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News Frame Patterns: An Evaluation of Newspaper Coverage of Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigates the newspaper coverage of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, with a view to identifying the patterns of frames in the stories published. A total of 120 editions of four selected newspapers were analyzed. Findings show that The Nation newspaper published more than other titles - Daily Trust, The Guardian and ThisDay - across all genres. Straight news was predominant. The ineffective response of the government, in terms of its uncompromising behavior and inability to contain the insurgency, was widely reported. Findings also show that the newspapers dwelt so much inflammatorily on the impact of attacks by the sect and de-emphasized messages that could help end the violence. Nigerian newspapers should do more in terms of investigating and interpreting issues in a crisis instead of straight news reporting that lacks control. If they agree with this recommendation, framing patterns that bring solution to the problem, rather than stoke it, become easier to create.

Key Words: Boko Haram, terrorism, framing, news frames, newspaper coverage

Introduction

Studies (Gadarian, 2010; James & Waldman, 2003; Okoro &

Chukwuma, 2012; Ekwueme & Obayi, 2012) have shown that media coverage affects how the

public learns, understands or thinks shown that the reaction of people to terrorist attacks is influenced by the tone of coverage of those attacks. Gadarian (2010, p.8) concludes that the emotional content, not simply the factual information in media reports, has a sizeable and statistically significant influence on attitudes. Subjects exposed to media reports with emotional content were more likely to support the use of military force, support spending on foreign policy, and approve of specific counter terrorist and foreign policies.

Studies in media framing (Nacos, 2007; Powell, 2011; Bruken, 2006; Chong & Druckman 2007; Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997) continue to support the opinion that the media draw the public attention to certain topics and decide what people think about. These studies argue that the way in which news is presented, and the attributes used in the presentation, is a deliberate choice made by journalists. Boystun, Gross & Resnik (2004, p.2) argue that the way media organize and media gatekeepers systematize and present the events and the issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided with, are products of media framing. Okoro & Odoemelam (2013, p.86) add that the act of framing shape perception of key events. Framing is a key

about an issue. Gadarian's study has concept in the study of press performance and regular assessment of this performance is necessary in order to determine its ramifications (Omojola, 2007, p. 70).

Research as conducted by Chong & Druckman (2007), Entman (1993), Hanggli (2012) Jacoby (2000), amongst others; establish that media framing has effect on the society. This is evident in media's presentation of an issue from one perspective at the exclusion of alternative perspectives. For example, the classic study by Nelson, Clawson & Oxley (1997) shows how people's policy attitudes toward a proposed Ku Klux Klan (KKK) rally differ depending on whether news coverage discusses the rally as an issue of free speech or as an issue of public safety.

In a world of 24 – hour news coverage and instant information, Massangri & Howard (201, p.179) note that the phenomenon of framing may play an increasingly important role in terrorism as media sources try to find a way to cut through the clutter and get their stories heard. The essence of framing as seen by Entman (1991, p.9) is to magnify or shrink the elements of the depicted reality in order to make them more or less salient. In 1991, Entman decided to test the concept of framing within the media. Through a content

analysis of magazine coverage of the Korean Air Lines (KAL) and the Iran Air attacks of the 1980s, Entman as McHale (2011, p.2) recalls, concluded that framing does exist in media coverage and that it significantly impacts the way that the public perceives a particular incident. While the facts surrounding the KAL and Iran Air disasters were similar, American media presented the events in vastly different ways: the media demonized the Soviet for the KAL incident, fostering sympathy for the American victims, while justifying Reagan's actions in the Iran Air incident as necessary and appropriate. For example, while the Newsweek cover headline after KAL was "Murder in the Air", the headline after Iran Air attacks read: "The Gulf War Tragedy: why it Happened." Public opinion polls conducted during each incident reflected this difference of perceptions, as the public was far more supportive of the Iran Air incident than the KAL event.

In Schaefer's study of the media coverage of the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, DC, respectively, comparing the reports by the major national newspaper in the cities, the study established that physical proximity and the 'local angle' influenced media framing,

especially in terms of the prominence and amount of coverage, although less in nature of coverage.

Stressing the essence of framing, Entman (1993, p.86) argues that when media highlight an issue in the news, they raise the salience of that issue. Bullock (2001, p.20) notes that framing has the ability to affect how a story is told and what implication such a story holds. And since people rely on media for information and decision-making, they can be easily influenced by framing; as Auerbach and Block – Elkon (2005) observe:

When the media place stories in specific frames, they lend a different meaning to the news. The media increase or decrease the salience of issues, which allows the public to remember and make judgments on such issues. Framing assumes that subtle changes in the wording of the description of a situation might affect how audience members think about the situation. (p.13)

Though studies looked at in this study made good attempts at explaining the role the mass media played in reporting Boko Haram activities with emphasis on frequency and volume and how the audience perceived the functions of the mass media in this regard; no study has been able to clearly present the frames used by the

newspapers and the attendant implications of the frames. This research, therefore, fills the gap by offering the different ways the newspapers selected and laid emphasis on certain words and phrases about Boko Haram.

Statement of the Problem

Substantial literature exists on terrorism and attacks around the world but there seems to be dearth of literature on the Boko Haram activities in Nigeria; particularly with regards to how the media framed the sect and its activities. Available studies such as the one conducted by Okoro & Chukwuma (2012) focused more on audience's opinion about the way the media reported Boko Haram without regard to the frames employed by the media in the coverage. Others like that of Alao & Uwom (2012) compared how the newspapers reported the stories on Boko Haram, looking at North/South dichotomy of news presentation. Okoro & Odoemelam (2013) however, identified the dominant frame used by the newspapers.

Since investigation is visible enough on the pattern of frames employed by the newspapers in their coverage of Boko Haram attacks, it is of interest to this study to evaluate these patterns in the quality of frequency of reports they present on the attacks by the sect;

prominence given to the reports; and the types of frames used by the newspapers. Hence, the major question: How did the selected national newspapers cover Boko Haram activities during the period under study?

Research Questions

The foregoing poser is broken into the following research questions to guide the study:

1. What sizing techniques did the selected Nigerian newspapers employ in the reportage of Boko Haram attacks between April 2011 and March 2013?
2. What was the nature of the reports on Boko Haram attacks by the selected Nigerian newspapers during the period under study?
3. What were the patterns of news frames of Boko Haram activities in the selected Nigerian Newspapers?

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited to the coverage of Boko Haram terrorist attacks in

Northern Nigeria, including Abuja, the capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, between April 2011 and March 2013 by selected national newspapers in Nigeria. This period is considered ideal because it marked the height of tension as a result of endless bombings and gun attacks that became the hallmarks of

Boko Haram's campaign of death and destruction. The study is specifically concerned with the coverage of these attacks by Nigerian newspapers in terms of framing. The newspapers selected for this study include Daily Trust, ThisDay, The Guardian and The Nation

Literature Review

Understanding Framing

Framing is a central concept in political communication and a powerful political tool. The definition of framing has been slippery. The most widely employed definition among current researchers in political communication is provided by Robert Entman. According to Entman (1993, p.52) framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

According to Epkins (2011, p.19), Framing describes the process of content selection and exclusion, highlighting certain aspects over others to communicate a particular point of view. In many ways, a frame facilitates the nature of an

argument. Specifically, communicating a certain bent, context, or angle of an issue that, in itself, lends an interpretive meaning of the communication. As Jameson & Waldman (2003, p.1) put it, "journalists deliver the world to citizens in a comprehension form". Some scholars as Bowen (2008, p.339) argue that framing "tells us how to interpret communication."

To Gamson & Modigliani (1987, p.143) a frame is a "central organizing idea or story line" that serves to contextualize issue or debate. Reese (2001, p.49) sees frames as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.

To Gitlin (1980, p.389), news frames represent persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events. Norris, Kern & Just (2003, p.2) go on to say decisions and common practices in newsgathering - determining what and how stories are covered do contribute toward these frames. Out of the myriad ways of describing events in the world, journalists rely upon familiar news frames, and upon the credible sources, to convey dominant meanings, to make sense of the

facts, to focus the headlines, and to structure the story line. Norris, Kern & Just further note that the way journalists observe and report each event is shaped by how similar events have been covered in the past and by the reporter's most trusted sources of information. 'conventional frames' which become mainstream in the news media, provide contextual curves, giving meaning and order to complex problems, actions, and events, by slotting the new into familiar categories or story line 'pegs'.

Understanding mass communication through the concept of framing has become increasingly common, whether in the fields of social psychology, public opinion, or media studies. The idea of 'news frames' refers to interpretive structures that journalists use to set particular events within their broader context. News frames bundle key concepts, stock phrases, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments. The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events.

Frames serve multiple functions for different actions. Political leaders can respond to events and communicate policy priorities simply and effectively by adopting

predominant cultural frames to streamline and simplify their message. Reporters can also 'tell it like it is' within 60 seconds, or within brief newspaper headlines, rapidly sorting key events from surrounding trivia, by drawing on reservoirs of familiar stories to cue reader. The public can use frame to sort out and make sense of complex and unfamiliar events, people, and leaders. Through frames, apparently scattered and diverse events are understood within regular patterns.

In general, Reese & Levis (2009) argue that journalists socially construct meaning for their audiences merely by the selection and omission of components making up a news story. The mass media have a strong impact by constructing social reality, that is, by framing images of reality in a consistent pattern, thereby creating adjacency between the concept of social constructionism and framing.

Journalistic Framing Practices

Journalistic framing practices describe what journalists do when they produce media texts that include certain frames and neglect others. Journalistic framing practices lie on a continuum between frame setting and frame sending. The terms are inspired by Semetko & Canel (1997, p.7) who distinguish between "agenda setters" and "agenda-senders" with regard to the practices of two Spanish TV stations. This

distinction according to Blumler & Gurevitch (1995, p.87) refers to the journalistic practice of actively setting the agenda of media coverage rather than sending the agenda provided by political actors. The authors note further that journalists do not only influence the media agenda - they do not just write about given topics. Often, they also define what is at issue.

Both journalistic agenda-setting and frame setting can be viewed as instances of strong media interventionism, understood as the different ways in which journalists – deliberately, or not – shape news content (Stromback & Esser 2009). The kind of journalistic intervention may vary, so does the degree of intervention. One may, therefore, distinguish two extreme types of journalistic framing practice: frame setting implies that journalists mostly frame their coverage in line with their personal interpretations of what is at issue. Frame sending denotes the practice of merely relaying the frames as presented by different public actors

The fact that journalists quote sources that provide statements with certain frames is not a sufficient condition for frame sending. Hagen (1993) believes that sources might be instrumentally used by the journalist as opportune witnesses who provide quotes representing his or her personal world view. By

contrast, the prominent presence of frames in media content that are not in line with journalists' personal interpretations is a strong indicator of frame sending. For the distinction between frame setting and frame sending it does not matter whether framing is provided directly in statements made by the author of an article or indirectly via quotes made by external actors. The key question is whether or not the frames provided within a news story predominantly conflict or are in line with the journalist's personal interpretations of what the issue is.

Newspaper Coverage of Boko Haram Acts

The group known as Boko Haram today as reported by Onuoha (2012) started operating in 1995 in Maiduguri, Borno state under the name Ahlulsunna Wal'jama'ah hijra or Shabaab, Muslim Youth Organisation with Mallam Abubakar Lawan as the leader. When Lawan left to continue his education, Mohammed Yusuf took over leadership of the group. The group actually flourished as a non-violent movement until when Yusuf assumed leadership of the sect in 2002.

The group conducted its operations more or less peacefully during the first seven years of its existence. But that changed in 2009 when the Nigeria government launched an investigation into the group's

activities following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that, the government reportedly repeatedly ignored warnings about the increasingly militant character of the organization.

Acts common to Boko Haram, like other terrorist groups, are the threat or use of murder, injury or destruction to coerce the government or other target groups into conceding the terrorists' demands. It is because the terrorists seek to demonstrate the credibility of their threats by spectacular acts of destruction or atrocity that the media reporting of these acts is often held in some sense to have 'caused' the terrorism. But in reality, the media only report the happenings. The role of the media is to report what happened, probably help to identify the people involved, the cause and how to prevent future occurrence.

Supporting this fact, Wilkinson (1997) believes that:

“for as long as the mass media exist, terrorist will hunger for what former British prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, called ‘the oxygen of publicity’. And for as long as terrorists commit acts of violence the mass media will continue to scramble to cover them in order to satisfy the desire of their audience for dramatic stories in which there is inevitably huge public curiosity

about both the victimizers and their victims (p. 52).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the media have the duty of letting the society know what happens around them. Cases of conflict or crisis prove to be ‘hot’ stories to report.

Recent history, specifically the past decade, has provided plenty of examples of the mutually beneficial relationship between terrorist organizations and the media. As some remarkable terrorist attacks in history indicate, whether it is in the United States, Europe, or the Middle East, it is by and large the case that the architects of terrorism exploit the media for the benefit of their operational efficiency, information gathering, recruitment, fund raising, and propaganda schemes (Nacos, 2006, as quoted by Bilgen, 2012). In the words of Nacos (2002), again cited in Bilgen, (2012), whether it is the relatively inconsequential arson by an amateurish environmental group or mass destruction by network of terrorists, the perpetrators' media-related goals are the same attention, recognition, and perhaps even a degree of respectability and legitimacy in their various publics – Nacos (1994, p.8) quickly, adds that “getting the attention of the mass media, the public, and decision makers is the *raison d'être* behind

modern terrorism's increasingly shocking violence.

In the words of Laqueur (1976, p.104), quoted by Farnen (1990, p.108), "the media are the terrorist's best friend... the terrorists' act by itself is nothing, publicity is all." The media, in return, receive the attention of the public that is vital for its existence and benefits from record sales and huge audiences. To put it briefly, just as terrorism has to be communicated to have effect, the media have to cover the incidents in such a way to benefit from the public's eagerness to obtain information about terrorist attacks. How the media cover these attacks or report conflicting issues is of great concern to this thesis. Are the media guided by ethical and social responsibilities rather than by economic, sectarian, racial, nationalistic and other sentimental considerations in their reportage?

The mass media are social institutions charged with the responsibility of informing, educating, socializing and mobilizing the general public. These functions, it is believed, will bring about positive change, which also include the benefits of conflict management.

To some extent, one can say that the media contribute to the continuation of crisis or peaceful resolution of that crisis. That is to say that communication through the media

can play both casual and remedial roles in conflict resolution. It is believed that the interest of the media should be that of bringing an end to the issues that create crises. That is why former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, as quoted by Picard (1991, p.50), stated that, "democracies must find ways to starve the terrorists and hijackers of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend."

This point made by Margaret Thatcher makes it clear that the mass media are considered to be very important in conflict management as conduits or carriers of various shades and colors of information. In times of conflicts or crises or even wars, Nwosu (2005, p.15) says adequate on inadequate management of information is considered to be critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension points at various levels, tensions which depend on how they are managed, can determine the end or continuation of the conflicts. This overwhelming influence of the mass media is felt most in those conflicts or crises that get to the level of wars, ethnic, sectional or communal and religious conflicts or crises that result in blood-letting.

All these explain why Sankore (2001, p.13) cited in Nwosu (2004) notes that:

Nothing defines the character of mass media establishment more sharply than any crisis that pitches nation against nation or one section of society against another. In times of crisis, the responsibility of the mass media is magnified ten folds by society's demand for more news, information and analysis, and therefore, its increased capacity to influence debate and shape public opinion. Every word written or spoken, by the media is a potential matchet, bullet or bomb in the minds and hands of victims and perpetrators.

