracle is sold. Church is now a serious business, as long as you can perform the "magic" of miracles; wealth shall flourish your way and nobody dare question you. From the findings we can conclude that people set up churches to dupe the unsuspecting public because; of the respect and fear most Nigerians have for God. Selfishness and garrulousness are the bane of these new generation churches; and as long as they are not checked, our religious clime will continually have this sweet savour of deceit.

Recommendations

Base on the findings the researcher made the following recommendations

1. Government must as a matter of urgency set up taskforces to investigate the veracities of these miracles we see and or hear daily; this will help ease off the religious tension and also create an atmosphere of cordiality and respect. And any pastor found wanting of fake miracles should be sanctioned.

2. Pastors and church owners should be advice that good financial relations can go a long way in positioning the image of the church in good light before the members of the church and the public in general.

3. Pastors should be mindful of their language when communicating with members; they should avoid threatening their members or cajoling them unnecessary against their will.

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ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC Ann WARENESS AND ACTIONS AGAINST HARMFUL EFFECTS OF FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG RESIDENTS OF ENUGU METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of awareness and actions against harmful effects of exposure to fake news among residents of Enugu metropolis. The study adopted survey method while questionnaire was used as instrument to generate quantitative data used for the study. The researchers adopted multi-stage random sampling to select 384 respondents from the four Local Government Areas that make up Enugu metropolis for the study. Media Ecology Theory was adopted as a suitable theoretical framework for the study. The study found, among other things that there is high awareness of the existence of fake news on social media among residents of Enugu metropolis. It also found that there is high awareness that exposure to fake news can be harmful. However, the study revealed that high level of awareness about the existence of fake news on social media platforms and of the dangers of exposure to such fake news does not influence residents' view of the need to interrogate any news on social media before believing them. Similarly, despite the high level of awareness of the existence of fake news on social media and the danger of exposure to them, most respondents do not bother about the importance of checking if information they got on social media is true before sharing them with others and spreading them online. The researchers therefore recommend that there is need to embark on general social media use education/campaign among residents of Enugu metropolis. The campaign should focus on creating awareness of and inculcating the habit of interrogating any information on social media to confirm that they are true before believing them and before sharing them with others and spreading them online. The education should aim to reduce the urge to quickly share and spread information until such information has been confirmed as true.

Keywords: Assessment, Public Awareness, Fake News, Social Media

Introduction

Using social media platforms for information dissemination and gathering is now a popular practice especially among young people. There is a growing trend of people getting involved in the use of one or more social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram and others in search of current information. Most young people are so

attached to their mobile devices and frequently visit social media platforms in order to keep up to date with recent information about things happening around them and in different parts of the world. Like any other information, the information gotten through social media networks can have positive or negative influence on people. When most people receive information on social media platforms, they do not only spread such information verbally to people around them. They copy and share such information online through other social media platforms and handles available to them. In some cases, such information has capacity to evoke an emotional response in the receiver. Unfortunately, the person spreading the information may not have checked to confirm whether the information being shared is true or not (Cook et al., 2012). This way, both true and false information continue to be spread like wild fire as most people may not have the capacity to interrogate the contents of the news to which they are exposed.

One of the developments associated with the increasing use of the social media in most societies today is the spreading of fake news. Fake news can be best described as a manipulated or fabricated story with the intention of misleading people. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2019), fake news is completely false information, photos or videos purposefully created and spread to confuse or misinform people; information, photos or videos manipulated to deceive, or old photographs shared as new; satire or parody which means no harm but can fool people. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) noted that fake news represents an array of misleading news style stories that were fabricated and promoted on social media to deceive the public for ideological and/or financial gain.

There has not been a time when fake news is spread so fast and wide in clever ways that makes it very difficult to identify it as fake than now. People can now use some software applications to create believable false contents. Tools such as Photoshop can be used to doctor photographs and make it difficult for undiscerning members of the public to know that the photograph was doctored and not real.

There are genuine reasons to be concerned about the spread of fake news in the present generation using social media platforms and handles. Fake news spread faster through the social media because there are no measures to restrict or check information before they are released to the masses. One major challenge of social media sites is that they are mostly open, free and unrestricted (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). Today, professional editors and journalists no longer have control of the information that people can access (McGrew et al, 2017). Everyone who has access to the internet can generate and spread any content whether true or false. Individuals, groups, organizations, parties, and politicians can create any information they want to create and spread same through social media. Such unverified information can have great impact on the perception and opinion of the public.

Unfortunately, nobody has the responsibility of checking the information being spread online in most platforms to confirm if they are true or false, fake or real. It is left for individual media consumers to evaluate the information at their disposal (McGrew et al., 2017), and to either believe them or reject them. It is understandable that not every media consumer has the capacity to determine the information that is false or true, fake or real. Some are so gullible that they accept whatever they read hook, line and sinker.

Allcott and Gentzkow (cited above); and Hirst (2017) examined the motivations behind the creation and spreading of false information. They noted that fake news generation is mostly fueled by commercial motivations and political motivations. Some create and disseminate fake news in order to drive traffic of readership to their news site in order to drive more advertising revenue. Others create false information for political reasons. They seek to manipulate the minds of the public against political opponents by creating false information intended to defame and damage their public image.

Fake and false information spreading without checks on social media platforms should be a matter of concern to all because most people depend on social media as their major and most easily accessible source of information. Many people do not consult professionally edited media sources to crosscheck the information they receive online (Klein & Wueller, 2017). This increases public vulnerability to manipulation and other negative impacts of exposure to false information.

Pennycook et al. (2017) noted that fake news is most likely to be believed by many people if it is shared and liked by many others. Similarly, some would be more likely to believe a fake content as true due to prior exposure. That is, if a fake content is shared widely, people are likely going to be exposed to them repeatedly. In the minds of members of the public, seeing such information repeatedly may mean that the information is true. Similarly, if users think that a website or online news source appears to be journalistic, they are most likely to believe the false content. That is why some fake news producers exploit this by employing journalistic-sounding names for the fake news sources (Klein and Wueller, 2017).

Members of the public can take certain steps to identify false information. This can be done by manual efforts or by automated approaches of veracity check (Albright, 2017). Some of the measures that people can take include:

1. Checking the source**:** This involves making efforts to ensure that the source is credible and has good reputation.
2. Be skeptical of dramatic headlines: headlines that are dramatic are probably exaggerating something. It is important to double check such information.
3. Check the language: Lots of spelling or grammatical errors may also be a sign that indicates that the information did not go through editing thorough editing.
4. Confirm with other reliable sources: check other news sites to see if the same story is running on multiple credible sources.

Statement of the problem
Individuals want to be informed; they want to be able to know what is happening around them. They want to know what happened, why it happened, where it happened, when it happened and who is involved. Before the advent of social media, people depended on conventional media of mass communication like radio, television, newspapers and magazines for accurate information about things that happen in different parts of the world. That situation has changed. Most people now depend on social media platforms for information. Unfortunately, there are no gatekeepers to double check information before

they are released through the social media platforms and handles. The emergence of social media has made news content lack credibility and authenticity because everybody has become content creators. Emergence of social media has transformed people from being passive and at the receiving end of one way mass communication to becoming active producers and transmitters of information.

Some people build information on lies in order to deceive the audience. Unfortunately, most internet users like bloggers post fake news just to drive traffic to their websites, while others generate and spread fake news for fun. Some generate fake news with the intention of harming someone or a group, while others do so, expecting to benefit from the emotional reactions of people. Some do it deliberately to achieve certain premeditated goals of damaging the reputation of others, causing agitations, and outright confusion in society. Information is powerful, fake information can be negatively powerful. False information can be dangerous as it can lead people to reactions that could be very destructive to self, to others and to society. On the basis of the situation described above, the researchers desired to examine the awareness of residents of Enugu metropolis about the danger of exposure to fake news on social media, believing, and spreading same without checking to confirm if such information is true.

Research questions

In line with the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated7

1. To what extent are residents of Enugu metropolis aware of the existence of fake news on social media platforms?

2. To what extent are residents of Enugu metropolis aware of the dangers associated with believing and spreading fake news on social media platforms?

3. To what extent do residents of Enugu metropolis interrogate news which they read on social media before believing or sharing them?

4. To what extent do residents of Enugu metropolis believe that it is necessary not to share social media contents before confirming if they are true?

Social Media and Fake news in Nigeria

Spence, Lachlan, Edwards, and Edwards (2016) stated that misinformation is more quickly disseminated through social media when there is high uncertainty and high demand for public information about the issues such as crisis and health concerns. Adeleke (2016) stated that the spread of the fake news on the internet is caused by the internet's ever connected nature and the preference for speed over accuracy. Because internet content providers and distributors are in a battle for attention and advertising revenue, they will do any and everything to boost traffic. Unfortunately, many journalists also, while competing for attention and mindshare, are forced to publish first and verify later. Thus the spread of fake news has become a global problem which is heavily manifest in Nigeria.

Amobi (2019) opined that false claims are on the rise in Nigeria, partly because of citizen journalism. The advent of social media and users' ability to generate their own content has

further increased the presence and reach of misinformation. False claims can spread fast, taking on the garb of truth. News sites and blogs in Nigeria according to Adeleke (2016) publish stories without first authenticating the sources. Fake news stories are usually sensational in nature and so are very likely to spread quickly. And because the platforms containing the news already have a massive readership base that looks to them for information, the stories will most likely be believed by the people that read them. These people will, in turn, share the story on social media in order to pride themselves on being the first to know. Sometimes, even after the story has been debunked, the fake news still prevails.

Fake news has been declared a huge challenge in Nigeria because of the fragile social setting in the country, as well as her loose democratic culture, poverty, illiteracy, depressing human conditions, inflation, weak economy, intolerance and high tendencies for disunity among the peoples of Nigeria (Ogola, 2017). Ogbette et al., (2019) observed that fake news creates tension, killings and pandemonium which are not good for the peace and unity of Nigeria and the world at large. They observed that the major causes of fake news in Nigeria include quest for relevance, hostile government and civil actors, poor regularization / of the internet and money making. Fake news is contributing to insecurity in Nigeria especially now when the country is facing different crises like fulani-herdsmen and farmers crisis, militancy, and so on which goes a long way to create tension, killings and pandemonium.

In Nigeria, there are many instances of false claims causing avoidable harm to citizens. From 2002 to 2006, false claims about the polio vaccine contributed to the increase in polio cases in Nigeria. Political and religious leaders in the northern Kano, Zamfara and Kaduna states claimed, without evidence, that the vaccine was laced with HIV, anti-fertility agents and carcinogens, so as to reduce the population of mainly Muslim region. The claims ended vaccination campaigns, allowing the crippling disease to claim more victims (Africa Check, 2017). In 2014 during the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), false information circulated through text messages and posts on social media claiming that hot water and salt prevent Ebola and equally cure infected patients. According to World Health Organization (2014) at least two people died after drinking salt water.

Amobi (2019) noted that in 2017, the Nigerian Army had just begun a free medical service of administering polio vaccination as part of its military operations in South-East of Nigeria when rumours were circulated that the army was going to schools to inject pupils with the monkey pox virus. This caused massive panic that led to the closure of some schools. Students hurriedly left their schools, while worried parents came to pick up their wards.

Okakwu (2018) observed that the current Minister of Information in Nigeria, Alhaji Lai Mohammed argued that fake news is not restricted to the social media alone. He pointed out that on 5th July, 2018, the front page headline of a national newspaper was: Court orders National Assembly to begin impeachment of Buhari. According to the Minister, the news was fake news. Quoting the certified true copy of the order, the Minister noted that the order of the court was manipulated to read that the court has given the go-ahead for the National Assembly to commence impeachment proceedings against the President. Similary, Elebeke (2018) noted that in 2017, a fake report circulated on the social media claiming that five students of the College of Education, Gidan Waya, were ambushed and killed by Fulani

herdsmen in Southern Kaduna. That report turned out to be false. No student was killed. In 2017 also, false information went viral claiming that President Muhammadu Buhari was dead. This was when the President travelled on health leave to the United Kingdom. In October 2019, there was another viral rumour all over the social media space in Nigeria that the President is taking another wife. The rumour was supported with supposed invitation cards. Ahmed (2020), noted that the recent outbreak of Corona Virus has also witnessed the spreading of a lot of false information about the virus in Nigeria.

Harmful effects of fake news

Regrettably, fake news has the ability to trigger quick actions, outcomes and consequences, especially if they are spread through social media (Pennycook et el, 2017). Fake news can be quite serious and can pose real dangers to society in many ways. Fake news can be used to damage people's reputation. Spreading lies about someone can change the way people feel about him or her. Fake news can cause public harm. The spread of false information may lead to physical harm on members of the public. The spread of fake news has generated tension between races and religious groups by fueling hatred among people of different race and religion. Fake news is also known to have caused tension between the public and government when unverified information concerning government and its activities is spread. This may lead to crisis and unnecessary protests. Spreading of fake news could result to violence, cause public disorder and chaos and lead to murder of innocent people. Disseminating false information can trigger fear and panic reactions in people. In Nigeria, fake news reportedly caused so many people to bath with salt water during the outbreak of Ebola. Fake news can be very harmful. Currently, lots of fake, false and misleading information are on social media relating to Covid 19 pandemic.

Nyhan, Brendan, Reifler, and Jason (2015) noted that one of the challenges of fake news is that misinformation can be very difficult to correct and may have lasting effects even after it is discredited. Consequently, false information may continue to influence beliefs and attitudes even after being debunked if it is not replaced by an alternate casual explanation.

Efforts against fake news in Nigeria

There have been a lot of campaign efforts geared towards combating fake news in Nigeria. As reported by Premium Times newspaper on July 11, 2018, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched a national campaign against fake news. During the campaign, the Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed likened the effects of fake news to a time bomb waiting to explode. He said the campaign will employ active collaborations engaging digital as well as traditional media operators and the National Orientation Agency to educate Nigerians on the effect of fake news on Nigeria's democracy and corporate existence as a nation as well as on the peace and security, and the fact that all Nigerian citizens have a role to play in curtailing the spread of fake news.

Ahmed (2020) recalls that the World Health Organization partnered with WhatsApp, a popular social media platform, to halt the spread of fake news on the Corona Virus outbreak. The initiative called WhatsApp Corona Virus Information Hub was a response to the spread of misleading information on social media, most especially on WhatsApp about the pandemic. The hub is geared to offer simple, actionable guidance, general tips, and resources

for users around the world to be better informed about the disease and hence reduce the spread of rumours. With this new initiative by WhatsApp, a platform widely used among Nigerians, the people can rely on a credible source to get facts and figures on the pandemic without any compromise.

Reducing the spread of Fake News

Oberiri and Bahiyah (2020), stated that in order to reduce the spread of fake news, there is need to increase media and information literacy among the citizens, especially among young people. The aim is to make people critical in accessing and responding to media messages. They noted that there should be constant adverts, workshops, jingles on TV and Radio as a part of the strategy to fight circulation of fake news. Social media users should be encouraged to check the integrity of the information they receive, before sharing it with others. They believe that fake news has become a menace which could only be curbed by sustained collective efforts, involving individuals and all policy makers. They also proposed that the Federal Government of Nigeria should mobilize its agencies like the Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to increase campaigns against fake news in Nigeria, particularly as it concerns national security.

Theoretical Framework: Media Ecology Theory

This study is anchored on Media Ecology Theory (MET). The concept of the theory was proposed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 while the term was first formally introduced by Neil Postman in 1968. McLuhan sought to define the relationship between media technology and members of a specific culture. He noted that electronic media have brought far reaching changes in society as society has become dependent on these communication technologies and that it is difficult to locate any society that is not influenced by electronic media. The theory upholds three key assumptions: One, media are infused into every act and action in society; Two, media fix our perceptions and organize our experiences; Three, media tie the world together. These assumptions seek to explain that media are powerful in shaping the way people view the world around them. Octavio et al (2016) stated that MET is the study of media as environments and that the theory seeks to interpret how media of communication influence human perception, understanding, feeling, and value; and how interaction with media facilitates or impedes human chances of survival. It also claims that media act directly to shape and organize culture. It tries to find out what roles media force us to play, how media structure what we are seeing, why media make us feel and act as we do. Kaialiisa (2012) while discussing MET, upholds that media environment gives us information and creates stereotypes and prejudices of things and people, but it gives us also broader choices to choose what we would like to do with our lives.

The assumptions of the theory are found as suitable framework for the study in the following sense: Social media have become ubiquitous and so intertwined with the daily lives of so many people today. Information on social media contributes immensely in determining how people understand and interpret the world. Social media more than any other form of media binds people together across the world. False information created in one part of the globe can spread so fast to millions of people across the globe and may lead to unimaginable impact.

Methodology

The researchers adopted survey as the design for the study. The population for the study was 968,300 drawn from the areas that constitute Enugu metropolis. These are Enugu East LGA, Enugu North LGA, and Enugu South LGA. The sample size of the study is 384. The researchers applied multi-stage random sampling technique to select two towns from each of the participating LGA's first. Sixty-four respondents were then drawn from each of the towns for the study. Questionnaire was deployed as instrument for gathering data needed for the study. The questionnaire was administered to each respondent directly by a team of research assistants. Data collected from the field were presented in simple percentage tables for interpretation and analysis.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the research questionnaire were distributed, out of which 38 copies were not retrieved and 348 (90.6%) were returned, validly completed and used for analysis.

Table 1: Respondents' awareness of the existence of fake news on social media platforms

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	272	78.2
No	32	9.2
Can't Say	44	12.6
Total	348	100.0

Majority of the respondents (78.2%) indicated that they are aware of the existence of fake news on social media platforms. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that there is high awareness of the existence of fake news on social media platforms among residents in Enugu metropolis.

Table 2: Respondents' awareness of the dangers associated with believing and spreading fake news.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	18	5.2
Disagree	20	5.7
Undecided	13	3. 8
Agree	101	29.0
Strongly Agree	196	56.3
Total	348	100

Majority of the respondents (85%) agree and strongly agree that they are aware of the dangers associated with believing and spreading fake news. Therefore awareness is also high as relates to dangers associated with spreading fake news.

Table 3: Respondents' view on the importance of interrogating any news from social media before believing them

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	202	58
Disagree	96	27.6
Undecided	26	7.5
Agree	16	4.6
Strongly Agree	8	2.3
Total	348	100

Majority of the respondents (85%) strongly disagree and disagree that it is important to always interrogate news from social media before believing them. This indicates that they will likely believe any social media content without questioning them.

Table 4: Participants' views on the importance of not sharing unconfirmed social media contents

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Strongly Disagree	98	28.2
Disagree	85	24.4
Undecided	25	7.2
Agree	76	21.8
Strongly Agree	64	18.4
Total	348	100

Slightly above half of the respondents (52%) strongly disagree and disagree that it is important not to share any social media content before confirming that it is true.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presented above, it is safe to conclude that there is high awareness of the existence of fake news on social media platforms among residents of Enugu metropolis. This agrees with Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) who noted that the quantity of fake and false information on social media is very high. There is also a high awareness that exposure to fake news can be harmful. However, the high level of awareness about existence of fake news on social media and the dangers of exposure to fake news does not influence residents' view of the need to interrogate news on social media before believing them. This agrees with Klein and Wueller (2017) when they observed that so many people do not bother to check if social media contents are true before believing them. Similarly, above half of the respondents do

not think it is important to avoid spreading social media contents before confirming if such information is true or false. This finding agrees with the views of Adeleke (2016) that people share information fast, preferring speed to accuracy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that awareness of existence of fake news on social media and awareness of the dangers of exposure to fake news alone does not influence residents' attitude and actions relating to believing and sharing social media contents without verification and authentication. The researchers therefore strongly recommend in agreement with Oberiri and Bahiyah (2020), that residents of Enugu are in serious need of education on the need to question any social media content before believing them and sharing them. They should be thought how to check if social media content is true or false. They should be oriented to avoid the urge to quickly share information with anyone else until they have independently confirmed that such information is true. The researchers believe that this approach will go a long way to reduce the spreading of fake news and unconfirmed information among residents of Enugu metropolis.

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PROMOTION OF HERBAL THERAPIES IN THE FACE OF APCON REGULATIONS: A COMPLIANCE APPRAISAL

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Abstract

The proliferation of supposed herbal remedy for various presumably serious ailments plaguing humanity has become common place in the city of Port Harcourt. The Herbalists deploy several advertising strategies to sell their products. This, they do, in a bid to convince and indeed hoodwink would-be patrons of their products. The Advertising Practitioners' Council, APCON, is a body legally vested the power to regulate the practice of advertising in Nigeria and the purpose of this piece is to attempt an appraisal of the compliance level of herbal remedies' practitioners in their advertisement messages in line with APCON regulations. The approach was experiential and realistic.

Keywords: APCON Regulations, Herbal remedies, advertisements, sales promotion.

Introduction

The promoters of herbal remedies otherwise referred to as alternative medicine practitioners, have virtually taken over the commercial space in Port Harcourt metropolis. A cursory investigation reveals their presence at almost all busy bus stops, markets and motor parks in the city. The herbal practitioners have not only taken over the streets but have also invaded the electronic media in the city especially the television. They, like religious sermon preachers, now compete for airtime in broadcast stations like the Rivers State Television, Silverbird Television Port Harcourt and partly the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA-Port Harcourt stations, as one of the most popular and frequently aired programmes on these stations. The case of Silverbird Television Port Harcourt is even more nauseating as the timing for the airing of the 'herbal remedies' programme is neither streamlined nor specific – a situation where such airing defies the time-belt of other programmes aired by the station without apologies to the audience.

They (the herbal therapy promoters) hardly use the print media(newspapers specifically) because of their target audience being mainly illiterates, semi-literates and the dregs of society. And their presentation on the television is not strictly the advertised copy (message type) of their product but an extemporaneous goading of the people on the self-acclaimed and 'believed' efficacy of their product. Their emphasis on the legality of their actions is based mainly on the acquisition of a registration number from the National Food Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC, on the said products and not that the Nigerian Medical Association or any professional medical body has or can indeed endorse their

products as fit for consumption in line with their claims on its curative effects.

The most annoying aspect of these promotional activities is the fact that the manufacturers claim to have some yet to be substantiated spiritual knowledge as a basis for assuming superiority over orthodox medicine. This puts pain to the cry for examining and regulating their activities in the interest of societal sanity. Most of them go by funny onomatopoeic names as a way of alluding to their efficacy and indeed efficiency.

This has led to a beehive of activities around herbal remedy industry such that 'alcoholism, self-medication and drug abuse' is becoming common place among residents of Port Harcourt because of the information over load and other environmental cum cultural influences associated with the advertisement of herbal remedies' products. Products like Alomo Bitters, Action Bitters, Tombo bitters etc. are being consumed freely by unsuspecting youths notwithstanding its alcoholic content, all in the name of its acclaimed curative effect as a blood cleanser, disease killer and health purifier. Besides, the only claim some of the consumers of these 'bitters' lay hold of is the fact that the products has a bitter taste and not that they can prove or have proven its curative claims by the promoters.

The situation has become worrisome to the extent that commuters, travelers, traders and other residents of the city alike, are being daily inundated with pre-recorded messages of the effects and benefits of consuming their products with no reference as to its side-effects or strict medical efficacy and rules. On the popular Aba Road axis of Port Harcourt, almost every long-bus plying the route from Mile one to Eleme junction and Oyigbo city centre, have an agent inside trying to sell drugs mostly herbal to unsuspecting customers. Some of the patrons of the herbal remedy promoters do so after listening to the unscientific and non-clinical diagnosis of possible symptoms of ailments plaguing them without first testing themselves for such ailments

The 'message boxes' in the form of stationary cars, mobile cars cum hawkers, sprawl the streets in different parts of the city of Port Harcourt, especially thickly populated areas of the city to disseminate their message and make merchandise of the people. Some children living in the said areas can now mimic and replay the messages as part of their daily conversation, hence exposing them to advertisement content that was not ordinarily meant for them because it was not in a controlled or censored medium.

This situation has led to the conceptualization of this work, to look at the promotion of herbal remedies in the face of APCON Regulations in terms of checking their compliance level.

Brief Overview of Advertising
The activities of the promoters of the herbal therapy craze as elixir to all forms of natural ailments common to man, falls within the ambits of advertisement. This is, if we view advertisement as defined by Yalaju (2001) as a notice given in a manner designed to attack public attention. Gupta (2012) notes that the term advertising is derived from the Latin word 'adverter' which means to turn the attention, 'it can be said that anything that turns the attention (of people) to an article or a service or an idea might be called as (*sic*) advertising', p.4.

Whetmore (1985) cited in Okpoko (2008), defines advertising as a sales message which is directed towards a specific audience and seeks to sell goods and services and the promotion of ideas through the media by a paid sponsor. The Webster's English Dictionary sees advertising as any form of public announcement intended to aid directly or indirectly in the sale of a commodity. Stanton (1982), cited in Okon (1998), defines advertising as all activities involved in presenting to a group a non-personal, oral, or visual openly sponsored message regarding a product, service or idea.

The definition of the American Marketing Association (AMA) is mostly recognized in professional circles. It defines advertising as any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of products, service or ideas by an identified sponsor.

From the foregoing, advertising can then be said to have the following features:

- It is a non-personal presentation of messages. This implies the use of third parties in communicating the message content.
- Its intention is to inspire action about a product, service or idea.
- It is usually paid for by an identifiable sponsor. This means that its content cannot be referred to as gossip.
- It uses different media of communication: oral, print and electronic.
- Its content is target specific.

According to Okon (1998), not all advert messages can be referred to as advertising. He posited that 'for any advert message to qualify as advertising, it has to be non-personal, it has to be paid for and the sponsor identified', p.23. Advertising can be classified as national, retail/local, trade/professional, industrial, co-operative or institutional, depending on the content, intent or reach of the message.

APCON Regulations in context

Ewelukwa (2004) echoes that 'there is no doubt that in Nigeria today, there are frequent disobedience, violation and disregard of advertising laws', p.4. This has informed the enactment and enforcement of laws by both State and Federal Government of Nigeria. One of such laws is the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria, APCON, Cap 7, laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1992.

The Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON) was established by Act No. 55 of 1988, as amended by Act No. 93 of 1992 and Act No. 116 of 1993 and is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Determining who are qualified advertising practitioners;
- Setting the standard of knowledge and skills required for such practitioners;
- Compiling, maintaining and keeping the register of practitioners;
- Regulating and controlling the practice of advertising in Nigeria;
- Conducting qualifying examinations in the profession;

- Performing all such other functions as are incidental or conducive to the above responsibilities or any of them.

The fifth edition of the Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice, Sales Promotion/Restrictions on Practice, effective from December 1, 2012, spells out the rules and regulations that govern the practice in specific terms in relation to specific products. Chapter one of the code states the general principles indicating that all adverts must be legal, decent, honest, not be sexually explicit, must not discriminate gender, superstitious etc.

On page 24 of the code, (d) states that consumers shall not be encouraged to use products in excess and Advertisers shall hold proof before suggesting their products or therapies are guaranteed to work, absolutely safe or without side effects and (e) states that advertising communication shall not suggest that any product is safe or effective merely because it is 'natural' or that it is generally safer because it omits an ingredient in common use.

Article 67 of the code states that all advertisements, promotions and other marketing communication activities concerning alternative medical practices, products and treatment shall:
i.   Clearly specify the name and address of the dispenser/advertiser;
ii.   Specify the particular ailment to which the product applies and shall not claim efficacy over a range of condition;
iii.   Have dose specification.

Herbal Remedies Promotion in Port Harcourt
Residents of Port Harcourt can hardly deny the absence of herbal remedies promoters due to media glut of its advert messages. By media glut, we mean the utilization of various media appropriate in reaching the target audience including trade fairs, markets, hawking, promos, radio, television etc. The herbal remedies promoters are unrelenting in their effort to supplant orthodox medicine as a means of curing ailments that is common to man. Their slant mainly is to hoodwink unsuspecting patients with sympathy and presumably low prices for drugs which ordinarily would have been sold for more at the conventional hospitals. Moreover, they tend to suggest that their medication beats the rigour and apparent protocols associated with hospital administrations in Nigeria.

Investigations reveal that most of them are not licensed by the government but are catching-in on the desperation and morbid fear of high charges by the hospitals to operate. Their would-be patrons are further goaded with sugar-coated elixir/opium sermon of their medication as cure for symptomatic ailments and not medically diagnosed disease.

Their activities are worst in the rural areas where their operations take on the colouration of some sort of superstitious power to heal and not just cure the diseases. Some families are believed to be gifted with the power to treat certain ailments as a matter of inheritance cum heritage not minding the attitudinal disposition of individual members to such touted heritage. Herbs and roots are freely prescribed by the practitioners to patients who simply reel out symptoms upon symptoms. And the prescriptions are sometimes not adhered to as

prescribed hence leading to possible medical complications and possibly, death in the face of lack of adequate medical attention. In such villages, they need no advertisement because the villagers believe in the efficacy of their treatment of the acclaimed ailments.

This piece is not intending to disparage traditional knowledge which has been proven to be efficacious when administered adequately. Amadi (2017) refers to it as "Indigenous Knowledge"**,** a kind of knowledge that has existed within a community over time such that it has formed part of their belief system. But our focus is on how such knowledge (of alternative medicine) is being advertised within the Port Harcourt metropolis in line with laid down rules of advertisements.