The above observation by Sankore projects the agenda setting role of the media in conflict reporting. Since the members of the public always look up to the media to get updates on conflicts or terrorist attacks, the media take the advantage to set the tone of discussion with the goal of influencing public opinion. The public therefore believe whatever interpretation the media offer concerning the conflicts. Thus, the central role of the agenda-setting system as seen by Folarin (1998) is that the media give the audience what to think about but do not necessarily think for the audience.

Theoretical Framework News Framing Theory

The framing idea, according to McQuail (2010: 350) has been attributed to Erving Goffman as the originator. According to Goffman

(1974) as cited in McQuail (2010, p.350), a frame is needed to organize otherwise fragmentary items of experience or information. The idea of a 'frame' in relation to news has been widely and loosely used in place of terms such as 'frame of reference', 'context', 'theme', or even 'news angle'. In a journalistic context, stories are given meaning by reference to some particular 'news value' that connects one event with other similar ones.

Gitlin (1980:7) defines frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol – handlers routinely organize discourse. Norris, Kern & Just (2003, p.4) support Gitlin by saying framing theory offers an opportunity to explore the intricacies of the news production process because the theory provides a window into the patterns mentioned by Gitlin which furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events. Fairhurst & Star (1996, p.2) assert that "a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audience interprets what they are provided." McQuail (2010, p. 380) adds that framing is a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact.

According to Entman (1993, p.52) frames in the news can be examined and identified by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments.” Along these lines, Gamson and Modigliani (1989, p.10) identify ‘framing devices’ that

- a. Headlines
- b. Subheads
- c. Photos
- d. Photo captions
- e. Leads
- f. Source selection

Similarly, Semetko & Valkenburg (2000, p. 95-96) considered some measures that could be used to analyze framing by media people, especially in crisis reporting. These include:

- a) Response frame
- b) Powerless frame
- c) Political frame
- d) Human interest
- e) Conspiracy frame

In sum, scholars within the empirical approach to measuring frames agree that frames are specific textual and visual elements or ‘framing devices’. These elements are essentially different from the remaining news story which may be considered core news facts.

This theory is similar to the agenda – setting theory, in fact, McCombs, Shaw & Weaver (1997) suggested that, not only are agenda setting and

condense information and offer a ‘media package’ of an issue. They include: (a) Metaphors (b) Exemplars (c) Catch – phrases (d) depictions, and (e) visual images.

The most comprehensive empirical approach is offered by Tankard (2001, p.101) who suggests a list of 11 framing mechanisms or focal points for identifying and measuring new frames:

- g. Quotes selection
- h. Pull quotes
- i. Logos
- j. Statistics and charts, and
- k. Concluding statements

- f) Attribution of responsibility
- g) Ethnicity frame
- h) Religious frame
- i) Economic frame
- j) Labeling frame

framing effects related, framing is in fact, an extension of agenda setting. They used the term second – level agenda setting to describe the impact of the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audiences’ interpretation of these news stories. But while agenda setting describes which issues will enter the public domain and how they may later influence political judgment, Terkildsen & Schnell (1997, p.57) believe that the theory

of framing holds that issues, in and of themselves, can be arranged or presented in multiple fashions and as such influence citizens' ensuring issue considerations and level of policy support.

Relating this theory to this study, we can say that the way and manner the Nigerian Newspapers frame words in their reportage of the Boko Haram attacks impact seriously on how the issue is viewed by all, thus contributes to its resolution or not.

Methodology

This study adopted the content analysis method for the purpose of generating the primary data from the manifest and latent content on Boko Haram acts from selected newspapers in Nigeria. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. The quantitative method was to help estimate the volume of the manifest content on Boko Haram attacks in the newspapers, while the qualitative method was to help determine the framing of the Boko Haram attacks by the various newspapers. The population of this study was 2,920 editions of Daily Trust, The Nation, The Guardian and ThisDay published between April 2011 and March 2013

The sample size for this study was determined by multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, the researcher sampled newspaper titles. This was purposively done by selecting four newspapers from the population. In the second stage, monthly samples were taken. Six samples of each newspaper were drawn during the period under study, in fixed intervals. This was systematically done. In the third stage, edition dates were sampled. That is, thirty (30) issues of each newspaper were selected during the period. In the fourth stage, content categories were purposively sampled. They were made up of straight news stories, features, editorials, cartoons, photographs and columns.

Data Presentation

A total number of one hundred and seventy one (171) stories were coded and analysed in this study from the sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) issues obtained from the four selected national newspapers in Nigeria between April 2011 and March 2013. The analysis here presented is based on the newspaper reports on Boko Haram during the study period.

Table 1: Publication of Boko Haram stories among newspapers during the period under study.

Newspapers	No. of Stories	Percentage
Daily Trust	48	28.07
The Nation	56	32.75
The Guardian	33	19.30
ThisDay	34	19.88
Total	171	100

Table 2: Treatment Genre of Boko Haram Stories

Content Format	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	ThisDay		
News story	45	41	28	26	140	81.87
Editorial	00	02	03	01	006	3.51
Cartoon	00	05	00	00	005	2.92
Photograph	01	04	01	02	008	4.68
Feature	00	00	00	01	001	0.58
Column	02	04	01	04	011	6.43
Total	48	56	33	34	171	99.99

Table 3: Display of the subjects of stories on Boko Haram.

Theme/Subjects	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	ThisDay		
1. Impact of Attacks	13	17	7	15	52	30.41
2. Arrest of Terrorists	7	4	02	02	15	8.77
3. Attacks by Boko Haram	00	02	00	00	02	1.17
4. Conflicts generated	08	08	05	07	28	16.37
5. Government Response	12	05	06	02	25	14.62
6. Security agencies' Efforts	02	04	03	03	12	7.02
7. Religious leaders' Reactions	01	01	02	00	04	2.34
9. Emergency rule	00	01	01	00	02	1.17
10. Peace talk	04	10	05	02	21	21.28
11. Amnesty	01	04	02	03	10	5.85
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100

Table 4: Display of Prominence given to stories on Boko Haram among the selected newspapers.

Position	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	ThisDay		
Front Page lead	14	18	05	04	41	23.98
Front Page	04	03	04	05	16	9.36
Inside Page	28	32	24	24	108	63.16
Back Page	02	03	00	01	06	3.51
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100.01

Table 5: Space allocated to the different messages on Boko Haram among newspapers.

Measurement	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Short story (0–5cm)	08	10	06	09	33	19.30
Medium story (26-51cm)	32	31	19	14	96	56.14
Long story (52cm and above)	08	15	28	11	42	24.56
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100

Table 6: Tonal direction of newspaper editorials, columns and features among newspaper.

Direction	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	ThisDay		
Condemning the Act	00	01	01	01	03	16.67
Blaming Government	01	03	02	03	09	50.00
Neutral	01	02	01	02	06	33.33
Total	02	06	04	06	18	100

Table 7: Display of the type of news headline used by the selected newspapers

Headlines	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Banner or Streamer	01	03	00	01	05	3.57
Cross or barline	00	01	00	00	01	0.71
Flush right	00	01	00	00	01	0.71
Flush left	25	04	17	10	56	40.00
Centred headline	13	16	9	10	48	34.29
Rider	06	16	02	05	29	20.71
Total	45	41	28	26	140	100

Table 8: Display of Patterns of News Frames by the Selected Newspapers.

Patterns of Frames	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Response frame	12	05	06	02	25	17.86
Powerless frame	02	04	01	04	11	7.86
Political frame	03	07	05	05	20	14.29
Human interest	12	8	03	05	28	20.00
Conspiracy frame	01	02	01	01	05	3.57
Attribution of responsibility	02	04	02	03	11	7.86
Ethnicity frame	02	02	04	01	09	6.43
Religious frame	01	01	00	01	03	2.14
Economic frame	02	04	01	02	09	6.43
Labeling frame	08	04	05	02	19	13.57
Total	45	41	28	26	140	100

Table 9: Language of News Stories

Language of News Stories	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Therapeutic Language	05	08	07	13	33	23.57
Inflammatory Language	19	07	10	13	49	35.00
Neutral	17	13	09	19	58	41.43
Total	41	28	26	45	140	100

Table 10: Display of Rhetorical Techniques

Rhetorical Techniques	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Metaphoric terms	18	18	12	08	56	32.75
High sounding terms	07	11	06	02	26	15.20
Declaratory terms	23	27	15	24	89	52.05
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100

Table 11: Display of Description of the Group

Description of the Group	Newspapers				Total	%
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day		
Insurgent	00	00	10	08	18	10.53
Militant group	00	00	00	00	00	0.00
Terrorist group	00	00	00	00	00	0.00
Islamist extremist/fundamentalist	15	22	10	10	57	33.33
Boko Haram	33	34	13	16	96	56.14
Anti-government	00	00	00	00	00	0.00
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100

Table12: Display of Acts by Boko Haram

Description of Acts	Newspapers					
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day	Total	%
Acts of wickedness	01	04	03	00	08	10.39
Acts of violence	00	03	01	03	07	9.09
Barbaric acts	03	07	04	02	16	20.78
Inhuman acts	03	01	03	04	11	14.29
Un-Islamic acts	01	01	04	02	08	10.39
Condemnable acts	11	07	02	07	27	35.06
Total	20	23	17	17	77	100

Table 13: Display of the State of Crisis

Presentation of the State of Crisis	Newspapers					
	Daily Trust	The Nation	The Guardian	This Day	Total	%
Boko Haram winning	09	13	08	07	37	21.64
Government in control	09	05	05	05	24	14.04
Helpless situation	20	22	13	14	69	40.35
Inadequacy of the security agencies	07	11	06	05	29	16.96
End of the crisis in sight	03	05	01	03	12	7.02
Total	48	56	33	34	171	100.01

Discussion of Findings

This study was conducted to determine the pattern of news frames used by selected newspapers in the coverage of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria. With a sample size of 171 reports on Boko Haram from 120 editions of four newspapers, spread evenly over a period of two years, the study

sought to find out whether the selected newspapers gave adequate coverage to the Boko Haram attacks; determine the nature of reports on Boko Haram attacks in the selected newspapers; and identify the pattern of frames used by these newspapers.

The study found that the selected newspapers did very well in their

surveillance function, since they gave a very good coverage to the attacks by the Boko Haram activities. Findings showed that nearly all the news stories published were attributed to official sources, which gave such reports credence and showed their push for professionalism.

The study found that the percentage of editorials and opinions on Boko Haram compared to the straight news stories is negligible. This did not allow the newspaper organizations to make known their positions on the issue adequately and allow individuals to also contribute what they think about the issue. Much effort was not put into investigative reporting to know the exact reasons for the attacks by the sect and the brains behind them.

A major finding of this study is that for the period of study, terrorism occupied a very big space in newspapers' reporting as placement shows that most of the stories on Boko Haram on front pages took the lead position. Reason for always having issues of terrorism on the front page could be likened to the saying that, as long as there are still lice in the hair, the finger nails can never be free of blood. Thus, the newspapers were left with no option than to revisit the issue of Boko Haram so often.

Despite the fact that the newspapers were committed to reporting

terrorism over and above other topics, the prominence given to it on a general note on the mind of the readers seemed to be down played since the stories that appeared on the front and back pages of the newspapers put together, formed just a little above half of the stories buried in the inside pages of the newspapers.

The spread of the subjects of stories on Boko Haram by the newspapers is reflective of their efforts in covering all angles of that agenda. This, however, showed that the impact of attacks staged by Boko Haram operatives was the most reported (30.41%). This is not surprising because the unusual usually makes more news. Considering the fact that the period of study was seen as the peak of the attacks by Boko Haram, most of the reports were about attacks with very high casualties that could move everyone to tears.

Reports on Government responses, followed by the efforts made by the security agencies in discovering the sect's hideout and bomb factories were heartwarming and capable of increasing readers' belief that the crisis would end soon.

This point was also reflected on Table 8, where the response frame came immediately after the frame on Human interest in terms of volume. Most of the responses were from government officials. This

showed that the media, particularly newspapers reflect the interest of the government of the day. Their views and efforts at halting the activities of Boko Haram operatives were what the newspapers wanted the readers to know and not the frantic efforts made by the reporters to unravel the happenings and best ways to curtail them.

The major findings, especially from the few editorials and columns showed that the newspapers were not committed to digging facts on their own but relied on the statements made by others which did not carry weight enough to move the government to take action or even give the terrorists room to reconsider their acts, and the citizens, of course the hope for tomorrow.

The idea of news frames represents persistent patterns of selection, emphasis and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events. As manifest in this study, emphasis on human interest angle of stories occupied the biggest space of all the stories on Boko Haram during the period of study. The language of news stories too was both therapeutic and inflammatory.

The fact that the mass media had not done much in terms of helping to halt the activities of the sect, Mohammed Haruna, one of the columnists in *The Nation*

newspapers lamented the state of the media in reporting Boko Haram terrorism in his article on, “The media, Civil Liberties, Boko Haram and Nigerian media”. He said one would search the Nigerian media almost in vain to read about any serious concern, never mind a sustained one, being raised about these flagrant trampling of the civil liberties of Nigerians. Instead the vast majority of the media have endorsed, and in some cases, even canvassed this high handed approach (by the government) to ending the sect’s terror.

According to Haruna, in covering the Boko Haram insurrection and even the wider ostensibly religious conflicts that have predated Boko Haram, the Nigerian media have been more propagandist than factual and objective, they have behaved more as weapons of mass deception for ideological and commercial reasons, than as weapons of mass education of the people about the complexity that Nigeria is. This remark is in consonance with the assertion of Morah & Omojola (2011, p. 162) and other writers that evidence exists that the media fuel terrorism.

He concludes that the sooner the Nigerian media begin to report the seemingly sectarian and ethnic conflicts in the country with more accuracy, balance and fairness than they have done so far, the better the

chances of a lasting solution to the threats posed by those conflicts. This position is a true reflection of the results of the investigation.

Conclusion

Nigerian newspapers showed commitment to the coverage of Boko Haram activities, but the coverage did not seem to contribute much to the fight against the unending attacks by the sect. Their show of commitment was manifest in the newspapers' reporting trend during the period of study, as the newspapers gave overwhelming attention to Boko Haram on their front pages, with most of them taking the lead position. But most of the newspapers' stories did not go beyond information provision. Much was not done in terms of investigation, interpretation and mobilization.

By relying much on straight news accounts in reporting Boko Haram, newspapers underutilized editorials and features and columns, failing to see the value these messages of newspapers provide in offering background to Boko Haram attacks and the solution to the issue.

The newspapers relied more on government official reports on Boko Haram, which gives the public the impression that it was what the government wanted the public to hear that the newspapers carried in their reports. The implication of this is that there could be official

manipulation to attract sympathy from the people. Though the faceless nature of the Boko Haram sect was a very big challenge to the way the newspapers carried out their reporting, no serious effort was seen in their reports to unveil the group in terms of investigative reporting.

Also manifest in newspaper coverage during the period of study was the fact that the types of news frames used mainly by the newspapers were human interest, response frame and political frame.

The importance of what could be done to promote national security was downplayed by the newspapers, since almost all of them placed little emphasis on remedial messages in their reports. Entman (1991, p.9) notes that aside from the words and images used to depict the event, how much material on the event that is available and how prominently they are displayed speaks loud about framing. He further says the frame of a news portrait can be enlarged so that media reports may penetrate the consciousness of a mass public that is minimally aware of most specific issues and events.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusion reached, the study recommends that:

- Newspapers should do more in terms of critically interpreting and investigating issues in a

crisis instead of just relying on straight news reporting. This is what Omojola (2012, p.127) calls “three-dimensional reporting,” stating that journalists should go beyond the “what” of a news story and get to know “what” is driving “what.” Background analysis and possible solutions could come from this angle.