In Port Harcourt, they operate in groups, brandishing different concoctions with yet to be verified claims of cure. Some have rented offices with phoney names like Baba Cure, Dr. Agnes Nwanma, Herbal World home of Aloe Vera, Dr. Igwedo, Papa Na Mama Dada, Yem-Kem International, Emione Naturalist Care etc. Most times, they hire some jobless youths as marketers, stuff their hands with the drugs and off to the street they go to harass potential and unwilling patrons of their merchandise. They operate more in thickly populated areas.

Another twist to it is that some foreign companies have joined the fray. Companies like the GNLD, EDMARK etc. stand out in this regard. Their products come mostly in the form of teas and dietary supplements. They use the network marketing strategy linked to tempting incentives, to hood-wink would be interested patrons of their merchandise. Moreover, the perceived craze for foreign goods by Nigerians as against locally-made products, is being used to their advantage by the Nigerian promoters of their product. They organize seminars and other marketing activities in order to get a fair share of the herbal remedies market. But the focus of this paper is not on the foreign promoters of herbal remedies but it must be noted that the foreign herbal remedy promoters are busy trying to colonise the market through the use of sophisticated marketing and advertisement strategies to the detriment of locally made herbal products. That is a discourse for another paper.

Herbal Remedy Promoters and APCON Regulations

Findings by this paper reveal that most, if not all, the herbal remedy promoters are not in tune with APCON regulations as to the mode of presentation of their advertisements/promotions. Several of the practitioners and their marketers interviewed, did not know of the existence of the Nigerian code of advertising practice, sales promotion and other rights/restrictions on practice. None of them interviewed were certified APCON practitioners.

From the message content of some of the herbal remedies advertisements, the provisions in the code that herbal product must "Specify the particular ailment to which the product applies and shall not claim efficacy over a range of condition", is clearly in breach. Some of the culprits are Goodwill Liquid Herbal Mixture, Ashetu Adam Bitters, Ecosin Cleanser, Dr. Igwedo Goko Cleanser etc. all of which are acclaimed to be effective in tackling 'all sexually transmitted diseases'. The mixture 'Ecosin DX' and energizer 360 are being touted to be the gynecological elixir to all forms of sexual mis-function (poor libido, poor erection etc.).

Furthermore, the tone of the message it was clearly sexually explicit especially when drugs

meant for sexually transmitted disease. Worst of all, the language used is the 'pidgin' English which gives the message more reach especially among the 'educationally' disadvantaged audience.No mention was made of any side effect for taking the 'natural' medicine because, as stated, it is natural and therefore, not 'harmful in any way'. This is also without regard to the different configuration of the human body medically speaking. This action is in direct contravention of page 24 sub (d) of the code which states that consumers shall not be encouraged to use products in excess and that the 'Advertisers' shall hold proof before suggesting their products or therapies are guaranteed to work, absolutely safe or without side effects.

Also, some of the patrons of herbal medicines interviewed in Rumuwoji (Mile one) market, alluded to their traditional background as part of the reason for preferring alternative medicine. Some of them claimed that the efficacy of 'natural' medicine was more compared to orthodox medicine. One Mr. Anthony pointed out that the natural medicine had multi-purpose usage when compared to the orthodox medicine and that the pricing was on the lower side

In the course of rummaging for data for this paper, some alcoholic advertisements were spotted along Mile one axis of Port Harcourt. The said adverts were in clear contravention of APCON Regulations. In chapter three of the Code entitled 'special provisions', it states that alcoholic beverage adverts should not bear any religious or medical connotation in terms of the language and such adverts should not be placed within a radius of 200 metres of the perimeter fence of any place of worship, hospital, school or motor parks.

Firstly, at Emenike junction, there was a bill board stand carrying two advertisements of alcoholic drinks - Omega Aromatic Schnapps and Brandy Almondia V.S.O.P. The bill board was placed very close to St Andrews' Primary School, owned by the Rivers State Government. Omega Aromatic Schnapps has its cut line as 'the spirit of excellence' which is a religious line gotten from the Bible book of Proverbs chapter 17:27 and Daniel Chapter 5:12. The word Omega is mentioned four times in the Book of Revelations 1:8; 1:11; 21:6 & 22:13. This makes the religious connotation so real.

On the front of Rumuwoji (Mile One) market are two alcoholic drinks – Star and Hero beer displayed conspicuously. The case of Hero beer is worse such that it was also sited opposite a Mosque. Star beer was situated in front of Diobu Divisional headquarters of the Nigerian Police force which is directly opposite the Rumuwoji market.

At the Mile one flyover, the Rivers State Signage and Advertisement Agency, RISAA, was busy shutting down adverts over their non-payment of prescribed fees, none of the bill boards sighted bore any sign of APCON checks except for few sign boards along Rumuola road leading to the ever-busy Aba road. Investigations showed that the sign boards were shut down over non-payment of fees and not for the content of the advert. One of the bill-boards spotted to have been shut down by RISAA had the advert of a University in Ogun state.

Conclusion
Though this work set out to appraise the compliance level of locally made herbal remedies

advertisements to APCON Regulations, a greater danger looms with the strategy being deployed by foreign herbal remedy promoters to oust them and emasculate the market.

Clearly, locally made herbal remedy promoters still ply their trade at the subsistence level which is counter the principle of advertising. Advertising needs to be non-personal which means that the advertised product should be in large scale due to the effect the message might have on its target audience and subsequent demand for the product.

Locally made herbal remedy promoters should not rely on the traditional instincts of their would-be patrons as a key point in marketing but consider good packaging strategies as part of their advert for their product. Modern knowledge should be blended with traditional expertise for better results. Their products should be given global appeal to shrug-off stiff competition from their foreign counterparts.

In so doing, the relevant laws and regulations governing their operations should be strictly adhered to in order to avoid unwarranted intervention by government to the detriment of their survival. The market is competitive and the operators must rise up to the occasion.

Recommendations

In the light of the study, the following are recommended:

- The government should as a matter of urgency statute a medical panel streamline indigenous medicine and orthodoxy.

- Operations of alternative medicine practitioners should be standardized by the government.

- APCON and other regulatory agencies of government should collaborate to ensure better enforcement of standards.

- Government regulatory agencies should not restrict its enforcements to funding infractions but offer training and mentorship to offenders.

- There is urgent need for APCON to enlighten the people on what an advert should be and keep an open line that will enable the people report adverts that fall short of the standard.

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THE MEDIA AS THE FOURTH ESTATE OF THE REALM: REAL OR IMAGINED?

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Abstract

Scholars have widely accepted the notion of the media as a fourth estate of the realm; however, there are concerns that the media may no longer be playing their proper democratic role being the fourth estate of the realm. This study aims at examining the argument as to whether the media as the fourth estate of the realm is 'real' or 'imagined'. Theoretical framework analysis and secondary data was mostly used due to the nature of the study. The libertarian theory, authoritarian theory and framing theory were used to clarify the concept of media as the fourth estate of the realm. The study was then hinged on liberal perspective which describes the ideal circumstance where the media is accepted and able to play their role in building the nation and ensuring democratic principles are not selfishly manipulated. The study revealed that the media in Nigeria have come a long way in the struggle against limiting factors such as repression, suppression, corruption, ownership control and partisan, which have made the reality of a fourth estate of the realm a mere mirage and an assumption hoping will emerge into reality in the nearest future when the stipulated laws as slated in the constitution are diligently adhered to.

Keywords: Fourth Estate, Media, Realm, Democracy and Nigeria

Introduction

The term fourth estate of the realm is a descriptive term for the press (media), it is commonly agreed to have been coined by Edmund Burke, a 19th Century British statesman and orator, who advocated many human rights causes and brought attention to them through his persuasive speeches. The fourth estate is perceived as the established news media which encompasses an educated group of professional journalists. It originated from the European concept of the three estates of the realm - the clergy, the nobility and the commoners. The term has come to symbolise the media or press as a segment of society that has an indirect but key role in influencing the political system (Babarinsa, 2003).

The media, without doubt, plays a very important role in most societies, reporting on a wide variety of topics and creating powerful personalities who are relied upon for sources of information and informed commentaries. The importance of the Press was apparently what Thomas Carlyle, another 19th Century British author, had in mind when he wrote that writing gives people "a tongue which others will listen to." The relevance of the media in any polity is generally drawn from the fact that information is necessary for effective governance and administration. Lack of information or misuse of information, or hoarding of information will be counterproductive in governance and/or administration (Akinfeleye, 2003).

Presently, in modern constitutional democratic system, the three estates of the realm are depicted or given meaning by the three arms of government comprising: the legislature, elected representatives of the people for the purpose of law making; the executive, cabinet of ministers that take decision policies of government; and the judiciary, judges who interpret the laws and uphold the sanctity of the constitution. The fourth of these three arms, however without any constitutional or statutory footing as an arm of government, has been accepted to be the media (press) up till date.

There is no doubt in the minds of communication scholars and politicians as to the power of the media in nation-building. Just as it is in economic theories of development, where the essence of economic development is a result of an increase in the economic productivity of the society, so also it is in the case of the role which the media can play in nation-building.

However, scholars are not so sure of, whether the media has been "real" towards causing change in nation-building or 'figment of imagination'. In as much as nearly all scholars and politicians agree that the media can support rapid national development, they are not so sure as to whether the change or the development has been significantly influenced by the media playing their role as the fourth estate of the realm. But scholars and politicians alike perceive the press as mediating factor and one of the social forces in the nation's march to maturity.

Democracy would however, only remain a mirage until the freedom of the press is guaranteed since the media or press, usually referred to as the fourth estate of the realm, remain one of the most vital channels through which the provisions made for the freedom of expression and access to information, which are seen as fundamental human rights, are guaranteed. The mass media are often seen as fulfilling the vitally important role of fourth estate, the guardians of democracy and defenders of the public interest (Osakue, 2017).

Most modern scholars would agree that the mass media should play a central role in sustaining and developing constitutional democracy: the media should present a full, fair, and accurate account of the news, they should inform and educate the general public, and they should cover a wide range of political opinions and positions (Keane, 1992). However, scholars are concerned that the mass media may no longer be playing their proper democratic role being the fourth estate of the realm.

It is based on the above background that this study aims at examining the argument as to whether the media as the fourth estate of the realm is 'real' or 'imagined'. Theoretical framework analysis and secondary data is mostly used due to the nature of the study,

The Concept of Media
The phrase Media began to be use in the 1920, the notion of mass media was generally restricted to print media up until the post Second World War, when radio, television and video were introduced. Due to development in science and technology, different types of media originated accordingly in different stages of history of the world as; Print media including books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, etc. originated from the late 15th century. Recordings including gramophone records, magnetic tapes, cassettes, cartridges, CDs, DVDs etc. originated from the late 19th century and Cinema about 1900. Radio came

into existence from about 1910 and Television find its place from about 1950, Internet from about 1990, and Mobile phones from about 2000 (Bastinade, 2008).

Media are the communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data (Livingstone & Lievrow, 2009). The term refers to components of the mass media communications industry, such as print media, publishing, the news media, photography, cinema, broadcasting (radio and television), and advertising. The news media are forms of media that focus on delivering news to a target public. These include print media (newspapers, newsmagazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and more recently the internet (online newspapers, news blogs, news videos, live news streaming etc.) (Harcup, 2016).

From the perspective of scholars who see the media as situated within the model of a pluralist liberal democracy, the mass media are often seen as fulfilling the vitally important role of fourth estate, the guardians of democracy, defenders of the public interest.

Media in this study is conceived as agents of information communicated to large groups of people through a group of corporate entities, publishers, journalists, reporters, pressmen, newscasters and others who constitute the communications industry and profession. It also includes the ability to inform, educate and entertain the populace (Abubakar & Fadeyi, 2016).

The Concept of Fourth Estate of the Realm

The term Fourth Estate refers to the press and news media both in explicit capacity of advocacy and implicit ability to frame political issues. Though it is not formally recognized as a part of a political system, it wields significant indirect social influence (Schultz, 1998). The fourth estate is seen as the established news media which contains an educated group of professional journalists.

By this description the Press is regarded to be the fourth of the traditional three estates of the Parliament namely: The Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal and the Commons. In medieval Europe, the three estates depicted the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners – each of whom sat in designated dais of the Parliament. Representing the Fourth Estate then were the press men/women who sat at the Gallery of the Parliament to cover proceedings. Each estate had a very distinct social role and a certain level of power. Although, society is far more egalitarian today, the idea of the estates of the realm became so entrenched in European society (Misbau, 2013).

The separation of power has become the construct upon which nations have been built throughout the world. Of which the media (press) is the fourth element. The purpose, 'raison d'être', of this fourth element is to act as a counterbalance, a systemically opposite force that is to report, verify and question matters of governance, public matters as well as commercial ones, conducted by the powers, we the people, have entrusted it with and bestowed upon. The fact that it is called the fourth power or estate may prelude to the importance and significance we attribute to it (Ubuntu, 2017).

Profiling the Fourth Estate of the Realm: Media and Democracy in Nigeria

From the colonial period, media operators have adopted the main tenets of the liberalist perspective to campaign against repressive government policies. Those media owners and journalists allocated the writing of the John Miltons and others in their protestations against attempts by the colonial authorities to muzzle the press (Omu: 1978). The early newspapers saw themselves as instruments of public enlightenment and mobilisation for independence. They championed the course of the colonised and passed judgement on the colonial government as the watchdog of the society. Also they provided the platform for debate and discussion. In the post-colonial period, the media have carried out these functions (Nwosu, 1996).

In general discussion, there is common agreement of private media ownership. With an even general acceptance of the media as the fourth estate of the realm, Nigerians are wont to argue that the government has no business in media ownership. It is argued that government owning media makes it exceptionally impossible for the principle of the fourth estate of the realm to be operationalized. Nwosu (1996) observed that the successes achieved in the performance of the watchdog function by the Nigerian media cannot be shared by the government-owned newspapers, radio and television houses which were more or less government lap-dogs and megaphones. This clearly shows that the media cannot be seen as the fourth estate of the realm, when they are owned and controlled by the government.

The above argument added with the reigning neoliberal orthodoxy, informed the liberalization and commercialization of broadcasting in the country and the predominance of privately owned newspapers. Though broadcasting is still predominantly owned by the government, the liberal ethos informs the discourse about their roles in the democratic process. The constitution provides an over-arching anchor for this liberal discourse (Lai, 2013).

In the course of the argument that took place during the drafting of the 1979 constitution, there was a widespread agreement on the need for a constitutional provision for freedom of the press in line with the American First Amendment. It unanimously accepted then that Nigeria should not continue with the British Westminster parliamentary model for the American President System with all its legal and institutional trappings. Though the framers of that constitution and others that followed refused to provide for such a specific provision guarantying the freedom of the Press as in the American constitution, they nonetheless acknowledged the role of the mass media (Schudson, 2011). Under the section which has now become a constant feature of subsequent constitutions (now in Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution), it is expressly stated that: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people." (FGN, 1999)

The law is explicit as regard to the fourth estate of the realm in Nigeria. Constitutionally, Section 36 (1) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of the press. It stated that: "(1) every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference". Section

39(2) guarantees that "…every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions". It suffices however to state that section 39 is not an absolute right as section 45 of the same Constitution permits its derogation "…by laws reasonably justifiable in a democratic society" (FGN, 1999).

In Section 22, the responsibility of the media to hold the government accountable to the people is defined. It provides thus: "the press, radio, television and other agencies of mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people". Section 16 gives the media the right and freedom to ensure that governments uphold good governance and "control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity" (FGN, 1999).

The implication of the law as spelt out in the Constitution is that the media has been empowered to investigate and criticize poor and corrupt leadership and promote political stability, economic prosperity and social justice. There is also the Freedom of Information Act which has been welcomed by all and sundry as a significant development for widening the space for freer flow of information, transparency and accountability in governance.

Given the above scenarios, with the laws empowering the media, ideally the media as the fourth estate of the realm should have been without doubt 'real'. The Nigerian media is constitutionally empowered to be liberal in carrying out their function as regard to safe guiding democracy. This strategically positions the media as fourth estate of the realm. In reality the Media has not been able to live up to the expectation in Nigeria, as governments' suppression using regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies, politicians and political parties control, financial inducement and related factors have made them more of a branch or an extension of the other estates of the realm.

In the midst of these gloomy pictures on the press freedom it is heartwarming to note that the judiciary, the third estate of the realm, has exhibited courage in upholding the sanctity of the constitution, at least to some commendable extent. An example of such courage was the Nigerian Press Council Act nullified by the Federal High Court. This was a law enacted to repress the press and prevent criticism of the government in power. There is also the courageous judgement handed down in the case of Nwankwo v. The State in favour of press freedom where the Court held that sections 50 and 51 of the Criminal Code on seditions are unconstitutional (Misbau, 2013).

Whilst the Nigerian media may not fully be in reality the fourth estate of the realm, especially in terms of press freedom in Nigeria, it is heartwarming and reassuring that all attempts to suppress the media have always ended up in strengthening it to the detriment of the suppressors.

Theoretical Framework
This section comprises the theoretical framework of the study, where relevant theories are

used to describe and depict perspectives of scholarly arguments on whether the media is in reality the fourth estate of the realm or just imagined.

Libertarian Theory

The liberal perspective has its origin in the medieval period in European history. It has progressed with the historical development of European societies both intellectually, economically and politically. Historically, the system of press control in Europe was authoritarian reflecting the basic authoritarian structure of society and government with its economic and religious underpinnings (Lai, 2013). However, because of changes at different levels of the society, notably economic, intellectual and the struggle for power between the rising class of commercial bourgeoisie and the declining class of landed aristocracy, and the Reformation, the authoritarian social structure gave way to liberal democracy. In the words of the scholars, Liberalism's stress on the virtues of freedom, liberty and autonomy directly and irrevocably challenged the repressive political, economic, religious and social order on which medieval society was based (Errington & Miragliotta, 2007).

The first approach which is dominant in mass communication discourse in Nigeria is derived from the liberal democratic view of the press as a "fourth estate of the realm". This has its root in a pluralist/functionalist conception of the society with analysis centering on freedom of speech and the press, media autonomy particularly from the state, among others (Curan, 2005).

This theory's perspective supports the reality of the media as the fourth estate of the realm. It shows a true distinction of the media being a 'fourth estate of the realm' rather than a 'fourth branch' of the arm of government.

Authoritarian Theory

Authoritarian theory describes that all forms of communications are under the control of the governing elite or authorities or influential bureaucrats. Authoritarians are necessary to control the media to protect and prevent the people from the national threats through any form communication (information or news). The press is an instrument to enhance the ruler's power in the country rather than any threats. The authorities have all rights to permit any media and control it by providing license to the media and make certain censorship.

If any media violate the government policies against license, then the authority has all right to cancel the license and revoke it. The governments have all right to restrict any sensitive issues from press to maintain peace and security in the nation. This perspective portrays the media as an element used by the government, thereby seen as a 'fourth branch' rather than the 'fourth estate of the realm'

Framing Theory

Framing theory was developed by a sociologist, Erving Goffman in 1974 to provide a systematic account of how expectation is used to make sense of everyday life situation and the people in them. He argued that as humans, we constantly and often radically change the way we define or typify situations, actions and other people as we move through time and

space (Baran & Davis 2010).

The media framing theory is based on the study of understanding, especially through systematic interpretation of actions and texts. This theory provides a rather "intriguing" way of assessing how media can elaborate and reinforce a dominant public culture, thereby revealing whether it is 'real' or 'imagined' as a fourth estate of the realm.

One of the most important areas of framing theory is the media research in journalism and political communication. As the media maintain a fourth estate role in democratic societies, media researchers find framing theory helpful to analyze the imbalances and underlying power structures that mediate political issues. It helps to also detect journalistic bias in political issues (Encyclopedia of Communication Theory, 2009).

Reality of the Fourth Estate of the Realm Limitations in Nigeria

The fourth estate of the realm is not yet a reality in Nigeria, irrespective of the efforts and sacrifices made by media professionals. According to Fakoya (2010), currently, the Nigerian mass media are one "hotbed of corrupt and sharp practices." He describes the function of Nigerian journalists as centering around "collecting brown envelopes in order to write stories ruining the reputation of otherwise innocent people". For him, the Nigerian media have always been a corrupt body, with the journalists being a reflection of Nigeria's corrupt state.

Musa (1996) observed that the media can help in attaching importance or unimportance to an issue by the frequency with which the issue is covered by the media. The media are labeled the watchdog of the society because of the role of the media is to arm citizens with adequate, quality information so that they can make rational choice in exercising their franchise. (Musa, 1996). He adds that the Nigerian mass media are not presently exercising their role as the fourth estate of the realm due to reasons such as: influence of ownership and control, lack of commitment to professional ethics, giving of more priority to their pockets at the expense of the profession. He believes that these reasons have aided in "sedating the dog" of the Press.

Similarly, Akpan, Ering and Olofu-Adeoye (2013) are of the view that the reasons why the media in Nigeria are presently not functioning in their full capacity as the fourth estate of the realm. Such reasons also include: poor remuneration, high level of corruption in the media, lack of trained journalists and decline in professionalism. For them, the media as the fourth estate of the realm are "susceptible to manipulation positively and otherwise, regardless of time and space."

Ndibe (2011) insists that Nigeria's fourth estate of the realm is bedeviled by the "same pathologies that have afflicted Nigerian politics and other sectors of the nation's life including its law enforcement and academia." In other words, the problems that can be found in the Nigerian mass media are a reflection of the problems prevalent in the Nigerian society. This view depicts the fall of intellectual discourse among "supposed" media professionals and the catastrophic devaluation of moral currency in the profession have in no small way

contributed to the decline in Nigeria performing its role as the fourth estate of the realm. Rather than engaging in falsification in order to claim the cheap money given to them by corrupt politicians, Ndibe believes that Nigerian journalists ought to commit to the service of Nigerian society by exposing the impunity of those who "mis-shape" and malnourish Nigeria as a country.

There also exist numerous laws that have the capacity of undermining and have indeed undermined the constitutional provisions of the law on the freedom of the media. A number of laws (Official Secrets Act, 1962; Press Registration Act, 1933; Newspaper Act, 1917 etc.) including the unlimited powers of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Nigerian Press Council, both of which are Federal Government agencies can, if inappropriately exercised as has often been the case, undermine the establishment and unrestricted operations of the independent media (Lanre, Suleimanu & Oyinkansola, 2014).

Nigeria has had inconsistent degrees of freedom of the press over its tumultuous history. There has generally been a miscellany of voices in the media; however, as the government changed hands often and in different circumstances, the media voices that were in support of a leader would find themselves without a voice as a replacement emerged. At some points, newspapers and magazines were outlawed entirely due to their criticism of government authorities. Unfortunately, since the return of democracy to Nigeria in 1999 and hence the fourth republic, the repression and suppression of the media has not subsided (Misbau, 2013).

Seemingly concerned by the evidently increasing attack on the media by the Goodluck Jonathan administration, the United States told the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan to make certain press freedom. As broadly reported in the media, the U.S made its position at a public forum through its Consular General in Nigeria, Jeffery Hawkins, who was reported to have stated in Lagos this past Wednesday at a programme to celebrate Joe Okei-Odumakin, who was honoured with the International Women of Courage Awards by the U.S. government for her Commitment towards entrenchment of democracy and the respect for human rights, that "The freedom of the press is crucial. Nigerian vibrant media should be allowed to operate freely" (Misbau, 2013).

According to the US Consular General, Mr. Hawkin's proclamation, which came at a time the Nigerian government is intensifying its iron fist approach at silencing media organisations across the country. Four journalists from the Leadership Newspapers were detained for refusing to name the source of a story published in their newspaper which alleges that the President is planning to truncate the merger of opposition political parties in the country. It is disturbing also that under proclaimed constitutional democracy journalists have been charged with criminal sedition for publishing stories in line with their responsibilities (Osakue, 2017).

Also in a manner suggestive of an unfortunate throw back into the military era, media houses have been shut down by our democratic governments on account of publishing news that embarrassed governments. Indeed, the closure of Channels Television and the Insider Magazine in the not so distant past clearly demonstrated the fact that the media is not safe

from repression and suppression even under proclaimed democratic government.

While the level of media-political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Seymour-Ure, 1974) has greatly been reduced one can still find evidences of media owners and journalists who are more or less active functionaries and foot soldiers of the main political parties. Some journalists in their writings act as publicists for these parties and individuals. Evidences of external control can also be attained, however covert and surreptitious of media control. Politicians and political parties use the media intervene in the political process e.g. to mobilize support and/or advance some political causes. The point is that there is still some element of instrumentalisation in the relationship between journalism and the state/political structure in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it is evident that in a country as Nigeria which practice constitutional democracy, ideally the media should be the fourth estate of the realm in order to checkmate indiscriminate, unproductive, unprofessional, unethical and ill-minded actions of the other estates of the realm. In reality, the media is yet to attain the status of the fourth estate of the realm, as various challenges be-devilling it have made it become an extension or branch of the other estates of the realm.

Rethinking Media as the Fourth Estate of the Realm: Opportunity for Nigerian Democracy

Recent years, have witnessed some developments that have led to a transformation in the media industry. These developments are also very significant in the capacity of the media as watchdogs of the society. The media are an indispensable agent of development in any nation given their invaluable contribution to governance as a watchdog and partner in progress with other arms of government. In a developing country like Nigeria, the mass media have been instrumental to the delivery and consolidation of the current democratic experience.

For democracy to thrive and be consolidated, there is a need for the fourth estate of the realm to fully take its place and play its role as the fourth arm in the separation of power. The media as the fourth estate of the realm should be seen as a partner in the process of nation building. Liberal theorists pointed out that the existence of a free and independent media within each nation or political system is essential to the process of democratization as they contribute to the right of freedom of expression, thought and conscience and the strengthening of the responsiveness and accountability of Governments to all citizens bringing about good governance and human development.

The role of giving accurate information to the Nigerian citizenry is one of the major roles of the Nigerian Mass Media. The role of the mass media as the "fourth estate" of the realm implies that the media is also a lawmaker in itself (McQuail, 2010). Assuming the law, leadership and society provides supportive circumstances for the media, there is assurance of positive benefits to the nation, people and leaders.

The major struggle of the media ushered-in the passage of Freedom of Information Act into law. Hence, the idea behind the aforementioned laws are to protect vital government

information, but the level of secrecy is so ridiculous that some classified government files contain ordinary information like newspaper cuttings which are already in the public domain. So impenetrable is the veil of secrecy that government departments withhold information from each other under the appearance of official secret legislation. There are also instances where civil servants refuse to give the National Assembly documentation after being asked to do so. Effect of this is that journalists are deprived of access to information that is critical for accurate reporting and unraveling the web of corruption in Nigeria. These issues encouraged Edetaen Ojo along with other relevant Non-Governmental Organizations to initiate the bill that has become Freedom of Information Act (Osakue, 2017).

It will amount to the highest form of naivety to undermine the role of mass media in the revelation of corruption taking place in the government ministry, department, agencies and institutions across the country. It thus exposed the jumbo pay of politicians. The media had captured and analyzed the declaration of the Governor of Central Bank over the quota and earnings of law makers in the National Assembly. So, democratic rule energizes the mass media to exercise their roles. The media has been playing active role in Nigeria democracy. They have through exposure of abuses, forced the resignation of a former Speaker of House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Buhari and former President of the Senate, Chief Evans Enwerem (Olukotun, 2000).

Mass media in Nigeria could be described as the most robust media in Africa continent. Today, with the advent of technological development under democratic rule, Nigeria now have media operating twenty-four hours like their counterpart in the developed countries. This is why Olukotun posits that Nigeria has the biggest and most virile press community in Africa followed by South Africa and Kenya (Olukotun, 2000). More so, print media like daily newspapers are available in Nigeria throughout the days of the week including Sunday contrary to what occurs in some other Africa countries. Democracy in Nigeria has inspired the establishment of more privately-owned media houses across the country unlike in the past. The democratic experience had energized broadcasting regulatory authorities like Nigeria Broadcasting Commission and the Nigeria Press Council.

The realization and acceptance of the media as the fourth estate of the realm will go a long way in helping nation building by abating corrupt practices and misconducts from the other three estates of the realm. It will also better create a balancing element in the separation of power that is totally without control.

Conclusions

The Nigerian media, particularly the newspaper sector remain as highly political as ever. However, this political profile is not directly inherent in the professionalism of the journalists as such but on outcome of the country's political structure and ethnic configuration. The Nigerian media is more or less an instrument of power constituencies in the country in grim struggle for power and privileges. While the main arguments and principles of the liberal narrative on the mass media are still influential and continue to hold sway, there is no doubt they have become inadequate and short through with many holes. It is therefore obvious that the media is the fourth estate of the realm; howbeit it is still struggling

with identified circumstances as expatiated in the various discourse that continue to exert suppression, control, manipulation and make it an extension or branch of other estates of the realm.

Based on the above revelation, it is recommended that the government, state and those in authority fully recognize and comply with the laws as stipulated in Section 22, Section 36(1) and Section 39(2) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution which empowers the media the capacity as the fourth estate of the realm. In addition, the media should fully perform their responsibilities as the fourth estate of the realm as obligated, with professionalism, ethics and selflessness.