- There should be regular training in the media organizations on how best to cover and report terrorism, since terrorism is a new phenomenon in Nigeria, so that the media do not expose the country’s warfare strategy for the benefit of terrorists.
- Newspaper reports on terrorism should be geared towards minimizing the psychological effects the attacks may have on the audience, thereby raising hope that all is not lost.
- There is need for Nigerian newspapers to move with the

trend of reporting which has gone beyond episodic reporting to more analytic and thematic coverage. They need to connect fragments of news into patterns of continuity and follow-up.

- Since framing has a lot to do with how people perceive risk and danger, the language of messages on the newspapers must be carefully selected. Instead of inflammatory language, more of therapeutic language should be used. This implies that emphasis of reports should not only be on lack of preparedness of government and security agencies and the fact that terrorists are threatening more attacks but also on the areas the security agencies have succeeded in fighting the insurgents and how much they can do to safeguard the lives and property of everyone.

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Community Radio in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract: This paper traces the origin of radio broadcasting in Nigeria from the colonial era till date and analyzes the agitation for community radio from 2003, anchoring the discussion on the *development media* and *democratic participant* theories. It notes that the country is in dire need of community radio owing to its legendary cultural diversity of over 250 ethnic groups. Unimpressively, however, the country is one of the few in Africa that have not implemented fully the African Charter that recognizes community radio as the third tier in broadcasting. The government still controls much of the airwaves but has not demonstrated enough courage to make community radio operational going by the existing fuzzy legal, regulatory and administrative frameworks. The authors recommend that license fee waiver, low import duty on equipment and transparency in the allocation of frequencies, among others, are required to make community radio a reality in Nigeria.

Keywords: Radio broadcasting, Nigeria, cultural diversity, community radio, license fees.

Introduction

Radio broadcasting started in Nigeria when the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched the British Empire Broadcasting service. Based in

Daventry, England, the programs of the empire service were relayed in Lagos to a limited audience. English language was the language of broadcast. The whites (colonial masters) and a few elites who understood English constituted its audience. Later, the Lagos station started experimenting with the re-diffusion service, by distributing programs to subscribers in Lagos, Kano and Ibadan.

The colonial administration, in April, 1951, established the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS). It consequently converted the existing re-diffusion stations into full-fledge radio stations. The NBS was condemned by the public for being bias and acting as a government tool. Nigerians had expected the NBS to be impartial and reflect the divergent views and multi-cultural/religious sensibilities of Nigerians. Hence, D.S. Adegbenro of the Action Group introduced a bill in the Federal Parliament for the conversion of the NBS to an impartial public corporation in August 1954. The bill was passed into law and NBS was renamed Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on April 1, 1957.

Thereafter, Nigeria witnessed the emergence of regional broadcasting stations. The Western Region headed by the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo blazed the trail in 1959 by

setting up the first television station in Africa which started operation on October 1, 1959. This radio arm (Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service-WNBS) went on air in May 1960. The other two regions followed suit. When the military took over government in 1966 and ruled till 1979, the pattern of ownership did not change. The states that were created in replacement of the regions set up their own radio stations. However, the military government restructured the NBC and renamed it Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in 1978.

In 1988 there was agitation for the deregulation of the electronic media Nigeria which continued till early 1990s when the military government promulgated decree 38 of 1992 which deregulated the electronic media by allowing private individuals to own both radio and television stations. By June 1993, the first set of broadcast licenses were issued by the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission. Hence, the first private TV station (*Clapperboard TV*) and radio station (*Ray Power FM*) went on air in May 1994 and September 1994 respectively.

Community Radio in Nigeria

In 2003, advocacy for the establishment of community radio in Nigeria became visible and loud. The Panos Institute of West Africa

(PIWA) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), in conjunction with the Institute for Media and Society (IMS-Nigeria), launched an initiative on community radio in Nigeria. According to Akingbolu & Menkiti (2008), the steering committee which articulated an action plan put Nigerians in the forefront of the campaign. A lot of awareness was created about community radio across the country. Workshops were held to generate interest in community radio. Several meetings took place to map out strategies to demand for policy, legislative and regulatory restructuring with regard to community broadcasting. In 2004, the federal government on its part, set up a working group to review the outdated National Mass Communication Policy of 1990. In 2005, the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC) was formed by stakeholders. It consists of about 200 organizations with members located in all the geographical zones of the country. It has a common bond of social and grassroots development. The federal government went further in 2006 by setting up a committee headed by renowned communication scholar, late Professor Alfred Opubor, to develop a policy framework for the establishment of community radio stations for the country.

The committee succeeded in putting together a draft policy which was submitted to the Federal Government for necessary action. The stakeholders are still waiting for the Federal Government to legislate on community radio on the guidelines for its licensing and operations. President Goodluck Jonathan's declaration in 2010 that the government will soon commence licensing of community radio is yet to come to reality.

The Problem

Since the advent of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, it has remained entirely an urban affair. Almost all the radio stations are located in urban areas. They cater for the needs and interest of the urban dwellers in their programming. The same trend applies to television, newspapers and Internet while below-the-line media such as digital large screens (Morah & Omojola, 2013, p. 391) are city phenomena. Paradoxically, over 60 percent of Nigerians live in the rural areas. It therefore means that majority of Nigerians who live in the rural areas are cut – off from main stream broadcasting as they are 'denied' access to radio. They are therefore voiceless and could not participate effectively in the running of their own affairs even under democratic setting.

In the same vein, the language of broadcasting in Nigeria is usually

English. English language is an urban language and a medium of expression for the elites in the country. Majority of the rural dwellers cannot speak or write in the language. The high illiteracy level therefore negatively affects them in terms of listening to radio. The implication of this is that radio could not be used to mobilize the rural dwellers effectively for development. News/information on development, health, farming, environment, knowledge acquisition, education, behavioral change and so on that could motivate the people would not be able to reach them effectively. This mass of the people will continue to remain poor and underdeveloped.

Against this background, community radio has become a necessity in Nigeria. The radio will be owned by the people, managed by the people and is not for profit. It broadcasts in the local language of the people that all will understand. Its programme contents will cater mainly for the needs and interests of the people. Community radio will therefore serve as change agent in rural areas and promote development.

Theoretical Foundation

Development Media Theory

The main thrust of the development media theory is how the media can be used in developing countries to promote development. According to

the proponent Denis McQuail (2000), mass media serve as agents of development by: disseminating technical knowledge, encouraging individual change and mobility, spreading democracy (election), promoting consumer demand and aiding literacy, education, health, population control. That the media serve as catalyst for development is not in doubt. If properly managed, the media can be used to promote development in all its ramifications. Towards this ends, the media will serve as agents of mobilization for development. As agents of mobilization, Rosengren (2000) observes that the media provide formal, educationally oriented socialization. He adds further that the media help to conserve existing structures of power at the same time as preparing the ground for those on-going processes of change so vital to any modern, industrial and post-industrial society and presumably, to all post-modern ones as well. Community radio is suited for the tasks assigned to the media under this theory.

Democratic – Participant Media Theory

The Democratic-participant theory preaches easier media access for all potential users and consumers of media. According to McQuail (2000), the theory supports the right to relevant information, the right to answer back and the right to use the

new means of communication for interaction and social action in small-scale settings of community, interest group or sub-culture. Instead of a centralized, high – cost or state controlled media, this theory advocates small – scale, local, non – institutional committed media which link senders to receivers and also favor horizontal patterns of interaction. Community radio fits perfectly into the structure being advocated by this theory. It is owned by the community, managed by the community, broadcast in the local language and is not for profit purpose.

The Need for Community Radio in Nigeria

It is surprising that Nigeria, the biggest and the richest country in West Africa, does not have a single community radio station. In fact, it is the only country in West Africa without a community radio. Nigeria has a population of over 160 million, comprising people from more than 250 ethnic groups. Besides, about 60 per cent of Nigeria's population lives in the rural areas, where access to the media is restricted by numerous factors. Some 51 per cent of Nigerians are not literate in the official English Language, making the existing traditional radio structure unsuitable for reaching them. Sufficient evidence exists to show that though radio has

tremendous potential to engender development in the rural areas, the conventional radio system has failed toward this end (Moemeka, 1981; Brieger, 1990; El Nafaty. 1999; Ojebode, 2003 & 2005; Yahaya, 2003).

One of the earliest attempts to use radio to promote development was pioneered by the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Moemeka (1981, pp. 3-4) recalls that the university in 1971 created the Adult Education and General Extension Services Unit (later renamed Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services). The centre was to enlighten and mobilize the rural population towards development issues. Specifically, the mass media section of the centre catered for the educational interests of the rural communities by providing, through radio, information and guidance on such topics as health, culture, history, sanitation, business management, family life, childcare and politics. Development-oriented programs were created by experts from different fields and produced by the centre. The programs were then broadcast through the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Kaduna. But as Moemeka (1981, pp. 3-4) observes, the people were made passive listeners in the programs, noting that many of the producers lacked first-hand knowledge of the socio-political,

economic and cultural situations of the audiences of these programs.” He concludes by saying that the producers “were in the community but not of the community.”

The need for community radio in Nigeria stems from the inalienable right of the people *to know* what their elected representatives in government are doing with the mandate given them. It also arises from the failure of the existing two tiers of broadcasting—publicly-owned and commercially-oriented privately-owned stations—to meet the information needs and interests of the people. The development imperative of the nation makes the application and use of community radio imperative. Radio has been identified as the most accessible and participatory of the traditional mass media systems.

Ojebode & Adegbola (2007, pp.28-30), in a review of some studies previously carried out on radio as a development communication medium in Nigeria, raised five pertinent conclusions: first, existing radio stations have performed below expectation; second, listeners’ needs and interests vary widely, and it is consequently impossible for a single radio station to satisfy everyone in a state or region; third, listeners want a radio station that is close to them, speaking to them in their own language or dialect; fourth, government’s failure to provide

enabling environment for behavior modification or change and finally, programme producers over-estimate the impact of their programs.

It is this general failure of the broadcasting system in Nigeria that has necessitated the clamor for community radio as the third tier of the broadcasting system in Nigeria. The advocacy for the establishment of community radio is being spear-headed by the Institute for Media and Society (IMS), with strong support from Panos Institute West Africa (PIWA) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). The partnership gave birth to *Initiative on Building Community Radio in Nigeria*. The community radio (CR) advocacy, according to Akingbulu and Menkiti (2008, pp.10-11), has achieved worthwhile results. These include:

- The participation base of advocates has tremendously expanded. From an 11-member steering committee at take-off in 2003, there are today about 200 organizations and individuals within the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition, the umbrella body which was formed by stakeholders in 2005. The membership is drawn from a broad spectrum of constituencies with a common bond of social and grassroots development.

Members are located in all the geographical zones of the country.

- A strong awareness of the benefits of community radio has permeated numerous communities. This has led to an upsurge in the interest and resolve to own/establish community radio and to demand for licenses and frequencies.
- Several international development agencies have not only appreciated but also expressed commitment to the advocacy as well as establishment initiatives in some communities.
- The broadcasting regulatory agency, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), has reviewed its industry regulatory instrument, the Nigerian Broadcasting Code, to provide wider accommodation for the licensing of community radio.
- The federal government has instituted three policy processes. In mid-2004, it established a Working Group to review the moribund National Mass Communication Policy (of 1990), while in 2006, it also set up Working Groups to design a National Community Radio Policy and a National Frequency Spectrum Management Policy. The

reports of these working groups are in its custody.

- Members of parliament at national and state (second tier of government levels) have expressed support for community radio and willingness to facilitate legal reform in its favor.
- Community radio issues have moved up to top priority on the agenda of media development in Nigeria. For example, CR now receives prime consideration on the programs of media conferences in Nigeria.

The Role of Community Radio in Nigeria's Development

Radio is the most accessible of all the mass media types in Nigeria. For instance, Pate (2006, p.27) describes radio as "the most patronized means of mass communication in Nigeria." Quoting the 1999 National Demographic and Health Survey, Pate remarks that 62 per cent of households in Nigeria own one or more radio sets. Things have even become better as more people now have access to radio stations through their mobile handsets.

At the moment, Nigeria is confronted with a myriad of socio-political and economic problems. Community radio is expected to play vital role in mobilizing the rural populace. Majority of

Nigerians living in the vast rural communities are practically cut off from the mainstream media. They are hardly heard because news is about prominence. Therefore, community radio, when fully operational in Nigeria, will be expected to give voice to the local population in the following areas:

Politics

Democracy is all about the government of the people, by the people and for the people. The participation of people in governance has been hampered over the years because of the inaccessibility to and unavailability of media outlets in the rural areas. In-between elections, people are expected to participate actively in public affairs, through robust debates on issues that affect their lives. Besides that, the need exists for constant flow of information that allows people take informed decisions on matters of public interest. There is need for the education of the rural populace on political matters.

Economy

Mass poverty, exacerbated by mind-boggling corruption, is one of the greatest challenges facing the Nigeria at the moment. Omojola (2010, p.25; 2008) notes that corruption is a “polygonized” practice as it involves many sides, including the media, that perpetrate it. One way media have been found

to abet corruption is when they do not exist to hold politicians and civil servants accountable. The 2011 Human Development Index ranks Nigeria as the 156th of the 177 nations on earth. Corruption is one of the factors that account for the poor rating. Poverty reduction is a major component of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but overcoming poverty in a country like Nigeria requires mass mobilization of the people for development programs. Only community radio that speaks to the people in their own language can do the job better.

Education

Literacy level in the rural areas of Nigeria is still very low. National literacy rate is 67 per cent (Akingbulu & Menkiti, 2008, p.12). Majority of the uneducated people lives in the rural areas where educational facilities are either non-existent or inadequate. Community radio will be a vital tool in adult education. It is difficult to conceive development in modern times without one form of education or the other.

Health

No nation on earth is free from health challenges, but these challenges are more serious in some countries than others. Health issues require joint action of the citizenry. Community radio can be used to promote appropriate health

behaviors that prolong life and ensure disease control/eradication in the rural areas.

Culture

With the wide application of the new media technologies and the real threat of cultural imperialism, there is urgent need to protect the cultural heritage of Nigeria. Community radio is one of the best means of preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of the people.

Challenges

A lot of challenges have continued to face Nigeria in her attempt at starting a community radio. The greatest challenge facing Nigeria is the lack of courage by the government. Nigerian governments over the years have not demonstrated strong political will for the takeoff of community broadcasting. The lack of political will is demonstrated in a number of ways.

Nigeria is a signatory of the African Charter on Broadcasting which recommended the setting up of community broadcasting as the third tier of the broadcasting system. It remains one of the few African countries yet to implement fully the provisions of this charter. Nigeria, till date, has not segmented the broadcast sector into public, commercial and community broadcasting. This is unlike what happens in sister West African countries. Even in Mali, a less

endowed country, the third tier of broadcasting is further segmented into community, co-operative, confessional and cultural radio stations.

Apart from not implementing the African charter fully, the Nigerian government has not enacted the enabling law to start and guide the operations of the community radio. The NBC only made provisions for the operation and regulations of the first and second tier of broadcasting. Act 38 of 1992 and its subsequent amendment Act 55 of 1999 did not make specific provisions for the licensing of community radio.

Furthermore, the existing law poses a serious challenge for any community seeking a license to own and operate a community radio station (Ojo, 2006). The Nigerian law provides that communities or community-based organizations and other non-profit organizations seeking legal incorporation are registered under a trusteeship with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Any organization registered in this category will not have an Article and Memorandum of Association which is required for corporate bodies to carry out commercial activities. The implication of this is that communities or non-profit organizations do not qualify to apply for broadcast licenses for ownership and operation of community ownership radio station

since they are not incorporated as limited liability companies.