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GENDER ROLE PERCEPTION AMONG SOCIAL MEDIA USERS: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATES IN IMO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The social media provide users an online platform that allows them to communicate widely and even to virtually manage others' impression of the user and also express gender identities. Social media contents also help to understand more about gender roles and the way people present themselves. Thus, the focus of this study is on the perception of gender roles by undergraduate students of Imo State University. A sample size of 373 was drawn from the University's estimated undergraduates' population of 26,000. The study adopted qualified volunteer sampling technique and used questionnaire to collect data. The major finding is that social media users exhibit stereotypical perceptions of the relationship between men and women. The authorities should promote an active and visible mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the social media.

Keywords: Gender, gender role, masculinity, femininity.

INTRODUCTION

Gender roles are the realities of human existence and culture. They prescribe behaviour, attitudes, expectations and characteristics associated with being male and female. Gender identity and roles are unarguably significant parts of everyday life, shaping how people make sense of themselves and their relationships (Sebani, 2017). According to Wood (1994), of the many influences of how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and are among the most powerful. All forms of media communicate images of sexes. Experts aver that the mass media are a tool in promoting the stereotypes of gender roles (UNESCO, 2014; Craig, 2003).

The mass media have a dominant influence in distinguishing the roles of men and women. In packaging news content, entertainment, advertisements and other consumables, the mass media are unavoidably gendered and are engaged in socializing children into customary stereotypes of gender roles. Essay UK (2019) argues that in mass media advertisements, sex stereotypes tend to be at its greatest. There is a general agreement that mediated communication acts as very significant agents of interaction, cooperation with the family unit and with peers and contributes to ensuring that gender roles are effectively shaped.

Information communication technology has become a key factor in shaping the modern world, revolutionizing the way we seek and receive information. Citing Gates (2000),

Nworgu (2010) submits that digital tools offer a magnified ability to think, the ability to articulate our thoughts and the ability to work together to act on those thoughts. Indeed, virtual global families have developed based on the new media concept. According to Nworgu (2010:1), "Friendship is no longer developed based on local geography but rather, people are getting closer like in a family through digital world of interactive media, based on shared needs and interest, rather than geographical location".

Though a subjective way of communication, Henitzsch and Hanusch (2012), observe that social media have become the trend for every institution. Gender display is a common feature of social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on. Rose, Mackey-Kellis, Shyles, Barry, Biagini, Hart and Jack (2012) submit that social media website contents help us understand more about gender roles and the way people present themselves.

However, most studies on media influence on gender roles focus on the traditional media (Craig, 2003). Beyond speculations, however, are social media gendered? Do male and female users engage in different types of social media? How do male and female consumers of social media perceive gender roles? Have the social media played a significant role in the gender role perception of users? Do social media reinforce existing gender stereotypes?

These have become pertinent questions since recent studies indicate that a growing number of people are turning to the internet to search for a number of information for diverse range of decisions.

In line with the questions raised, this study sought to examine social media users' perception of gender roles; find out whether social media alter stereotypical gender perception of users, and; to ascertain, whether social media can be used to effect behaviour change in young Nigerians towards gender equality.

Gender role and gender ideology

Gender role refers to sets of expectations that are attributed to sex. According to the International Encydopedia of the Social Behavioural Sciences (2001), gender role is a broad term referring to the behaviours, attitudes, and traits that are associated with being male or female. Harcourt (2016) writes:

> Gender roles are cultural and personal. They determine how males and
> females should think, speak, dress and interact within the context of
> society. Learning plays a role in this process of shaping gender roles.
> These gender schemas are deeply embedded cognitive frameworks
> regarding what defines masculine and feminine.

Ayorinde (2015) posits that gender roles vary in different societies. He observers that while men and women have equal rights and opportunities in some, men dominate in others and rarely do women control the administration of a community. According to Cottingham (2017), gender roles have an impact on how and whether men and women have access to essential resources such as education, information, disposable income and health services. Girls, are often at a disadvantage in the gender gap in education.

Gender-role ideology refers to one's attitude and beliefs about the proper roles of men and women. It, in other words, informs how an individual judges the appropriateness of behaviours of men and women in a given society. According to Ungaretti and Etchezahar (2013:40), it is a historical construction whose meaning is derived from each culture or "the substrate upon which different meanings are given to the sexes. In this way societies pigeonhole women and men into stereotypes that seem immovable, building belief systems about masculinity-femininity and in consequence, the type of activities and distribution of occupations that are appropriate for each sex". People who entertain a traditional gender role ideology believe that women should mind home responsibilities while men should be the breadwinners of the family.

Masculinity and Femininity Characteristics
Kimmel (2001) relates masculinity and femininity to the social roles, behaviours and meanings ascribed to men and women in any society at any time. Masculinity and femininity are structured and expressed through such other identities as class, race, age and sexuality. Rose et al (2012) enumerated masculinity–femininity stereotypical gender traits across 25 nations, including.

Table 1 Gender Stereotypes across 25 Nations

Masculine Traits	Feminine Traits
Adventurous	Affectionate
Active	Attractive
Aggressive	Curious
Autocratic	Dependent
Courageous	Dreamy
Daring	Emotional
Dominant	Fearful
Enterprising	Gentle
Forceful	Independent
Independent	Sensitive
Progressive	Sentimental
Robust	Sexy
Rude	Soft-hearted
Severe	Submissive
Stern	Superstitious
Strong	Weak

Source. Williams, J.E., & Best, D.L. (1990). *Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Multination Study* (Cross-Cultural Research and Methodology Series 8) (Revised ed.). Newbury Park: Sage Publications, Inc.

Mass Media and Gender Equality

The potential of the mass media to promote gender equality and diversity in all spheres was highlighted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. All governments met there to discuss gender equality issues. Then all stakeholders were called upon to join forces to combat "stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media" (UNESCO, 2014).

Empirical Review

Onwumechili and Bedeau used thematic analysis to study gender in Nigerian football media narratives from 2010 to 2015. The concern of the study was the issue of inequality between media reporting of female and male football in Nigeria. The researchers did not focus their study on the quality of the game but inequality bound in sexism, discrimination, stereotyping and the continued traces of masculinity attached to female football in Nigerian newspapers. They found four key themes that resonated across the three newspapers: negligence, poor attention to women league, lack of parental support for girl footballers and diminishing of achievement of women football. The thematic analysis pointed to four major themes that described how the newspapers framed female football; quite different from how male football was framed.

Bell and Milic (2002) content-analyzed 827 Australian magazine advertisements from 1997-1998 to determine the presence of stereotypical gender roles. The conclusion of their study is that males were more frequently portrayed in narrative ways (as actors) than females. Women, according to that study, were more likely than men to "behave or express emotion". Their findings suggest stereotypical gender traits of men and women similar to the findings of other researchers.

Goffman's (1976) analysis of advertisements found that women were more likely to be portrayed performing submissive or appeasing gestures (such as bending one knee inward), sinding, clowning and acting less seriously (cited in Bell and Milic, 2002:205). The above studies suggest that gender is one of the variables that mediated communication can consciously shape to suit patriarchal stereotype. Similarly, some researchers have argued that the computer-mediated environment is a "gender-bending world" (Witmer and Katzman, 1997).

As the social media grow in popularity, so does concern for their impact on impression management, relationship and behaviour of today's youth. Stramo (2008) used a qualitative study to observe how males and females presented their profiles in Facebook. He found out that women used their profile pictures more than men for the purpose of impression. This, he interpreted is in order to be seen as attractive. Rose et al (2012) studied the impact of gender on social media images study in 2012 their aim was to assess how gender performed in self-created digital images in social media. They found that traits prominent in pictures of males were active, dominant and independent; traits prominent for females were attractiveness and dependent. Their findings conformed to gender stereotypes found in prior researches regarding stereotypical gender traits displayed in media.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on social role theory. As Ridgeway (2001) submits, Eagly's (1987) social role theory argues that widely shared gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labour that characterizes a society. According to role theory, people follow unwritten social and cultural rules and norms in behaviour, depending on different and often predictable social identities and situations in which people find themselves. Therefore, gender shapes how people make sense of themselves and their social relationships.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey design, given the effectiveness of survey in attitudinal and behavioural studies. The population of this study comprised all undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri, who are registered/users of at least one social media site. The age range of the undergraduate students' population of the university falls mostly between 16 and 25 years. The undergraduate students' population of the University is estimated at 26,000. At least, half of this number is estimated to be registered users of, at least, one social media site; thus 13,000.

The sample size was calculated using Wimmer and Dominic online sample size calculator (2019), (www.rogerwimmer.com) and it gave a sample size of 373. Data were collected using a set of questionnaire. The researchers developed the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Quantitative data analysis technique was used in this study. The data obtained using simple questionnaire were coded into frequency tables and then presented using tables and percentages.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

The study distributed 375 copies of the questionnaire, using face-to-face approach to ensure a high return rate and 369 (98.4%) were returned. From the returned number, 19 were improperly filled and 10 failed the lie detection test; a total of 29 were canceled. Therefore, 340 (91%) were analyzed.

Respondents' Perception of Gender Roles												
	SA	%	A	%	Not sure	%	D	%	SD	%	Total	%
Women are affectionate	150	44	119	35	37	11	20	58	14	4.2	340	100
Women are attractive	133	39	166	34	37	11	38	11	16	5	340	100
Males are the aggressive sex	199	35	102	30	37	11	48	14	34	10	340	100
Independence is a masculine trait	180	53	72	21	34	16	28	8.4	26	7.6	340	100
Males are domineering	194	57	78	23	26	7.5	36	12.2	6	1.7	340	100
Females play supportive roles	136	40	105	31	43	12.6	37	11	19	5.4	340	100
Females are submissive	139	41	95	28	43	12.6	26	7.4	37	11	340	100
Men are the family breadwinner	170	50	68	20	34	10	34	10	34	10	340	100
Men are more enterprising than women	105	31	101	29.6	54.4	16	46	13.4	34	10	340	100

From the result presented above, the perception of majority of the respondents is that being aggressive is a masculine trait. Respondents see men as domineering, independent and more enterprising than women and also as the breadwinner for the family. Not differing from stereotypical gender role perception, respondents perceive females as attractive, self-supportive, submissive and affectionate.

The result also indicates a gender role ideology or social construct which derives from the Nigerian cultural environment. Following this social construct, men and women are cast into social pigeonholes which seem immovable. Although social media and the internet have altered almost every aspect of life, social media have not altered users' stereotypical gender perception; thus addressing one of the research objectives.

Does the use of social media influence user's gender behaviour?

Options	Frequency		Total	Percentage
	Male	Females		
YES	62	79	141	41.4
No	66	95	161	47.4
Not sure	23	15	38	11.2
	151	**189**	**340**	**100**

The above table answers question on the use of social media influence user's gender behavior. Almost half of the respondents (47.4%) doubt that social media influence their

gender behaviour. More females (25.2%) than males (18%) believe that social media positively affects their gender behaviour. This finding indicates that social media may not be very effective in gender role modification of young Nigerians. It rather agrees with the findings of the Gender Equality Commission's (2014), posit that the media play an active role in perpetuating gender discrimination.

This finding indicates adequate representation of females in the use of social media. This contradicts the common belief that women are under-represented in media; which is said is to be responsible, among the factors, for creating gender inequalities (Gender Equity Commission, 2014).

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that social media users retain societal stereotypes perception of masculinity-femininity roles. In other words, social media do not alter users' perception of gender roles. By reason of the foregoing, social media may not be a very effective tool in modifying the attitude of users in achieving gender equity; at least, not in its present form.

Social role theory rests on the supposition that social structure ascribes different roles to men and women. All the agents of socialization ingrain in children their appropriate behaviours, attitudes and overall culture. As children develop, they acquire a deeply-rooted gender ideology or schema and often times, mediated communication reinforces society's gender role stereotypes.

Recommendations

Going by the rapid growth of the social media, this study recommends more attention of parents, governments, religious bodies and educational institutions on social media. The authorities must find a way to engage social media users in positive and developmental contents.

The authorities should promote an active and visible mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the social media. For gender mainstreaming of social media, there is a need to train the respondents on more equitable gender roles

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ENUGU RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF FACEBOOK IN ADVERTISING INDOMIE INSTANT NOODLES

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Abstract

Facebook is one of the leading social media platforms with billions of users. This explains the reason why advertisers resort to use it to get wider reach. To this end, this study sought to find out how residents of Enugu metropolis perceive Indomie Instant Noodles adverts on Facebook. The technological determinism theory was used as the theoretical framework of the study. The researchers used the survey research method. The population of the study comprised the residents of Enugu metropolis, which is 968,300. A sample size of 384 was determined, using the Australian Online Calculator. The multistage sampling technique was used in selectin respondents for the study. Findings revealed that 34.3% of respondents were of the view that the high purchase and consumption of Indomie Instant Noodles is not as a result of the Facebook Ads on Indomie Instant Noodles to which they were exposed. Findings further revealed that 41% of respondents were of the view that they see nothing wrong in the use of Facebook for Indomie Instant Noodles Ads. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that Indomie Instant Noodles Ads on Facebook should be more persuasive and appealing so that the tendency of influencing purchase from Facebook users will be high.

Keywords: *Public, Perception, Advertising, Facebook, Indomie instant noodles.*

Introduction

In recent times, social media have redefined the way people view the platform. From just a means of social interaction, producers of goods and services are beginning to view the social media as a viable means to reach the people in real-time. Almost all dot.com companies are online today to create easy means of information availability to their customers and prospective customers. In doing this, organisations and individuals have crated social media handles as a means of providing information and advertising their products and services. The social media, no doubt provided ample opportunities for brands to engage with consumers, one method being through interactive advertising (Akpan & Nwankpa, 2015). Recently, advertising has taken a digital twist. Some studies suggest that advertising is a force which moves people up in series of stages from being aware, like, prefer and decide to buy product (Ertugan, 2016 citing Lavidge, 1961). As it stands, it might seem subtle, but the social media is creating dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process as well as influencing general opinions and attitude formation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

The way the social media is move thing closer to consumers, companies that have not seen the gains therein may be left out. Almost everyone within the youth category is on the social media, either as passive or active users. There is an assumption that in no little time, social media might become the primary means of advertising goods and services to the people (Yuanxian & Pittana, 2011). This is not unconnected to the fact that goods and services which were primarily advertised on conventional media are now being advertised on social media (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012).

According to Lua (2019), Facebook, is the leading social media with 2.23 billion users, hence the top of the priority for marketers as a result of its popularity and widespread use by people. For this reason, advertisers embrace the advertising features of Facebook, which include creating events, fan pages, games, applications and using best practices to direct users to their Facebook pages. The vast use of Facebook around the globe has made it a new and important advertising platform, where businesses place their ads to reach their prospective customers. As Vahl (2011) argues Facebook is facilitating the manufacturers and service providers to reach customers of specific age group and interest. Growing Facebook based advertising is perhaps an indication that it is becoming an important source of business presentation and the firms are taking Facebook advertisement as a useful strategy to attract customers. Among the companies that have seem the advantages of Facebook in advertising is the Indomie Nigeria company. This company has several noodle brands and has create Facebook handle called Indomie (https://web.facebook.com/search/top/?q=indomie%20noodles). The company also has a handle called the Indomie Instant Noodle (https://web.facebook.com/indomieinstantnoodle), which has over 9,014 people following it. This handle is different from the instant noodle group called the Indomie Instant noodle club (https://web.facebook.com/groups/1089431354555062). The Indomie instant club has over 720 members. All these are avenue for the advert of Indomie products and the Indomie Instant Noodle brand. The Indomie Instant Noodle is a highly celebrated advert with different advert designs on Facebook. There are adverts on: "Taste is the difference" with mother and daughter at the centre of the advert; "Indomie BBNaija, who will win", which focused on the BBNaija reality TV show; "Spot Indomie on this match", which is a football based advert; "Indomie Team Up with Mum", where mothers create talented arts or products using Indomie packs; and the "Indomie giveaway", where Infinix phones are given out to people (https://web.facebook.com/indomieinstantnoodle). All these adverts are on Facebook to further persuade customers to remain loyal to the product and also win the patronage of prospective customers.

Statement of the Problem

Facebook is certainly a medium of advertising because it is believed that half of the world's population dominates Facebook accounts (Su, 2010). Not minding the gains of Facebook, Akpan and Nwankpa (2015) citing Water (2010, p.35) aver that there is still some dark side to internet advertising, which include fake claims in adverts as a result of lack of censorship. Based on this, some people seem not to pay attention to these adverts or even click on them. With this type of problem in mind, one might worry on what becomes the fate of Indomie Instant Noodle adverts on Facebook. This study, therefore, sought to find out residents of Enugu metropolis perception of the use of Facebook in advertising Indomie Instant Noodles.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to;

1. find out Enugu residents' exposure to Facebook adverts of Indomie Instant Noodles,

2. ascertain the views of Enugu residents on Facebook adverts of Indomie Instant Noodles, and

3. examine the influence of Facebook adverts of Indomie Instant Noodles on the buying behaviour of Enugu residents.

Empirical Studies

Akoja, Odibo, and Kareem (2019) did a study on Indomitable Advertisements on Noodles preference on findings show that 64.8% craved for Indomie noodles after watching the advertisement due to its appeals. It concludes that the indomitable advertisement influenced their perception and preference for Indomie noodles.

French and Story (2004) studied the effects of television food advertising on children food behaviour and found that children exposed to advertising will choose advertised food products at significantly higher rates than children who were not exposed. In addition, it was discovered that children's exposure to food television advertising increases the number of attempts children's make to influence food purchases their parents buy while purchase requests for specific brands or categories of food products reflect product advertising frequencies. In another study,

Chernin (2008) focused on the effects of food marketing on children's preferences by testing the moderating roles of age and gender. The study found that exposure to food marketing significantly increased children's preferences for advertised products. While it is often argued that younger children are more persuasible than older children, the results indicated that age did not moderate the effects of ad exposure on product preference. This suggests that knowledge of persuasive intent did not influence children's responses to the advertisements.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on The Technology Determinism Theory. The term technology determinism theory was propounded Thorstein Veblen. The theory explains how technology drives social change. In essence, technology is seen as a force of cultural change in a given society (Communication Theory, 2019). Langdon Winner, in expanding on the technology determinism theory, proposed two hypotheses namely: 1) The technology of a given society will fundamentally influence the ways the society orders its things. 2) Change in technology definitely leads to change in the society (Communication Theory, 2019). The central meaning of this theory is that technology possess the power to change the way things are originally done in a given society.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that social media such as Facebook has affected the way adverts are done before the advent of new media. Before now, adverts are placed on conventional media (radio, TV, magazine, newspapers and outdoor advertising) as a way of capturing the attention of the people. But, technological inventions like social media (Facebook), have altered these conventional means of advertising to meet people even in

their private corners, through their cell phone. The new normal now is that individuals, organisations and government institutions place adverts on social media platforms as part of the viable means of reaching the people. This is certainly a change in the social order of things.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research method. The survey method is the most appropriate for this study because it elicits the views of respondents on adverts of Indomie Instant Noodles. The data collection instrument used for this study is the questionnaire. Using Australian online sample size calculator, a sample size of 384 was drawn from a population of 968,300 (NPC projected population of Enugu Metropolis). The multi-stage and purposive techniques were used to select respondents for the study within Enugu metropolis, which is made up of Enugu South, Enugu East and Enugu North. The questionnaire instrument was used as the instrument for data collection. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of instrument and the result showed 0.970, which indicates a high level of consistency. The questionnaire was administered with the help of three research assistants. Analysis of data were presented in a table using simple percentages and numbers.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Given that 384 respondents were the sample size of this study, 384 copies of questionnaire were administered. Out of 384 copies of the questionnaire administered, 378 copies were returned. This translates to a 98% return rate. Therefore, analyses were done based on the returned copies of questionnaire. Findings revealed that respondents were made up of 58.2% male and 41.8%. An age bracket of 16 to 60 was used and study revealed that majority of respondents was between the ages of 15 to 45 which amount to 76%. Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of respondents was educated with a 69% accounting for it. While majority of respondents were artisans, civil servants and students with 84% accounting for it.

Table 1: Respondents view on exposure to Indomie Instant Noodles Ads on Facebook

Questions	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1. Respondents' views on the exposure to Indomie Instant Noodles Ads	Yes	378	100%
	No	-	-
	Can't say	-	-
2. Respondents' views on the frequency of exposure to Facebook Indomie Instant Noodles Ads	Once a day	184	48.7
	Twice a day	59	15.6
	3 – 5 times daily	26	6.9
	Twice in a week	54	14.3
	Once a week	24	6.3
	Sparingly	31	8.2
	Total	**378**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Data analysis revealed that 100% of the respondents were exposed to Indomie Instant Noodles Ads on Facebook. It was also revealed 48.7% of the respondents were exposed to adverts on Indomie Instant Noodles on Facebook at least once a day. This implies that residents in Enugu Metropolis are exposed to Indomie Instant Noodles Ads on daily basis. This indicates that exposure to this adverts is high.

Table 2: Respondents' views on the use of Facebook in advertising Indomie Instant Noodles

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Appropriate	58	15.3
Very wrong	70	18.5
Not wrong	155	41
Can't say	95	25.1
Total	**378**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

The above table revealed that 41% of the respondents were of the view that they see nothing wrong in the use of Facebook for the advert of Indomie Instant Noodles. This means that majority of the respondents studied see nothing wrong in using Facebook for Indomie Instant Noodles ads and are not worried with the way it appears on their page.

Table 3: Respondents' views on whether consumers buy Indomie Noodles base on Facebook adverts of Indomie Instant Noodles

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	85	22.4
Agree	68	17.9
Disagree	130	34.3
Strongly disagree	95	25.1
Total	**378**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2019

Analysis of data from table 3 above revealed that 34.3% of respondents were of the opinion that their purchasing decision is not based on their exposure to Facebook ads of Indomie Instant Noodles. This means that buying behaviour of consumers is not predicated on Facebook ads on Indomie Instant Noodle.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that all the respondents are aware and exposed to Indomie Instant Noodles ads on Facebook. Findings also showed that 48.7% of respondents are frequency exposed (once a day) to Facebook Indomie Instant Noodles Ads. This corroborate

the findings of French and Story (2004) where they asserted that children exposed to advertising will choose advertised food products at significantly higher rates than children who were not exposed. They further noted that children's exposure to food television advertising increases the number of attempts children's make to influence food purchases their parents buy while purchase requests for specific brands or categories of food products reflect product advertising frequencies. Also, in consonance with this study finding Chernin (2008) noted that exposure to food marketing significantly increased children's preferences for advertised products. However, (Gaber, 2012) in his study found that the value of advertising is decreased when there is a high frequency of exposure. This finding is in agreement with the diffusion innovation theory because if the new innovation (Facebook) that is introduced is not accepted, people will not be exposed to it in the first place.

Communicating finding of this study, it was revealed that majority of the respondents make use of social media platforms. It was also revealed that 41% of respondents were of the view that they see nothing wrong in the use of Facebook for Indomie Instant Noodles ads. It is quite clear from their views that like every other advertising platform, Facebook can serve equal purpose of advertising with the possibility of reaching a great number of people. This gives credence to Champoux, Durgee and McGlynn, (2012) assertion that as Facebook has become the most-visited website site, it has become the first location for a company looking to modernize its communication strategy. In consistence with this finding Barnes and Hair (2012) revealed that the more the consumers like a website, the more positive the attitude they have toward its ads. Though, Kornias and Halalau (2012) in their study maintained that when users see advertising as troubling, invasive, disturbing, inferring, distracting, intrusive, forced, or obstructive and interfering with their goal oriented tasks for which they are present on Facebook, the ads are perceived as being annoying

Analysis of findings showed that 34.3% of respondents are of the opinion that their purchasing decision is not based on their exposure to Facebook ads on Indomie Instant Noodles. This means that buying behaviour of consumers is not influenced by Facebook ads on Indomie Noodle. In as much as respondents are frequently exposed to Facebook ads on Indomie Noodles it does not necessarily mean they can be influenced by it as the study confirmed. In line with this finding Chernin (2008) study noted that knowledge of persuasive intent did not influence children's responses to the advertisements on consumable products. Supporting this finding Anyanwu (2005, as cited in Agu & Ogbuji, 2008), in their study observed that there are internal and external forces at work that cause the individual to want certain products prefer specific brands and stores over others. The internal factors are consumer needs, motives, perception, attitude and learning. The external determinants include; family, social, & cultural influences, business, economic factors. This simply means that there are factors responsible for the purchasing decision of Indomie Noodles by consumers other than Facebook ads on Indomie Noodles. However, contrary to this study finding Yuanxin and Pittana (2011) in their study, noted that Facebook, which is a part of the internet, is full of information. However, the quality of the information placed on Facebook might have an influence on the perceptions of companies and their products or services in the advertisements of the Facebook users. Therefore, information would be positively correlated with Facebook users' attitude. In contrast with the diffusion of innovation theory the new technology which is Facebook which ads can be placed may not necessarily be seen

or adopted as a key variable that can influence consumers buying decision on Indomie Noodles.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The ever-changing landscape of advertising is having huge impact in the way advertisers decide to reach their target audience. There has been a paradigm shift in advertising from the use of traditional media platforms to the new media of social networking sites. This paradigm shift is occasioned by the emergence of Internet technology. Popular amongst these social media platforms is the Facebook with billions of people already active users. The characteristic feature of Facebook has made it irresistible for advertisers, companies, organizations who would want to better their lot or fortune to ignore the strong pull.

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that Indomie Instant Noodles advertiser should intensify their advertising campaigns so as to improve the exposure level of Facebook users to Indomie Instant Noodles ads. Also, in as much as respondents see nothing wrong with Indomie Instant Noodles ads being placed on Facebook, advertisers should take into cognizance the content of advertising message so that consumers' perception will not be affected negatively. Indomie Instant Noodles ads in Facebook should be more persuasive and appealing so that the tendency of influencing purchase from Facebook users will be high.

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ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the use of digital public relations in Southeast tertiary institutions and the challenges encountered in the use of these digital tools. This work was anchored on Media Ecology theory. This study adopted the in-depth interview and observational research methods. The institutions selected include: Imo State University, Owerri (IMSU); Federal University of Technology (FUTO); Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki (EBSU); and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK). The population and sample size of this study was 20 public relations personnel from these selected institutions. The data gotten from the in-depth interview was presented using discussion building technique. Findings got from the study showed that the selected institutions use digital gadgets in the public relations endeavour. Further findings stated that the tertiary institutions public relation departments are confronted with some challenges like high cost of data, the presence of employed analogue personnel, finance, insufficient and less productive technologies; student usage of subscription. The study concludes that southeast tertiary institutions in Nigeria use digital technologies in their day to day public relations practices.

Keywords: Assess, Digital, Public Relations, Practices, and Corporations**.**

Introduction

Since the advent of the internet in 1960's by the US defense department. It was used as an extension of the ARPANET, then grew to be named NSFNET. With time the internet spread rapidly across the globe and grew to one million users in 1992 (Giovannetti, Kagami& Tsuji, 2003). The Internet has become a useful tool for impact on lives. The Internet has been used extensively to broaden the digital sphere. It has been used for accessing instantaneous information and communicating across geographical boundaries. Due to its characteristics of speed, efficiency and economy, the Internet began to be applied increasingly across industries ranging from retail and banking to the media (Giovannetti et al.,2003).

In past years public relations has grown as a body which focuses on balancing work-life. The industry as well seen the rise of the social media which is now used daily in public relation

practices as it is strategic, efficient and cost-effective. The practice of public relations is one such profession that has considerably been affected by online revolution (Wickman, 2015)**.** The new technologies have therefore made the job of public relation practitioners very effective, interesting, easy, cheaper, faster, more reliable and perhaps most profitable. Social media is an extension of traditional word of mouth networks, which is always the most effective tool of disseminating information and with the enablement of technology; the social media allows anyone with internet connection to access and voice through the social media (Sajithra, &Rajindra, 2013). PR practitioners have re-examined the traditional communication methods and consider how they may apply their work to the online world through the common use of social media and other digital media.

The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has brought tremendous innovations in all spheres of human endeavours. The landscape of communications industry has undergone a major shift over the years due to this innovations taking place in technology. Social media in the society is getting stronger day by day where the public's are no longer passive in receiving information from traditional media since social media allows the public's to have more control of what they read, hear and watch (Mclennan, & Howell, 2010). The Internet is a computer mediated communication (CMC) network that enables consumers to have unprecedented information and power. A collaboration by Holtz (2002) and Lattimore, (2004), has argued that institutions now operate in an information economy as opposed to an industrial one, and this causes a change in the traditional public relations practices that were rooted in a top-down approach. Southeast tertiary institutions are not left out in providing a good informative image for their institutions.

Initially, Public Relation agencies have been into media releases, client management and media relations. With new media and digital inventions, public relations practices have moved from the conventional practices to a world of digitalization therefore giving birth to the world of Digital Public Relations practices (Nwafor, 2010).