The government has not demonstrated commitment to the establishment of community radio by sending a bill to the national assembly, specifically making provisions for the establishment of community radio or amending the existing law to provide for community radio. Yet, a former minister of Information, Frank Nweke Jnr, in 2009, acknowledged that “the delay in the take-off of community radio in Nigeria is necessitated by the desire to ensure that appropriate legal, regulatory and administrative frameworks crucial to the success of community radio are put in place.” Three years on, Nigerians are still waiting. Not even the government’s declaration of its commitment to issuing licenses for community radio stations has been effected.

The former Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan had declared during the 8th biennial conference of African broadcasters tagged Africast 2010 that “we are aware of the need to expand the broadcast space and give more voice to the people. Consequently, the Federal Executive Council has considered and approved the guidelines proposed by the National broadcasting Commission for the licensing of community radio in Nigeria”. Two years after,

stakeholders are still waiting for the policy guideline on the licensing of community radio. As observed by Garba (2011), despondence has since overtaken the rank of the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC) as they await the realization of their dream. The headquarters of the coalition in Lagos is daily besieged with enquiries about what has happened to the presidential directive.

Moreover, there is lack of an enabling environment for community radio to thrive in Nigeria. The Nigerian government not only dominates the airwaves by its covetous self-allotment radio frequencies, it sees the public service stations as agents established to protect its interests. The government has a near monopoly of the airwaves in Nigeria- the existence of private broadcast stations notwithstanding. Majority of the radio stations in Nigeria are owned by the Federal and state governments. The two levels of government owned 81 stations as against 25 by private individuals.

Private individuals face a lot of difficulties in obtaining broadcast licenses in Nigeria. This results in long wait. The difficulties manifest in excessive high licensing fees being paid by individual organizations. These fees range from \$75,000.00 to \$150,000.00

depending on the category of license being applied for. On the contrary, the government pays little or nothing to obtain license to set up its own station. While individuals pay through their noses to get license in Nigeria, the situation is different in neighboring West African countries. For instance, in Mali, radio license for community radio is free provided the applicant is a Malian. In Ghana, a mere \$100 (one hundred dollars) is charged for application license while authorization fee is \$2,000 (two thousand dollars).

The NBC seems not prepared yet for the commencement of community radio in Nigeria. Investigation has shown the officials lack experience and training in the operation and regulation of community radio. The NBC is right now pre-occupied with the transition from analog to digital broadcasting. This was a fall-out of its failed, self-imposed deadline of 2012 for the accomplishment of same as against the 2015 deadline set by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). A digital broadcasting demonstration was carried out in Jos in 2016. Since then, not much has taken place. Some observers opine that community radio enthusiasts will not have their dream realized until the digital transition process ends.

Frequent changes in the political leadership at the information ministry constitute a minus for community radio. The careless replacement of top government officials and decision makers has negatively affected the policy thrust of the government on community radio. Concomitant to this are bureaucratic bottlenecks in governance and annoying red tape.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has identified the need for community radio in Nigeria as it remains the most potent means of reaching the vast majority of Nigerians who reside mostly in the rural areas. It is surprising that Nigeria remains the only country without a community radio in West Africa despite being the largest and richest country in Africa.

Without doubt, community radio will assist greatly in promoting development among the rural populace in Nigeria. It will promote good healthy living, agriculture, adult literacy, and environmental sanitation among others. It could be very useful in promoting peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society that is highly pluralistic in culture and religion with over 250 ethnic groups. It will serve as the voice of the voiceless and give the local people a say in the running of their affairs of their country particularly at the local level. Besides,

community radio will provide jobs for the army of unemployed mass communication graduates and also serve as training ground for others.

For community radio to achieve the laudable objectives and for Nigerians to enjoy the benefits like their West African neighbors, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Nigerian government should immediately provide the legal framework for the commencement of community radio in Nigeria.
- Licensing fee should be waived for promoters of community radio.
- Government should immediately produce official policy on community.

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- Government should reduce import duty on equipment for community radio.
- Government should make the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission truly independent.
- Government should amend the law requiring presidential assent for radio license.
- Government should be transparent in the allocation of frequencies.
- There should be guiding philosophy on community radio.
- When operational, the content of community radio should reflect local views and interest of the people.

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Anti-corruption Promises and Print Media: The Case of Nigeria

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Abstract: Assertions are held widely that the mass media play an important role in ensuring that an elected government fulfills its campaign promises. This paper examines the reaction of the Nigerian government headed by Goodluck Jonathan to corrupt practices and media's response to that reaction. Newspaper reports of the alleged corrupt purchase of two bullet proof vehicles by a senior government official are used as a test case of the Jonathan's promise to stamp out corruption. Content analysis was adopted to generate data for the study. Results show that government's promise was not fulfilled, as public office holders emphasized the mundane aspect of corruption as a strategy to distract citizens' attention from the real issue of corruption eradication. The citizens' hope that the government would prosecute suspected corrupt officials, as reported by the media, was short-lived.

Keywords: Media, reporting, corruption, government, print media, Nigeria

Introduction

The vital role communication plays in human existence can be

summarized in the saying that information is power. To Klapper (1960), the mass media have

exercised so much influence on the modern society that their role cannot be over emphasized. The media are social institutions whose influence is widely accepted. He further explains that many of the defining moments of our lives come from our experiences with the media and other sources of information.

Moemeka (2000, p.1) defines the mass media as the technological devices of public or mass information. According to him, they provide us with the information materials to talk about different aspects of life; they provide information for mass audiences that are scattered over a nation and when they are properly managed, they can act as channels for exchange of ideas and opinions between and among people, communities and nations.

The media are the contemporary means of circulating information. Daramola (2008, p. 31) explains that they include the print media, the electronic channels such as radio, television; and the new media – the Internet and others. He espouses that the basic functions of the mass media in any nation are dissemination of information, correlating parts of society, educating and entertaining. There is hardly any government or nation that can ignore the mass media, given their importance (Lasswell,

1948; Wright, 1975; Sobowale, 1983; Moemeka, 2000).

Berelson & Janowitz (1966) argue that from the most primitive to the most civilized, every nation uses the communication system to harness the benefits of those functions of the media. However, Wilbur Schramm (1960) and Sobowale (1983) use other terms to refer to these functions namely: watcher, forum, and teacher. Schramm explains that all societies have watchers who monitor the environment and report the good and the bad news.

Sunday (2008, p.11) goes back in time when media development took place in Nigeria in three significant phases, namely: the missionary era, the nationalist era and the post-independence era. The first phase, he explains was motivated by the need to get people informed and teach them how to seek information by reading. The second phase, which aroused political consciousness among the citizenry, captures the essence of this paper. Akinfeleye (2008) explains that the mass media monitor the government and make government accountable to the people at all times. This, Gyoh (2008) argues, was a great risk in the military days. Nevertheless, he explains that Nigerian journalists never surrendered, no matter how intimidating the odds.

However, democracy ushered in press freedom and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Udoakah (2014, p.3) posits that press freedom means freedom of the press to criticize the government and its officials in their conduct of public affairs and all other persons or organizations whose activities affect public welfare, without intimidation and victimization. On the other hand, Relyea (1977) submits that the Freedom of Information Act provides the basic authority and procedure for retrieving otherwise unreleased documents held by the federal and state bureaucracies.

According to Nimmo & Combs (1992), the mass media are seen as the ultimate instrument of democracy. They are intended to teach, unite and by so doing, improve the actions and decisions of the nation as a whole. Udoakah (2014, p.4) and Sobowale (1983) confirm that the media are mediators between the people and the government in a democracy.

The supermarket metaphoric expression of democracy by Golding (1990, p.84) gives the understanding that each government that comes into power presents various policies to the people, the various political actions and inactions, promises, and the attitude to be found in the civil government that claims to be on the side of the people on all matters, and its stand,

especially as it concerns corrupt practices. According to Udoakah (2014) the role of the media then is to mediate between the supermarket and the people to help them make rational choices. Monitoring the government and its agents and reporting them accurately to the people is the task of the press in a democracy, including other persons or organizations, whose activities affect public welfare (Nigeria Constitution, 1999).

The media owe the society an obligation to report events so that the citizens would have sufficient information to plan their lives and take meaningful decisions. According to Siebert, Peterson & Schramm (1956), the information would help in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence as the basis for decision making.

Statement of the Problem

It is puzzling to know that despite all efforts by the Nigerian government to put an end to corruption, it keeps sprouting from different angles and has assumed a “polygonized” nature (Omojola, 2010, p.25) with many sides to it. Corruption is an issue that is never far from the public attention either in the traditional media or the new media. For instance, the Stella Oduah’s alleged ₦255m bulletproof car scandal. The respected Nigerian politician, Obafemi Awolowo, in a

lecture delivered in London to Nigerian students in 1961, said that bribery and corruption, in high places, were on the increase as large percentage of monies voted for expenditure on public projects ended up in private pockets. It is doubtful that the story is different today. Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon and there is hardly any society without one form of corruption or the other. In the words of Agbese (2008, p.188), “corruption is a global sin.” Corrupt practices did not begin today; according to Adeyemi (2013, p.1), its history is as old as the human race and has become a way of life (Ayodele, 2012).

According to Salisu (2000, p.68), corruption “is the misapplication of public resources to private ends”. The menace called corruption is a big problem in Nigeria. Corruption is indeed a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society (Watts, 2008, p.47). It is a monster that all and sundry blame for the economic woes facing the country. Adamu Ciroma of the *Sunday Sun* (2010) writes:

“Corruption is obviously one of the causes of our under-development and we must do something about it. You will hear people condemning corruption, but if you put them in places where they can readily receive bribe, they will do it with

impunity. So we need to tackle what it is that makes people to be corrupt in Nigeria. Corruption is killing the nation. We all have to accept the responsibility to do the right thing. We must stop paying lip service to the issue of corruption”.

This is because corruption is seen as one of the major impediments to the economic development of the nation. Even with the presence of anti-corruption agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (Salisu, 2000), nearly every sphere of human endeavour in Nigeria is affected by corruption and no profession is spared either. A caption in the *Punch* newspaper of Tuesday 27th July, 2010 reads “Corruption Threatens Nigeria’s Existence – JONATHAN.”

What then is the stand, the perception and reaction of the federal government to corrupt practices by individuals and organizations, whose activities affect public welfare? What measures have been put in place to discipline those found guilty and to exonerate those wrongly accused? What was the extent of coverage given to the Oduah’s corruption allegation by the selected newspapers? Did the media give it enough frequency and prominence? Why did the government allegedly

not react more quickly to the Oduah saga? How did the media help the government implement its promise to the people to control corruption in the Nigerian system in this instance? Was the government able to fulfill its promise of zero tolerance for corruption in the case of Stella Oduah? How did the aviation industry react or respond to the crisis? What were the efforts put in place to deal with the situation? We attempt to answer to these questions.

Literature Review

Gurevitch & Blumer (1977) acknowledge that the mass media and the government are conditioned by mutual power relationship as the media are major arteries for the politicians to reach the electorate. It is with this understanding that the unique role of the media in the implementation of government promises is examined. First, the media have the unique capacity to deliver to the government an audience which in size and composition is unavailable to it by any other means; secondly, as observed by Udoakah (2014) and Ebuetsse (2010) to safeguard citizens against possible abuse by political authority; thirdly, to ensure that the government of the day fulfills its promises to the people as presented before assuming office.

This discussion is anchored on the Agenda-Setting theory which

explains that the power that the mass media have through repeated coverage of an event raises the significance of that event in the public's mind (Ojebuyi, 2013, p.5); and the Social Responsibility theory which stresses the moral and social responsibilities of persons and institutions that operate the media. Such responsibility includes furnishing the public with information on important issues.

Jonathan's Government and its stand on the issue of Corruption

A number of issues of integrity among the rank and file of the officials of the President Goodluck Jonathan administration have cast a pall on the ability of the regime to fulfill its promises upon coming to power. In the speech delivered by Jonathan on the occasion of the declaration of his candidacy for the PDP presidential primaries on 18th of September, 2010, the President had charged the anti-corruption agencies to speed up the war against corruption, and respect no sacred cows in the process. He explained that corruption had long shackled economic and social development in Nigeria. According to *Sahara Reporters*, President Jonathan has made the elimination of corruption a key priority of his administration. Amongst other measures, President Jonathan has:

- granted the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

- (EFCC) prosecutorial independence.
- signed the Freedom of Information Act, thereby empowering the press and Nigerian citizens to scrutinize the actions of public officials and institutions.
 - dismissed some officials found to be abusing their offices through corrupt practices (*Premium Times*, February 12, 2014; *The Punch*, October 27, 2013).

The President further declared, “We will fight corruption! Our country is at the threshold of a new era; an era that beckons for a new kind of leadership; a leadership that is uncontaminated by the prejudices of the past; a leadership committed to change; a leadership that reinvents government, to solve everyday problems that confront the average Nigerian.”

The case of Stella Oduah

Stella Oduah-Ogiemwonyi, from Anambra State, a political subdivision in South East of Nigeria was sworn in as a minister and deployed to the Ministry of Aviation on July 4, 2011. She was, however, relieved of her duties as Minister of Aviation on 12 February, 2014, because she was indicted for allegedly compelling an agency under her supervision, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) to buy her two exotic bullet-proof cars

without following due process (*The Punch*, 31 October, 2013). She was active in the political campaign of President Jonathan where she served as his campaign's Director of Administration and Finance. A controversy around one of her certificates also emerged as reported by *Premium Times*, February 12, 2014.

Research Design

Content analysis was the research method adopted for this study. With the use of a coding sheet, the study examined the frequency of coverage of the Oduah saga, types of statements, sources of the stories, the prominence it was given, including the content of various official and non-official statements made within the period of study, which would help in analyzing the role of the media in the implementation of government promise to the people with regard to corruption. The sample for this study were four Nigerian daily newspapers purposively selected. These newspapers were *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *ThisDay* and *The Nation* of September 2013 to March 2014. The census method was used to select the stories from the four newspapers for analysis. This gave rise to 322 items on the saga for the period of study.

Results

From the data gathered, *The Punch* newspaper with 40.1% outweighed

the other newspapers in its coverage of the saga. Interestingly, *The Guardian* newspaper, with only 12.4% news stories followed the event and reported every other day rather than on daily basis. While, *ThisDay* newspaper, had a few more stories 19.3% compared to *The Guardian*. *The Nation* newspaper had 28.3% coverage.

The study also revealed that the government was not silent on the saga as assumed but was caught unawares about the leakage of the information and thought that directing the masses' attention to the pursuit of who leaked the story, 4.4%, would make the people forget about the corrupt act. That distraction led to the issue being blown out of proportion by angry citizens, 33.3%, who felt their resources were being mismanaged. This action was contrary to the promise of zero tolerance for corruption that President Goodluck Jonathan made before his assumption of office. The citizens had expected the President to act firmly and expeditiously by sacking Oduah and sustaining the integrity of the presidency.

Another group that probably could have triggered action on the part of the government would have been the anti-corruption agencies but they did not say much, 1.9%. The report from anti-corruption agencies during this saga was that they were

not allowed to do their work. Kayode Oladele, an international lawyer and chief of staff in the office of the executive chairman of EFCC, explained that the legal system of the country was frustrating their activities. He added that undue delay in the judicial process was another challenge that the organization was facing. Hence, they were indirectly being crippled from doing their work (*The Guardian*, 2014, p.18). Pat Utomi, A respected Nigerian economist, supported this claim when he stated in the Sunday edition of *The Guardian* (March 30, 2014, p.18) that the anti-graft agencies were no longer working as they used to.

About 5% of the reports came from the NGOs/CSGs. Reports from the government officials were just 15.1% while those from politicians, especially those of the opposition parties were 5%. The aviation industry with 13.8% was more interested in how to save its image and the delay on the part of the Presidency only made the tension deteriorate. Even the lawyers who spoke, 2.5%, were more concerned about the safety of whoever leaked the information to the public. None of the party showed interest in what was happening or would happen to the perpetrator of the issue on ground. It can therefore, be inferred that the reasons explained above were responsible for the delay in

action on the part of the government.

Below are a few headlines showing what the stories for the early part of October, 2013, read: “Oduah’s N255m car scandal: we’re searching for those who leaked story – FG”

“N255m car scandal: Falana says Federal Government can’t punish whistleblower”

“Aviation: the audacity of a whistleblower”

“President wants culprits exposed”

Table 1: Distribution of the 322 stories among the four newspapers in terms of prominence

<i>Prominence</i>	Newspapers				Total %
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>This Day</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	
Front page	17.5	47.3	21.0	25.3	32.3%
Inside Page	82.5	49.6	74.2	62.6	62.1%
Back page	0	3.1	4.8	12.1	5.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	28.3%	100%
n=	40	129	62	91	322

All but *The Punch*, gave the Stella Oduah’s scandal an inside page treatment as can be seen from the tables above. *The Punch*, performed more on its front page, 47.3%, while *The Guardian* newspaper had nothing on its back page and others

had few stories. This could be due to the fact that the newspapers dedicate their back pages more to sports. In all, the tables show how each of these newspapers sets its agenda on what the public should see as important.

Table 2: Distribution of the Stella Oduah’s stories in the newspapers

Newspapers	Percent (%)
The Guardian	12.4
The Punch	40.1
ThisDay	19.3
The Nation	28.3
Total	100%, n = 322

Table 2 figures show that *The Punch* newspaper led the group with a total 40.1% news stories on the saga. Although *The Guardian* newspaper is at the rear with 12.4%, the four newspapers all had news items on the saga. The interesting

side to this analysis is that in terms of pages, *The Guardian* and *ThisDay* newspapers had more pages than *The Punch* or *The Nation*, yet they had the least number of stories.

Table 3: Directionality/Slant of the stories by newspapers

Direction	%
Favourable	17.4
Neutral	12.4
Unfavourable	70.2
Total	100% n = 322

Results from Table 3 show that more than seven out of ten of the stories were negative reports against the Minister. Less than a quarter

17.4%, was to her benefit while 12.4% were neither favorable nor unfavorable.

Table 4: Distribution of Stella Oduah's stories over the period of study

Period of Study	Percent (%)
October 2013	49.4
November 2013	26.1
December 2013	5.6
January 2014	6.5
February 2014	9.9
March 2014	2.5
Total	100% n=322

Although the scandal lasted some six months, almost half of the news stories, 49.4%, were recorded in October (Table 4) and only just above one quarter of the stories, 26.1%, were recorded for November. By December, the level of reportage had drastically dropped to only 5.6%. The trend picked up by barely an additional percent, 6.5% in January 2014, and only 9.9%, by February 2014. By March 2014, the reportage of the saga was already fizzling out. This showed that media had moved on to fresher stories and the newspaper houses were enthusiastic latest developments. The big story as at then was the death of the Ex-South African President and anti-apartheid hero, Nelson Mandela, at 95years old. Global attention was shifted to South Africa and Stella Oduah became the least of anyone's worry at the time.

Reports had it that this was not the first time the media would abandon a story and move on to a new scoop. In fact, there were several other corrupt cases that were still pending such as the Malabu and \$1.1billion scandals, the massive subsidy fraud of 300 billion naira in the petroleum sector headed by the Minister of Petroleum, Diezani Alison-Madueke; the case of money laundering trial against ex-Delta State Governor, James Ibori, etc. which the media neglected and moved on to new stories. This method of reportage says little when it comes to how helpful the media have been in helping the government in the implementation of its promises. The media sets the agenda and once their attention on a particular thing moves to another, the attention of the masses moves too. The government could see this as an opportunity to dodge from fulfilling its promises to the people.

Table 5: Distribution of story types covered during the saga

<i>Story Types</i>	<i>%</i>
News stories	53.4
News analysis	5.0
Interpretative stories	2.2
Feature articles	2.8
Cartoon/caricatures	2.5
Editorial	3.1
Public service announcement	.3
Letters to the editor	2.5
Comments/opinion	24.5
Interviews	1.2
Photos	1.6
Personality profile	.6
Other	.3
Total	100% n = 322

Table 5 shows that the media performed their primary roles of informing, teaching/educating, watching out for the good of the people with 53.4%, news stories published on the scandal. The citizens were all also provided with a platform – comments/opinions, 24.5%, to speak and to contribute amongst others.

Conclusion

The commendable effort of the mass media in the depth of coverage of the Stella Oduah's scandal, especially, in the first month (October 2013) cannot be overlooked. However, their inconsistency and ability to follow through a story need to change. As agenda setters – the media have to

know that once they take their attention off a story, the masses follow suit. This can serve as an excuse for the government to drag the corruption cases while waiting for new things to happen and knowing that it is only a matter of time that the media forget about those cases.

Recommendations

From the study, it has been discovered that the Nigerian mass media have a huge responsibility as a result of the high expectations from the government and its citizens. The following recommendations can aid their improvement and provision of quality service:

- The media cannot go outside their framework of reporting, commenting, entertaining, monitoring the environments, etc. but they can talk and write about the corrupt practices, cover all the proceedings and make sure that nothing is swept under the carpet. The media should express and voice serious concerns over what corruption has systematically prevented the country from achieving – attaining a level of development consistent with its level of national wealth and resources. Where reporters are threatened, Omojola (2013, p. 88) suggests that they can engage in undercover reporting with its attendant “dissembled declarations” and “intense dramaturgy.”
- Since the importance of the mass media has been established, they should not relent in their dissemination of information about government and its activities. This would help the people make informed decisions.
- The need exists for balance/fair reportage to ensure political tranquility and social harmony in the society.
- They should avoid criticizing the government based on past experiences of unfulfilled anti-corruption promises. This can lead to the masses being pessimistic and hostile to a government and its policies.
- Because of the high level of corrupt practices in Nigeria, journalists must be on guard and bear in mind the fact that they are agents of change. Therefore, in the execution of their duties, they should never forget the professional code of ethics and their conscience. Journalists should also learn to expose unethical practices of fellow journalists and the media owner.
- Owners of media outfits are to pay their staff (journalists) sustainable salaries because with incentives and the right motivation (especially in terms of tools to work with), seeking compromises and disregarding ethical standards are reduced.
- The Nigerian journalists still need a lot of training, especially in the area of writing. As Sobowale (2007, p.103) points, many persons do not know why they should communicate whether verbally or written. Many set out to impress rather than to inform. Journalists should learn basic terminologies in different areas of reportage. For instance, a journalist without basic knowledge of political science may find it difficult to present a good report on political events, if he had not

learnt the basic terms in political reporting and how they are used (Popoola, 2013, p.42).

- Media owners should know that objectivity is a fundamental

principle of reporting. They should allow journalist to do their job without unnecessary interference.

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An Evaluation of Reputation Management in Selected Federal Universities in South West Nigeria

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Abstract: This study evaluates reputation management in selected federal universities in South West Nigeria. Questionnaire (for 423 respondents), interview and focus group discussion were used to generate the needed data. Findings show that most of the respondents were not oblivious of the concept of reputation management in a university environment. Their knowledge of these institutions' reputation also created a favorable impression although a category of stakeholders were unimpressed, owing to lack access to the required information or updates about these institutions. The study notes that universities stand a good chance of building a good reputation if they establish and sustain good relationships with one another.

Keywords: Public relations, relationships, management, universities, reputation, south west Nigeria.

Introduction

Reputation management is an important aspect of every

responsible organization. Not only does it help the organization to distinguish itself, it is also a strategy

that helps shape the attitudes, beliefs, opinions and actions of its internal and external publics. Wartick, (1992: p.33) asserts that a reputation is an aggregate evaluation about how well an organization is meeting stakeholder expectations based on its past behaviors.

The reputation of an organization can be developed through the information stakeholders have concerning the organization. Much of this information comes from within the organization or news reports as media coverage is an essential method solicited to manage reputation of an organization (Carroll & McCombs, 2003). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and so forth also constitute a source of information. It is widely believed that stories from such secondary sources as social media can trigger organizational crises.

The stakeholders' desire is for the organization to meet their expectations. Where this is not possible, an expectation gap occurs and this is problematic for organization's reputation (Reichart, 2003, p.58). Reputations are based largely on how stakeholders evaluate an organization's ability to meet their expectations and this is especially so for a university. The fact The word "university" encompasses such words as *universe*, *universal*, *universally*,

which is an indication that a higher institution should operate an all-inclusive policy towards its publics. This study, against this background, evaluates reputation and how it is managed in some selected universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

University reputation anchors on the relationships that exist between the institution, its staff, students and other stakeholders within the context of the institution's vision and core values. The university's inability to manage the publics' perception of the vision and values creates an expectation gap that could lead to crises. While focusing on some federal government-operated tertiary systems in Nigeria the questions are asked: Does Nigerian universities engage in reputation management? If yes, to what extent and what strategies do these universities adopt for an effective reputation management?

Objectives of the Study

The study transposes the foregoing questions to the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of awareness of universities in South-West about reputation management.
2. To evaluate the influence of reputation management on the image of universities in South West.

3. To determine the extent to which Universities in South West are engage in Reputation Management

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in the study:

- The level of awareness does not correlate with respondents' perception of university's reputation.
- The level of satisfaction with reputation management strategies adopted by a university does not affect on the rating of the university image.

Theoretical framework and literature review

This study anchors on the relationship management theory which postulates that the success of an organization's programs depends largely on the quality of its relationship and not the quantity of the messages produced. Ledingham (2003) who has proposed relationship management as the core of a general theory of public relations argues that measuring the success or malfunction of long-term relationships is an important element in the assessment of public relations and corporate communications activity. As important as it can be for an organization to measure Public relations outputs and outcomes, it is even more important for an organization to measure

relationships. This is because for most organizations measuring outputs and outcomes can only give information about the effectiveness of a particular or specific public relations program or event that has been undertaken according to Hon & Grunig (1999). Ledingham (2005, pp. 740-743) proposes the following basic principles of relationship management:

- The core focus of public relations is relationships.
- Successful relationships involve benefit both for an organization and interacting publics.
- Organization-public relationships are dynamic; that is, they change overtime.
- Relationships are driven by the needs and wants of organizations and publics, and the relationship quality depends on perceptions of the degree to which expectations are fulfilled.
- Effective management of organization-public relationships leads to increased understanding and benefit both for organizations and publics.
- The success of organization-public relations is, measured in terms of relationship quality, rather than message production or dissemination.
- Communication is a strategic tool in managing relationships, but communication alone cannot sustain long-term relationships

in the absence of organization behavior.

- Organization- public relationships are influenced by relational history, the nature of the interaction, the frequency of exchange, and reciprocity.
- Organization- public relationships can be categorized by type (personal, professional, community), and whether they are symbolic (communication driven) or behavioral (program driven).
- Relationship building is application in all aspects of public relations study and practice.

This theory is anchored on public relations practices. Looking at the principles suggested in the theory, the core responsibility of the public relations officer is to build and maintain a good relationship between and among the various stakeholders of the university. Through the use of communication strategies, the public relations officer can manage its reputation.

The role of Public Relations in Managing University Reputation

Universities engage in public relations to manage their relationship with their stakeholders. University relations task is an important aspect of the job of the public relations practitioner. Baskin, Aronoff & Lattimore (2003, p. 116) assert that one of the major

components of public relations is a university news service whose job is to publicize the information that originates from the campus. They add that university relations officials do this by responding to calls from reporters. They make use of news releases and feature stories about the occurrence of important events, for instance, the appointment of a new vice chancellor.

Special events management is another aspect of university relations. According to Heath (2005) an educational institution is overwhelmed with special events- which can include new building dedication, matriculation, and convocation.

The third area is the communication of the University's image through graphic arts and web design. Heath (2005, p.742) explains that such work usually includes the display of the university logo, project planning, and a great deal of photography video and audio.

The creation and production of University publications whether books or University and alumni magazines is also under university relations. Ledingham (2000) states that tasks that are not easily classified but falls under the purview of University relations officers include the following:

- providing an overview of press clippings for senior level administrators

- offering editorial project assistance to departments
- engaging in crisis management when matters do not go well, and
- Offering training for faculty and staff.

Against this backdrop, the importance of public relations cannot be overemphasized. The aspects of the university which public relations officers project in the management of the university reputation are image and identity, vision and culture (Collins & Porras, 1996, p. 234), personality, research output and products, institutional confidence and goodwill (Rotfeld, Abernathy & Parson, 1990; Dowling, 2002). It is also important that universities establish a sustainable relationship with other universities (local and international), as means of building good reputation. This, Fombrun (2000, p. 34) asserts, influences rival institutions' actions toward the university.

Research Methodology

The research design encompasses a survey (using a questionnaire), interview and focus group discussion to elicit responses. Three institutions - Obafemi Awolowo University (Ile Ife), University of Ibadan and Federal University of Agriculture (Abeokuta) - were selected randomly from six universities. This study was

interested in the analysis of reactions from the combined population of the three universities. Using Cochran's (1977) sampling formula, 423 respondents were sampled from a composite population figure of 51,230 comprising staff, students and members of the host communities.

Furthermore, the public relations officers from the sampled universities were the respondents for the interview session. Three focus group discussions were conducted in the three selected universities. Each focus group comprised eight discussants, giving a total of 24. Two members each from the public relations department, host community, the student union, and staff constituted the panel for the focus group discussion.

Data analysis, findings and interpretation

In this session, the data from completed questionnaire were summarized and presented in frequencies and percentages for quantitative data. Out of 423 questionnaire copies, 408 respondents returned the questionnaire for data analysis. Thus, data analysis was based on the returned questionnaire.

Research Question (RQ) 1: What is the level of awareness of Universities in South-West about Reputation Management?

Responses to RQ1 showed that majority of 403 respondents, representing 98.8% opined they were aware of the reputation management of their universities. Five (5) of the 408, representing 1.2% did not share this view.

With regard to the source of awareness about university reputation management, 121 respondents, representing 29.3 percent opined that they became aware of their universities' reputation through reports in the media, 76 respondents, representing 18.4 percent knew about the reputation from what students said about the reputation. Also, 67 respondents representing 16.2% said they got to know about the reputation from what the corporate

world said about research output and products while 144 respondents, representing 36.1 percent, got the information about reputation from the recognition and awards received by the institutions.

On the level of awareness of reputation management, 44 respondents representing 10.7 said there was a low level of awareness of reputation management. The majority of the respondents – 229 – or 55.4% responded that level of awareness was average. A total of 135 (33.9%) respondents said the level of awareness was high. The foregoing analysis enables us to construct a table of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of the awareness and perception of university reputation management.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between the level of awareness and perception of university reputation

Hypothesis one: The level of awareness has no correlation with respondents' perception of university's reputation

Variables	Awareness (x)	Perception (y)	X ²	Y ²	XY
Low level awareness	44	323	1936	104329	14212
Average	229	85	52441	7225	19465
High level	135	0	18225	0	0
Total	Σx=408	Σy=408	ΣX²= 72602	ΣY²= 111554	ΣYX=33677

df=406, x cal= -0.704, Table Value= 0.997

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the calculated r-value of -0.704 is less than the critical r-

value of 0.997 at 0.05 alpha level with 406 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis that

the level of awareness has no correlation with respondents' perception of university's reputation is accepted. With regard to whether or not the perception of university's reputation emanated from the level of awareness: 323 respondents, representing 78.2% of the total respondents affirmed this while 85 (21.8%) negated the poser.

RQ2: What is the level of influence of reputation management on the image of universities in South West?