As a result of the Internet, people across the globe have become part of a networked society whereby time and distance have lost their meaning. This indicates that communication has shifted from the "one-to-many" to the "many-to-many" concept where the underlying assumption is that the information is no longer controlled by the organisation but easily accessible and readily shared. Tertiary institutions like IMSU, UNN, FUTO, UNIZIK, EBSU, ESUT now have an online portal in which their students can grab information at their various distance. These portals as well tries to project their school to be in line with the technological trends thereby creating a good and acceptable image in the mind of their students and prospective students anywhere in the world.

This study therefore aims to note the presence of digital public relations in Southeast tertiary institutions as well as examining the challenges encountered as they use digital tools for the growth of Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Statement of the Problem
The invention of social media and technologies has brought with it good and bad depending

on how the recipient manipulates it. The Internet has made it inevitable for the Public relation practitioners to focus on the quality of their content as well as assuring their publics that the information being disseminated is honest, accurate and credible.

Most tertiary institutions on daily and weekly basis use the internet as a digital tool through which they create a good image and impression on the minds of their students. They even concentrate more in creating more targeted and well-placed messages and strategic information. Even at these development their seem to be a lapse on these institutions timely update of information using their portals, this leads to clustering and unattended messages send without reply. In some cases their seem to be less managers of the site through which they create an acceptable image of their institutions, these are what this study tries to bridge.

This study therefore aims to examine and note the presence of digital public relations in southeast tertiary institutions as well as examining the challenges encountered as they use digital tools for the growth of Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following research question was raised:

1. Is there a digital presence of Public relation in selected southeast tertiary institutions?

2. To what extent do these institutions use digital technologies in creating a good image of their institutions?

3. What are the challenges affecting Digital Public Relations practices in selected southeast tertiary institutions?

Definition of Digital Public relations

Renee Blodgett and Magic Sauce Media in defining digital public relations states that it is the use of social media, branding and marketing to elevate the people and products that are changing the world. Mark Burgess from Blue Focus Marketing adds that digital PR focuses on experts building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building a good corporate image, and handling crisis management issues using the social media (Prowly, 2019).

Lisa Buyer from the Buyer Group defined digital PR is the use of direct messages, editorial media in prints, broadcast, radio, video or social media in contributing to a company's image, reputation, brand, perception and its public community. Steve Stratz from Illuminate Public Relations as well explained digital PR is the use of press, bloggers, analysts, and influencers expertise through not only speaking but through articles, thoughts and social media engagement to provide a third-party perspectives about an industry (Cohen, 2011).

Empirical Review

Bhargava (2010) did a study which explored the trends in the application of various Internet tools in the public relations practice of New Zealand and the impact these have on certain key

aspects of the practice such as skills, encroachment, gender balance and ethics. A mixed methods approach including an online survey and semi-structured in-depth interviews has been followed. An attempt has been made to answer the research questions with the aid of the data collected from 133 survey respondents and ten interview participants. The findings revealed that there are considerable variations in the use and application of the different online tools in the New Zealand public relations practice. This discrepancy was found to have been influenced by the area of work and experience of the practitioners along with their knowledge of the Internet and the organizational environment they operated in. Further, it appears that practitioners do not have a full grasp of the nature of online tools and their scope of utilization in the practice. Areas of further investigation have been highlighted and recommendations have been made for the future researchers to help aid a better understanding of online public relations.

Adlmaier-Herbst (2014) conducted a research which was based on the central research question: How can digital media and technologies contribute to a company's global relationship management? Stemming from the general question I have three more research-related questions: 1. How can social media communities contribute to corporate relationship management? 2. What are the key questions for global relationship management? 3. What are the organizational prerequisites for global relationship management? Conclusion: Digital media and technologies can contribute in a unique way to global relationship management. These peculiarities comprise the "big four": integration, accessibility, connectivity and interactivity. Connectivity and interactivity are the two most important for global relationship management. Social media channels have opened up new opportunities for companies to benefit from platforms in recent years, where users meet, communicate, exchange ideas and even create products. The problem for global relationship management is that these platforms are very different worldwide, their users and the culture of the communication within these channels are equally different. As a consequence for global relationship management, organizations have to set up a systematic and long-term process of analysis, planning, creation and control to professionally manage the organization's communication. This process includes not only the communication itself but also the organization of communication within the company. Expert global relationship management is tied to requirements: they concern the involved personnel, roles, responsibilities, processes, structures, the appointed information technology as well as the culture of the communications.

Similar study was undertaken by Mustafa(2017) which looked at digital technologies as an extensions of digital innovations that changes institution' and organization' structure, way of business and function in an innovative direction. In this study customer' communication behaviours were reviewed in accordance to the changing direction and new business models emerging according to their behaviours. The study tried looking at effects of digital innovations to Public Relations and the rationale on why public relation should adapt to new technologies and even design their projects and servicesin a way that it will be up-to-date at all time. In this study, sikayetvar.com as a site for e-complain was examined: this is a site the customers share their complaints about a brand, a product or service. This site serves as a public relations tool for e-complain.

Another study was done by Oyemike, Udo-Anyanwu, &Onuoha,(2016).This study was carried out to identify the strategies used in marketing information, products andservices in academiclibraries in Owerri Imo State, Nigeria. Study adopted the survey research design. Threeobjectives and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 100 library and information professionals working in different academic libraries in Imo state. Instruments for data were the questionnaire. Data collected through the use of questionnaire was analysed using simple descriptive statistics. The result of the findings revealed that use of library notice board, face-to-face interaction with user community, seminar/workshop, use of institutional websites, networking among professional colleague are the most dominated form of strategies used in marketing information products and services. It also indicated that inadequate funding, low level of awareness on use of ICT in marketing information products and non-collaborative effort among librarians and libraries are the factors affecting marketing of library and information products and services.

Shen and his colleagues in 2015 did a published study examining new survey data from PRSA members and exploring practitioners' perspectives on work-life conflict and personal coping strategies. Their studies showed that negative work environments can increase levels of work-life conflict, while strong identification with the profession and involvement with a professional association (i.e., PRSA) can help to mitigate work-life conflict. They also presented updated survey research on PRSSA members and their anticipation of work-life conflict issues within their future careers.

Recently Jiang, Luo and Kulemeka (2017) did a survey study which studied 458 communications professionals about how social media use influences their work, leadership, and perceptions of work-life conflict. Their findings showed that using social media technologies can have both positive (e.g., updated ability while doing one's job) and negative (e.g., increased workload) outcomes, and found evidence of both. The study on one hand used YouTube as a communications channel that has always had positive effect on professionals' work. For example, those who specialized in areas such as media relations and internal communication reported more flexibility in work hours, increased productivity, and a better ability to communicate ideas with coworkers. On the other hand, those who used Twitter extensively, particularly for crisis communications, experienced increased workload and stress.

According to Perlow (2012), Harvard Business School as well conducted a spectacular study on work-life balance solutions in the field of business consulting, which is an industry with many parallels to public relations. A year ethnography was done at a management consulting firm to examine how their work is been done. From the ethnography it was revealed that for the consultants working with clients, the unpredictability and lack of control over their schedules was a source of frustration inherent in their work lives, this has led many to eventually leave the firm. This study proposed a follow up experiment at the firm, starting with a simple step: giving consultants which comprised mainly of those working an average of 65 hours per week at a predictable night off per week, with other colleagues covering that person's work responsibilities and unexpected client needs. This initiative led to greater growth from the teams participating at the management consulting firm.

Theoretical Framework

This work was anchored on Media Ecology theory. Marshall McLuhan is a known figure who can't be forgotten easily for his theory that explains on the influence of modern technology in our lives. It is certain that existing commerce will increase towards modern railway. The founder of this theory believes that peoples' way of life would be changing due to media evolution (McLuhan, 1964). The future of communication media will influence our life as many industries currently transform their own communication system to a whole new level such as video conferencing with people in the other parts of the world. According to the profounder of this theory, new media has allowed "users become consumers and producers". Facebook, Pinterest and YouTube now serves as a platform to transform predictions into reality. Therefore, consumers have more way to share their, opinion and interaction with others. In conclusion, PR practitioners must be able to control the flow of communication in order to engage consumers and employees effectively and as well achieve their set goals.

According to McLuhan and Power (1989) as cited in Macnamara, (2005), during McLuhan's time, as he had predicted, people are now both producers and consumers of information when using the new media. Recent studies found that the social media can deliver information or message much more easily and efficiently than traditional media, therefore PR practitioners have changed their way of distributing. Thus, the flows of communication are altered from one way communication to two-way communication to interact with the public.

From this point of view, McLuhan's theory can explain why and how the lives of PR practitioners, consumers and organisations will be changed by social media and how media's evolution will continue controlling the flow of communication. However, his theory has also shown that this is why PR practitioners, organisations in particular, must learn how to use digital devices like the social media in communicating with strategic audiences effectively (Mulhern, 2009).

The relevance of this theory is that it has helped to prepare peoples mind on the change in technology which as well can be utilized properly through social media, blogs, portals, twitter etc. This is what a current public relation practitioner utilizes effectively, using any visible and modern means in communicating and informing their target consumers/fans on their beliefs and services. This is the next level in public relations growth which should be planned towards and used adequately.

Methodology

This study adopted in-depth interview and observational research methods to gather relevant information from the selected tertiary institutions in southeast. In-depth Interview method was used to gather qualitative data relevant for the study. This study covered tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. These institutions include: Imo State University, Owerri (IMSU); Federal University of Technology (FUTO); Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); Ebonyi State Univeristy, Abakiliki (EBSU); Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK). The population and sample size of the study was the 20 PR personnels from these selected institutions. Three PR

personnels were purposively selected from each of the selected institutions. The instrument for data collection was the interview guide and observer's diary, which was used to seek answers to the study's research questions. The data gotten from the in-depth interview was presented using discussion building technique.

Presentation and Analysis of Date

Research Question One: Is there a digital presence of Public relation in selected southeast tertiary institutions?

"….yes of course there is digital presence in my work in here, we use tons of digital appliances to communicate timely information to our students as well as boosting our image in the eyes of all who care to see". Interviewee 3.

…….which institution in Nigeria that does not use digital appliances as a means of boosting their image and prestige in the minds of our students"

………we use many digital appliances plus the internet in boosting our organizational image, without these we won't have gone far communication wise here". Interviewee 9.
……..everybody knows we use digital appliances in todays public relations, we are not left behind on this issue". Interviewee 6.
…..we use computers, social media handles created by us and used by our students, we as well use our school portal to communicate and advertise our institution to the whole world".
………of course we use our school portals, twitter handles to boost the image of our institutions…". Interviewee 1
…we often use the computer/laptops as the primary digital tool through which information can be constantly convened to reach our target audience which are students and parents". Interviewee 19.
….my institution uses the internet and the social media to perform our public relation practice here in the institution". Interviewee 14.
…..we are the ones who manage our school portals and we use that portal to weekly upload informations, articles, pictures, news, and happenings taking place in the school". Interviewee 2

There is digital presence of public relations in all the institutions studied. These institutions use computers/laptops, blogs, portals, good graphics, Facebook and Twitter pages etc in carrying out their public relations work thereby boosting the image of there students in many ways. They as well use soothing words to boost their academics: well soothing words that has boosted our images from other academic institutions".

Research Question Two: To what extent do these institutions use digital technologies in creating a good image of their institutions?

"I and my organisation use digital appliances frequent/to a large extent in constantly uploading mind blowing updates that change our students thought for good about us".

Interviewee 10

….we use digital appliances that often as in twice a week this helps us to update and inform our students better on what is happening and what they should expect".

…..we virtually use digital devices more than once weekly. Its not a thing the institution can leave without so we try our best to be up and doing in it".

…..we of course use these devices almost every day, we not only use it to aid students we as well use it for our self service and a means of uplifting the PR department of the institution".

….we work with the presence of digital PR at all times because it is faster and speculates faster to a larger student audience, so I can boldly say we use these things more than once weekly".

…..we use these digital PR tools at a very large extent, the department cannot go back to the analogue means of communication and informing larger student audience".

…..we use these devices to a large extent and very frequently for informing and interacting with our students thereby correcting wrong assumptions in their mind".

……we use these gadgets and tools to a large extent which has as well made us to use it at all times".

….we use this appliances more than moderately, so we use them at a large extent".

……we have been blessed in this generation with these easier and faster tools for communication, this we utilize more than once a week. So I can boldly say we use them at a large extent".

The interviewed PR personnels disclosed that they use digital PR tools at large extent, as they frequently use them almost daily for their constant uploads, self-service and for a better interactive section with their students.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges affecting Digital Public Relations practices in selected southeast tertiary institutions?

….finance has always been a big challenge to every organisation in Nigeria, my institution is not an exemption". Interviewee 7

….the use of not-up-to date computer appliances in our departments, and employment of outdated and obstinate personnels".Interviewee 18.

…..Money is a challenge. The employment of analogue PR practitioners who are unwilling to change with the current digital trend is as well another challenge". Interviewee 4.

…..the monthly update of our data subscription sometimes serves as a challenge to our department". Interviewee 10.

….Short lasting of data which are eventually been overused by our students tapping into our work Wi-Fi connection has been a challenge we are confronting here". Interviewee 3.

…..The high cost of data which on some occasions we are the ones providing it in emergency situations when there is no provision for that". Interviewee 14.

…….Our institution has always had finance challenges for using all ready strategies in boosting our image more than it has been". Interviewee 8.

…..We have insufficient and less productive technologies for boosting our works. This is another challenge we encounter". Interviewee 19.

…..willingness to readily assist the department finance wise towards our daily uploads in some occasions are challenges hindering us to an extent". Interviewee 6.

High cost of data, the presence of employed analogue personnels, finance, insufficient and less productive technologies; student usage of subscription; etc are all challenges encountered in our usage of these digital PR gadgets.

Discussion of Findings

The Presence of Digital Public relation in selected tertiary institutions

Findings got from PR practitioners in the selected institutions showed that institutions use computers/laptops, blogs, portals, good graphics, Facebook and Twitter pages etc in carrying out their public relations work thereby boosting the image of their students in many ways. They as well use soothing words to boost their academics".

This above finding is in line with Bhargava (2010) study which revealed that there are considerable variations in the use and application of the different online tools in the New Zealand public relations practice. This discrepancy was found to have been influenced by the area of work and experience of the practitioners along with their knowledge of the Internet and the organizational environment they operated in. Mustafa (2017) findings, which adds that most public relation organisations use sikayetvar.com as a site for e-complain, this site serves as a public relations tool from customers to share their complains electronically about a brand, product or services. Oyemike, Udo-Anyanwu, &Onuoha, (2016) findings agrees that use of library notice board, f ace-to-f ace interaction with user community, seminar/workshop, use of institutional websites, networking among professional colleague are the most dominated form of PR strategies used in marketing information products and services. The implication of the above findings is that southeast tertiary institutions use digital appliances in the institutional boosting department.