The influence of reputation management strategies adopted on universities' image is positive. To this end, 372(90.1%) of the respondents affirmed this while 36 (9.9%) negated the statement. The following table treats the null hypothesis that satisfaction with reputation management strategies adopted by a university does not impact on the rating of the university image.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient showing the relationship between level of satisfaction with strategies adopted and its impact on the university image

Variables	Rating of satisfaction (x)	Strategies used in reputation (Y)	X ²	Y ²	XY
Very satisfactory	92	372	8464	138384	34224
Satisfactory	265	36	65536	1296	9216
Not satisfactory	60	0	3600	0	0
Total	Σx=408	Σy=408	ΣX²=77600	ΣY²=139680	ΣYX=43440

df =1, x cal= -0.0005, Table Value= 0.997

Data presented in Table 2 indicates that the calculated r-value of -0.0005 is less than the critical r-value of 0.997 at 0.05 alpha level with 406 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that the satisfaction with reputation management strategies adopted by a university does not

impact on the rating of the university image is accepted.

On the rating of the universities image based on the reputation management strategies adopted, 256 respondents representing 62.0% rated the assertion as satisfactory. Also 92 respondents representing 22.3% were very satisfied, 60 respondents representing 15.7%

perceived the assumption as unsatisfactory. On whether the universities have a true academic image, responses gathered from the respondents show that majority of the respondents 376 felt that the institutions had good formal educational image nationally and internationally. On the other hand, 32 respondents representing 9.0% believed held sway.

When these figures were analyzed in degrees, majority of the respondents believed that the level of the academic image was moderate. This is evident by 170 respondents representing 41.2% of the total respondents who shared this view. A total 168 respondents representing 40.7% noted that the University's educational image was very high. The data also show that 27 respondents representing 7.7% asserted that the level of the educational image of the Universities was unimpressive while 43 respondents representing 10.4% were undecided. The last question item on whether the university image explains reputation comes up with the majority of 384 respondents, representing 93.0 percent opining that if faced with student from other universities in the world, the universities image explains their reputation. However, 24 respondents representing 7.0 percent of the total respondents did not share this view.

Research question 3: What is the extent to which Universities in South West are engaged in Reputation Management?

Responses from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion provided answer to this research question.

Analysis of qualitative data from in-depth interview on the Extent of engaging in Reputation Management

The quest for maintaining a favorable reputation appeared to be the most dominant activity in the public relations activities of these universities. For some, maintaining standards as the first, best or world class was a major concern while in others, factors such as conducive learning environment, social facilities, the awareness of the university name, product (graduates) quality, admission criteria, library facilities, quality of academic staff, social responsibility amongst others, were the major areas public relations officers placed more emphasis. All the public relations officers noted that they ensured that all the activities of the institution incorporated the vision.

Analysis of qualitative data from focus group discussion on the extent of engagement in reputation management

Responding on the extent of engagement in reputation management, some of the

participants admitted that the vision and mission statements of the universities were emphasized in programs and activities in order to protect their reputation. They stated that efforts were made by the institutions to improve on staff/students' character and learning, sound knowledge, integrity and excellence as well as the projection of these efforts, which are critical to achieving good reputation.

Discussion of findings

Responses from Table 1 indicate that majority of 403 respondents representing 98.8% agreed that they were aware of the reputation of their universities. However, five respondents, representing 1.2% of the total respondents did not share this view. The data from Table 2 revealed that 121 respondents, representing 29.3 percent of the respondents opined that they became aware of their universities reputation through reports in the media; 67 (16.2%) said they got to know about it from what the corporate world said while 144 respondents, representing 36.1 percent, got the information from the recognitions and awards received by the institutions. This is an indication that the public relations officers were active as they made use of the channels of communication at their disposal to

communicate to the universities' stakeholders.

Table 3 revealed the level of awareness of reputation management in the universities. The majority of the respondents 229 representing 55.4% responded that there was average level of awareness. However, 135(33.9%) respondents said the level of awareness of was high. The question which sought to know whether the perception of reputation proceeded from respondents' level of awareness came with 323 respondents (representing 78.2% of total) who affirmed this while 85 (21.8%) negated the assertion.

The 44 respondents, representing 10.7 percent from table 3 said there was a low level of awareness about their universities' reputation management. Furthermore, the 76 respondents, representing 18.4 percent from table 2 who knew about the reputation from what students said about suggests that this category of stakeholder did not have direct access to information and where they got information it was from secondary source or sources which could have been rumor. In line with this, some authors (e.g. Carroll & McCombs, 2003: p .34) have observed that second-hand information from social media on the internet, such as weblogs and second-hand information from other people (e.g., word of mouth), could

trigger crises. This is also in line with the hypothesis tested that the calculated r-value of -0.704 is less than the critical r-value of 0.997 at 0.05 alpha level with 406 degree of freedom - a reason why the null hypothesis (that the level of awareness has no correlation with respondents' perception of university's reputation) was accepted.

The foregoing findings suggest that the level of awareness of the reputation and reputation management of the universities can determine the level at which stakeholders perceive their universities, which in turn occasion their impression. Stakeholders' interests must be considered when managing reputation as ignoring such could elicit problems about reputation. It is noteworthy that reputation is a collective representation of images and perceptions, not a self-promoted message. It involves relationships and partnerships with all stakeholders and may be lost with time if not sustained. Amon (2004) has observed that image is affected by attitudes and communication styles in an organization with regard to the relationships that exist between management, employees and its publics.

Where there are mixed feelings about the level of communication relationships, it implies that all the

stakeholders are not carried along, the right channels of communication are not used and information flow is not properly managed. Thus, the public relations officers need to know that a university, by nature, has large and diverse publics who they should manage well in the interest of that institution. Therefore, university relations activities constitute a major function of the public relations practitioner for effective reputation management.

Analyses of the answers to RQ2, shown earlier, zeroed in on the level of influence of reputation management on the image of universities in South West Nigeria. The import of the analyses is that respondents believed that the reputation management strategies adopted by the universities had influence on its image. Accordingly, the public relations activities of universities should be to improve the overall standards to make them locally and globally acceptable.

This agrees with the widely-held assertion that a university is about a 'universe,' with commonness of practices, processes, methods, policies and strategies of providing learning and training at the highest level of formal education. Fornbrum's (2000, p. 34) conception of institution's relationship with other institutions also makes meaning in this regard.

According to him “University’s good relations influence rivals institutions and actions toward the university...”

RQ3 analyses show the extent to which universities in South West Nigeria were engaged in reputation management. The public relations officers noted that their activities involved maintaining standards as the first, best or world class universities. Factors such as conducive learning environment, social facilities, the awareness of the university brand, quality of graduates, admission criteria, library facilities, quality of academic staff, social responsibility amongst others, were the areas of emphasis in maintaining a good image of the institutions. All the public relations officers noted that they ensured that all the activities incorporated the vision.

Quantitative data from the focus group discussion show that participants admitted that the vision and mission statement of the university were also emphasized in the universities’ programs and activities in order to protect the reputation of the University. They also discussed that efforts were made to improve on character and learning, sound knowledge, integrity and excellence as well as project the efforts to their publics. They, however, stated that extra efforts were needed especially in the area

of relating with the host communities and other external stakeholders.

The contributions of Bateman & Snell (2009) support the above analysis by noting that a university vision serves as guide line for the clarification of expectations. The vision and values of a university are expected to manifest in services provided by a university as well as its activities. Consistency of manifestation is basic to the maintenance and sustenance of a university culture and reputation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

One finding of note in this study is that a segment of the university publics felt it was neglected. According to Deacon et al (1999, cited in Omojola & Yartey, 2016, p.16) such neglect “over-emphasizes certain sections of the population” and could be a source of conflict. Therefore, since the reputation management task has a communitarian aspect (Omojola, 2008, p. 176) it is important that all interests are taken into account when managing the reputation of a university, as ignoring such could lead to crisis. In addition to an all-inclusive policy of university authorities as a way of ensuring and maintaining a good reputation, the following are also recommended: Universities should have a well-defined set of rules that guide their

relationships with the various stakeholders. This helps reputation managers to clearly identify their terms of reference when engaging these publics.

A regular assessment of a university's reputation is necessary. Some universities dwell in past glory. This is common with old universities which operate in the illusion of positive image. The

assessment should be conducted against the rules that define a university's relationship with its publics. When these rules are juxtaposed with feedbacks from stakeholders, what becomes manifest is the status of the reputation and this development lets reputation managers know whether this reputation should be maintained or upgraded.

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Non-Governmental Organizations in the Eyes of Newspapers in Nigeria: 2013 – 2016 in Focus

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Abstract: This study examines the activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria that attracted newspaper coverage. Nine NGO themes in 488 stories of four leading titles – *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *ThisDay* – published between 2013 and 2016, were studied. Findings show that 82 reports appeared, representing 17%. NGOs reports occupied the least prominent, inner pages of the newspapers. Whilst *Daily Trust* appeared as the best NGO-friendly newspaper, 95% of the overall reportage was found positive. Infant and maternal health attracted 28% attention ahead of eight other themes. Also discovered were 12 dailies of “zero report” of NGO activities by all the newspapers. Overall results confirm the assertions that NGOs are poorly reported in Nigeria. The study recommends the creation of newspaper columns for NGO stories and a forum that connects both journalists and NGO operators.

Keywords: Activities, coverage, non-governmental organizations, newspapers, advocacy.

Introduction

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contrast in their pursuits, direction, location and aspiration but

communication is their common denominator. Individual experiences are known to have birthed socially-concerned agenda. Also, fractured

governance combines with failed elected leadership to rewire expectant but disappointed followers into seeking benevolent alternatives to underperforming administrations. In Nigeria, as confirmed by Farinde and Adisa (2005), NGOs play complementary, advisory and advocacy roles in several sectors of interests ranging from human rights advocacy, girl-child empowerment, small-scale industrialization, health, agriculture, ICT, sports, community development activities and women elevation, especially in the area of political participation (Aririguzoh, 2014, p.32; 2015). Global Forum on Agricultural Research–GFAR (2003) for instance, affirms that NGOs are gradually building networks around thematic or geographic interests to help increase their impact through the exchange of ideas and information as well as in mobilizing support from both government and the masses in the country. Whether motivated by a singular experiential action or multiple mass convictions, the existence of NGOs needs communication as an elixir of life. Communication analysts agree that NGOs are inadequately reported by newspapers.

In spite of the argument that NGOs rise and fall, there is no doubt, as admitted by Bibu, Lisetchia, and Brancua (2013, p.481) that they

remain relevant in today's world because of the umbrella of assurance which they provide to the mass of the people through subsidized or gratis services. Non-governmental organizations understand that achieving self-defined key performance indicators (KPI) boosts their existential objectives and donor-attraction. In contradistinction, a deficit of action is their death knell. Once an NGO is perceived, acknowledged and acclaimed to have substantially impacted the targeted receivers of its advocacy, it is considered to have contributed to the collective asset of the body of NGOs. Curiously, the perception, acknowledgment and acclaim in reference are not the preserve of those touched by a particular NGO but a shared value judgment of the general public. Thus, while it is expedient to touch the lives of a carefully defined set of people because human beings feel safe in a group with collective interests (Bromideh, 2011), it is imperative for NGOs to inform and educate the larger society on their achievements and challenges. Once again, they cannot but communicate in order to rise and not fall.

Lacuna as something in nothing clearly indicates that in all things, there is always gap; and it must be filled at one time or another. It may be contended that socio-economic and political gaps which are

yawning for the government to fill are circumstances in which NGOs are born; however, governments are not necessarily the creators of all vacuums. NGOs as explained by Cubukcu (2010, p.2481) are organizations with private origination and not solely dependent on any state organ. They are recognized by scholars around the world as major third sector players that fill gaps of development, human rights; humanitarian, environmental, and many other areas of public life (Lewis, 2009, p. 2). For instance, Ebola outbreak as a healthcare lacuna was not essentially the creation of governments but a broad-based healthcare gap for both existing governments and non-governmental organizations, new or renewed, to perform their roles in ending the dreaded disease. Ebola's occurrence in Nigeria confirmed, particularly by media reportage, that gaps are not necessarily generated by governments and that the two bodies are not conjoint but mutually-supportive entities in dealing with such a lacuna. But how would NGOs fill a gap if they are not aware of its existence?

Types and structures of NGOs vary. Lewis and Kanji (2009, p.1) state that NGOs could be large or small, formal or informal, bureaucratic with strong central authority or flexible with a loose structure.

Many of them are externally-funded through grants, sponsorships and donations while others depend on locally-mobilized resources and membership subscriptions (Besler & Sezerel, 2011, p. 1258). Though, there are many NGOs which receive funding from the United Nations for instance, there are others which choose to work outside the world of aid as far as possible. However, there are also numerous bogus NGOs, such as those established as fronts by government officials (government-arranged NGOs) or as Lewis (2007) calls them, "briefcase NGOs." These are usually set up by greedy government officials purely for personal gains. In spite of this, some NGOs are well-resourced and affluent, whilst others lead a fragile "hand to mouth" animation of existence, gasping for survival. There are NGOs with highly professionalized uniform staff and fleets of vehicles for easy crusade, whilst others lean heavily on volunteers' shoulders. No matter their circumstances, they all need to communicate, even though their structure could determine the reach, depth and spread of their messages.

From Morris-Suzuki's (2000, p. 68) perspective, NGOs could be secular or "faith-based", informal or incorporated, charitable, radical or empowerment-based. Their focus may be on change, but they can equally work to conserve existing

social and political systems in a country. Then again, their involvement in politics, if any, should never be pronounced as this could compromise the initial intention of their establishment. Bibu et al (2013, p. 482) pointed out that NGOs are known for two basic types of activities which are often interrelated: the delivery of basic services to people in need, and organizing policy advocacy and public campaigns for change. At the same time, NGOs play a variety of specialized roles such as emergency response, democracy building, conflict resolution, issue marketing, human rights work, cultural preservation, environmental activism, youth mobilization, policy analysis, research and information provision (Biswas, 2007). Nonetheless, some NGOs aim to meet only immediate needs, while others have a big picture to develop alternative ideas and approaches to problems. A single NGO might combine several of these different functions at any time and operate successfully. In all these, public awareness of their posturing through the news media is critical (Coalition for the International Criminal Court, 2003). Bad news as good news is time-tested and accepted in journalism. Both serve as locomotive for each other. Bad news challenge NGOs to hatch good news. It is arguable that

the location of bad news is the potential birthplace of an NGO (Cohn & White, 2007). For instance, the bad news of insecurity in the North East Nigeria sprang up many security-focused NGOs; and the aftermath of terrorist displacements in that part of the country influenced the sprouting of NGOs aiming at providing means of livelihood for internally evacuated and socially dislocated persons in solitary camps. The overall objective of NGOs in these two connected instances would definitely be the replacement of bad news with good news, a thing that the media, especially in Nigeria, often relish. But how do the media, especially the newspapers do it? How do they report NGOs good news whilst searching occupationally for bad news?

These questions are answered in this study by treating the distinctive offerings of NGOs as well as the relevant news clusters of leading national dailies. To exhaustively cover this topic, the paper carved out a statement of problem, clear objectives, research questions and thereafter, explored the evolution of NGOs. In this work, NGOs are classified as engines of social progress, concerted development and adhesive cohesion. The media bridge between the people and NGOs are examined with specific focus on thematic brackets of news

tabloids. This study is anchored on the agenda-setting theory, and content-analyzed the inclusive reportage of NGOs by top four national newspapers over a period of four years to show in quantum expressions, the expediency or otherwise of the medium to the delivery of NGOs messages in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Non-government organizations are analytically difficult to pin down (Lewis, 2009, p. 2) due to the specificity in their diversity. For instance, despite the fact that NGOs are neither fully run by a government, nor driven by the profit motive, some of them subliminally receive pocket-puffing government funding; whilst some others with unclear sources of burgeoning affluence are suspicious pipes for money laundering.

Integrity, openness, visible followership, social relevance and consistent volunteer support are hallmarks of responsible and respectable NGOs, especially from the perspectives of structural, formal and operational appurtenances (Salamon, 1992). Bibu et al (2013) and Willets (2002) are of a similar opinion that non-governmental organizations must stand on strong, enduring organizational and self-governing structures, be formed by institutionalized private promoters, pursue social needs rancor-free,

independent of government control, not distributing largesse, not interested in political power and non-criminal. The problem is that all NGOs cannot boast of all these virtues if put to a deep-stick clinical test.

Consequently, the activities of NGOs in the world today drive them under the spotlight, earning them both an eloquence of applause and echoing alarms. None of this would have been heard or known without the mass media which are inherent circulators of information. For instance, without the media, only few people would have known that NGOs such as MTN Foundation, Dangote Foundation, All Youth against Cancer (AYAC), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, etc. have enjoyed tremendous commendations compared to others such as the Albino Foundation which have writhed in discrimination and stigmatization. Yet, an army of NGOs are either unknown or in lassitude, thereby requiring complimentary media voice for service delivery awareness and operational revitalization.

In summary, there is a general observation that NGOs are poorly reported by newspapers in Nigeria, in spite of their acclaimed importance in driving socioeconomic development in the country. Current gaps in reporting NGO activities, if not filled, would

discourage the operators and further slow down the country's development and benevolent activities. The country generally and the people specifically need greater awareness to be able to tap into the deliverables of NGOs' activities nationwide. How newspapers currently face the responsibility of reporting these activities and fill the current gap is the major focus of this study.

Objectives of the study and Research Questions

This study examines the frequency of NGOs' coverage by leading national newspapers within the past four full years (2013 -2016) in Nigeria, and the degree of prominence given to NGOs' activities. Other objectives of this study include the identification of best NGO-friendly tabloid, based on the weight of reportage, as well as the negativity, positivity or neutrality of the reports.

To drive the achievement of these objectives, the following research questions suffice:

1. What was the frequency of coverage given to NGOs' activities by the selected newspapers within the past four full years (2013 -2016)?
2. How much prominence was given to NGOs' activities on the pages of the newspapers?

3. How much attention was given to NGO-focused themes by the newspapers?
4. Which national tabloid was the best NGO-friendly in terms of coverage volume of NGOs' activities in the country?
5. Are newspapers' reports of NGOs' activities predominantly positive, negative or neutral?

The historicism, classification and activities of NGOs in Nigeria

Whilst tracing NGOs back to industrialized western countries in the mid-nineteenth century, Willets (2002) affirmed that the term "NGO" was made popular in the 1945 Charter of United Nations Organization (UNO) which differentiated between participation rights for intergovernmental specialized agencies and international private organizations.

Historically, most NGOs emerged from relatively small-scale origins and metamorphosed into larger organizations (Besler & Sezerel, 2011). Small scale as operationalized in this study refers to the micro level where an individual takes action or a group of people of like minds congregate to tackle a perennial socioeconomic and political problem. By inference, NGOs in Nigeria predated 1945 having existed in various forms of age groups, social clubs and descendant associations, which were established by various passionate or

influential persons, private organizations, missionary institutions, etc. Since 1930 (NNNGO.org, 2014), the documented NGOs in Nigeria were mainly community-based and they drew membership from defined demographics, ethnic affinities and proximate geographical axis.

Nigeria, like other countries has names for NGOs such as non-profit organizations, voluntary organizations, charitable organizations and civil societies. To a large extent, these names have foreign influence. Lewis (2009) reveals that in the United States of America, 'non-profit organization' is frequently used because these organizations are believed to be non-commercial public good-doers. While in the United Kingdom, it is common to hear 'voluntary organization' or 'charity' due to the long tradition of volunteer 'non-political' works of Christian missionaries over the years.

Historical classifications of NGOs present them either as profit-seeking or non-profit, the former having given way for the later after several years of interchanging co-existence. Quite instructive is the classification of NGOs based on organizational goal by Bibua et al (2013, p.481), which states that profit-seeking NGOs are private commercial agents; whereas non-profit NGOs are associations,

foundations, unions and even political parties.

NGOs, like other types of organizations, are continually in a state of flux; dynamic and driven by winds of interest. Without prejudice to their hardly-displayed and advertised foibles (Odiboh, 2002), NGOs play three key roles of implementers, catalysts and partners, according to Lewis (2009, pp.1-2).

- The implementer role is concerned with the mobilization of resources to provide goods and services to the needy. Such services include healthcare, microfinance, agricultural extensions, emergency relief and human rights. This role has amplified as NGOs are increasingly responding to human emergencies and natural disasters with humanitarian assistance.
- Ability to inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote social transformation sum up the catalyst role of NGOs. This effort, Lewis explained, could be directed towards individuals or groups in local communities in the form of empowerment, advocacy and entrepreneurship at all social levels.
- The partnership role refers to the joint deliverables of an NGO

through associations with donors, private and public contributors as well as other non-competing NGOs. This role includes undertaking socially responsible business initiatives and community-based capacity building.

Generally, NGOs in Nigeria are driven by a range of motivations and values (Nwocha, 2011) built into a regulatory code of conduct which helps to increase their reliability (Iheme, n.d). TheNNNGO.org, (2014) portal lists the principles of ethical operation for NGOs in eight sections which include democratic governance, civic courage and care, sustainability and prudence in funds and resources management, responsibility and accountability among others.

In spite of their historical and vast contributions to human and socioeconomic development in Nigeria, NGOs are beset by several challenges, the most disturbing of which is the media exposure. Lewis (2001) and Bromideh (2011) outlined the other challenges as access to funding, inadequate resources, weak governance, insecure staff career development and public trust. This study focuses on the media exposure of NGOs' activities in Nigeria.

Components, Nature, Characteristics of the Media in Nigeria

Media components are similar in today's technology-driven world but their acceptability and usage differ from one country to another. Internet reproductions of traditional media content through iconoclastic online newspapering, telecast streaming and radio podcasting are gaining grounds in advanced countries; but yet to be fully embraced by over a hundred million Nigerians ex-metropolis. This explains why the traditional media and their internet replications coexist functionally with the former leading holding sway in larger sections of the country.

Television possesses arresting, colorful, audio-motion properties which stimulate viewers' attention and calibrate vivid imagination at all times. News and program broadcast on this medium could be recorded and stored for future view. However, immobility, erratic power supply, high cost of possession, hostage of viewers and invasion of foreign content discount from its value as a local mass medium in Nigeria.

Radio is the cheapest medium and could be acquired gratis either as a vehicular item or a structural accompaniment of a compact disc player. As a portable, mobile, friendly and land-travel partner, the

audio medium delivers listening pleasures without subjecting listeners to the discomfiture of divided attention at work, at home, on-the-road and outdoors. Nonetheless, the fleeting nature of news and broadcast, the distracting task of tuning in search for appealing programs, and most especially, poor referential capacity, reduce the value of the radio medium in the business of organizational communication in Nigeria.

Newspapers and magazines represent the print genre of the mass media as veritable reference materials. Whilst magazines hold sway with the gloss finishing of periodic analysis of immediate past occurrences, personality interviews and archival materials; newspapers lead the print industry by meeting the human need for daily updates of news, opinions, events, special organizational supplements, as well as providing the widest media menu of unflinching sectorial reports. As tear-sheets, newspaper publications are the most incontrovertible and best accepted referential business documents in advertising, public relations, marketing, corporate communication and research in all establishments, including non-governmental organizations, not only in Nigeria, but all over the world.

An Overview of Newspapers in Nigeria

Newspapers in Nigeria are generally characterized by ownership, regional bent, ethnic sentimentality, demographic courtesies, professionals' appeal, industrial specialty and print-plummeting online cloning. Circulation figures hitherto applied to rank newspapers have been as controversial as the claim of many to national reach (Aliagan, 2015). But many of them struggle to project themselves as national tabloids. Community newspapers are rendered in indigenous languages but generally, English has remained the phonology of newssheets in the country.

Seventy-five newspapers qualify as dailies but another seventy fluctuate between daily production and erratic weekly presence on newsstands in all the states and federal capital territory of Nigeria, (Nigeria Press Council, 2015). Unflinching newspapering in Nigeria depends on owner-funding, advertising patronage and high sales vending which is notably influenced by trailing publication of newsworthy stories. Since these conditions are not always guaranteed, the continuous survival of the average Nigerian tabloid is suspect. For them, high readership does not equal high sales as millions of the people are free readers or at best, pay-read-and-drop bibliophiles, who

shortchange the publications of income, continuity and potential to be national newspapers. Consequently, only a few newspapers are truly national despite the regional foothold of most of them; and leading the pack is *The Guardian*.

As one of the longest surviving newspapers in Nigeria with 25,222 circulation figure (*AllAfrica.com*, 2010), *The Guardian* is nationally acknowledged as elite in style, language and reader-targeting; and it is by the Newspaper Distributors of Nigeria (NDAN) as the first for captains of industries, top chief executive officers, corporate decision-makers and professionals of national standing. Though its lack of regional foothold reduces its spread, *The Guardian* is also confirmed as the second pick by top government officials whose loyalty to their regional newspapers (such as *The Punch*, *ThisDay* and *Daily Trust*) is unassailable.

Acclaimed with 34,264 daily print run (*AllAfrica.com*, 2010), *The Punch* consistently won national media awards as the most widely read newspaper in Nigeria in the past ten years; and its regional foothold in the South West of the country is often forwarded to either controvert its national readership billing or substantiate its mass niche and simplicity of style.

Appeal to politicians, political parties and partisan appointees all over the country puts *ThisDay* newspaper in the national media firmament, albeit with a circulation of 21,703 copies nationwide. Its tendency to predict election results at all levels of administration and predetermine the decision of the federal government on sensitive national issues attracts to it, the patronage of government officials at the centre and most especially in the combined eastern and middle belt regions of the country.

One newspaper that flaunts its complete regional coverage of the North, as well as the presence of its (Hausa) readers in every nook and cranny of the country, is *Daily Trust*. Printing simultaneously in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt is often added as a technical reason to tag it a national newspaper as no other newspaper has a triple-location printing press in the country. In the vast North, which is three regions combined (and half of the country's geographical expression), no newspaper has successfully challenged *Daily Trust* as the leading tabloid.

Leadership newspaper is one of the many regional papers in the North but which has remained in the grey shadow of *Daily Trust* since it covers only the North East and North Central, albeit inconsistently. Other regional newspapers are

Vanguard (South-South), *Sun* (East), *Tribune* (South West), *Nation* (South West) and others. *The Nation's* claim to national appeal stems from being the mouthpiece of the ruling political party whose members nationwide patronize the publication for updates on core party issues which may not be published elsewhere.

Many other metropolitan, non-national, non-regional newspapers that may be found on the newsstand comprise: *ThisDay*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Pilot*, *Authority* and *National Mirror*. Whilst many are struggling to print, some others have gone online, where all the newspapers narrated above are also active.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, the agenda-setting theory forms the foundational framework. Initiated on the notion that the media is imbued with the capacity to stimulate certain issues in the mind of the receivers of concerned messages, the theory builds prediction on the continuity of repetition. In other words, the more an issue is repeatedly reported, the more the receivers would deem it imperative. Walter Lippmann is credited with the foundation of this theory in 1922; followed by Bernard Cohen in 1963 who said that what readers are given to read would mold their view about the world. Cohen's follower, Max McCombs

and Donald Shaw in 1968, developed the theory and built it further on the correlation between what people thought was important and what was vital in news reports over a certain period of time. The summary of the theory is that media influence public outlook. In relation to this work, the agenda-setting theory basically explains the relationship that exists between the NGOs and the media. Whatever the media report again and again about NGOs is what the public would opine about the organizations.

However, it takes an understanding of the source of an issue, the relevance or otherwise of the matter to its founder and its operationalization. It may be argued that since NGOs are intricate unlike governments, it may not be easy for journalists to set agenda on behalf of charities. In other words, NGOs should be allowed to determine the agenda, ensure that the media get it before exposing it to the public. On the other hand, the media could be positioned to observe public reaction to NGOs and present the solution to identified problem as an agenda for reportage. It would be helpful to the media if the NGOs concerned get the intended agenda. What the NGOs think is important needs the getting of the media and on the other hand, what the media think is important for exposure about charities needs the getting of

NGOs. This is what may be referred to as Agenda getting.

Agenda-getting combines with agenda setting to ground this work properly. Media sets it, NGO gets it; NGO sets it, media gets it. Thereafter, it is repeated as a news item consistently to ensure that the public see it as important. Agenda-setting and agenda-getting would create mutual understanding between the media and NGOs which would translate to massive public awareness of NGOs activities and media support for the charitable organizations.

Method and Materials

Based on the narrative above, four national newspapers (*The Guardian, Punch, ThisDay* and *Daily Trust*) purposively selected were content

analyzed. One of the reasons for selecting these four newspapers is that many readers think that their reporters subscribe to *global ethical practices* (Omojola, 2008, 2014) though this claim is debatable. The period of study included the last two years of the immediate past federal administration and the first two years of the current regime spanning four years (2013 to 2016). This period was further broken down into quarters for extraction of publications from the selected tabloids each year as shown in the table below. The data generated from each of the selected months were processed to provide answers to the research questions and meet the study objectives.

A breakdown of content selection in The Guardian, Punch, ThisDay and Daily Trust

Table 1: 488 daily publications of four national newspapers over 16 weeks of four quarters in four years were content analyzed.

Year	Quarter	Month (Last month of each quarter)	Days
2013	Q1	March	31 days
2014	Q2	June	30 days
2015	Q3	September	30 days
2016	Q4	December	31 days
4 years	Four quarters	Four months (16 weeks x the 4 selected newspapers)	122 daily editions for each newspaper (122 x 4 = 488 daily editions)

Specifically, the placement of stories about NGOs, story categories, origin of stories, themes of the stories, NGO ownership as well as the slant of each reportage were key areas of focus. Story placement refers to the sectional prominence which the newspapers deem fitting for NGO reports: front or back page, inside or center spread positions. Story types or content categories covered are: straight news, news analysis, features, editorial comments, public service announcement, letters-to-the-editor, special interviews, photo-stories, and a host of other NGO report classifications. Originators of exhumed reports also considered are: NGOs, Government, citizens, and journalists. Additionally

indicated is the positivity, negativity or neutrality of each story against the backdrop of the ownership of the NGO (private, corporate, exclusive group or publicly open agglomeration).

Thematic slants of the published stories which were coded are: entrepreneurship, activism and research reports, donations and humanitarian services, sports and youth development; other themes include education awareness and sensitization, child and maternal health, domestic violence, anti-corruption and celebrations. These themes were coded as below for processing the reports retrieved from the newspapers:

Table 2: Nine themes and codes of NGO reportage by the four newspapers

Themes	Codes
Entrepreneurship	1
Activism & Research Reports	2
Donations and Humanitarian services	3
Sports & Youth Development	4
Education, Awareness and Sensitization	5
Child & Maternal Health	6
Domestic Violence	7
Anti-corruption	8
Others(Awards, Celebrations and Anniversaries)	9

Results

The first observation of this study is that the following twenty (20) NGOs received at least a newspaper

mention, each month of the period covered:

1. Albino Foundation

2. All Youth Against Cancer (AYAC)
3. MTN Foundation
4. Tony Elumelu Foundation
5. TY Danjuma Foundation
6. Rochas Foundation
7. Oando Foundation
8. Action Aid International Nigeria
9. PZ Foundation
10. Ford Foundation
11. Cleen Foundation
12. Ovie Brume Foundation
13. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
14. African Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (ANE EJ)
15. Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Professionalism Africa (LEAP Africa)
16. Dangote Foundation
17. Kanu Heart Foundation
18. Nigerian Labor Congress

19. Shuga Limp Foundation and
20. Irede Foundation

The result of this study shows 82 NGO-related reports in 488 daily outputs of four newspapers over four months in four years. It translates to one NGO report in six (6) dailies calculable as $82:488 = \text{ratio } 1:6$; representable in percentage as $(82 \times 100) / 488 = 17\%$. This means that only 17% of the 488 surveyed dailies produced 82 reports on NGO activities within the period in focus.