Extent of using digital appliances by southeast selected tertiary institutions

It was disclosed that they use digital PR tools at large extent, as they frequently use them almost daily for their constant uploads, self-service and for a better interactive section with their students. This is in line with a study undertaken by Adlmaier-Herbst (2014), which revealed that Digital media and technologies contributes in a unique way to global relationship management. This has made organisations to set up a systematic and long-term process of analysis, planning, creation and control to professionally manage their organization's communication. From the above findings we can trace the extent of using digital public relations to be high and used at large extent.

Challenges affecting GLO Nigeria and Imo state University while using Digital Public Relations practices.

Findings from these selected tertiary institutions revealed that High cost of data, the presence of employed analogue personnels, finance, insufficient and less productive technologies; student usage of subscription; etc are all challenges encountered in their usage of digital PR gadgets. Oyemike, Udo-Anyanwu, &Onuoha, (2016) study is in-line with this finding, in that it also found that inadequate funding is one of the factors affecting products and services of organisations. Although findings from Adlmaier-Herbst (2014) disagrees that the problem for global relationship management of organisations is that the platforms used are different

worldwide, their users and the culture of the communication within different organisation public relations channels varies too. From the above findings it can be concluded that finance is the main factor militating against the use of digital appliances for public relation purposes.

Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that southeast tertiary institutions in Nigeria use digital technologies in their day to day relations. This is visible in these selected institutions studied. The usage of public relations appliances are now like a new normal in most tertiary institutions. This they use at a large extent. Not forgetting to add that the usage of digital devices are not without challenges which disturbs its constant usage. Insufficient fund or inconsistent funding of the practitioners using these devices are the main challenge discovered from this study in their consistent use of these technologies in undertaking their public relations function.

Recommendations

- Since there is a presence of digital public relations in these selected institutions, it is recommended that the institution should look in and work more with new technologies should there be any.

- The extent these selected institutions use digital public relation tools is recorded to be at a large extent, so we recommend that the good work should be upheld as it is a good development that shouldn't slack.

- It is recommended that tertiary institutions should look into and invest more on their public relations department, giving them the fund and support they need to boost their institutional image and yield profit.

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AN APPRAISAL ON INSTAGRAM'S POPULAR CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter continuously bring contents closer to audiences globally, lending credence to McLuha's global village concept. Cultures are transmitted through digital media to susceptible audiences thereby altering societal values and influencing popular culture in unprecedented ways. This study investigates how western popular culture portrayed on Instagram influences social behavior of Nigerian youths. The study was anchored on cultural norm theory and media dependency theory. Survey Research was adopted for this study and copies of questionnaires were used as the primary research instrument for this study. A sample size of 384 was drawn from a population of 4,411,100 using Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator. The researcher adopted multi-stage sampling for the study. Findings of the study revealed that youths in Enugu State are highly exposed to popular culture on Instagram, it also revealed that they perceive western popular culture negatively but still imitate such behavior so they do not feel left out. The researchers recommend relevant stakeholders to ensure that youths limit the long hours they spend on social networking sites and also Nigerian government should establish a regulatory body to monitor and limit content that harm traditional values of the Nigeria society.

Keynote words: Media, Instagram, popular, culture, youth

Introduction

The accessibility of the Internet based apps may be radically transforming the way people receive the information (Trifiro, 2018), as online channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and so on now combine the immediacy of broadcast media with the in-depth coverage of newspapers; making it a preferred channel for information and entertainment especially among young people (Haddon, 2015).

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app with more than 400 million monthly active users, 80 million shared photos and 3.5 billion likes daily (Treitel, 2019). Evidently, Instagram has become a significant virtual community used to influence social behaviors for political purposes, sensitization or even setting societal agenda as is recently seen in the online advocacy against rape in Nigeria or the call for justice in the anti-racial rhetoric on the murder of George Floyd in the United States of America. With these massive engagements

on Instagram, one cannot help but wonder if there are negative behavioral influences that may occur from constant use of this app, especially as users are free to upload contents as they see fit.

Social networking sites are a gateway for individuals to fit into digital communities where cultures may be shared and new behaviors learned. In his publication in 1964, Marshall McLuhan coined the term "global village" to describe a phenomenon where cultures could be instantly shared through digital media (Grffin, 1997); (Dixon, 2009); (Gibson & Murray, 2012). He described digital technologies or the new media as an extensions of human physical and mental capacities (Gibson & Murray, 2012). Although McLuhan's concept acknowledged the struggle for supremacy of identity in the global village concept, it also recognizes a society without boundaries making it possible for cultural integration through digital media.

The most popular social networking sites among young people are image and video based social networking sites such as Instagram and Snapchat (Anderson & Jiang 2018), and studies have shown that Instagram has become increasingly popular among teenagers (Rostam, 2020). With high number of active users on this medium, it is no doubt several opinions and ideas are shared on this platform regularly. Udensi (2015), posits that people on SNS share what interests them and other users on the platform can read these stories and share them as well. Research on media effect have shown the media play a mediating role between social reality and personal experience; hence, they have the ability to re-construct perception, interpret social system and help make sense of the real world (Nzekwe, Ngoso, & Onyewole, 2017) for its users. Popular Instagram profiles or influencers like @symply_tacha @efia_odo with no fewer than one million followers and massive views and likes on their pages are likely to influence the behaviors of other Instagram users who pay close attention to their posts and are constantly on Instagram. The researchers observed that it is not uncommon to see these Instagram influencers wear heavy makeup, blonde wigs, use vulgar language or appear unclad online. Such behavior may be imitated by thousands and millions of young Instagram users who eagerly engage in media content for leisure (Trifiro, 2018); (Nzekwe, Ngoso, & Onyewole, 2017).

It is no news that the media is attributed with the power to influence attitudes however when this change in attitude manifests in behavioral ways that seems to relegate traditional value systems for western culture especially among young people, one can arguably claim that media imperialism has taken place. Young people spend long hours on their mobile devices and most of this time is spent on social media. This study investigates the extent to which prevalent popular culture portrayed by Instagram influencers affect behavior of Nigerian youth who spend hatful time on Instagram.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporary research has shown that youngsters generally use new media to explore identity, behavior and lifestyles that might remain inaccessible to them offline (Hiller & Harrison, 2007; Pascoe, 2011; Craig & McInroy 2014), therefore constant exposure to contents that portray nudity, indecent behavior, illicit drug use and so on may result in inappropriate behavior. Zhukova (2018), explains that consistent and long hours of exposure

to media can create a false sense of connection to reality and may also lead to decreased productivity.

Celebrities, socialites and influencers alike appear to be creating a shift in behavioral patterns from conservative norms to liberal, recalcitrant and westernized behavior through the content they upload on their Instagram timelines. Instagram accounts like @nairamarley, @symply_tacha, @efia_odo, bobrisk222, @sydneytalker, @wf_jamesbrown and many more constantly upload contents that suggest deviant sexual behaviors, tolerance to illicit drugs, flamboyant lifestyles that is supported by crime and nudity. All the mentioned Instagram accounts have not less than one million followers as at June 23, 2020 (except @wf_jamesbrown who has one hundred and eighteen thousand followers) and there's a likelihood that the numbers will increase.

This study examines how constant exposure to western popular culture on Instagram may and encourage deviant behavior that relegate traditional norms for western popular culture among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions
The main purpose of this study was to find out if frequent exposure to popular Instagram handles caused young people to adopt western popular cultural behaviors. In order to achieve this, the researcher raised the following questions:

   i.   To what extent are youths in Enugu State exposed to western popular culture through popular Instagram handles?

   ii. How do youths in Enugu State perceive western popular culture on Instagram?

   iii. To what extent do youths in Enugu State imitate the popular culture they see on Instagram?

Review of Related Literature
Rostam, F. A. (2020), conducted a study on *the negative impact of social media on youth* and found that Instagram and Snapchat have the most negative impact on the health and functioning of young people's minds.
Jin, S. V., Ryu, E. (2020), through their study on *I'll buy what she's wearing: roles of envy towards parasocial interaction with influencers in Instagram celebrity-based brand endorsement and social commerce,* revealed that Instagram influencers moderate the effects of envy and parasocial interaction towards buying products Instagram influencers wear, influence customers perception, and compulsive buying tendency and envy on brand trust.

Pilgrim and Bohnet-joschko (2019), in their study on *selling health and happiness; how influencers communicate on Instagram about dieting and exercise* found that influencers on Instagram gain trust and friendship of their followers by designing visual content and targeted communication techniques. They further explained that minors identify with the roles and ideals demonstrated by the influencers and their needs satisfied on several different levels, thus creating a dependency between influencers and their followers.

Trifiro (2018), in studying *Instagram use and its effects on well-being and self-esteem*

revealed that intensity of use rather than usage patterns determines user outcome, and also that users who engage with Instagram more intensely exhibit higher levels of self-esteem and well-being than users who do not use the application intensely. Arino, L. V. C., Flavian, C., Sanchez, S. I. (2018), in their study on *influencers on Instagram: antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership* found that opinion leadership influences behavioral intentions.

Veirman, Cauberghe and hudders (2017), in their study on *marketing through instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude* found that Instagram influencers with high number of followers are found more likable thus resulting in a perceived opinion leadership by followers; while Nandagiri & Philip (2018), in their study on the *impact of influencers from Instagram and YouTube to their followers* found that followers perceive influencers as credible sources of and are thus willing to try out products they review and endorse.

Olorunsogbon, & Olalekan (2017), in their study on *effects of social media on the socio cultural life of students in tertiary education in Nigeria*, found that majority of undergraduates in Nigeria use social media, social media influenced the socio-cultural life of young people and affected academic performances negatively. Nzekwe, G. N., Ngonso, B. F., Oyewole, P. O. (2017), in their study *Celebrification and Blogosphere. A Narrative of Social Media Portrayal of Celebrities* found that there is a significant positive relationship between social media portrayal of celebrities and audience perception. Dion (2016), after studying the *effect of Instagram on self-esteem and life satisfaction found that female college students* who were minimally exposed to celebrities on Instagram showed lower life satisfaction after a quasi-experiment that exposed them to celebrities (influencers) on Instagram.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Norm Theory is a communication theory which suggests that the media selectively presents and emphasizes contemporary ideas or values by reinforcing or changing norms (Kent, 2007). Through specific media contents, norms are emphasized which then guide the audience behavior into accepting such norms as a mental representation of appropriate behavior. Through influencers on Instagram, popular culture is transmitted to audiences who over time start accepting such behavior as appropriate until they become the new norm. Behavior such as nudity in fashion, use of illicit drug, deviant sexual behavior and so on are often depicted by these popular Instagram and by so doing they tend to influence the behavior of youth in Nigeria.

Media Dependency Theory presents a systematic interrelationship between the media, social system and audience(s) in a context that aids the comprehension of media effects. Developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976, the theory asserts that the more one's needs are met by media use, the more important will be the role of that media in the person's life and the more influence it will have on the person (Baran & Davis, 2012).

The researchers believe that Instagram has become an integral platform for entertainment for Nigerian youths who presumably seek out popular handles on the Instagram to satisfy their

entertainment needs. The researcher also believe that the consistent use of Instagram by youths have become somewhat addictive and an influence on behavior as is revealed by Olorunsogbon, & Olalekan (2017); Nandagiri & Philip (2018).

Methodology

This study examines how popular culture transmitted on Instagram influences attitudes and behavior of youths in Nigeria. To achieve this, the researchers deemed survey research method apt for the study. The data was collected personally through a well-designed questionnaire. The population of the study is youths in Enugu State. The total population as derived from 2016 population projection of the National Bureau of Statistics website is 4,411,100 (NBS, 2016). To effectively conduct the study, Anaekwe (2007), explains that the researcher needs to select a portion of the population which is studied with a view to generalize the findings from the entire population (cited in Obayi, Anorue & Onyebuchi, 2016). The researchers employed Wimmer and Dominick Sample Size Calculator to arrive at a sample size of 384.

In order to have a good representation of the population of the study, the researcher choose multi-stage sampling technique. This involved two stages, the first was cluster sampling whereby the researcher divided the population of the study into three clusters namely Enugu East LGA, Enugu North LGA, Enugu South LGA. At the second stage, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to determine youths who were exposed to popular handles on Instagram before 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered.
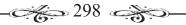
The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot testing. The instrument was administered to 20 respondents in Emene, New Haven and Uwani in Enugu State. The results obtained from the analysis of their response was used in computing the reliability of the instrument. The researcher distributed 384 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in selected areas in Enugu state. They were distributed on a face to face basis, 382 copies were retrieved, while 2 copies were wrongly filled. The researcher used tables and simple percentages for data analysis and presentation, while simple descriptive analysis was used to infer meaning from the data in the table for clarity.

Discussion of Findings

To what extent are youths in Enugu State exposed to western popular culture through popular Instagram handles?

The findings reveal that 61.3% of youths in Enugu State are constantly online through smart devices and spend over 2 hours in a day browsing on popular handles on Instagram. This finding correlates with Pilgrim and Bohnet-joschko (2019), in their study that revealed influencers on Instagram gain trust and friendship of their followers and in so doing, create a dependency of followers on the influencers. It further supports Veirman, Cauberghe and hudders (2017), whose study also found that Instagram influencers with high number of followers are found more likable thus resulting in a perceived opinion leadership by followers.

Based on these findings, the researchers therefore concluded that youths in Enugu State are highly exposed to popular culture on Instagram.

How do youths in Enugu State perceive popular culture on Instagram?

The study reveal that 56% of youths in Enugu State perceive popular handles on Instagram as a negative influence. They agreed that contents like nudity, illicit drug use and several other harmful vices can be easily learned on Instagram through influencers. From this finding, the researchers concluded that although there is high exposure to popular Instagram handles by youths in Enugu State, they are aware of the negative contents but still seek out such contents regardless.

To what extent do youths in Enugu State imitate the popular culture they see on Instagram?

The study further reveal that 61.3% of youths in Enugu State imitate social behavior they see on Instagram popular handles. The finding revealed that youths in Enugu State imitated behavior of their Instagram influencers so they do not feel left out. This finding agrees with Arino, L. V. C., Flavian, C., Sanchez, S. I. (2018) study that revealed opinion leadership on Instagram influences behavioral intentions.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that youths in Enugu State spend long hours browsing popular Instagram handles, and although they perceive its content as mostly negative, they imitate the behavior they see on these handles nonetheless because they do not want to feel left out from trending popular culture.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn therein, the researchers recommend the following:

    i.   Efforts should be made by guardians and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that youths limit the long hours they spend on social networking sites, because through high exposures to negative contents on such sites, traditional values are eroded for western popular culture. This may be denying African societies of its true identity. Having conducted this research and analyzed the field data, the researchers recommend the following:

    ii.   The Nigerian government should establish a regulatory body to monitor and limit content that harm traditional values of the Nigeria society.

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