Whilst 15 days recorded multiple stories, all other dates had at least one NGO-related story (from all the newspapers combined) except dates 14th, 27th and 29th, which recorded zero reports in the calendar months covered. The table below shows 12 days that NGO-related stories were not published (zero reports) by all the four newspapers:

Table 3: Twelve (12) days of zero report of NGO-related stories by all the newspapers content analyzed

	14 th	27th	29 th
March 2013	Thursday	Wednesday	Friday
June 2014	Saturday	Friday	Sunday
September 2015	Monday	Sunday	Tuesday
December 2016	Wednesday	Tuesday	Thursday

Further to this revelation is that whilst all the seven days of a week recorded single digit contribution of

zero report, Monday and Saturday had one day each and all other days had two days of no report.

Table 4: A breakdown of zero report according to days of the week

Day	Contribution of Zero report
Monday	1
Tuesday	2
Wednesday	2
Thursday	2
Friday	2
Saturday	1
Sunday	2
TOTAL	12

Zero reports days/dates across four different months and years may be a coincidence, but it is a noteworthy revelation of this study. Though zero report findings cut across all newspapers, *Daily Trust* produced 44% of NGO-related reports

followed by *The Guardian* with 27%. Both newspapers dominated others but *Daily Trust* should be accorded the best NGO-friendly newspaper among the pack going by this result.

Figure 1: Newspapers reportage of NGOs showing the leadership of Daily Trust

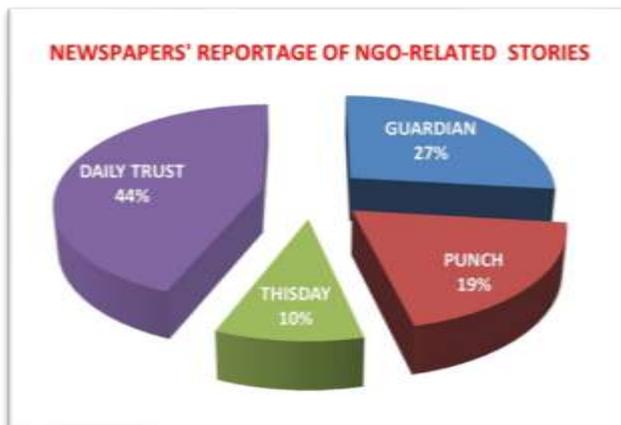


Figure 2: Newspapers’ placement of NGO-related stories showing the preponderant allocation of inner page spaces



The placement of NGO stories were 99% inside pages. Except a single instance in which *The Guardian* gave a prominent cover page space, all newspapers consigned NGO-related reports to the least conspicuous inner recess of their

publications. This shows that the newspapers did not see the newsworthiness of NGOs’ activities to attracting readership or sales, thereby questioning the commercial value of charity reportage.

Figure 3: 15 months interval movement of newspapers’ reportage of NGO-related reports; it shows the highest contribution during September 2015.



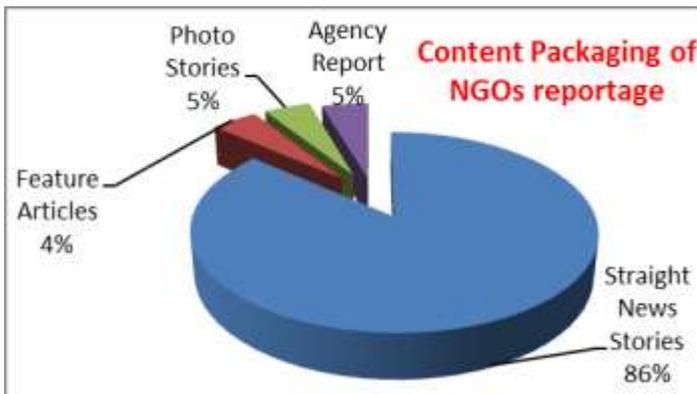
A steady rise in newspapers' reports of NGOs was recorded between 2013 and 2015 with a slight drop in 2016. However, quarter three

(September, 2015) recorded the highest units (32%) reportage of NGO activities which could be seen clearly in Fig 4 below.

Figure 1: Periodic contributions of newspapers' reportage of NGO-related stories showing the percentage advantage of September 2015



Figure 5: Choices for packaging NGO reports showing the vast use of straight news option



The chart above shows that across all newspapers, “straight news stories” about NGOs featured most prominently scoring 85%. Other journalistic methods of packaging

reportorial content such as feature articles, photo stories, and agency reports were poorly deployed.

The straight news coverage further suggests that NGO activities were

either reported as covered by newspaper correspondents or through NGO-generated press releases. Concerning this, the report

shows that journalists initiated 55% and NGOs originated 45% of newspaper reportage during this study as shown in the chart below:

Figure 6: Sources of newspapers' reports of NGO activities, showing higher contribution by journalists

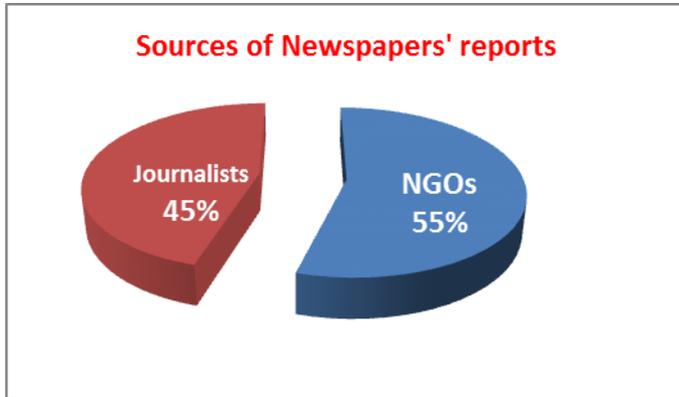
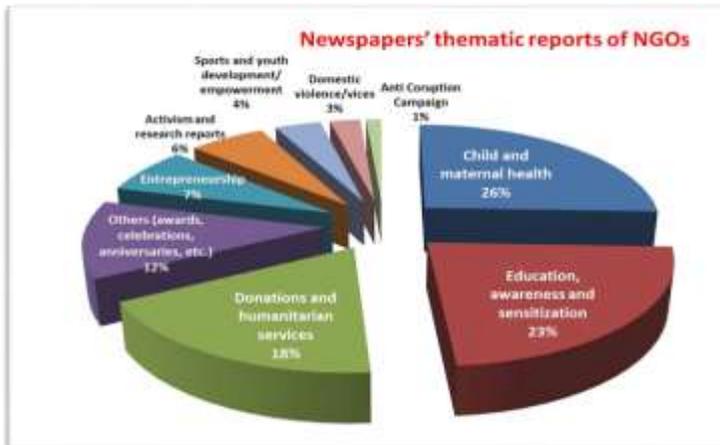


Figure 7: Nine NGO themes as reported by newspapers showing the dominance of “child and maternal survival.”



From the above chart, among the nine themes of reportage examined, “child and maternal survival” scored highest with 26%. Education awareness and sensitization followed closely with 23%. But

interestingly, “donations and humanitarian services” which is what most Nigerians know NGOs to do most as pointed out in literature that bad news usually births NGOs good news, had only 18%.

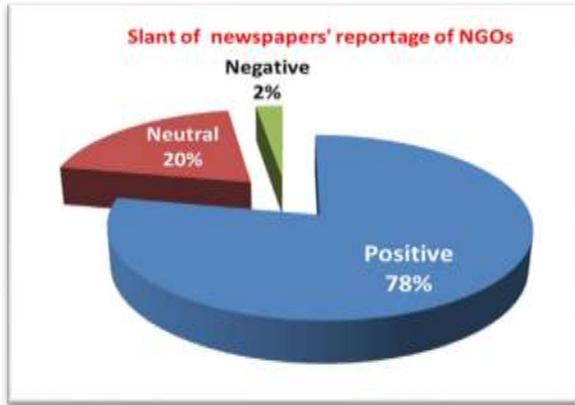
Figure 8: Share of newspapers reportage by NGO ownership showing the dominance of publicly owned ones with little margins among the rest.



Among the four ownership types of NGOs identified in Nigeria, the general public group caught newspapers’ attention more than others with 33%. About 24% activities of the privately-owned NGOs such as Dangote, TY Danjuma, Tony Elumelu, Bill Gates

caught the newspapers’ attention while 23% concerned specially-focused charities on Albinos, cancer, heart and corporate. NGOs such as Ford, MTN, Oando, amongst others, occupied the remaining 20% of tabloid space.

Figure 9: Slant of newspapers reports of NGO activities showing that most of the narratives were positive.



The slant of newspapers reportage of NGO-related stories returned largely positive with 78%; which aligns with findings in literature that NGOs exist to fill gaps of development, human rights, humanitarian, environmental, and many other areas of public life. The 20% neutral stories were on structural reforms while the 2% negative report was for postponed events by a few privately owned NGOs.

Discussion of Results

Placement of stories in newspapers provides the basis for visibility and access to such stories by readers. The decision on placement of stories is often premised on the perceived importance of the story to the issue in print. NGO stories were given more “inside page treatment” within the study period when compared with the incidents of front page

placement. There are two basic implications of this reality, the first links effectively with the second. First, NGO stories featured in the inside pages would hardly get seen or noticed by newspaper readers. This, in turn, reduces the perception the average reader has about activities carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations. It becomes easy to accord NGO activities with little attention on the part of the average news observer who feels that since the journalist do not deem it fit to give good coverage to NGOs there might be no need, after all, to consider their activities important.

In the cases where NGO stories occupied the front page, there were either sponsored campaigns spearheaded by the Awolowo Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the MTN Foundation,

the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurial Foundation and the Dangote Foundation. This goes on to imply that good coverage would be accorded to an NGO, only if the personalities behind such Organizations are well known and perceived to draw readership to that newspaper issue.

The approach to reportage was different within the study period. So little was communicated through photo stories and feature articles which are capable of giving elaborate explanations to the event reported or the issue highlighted. The Newspapers chose to give coverage to NGO stories primarily through the straight news. Agency reports are sponsored by the NGO and very little was featured in the editions studied. The reason for the low occurrence of Agency reports could be due to the high cost of having such published in well-read newspapers like the ones studied.

There was a fair balance of news source from both ends; however, a larger percentage of the news stories seemed to originate from the Non-Governmental Organization. These stories upon a closer view were seen to be reports on event, maternity health and child care campaigns and most frequently, educational sponsorship, funds and donations to orphanages and other noble activities carried out by the NGOs. This clearly reveals that journalists

do not have NGOs as a primary focus if the actions undertaken are not directly related with the state of the nation or directly influence the good the greater number of Nigerians. The NGOs have been forced to blow their own whistle and let the world know what they are doing within their own corners to advance the course of humanity and increase the quality of life.

The possibility of arousing human interest and giving emotional appeals to news stories could be the rationale for the increased publicity given to NGO activities in the area of child and maternal health. More so, it becomes only morally acceptable to give good publicity to matters bordering around the health much more than other issues. Very little attention was given to activism which more often is a plea or agitation for the government to take steps in line with an area where attention is currently perceived to be low or nonexistent.

Next to the coverage of child and maternal health was the coverage given to donations and other humanitarian services. A larger percentage of stories in this category were NGO sponsored and not generated by the Journalist. Stories in this category included donations to IDP camps, Donations to orphanages yuletide season as well as fundraising for other developmental initiatives.

Against expectation, entrepreneurship, being a major solution to employment deficit in the country did not register strongly in the eyes of newspapers as an agenda to set for NGOs. It is not clear if all NGO activities caught the attention of newspapers; neither is it indubitable that NGOs brought all their activations to the front burners of newspapers. However, the study's result that 91% of newspaper reportage were positive apparently indicates the medium's sympathy towards the charities, irrespective of their thematic preferences.

Conclusion

The findings of this study substantiate the reality that NGOs are not given adequate coverage by many Nigerian media organizations. The thin coverage recorded over the period studied reflects the lack of media attention that the activities of NGOs have received. Equally, this study reported 95% of the reportage as being positive and favorable to the activities of the NGOs. Regarding the origin of the news stories, the NGOs accounted for a larger percentage of the stories reported (more than the journalists). Child and maternal health was discovered to attract a larger percentage of media attention, far ahead of every other theme of the study.

The strong statement of this study is that newspaper organizations have unsuspectingly deprived NGOs noticeable readership owing to the placement and frequency of reportage accorded to NGO stories over the study period.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusion of this study, the following are recommended to remove the gap in the reporting of NGOs' activities in Nigeria.

1. Sections of newspaper editions should be created (weekly) to specially focus on developmental initiatives of non-governmental organizations (whether prominent news item or not). Such columns would positively motivate otherwise unknown NGOs which are bogged down by miniscule media voice or zero budgets for mass communicating their actions and activations.
2. Regulations that support discounted newspaper (and indeed all media) advertising rate for NGOs should be instituted. Whilst solving the problem of inadequate funding perennially faced by NGOs, the regulations would opportune charities to announce their programs for public attention and attendance which newspapers hardly focus

on. In newsworthiness, tabloids are easily attracted by occurrences more than expectations. Therefore, discounted advertorial costs would assist in the publication of upcoming NGO events and stories which normal newspapering would thrash for lacking newsworthiness. When such are published in newspapers they are seemingly deemed credible when compared to content published in social media which display personal manifestoes devoid of public interest in many cases (Abubakar, 2011, p. 446).

3. Blurred lines currently exist on the pages of newspapers between “groups,” “coalitions,” “centers,” and “summits” claiming advocacy practice on one side and NGOs with similar social concerns on another side. If tabloid reporters cannot indubitably sift pressure groups, concerned professionals, ethnic agitators, social negotiators, labor unions, one-off protesters and religious vituperators from charitable advocators, then the general public may not be in a better position to decipher their essential differences, epistemologically speaking. Therefore, non-governmental organizations should be properly registered by

appropriate agencies for easy media identification, message classification and apposite reportage. Every NGO in Nigeria should have a number or identity tag recognizable by journalists and even the public. Correspondingly, newspapers should rise above mere mention of any news-providing collection of people by specifically applying a tag of nomenclature. For instance, in reporting a free eye test of MTN, a newspaper should write “Nigerians with ocular challenges have been invited to a one-day free eye test by MTN-Health, a non-governmental organization registered in Kaduna...” The emphasized words in that sentence are critical to identifying and placing the organization in the mind of the reader as well as easing research endeavors in that connection. Additionally, all NGOs should visibly display their registration numbers during press conferences, seminars and trainings whilst ensuring that the pages of their press releases bear their numerical identities.

4. Paucity of journalistic reportage and scanty news releases by NGOs mirror a bland relationship between charity operators and

newspaper correspondents in Nigeria. This situation calls for disruption of current trends to produce a greater and more compelling synergy between the two, moving forward. Therefore, interactive workshops and seminars are recommended to be organized periodically for training the two stakeholders on modern techniques for reporting NGO activities. Apart from improving the relationship between the two groups of organizations (NGOs and newspapers), the sessions would provide greater insight

into NGO news-reporting, train newbies on the beat, retrain veterans, and ultimately assist in raising the reportage levels of charity activations throughout the country.

The application of these recommendations would go a long way in increasing public awareness of the activities of NGOs, raise the bar of collaboration between journalists and charity operators and most importantly, stimulate increased benevolent contributions to the socioeconomic development of the country.

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