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Articles

Newspaper Framing of Incumbent President and Challenger in Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

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Abstract: As elections draw near, citizens look up to the media for information about contestants. This study examines the coverage, by four dominant newspapers, of an incumbent President and his challenger in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, to determine how the news was constructed and the framing patterns in their reports. Using the continuous week formula, 28 editions spread over four months were studied. Results show that there were 110 articles on the 2015 election that captured a total of 245 frames. The *history* frame was dominant, followed by *national security* and *corruption*. The findings also show that the 2015 presidential elections were adequately reported by the media but contents focused more on the candidates than on issues. This study recommends that the issues raised by contestants in their manifestos could be appropriated by the media to expand their discussion on matters affecting the citizens rather than the personality of the contestants.

Keywords: Media, Framing, presidential election, incumbent president, challenger.

Introduction

Elections are conducted every four years in Nigeria and 2015 was an election year. Though there were 14 candidates vying to become president in that year, only two - incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan (of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP) and former Head of State Muhammadu Buhari (of the All Progressive Congress, APC) - appeared popular.

The 2015 presidential election was one of the fiercests owing to the socio-political situation which had ebbed dangerously. Security situation in the country had been complicated by the Boko Haram insurgency. Youth unemployment, rivalry of the country's north and the south over power-sharing, menace of Fulani herdsmen, fragile party alliances, shortage of electricity were just a few of the tension-causing factors. Nigerians needed change desperately and the 2015 presidential elections provided the opportunity to bring in a new regime that could turn things around.

Ezea (2015, para. 5) asserts that "since 1999, Nigerians have not witnessed a presidential poll [whose] prelude has generated much controversy, hate campaigns, tense atmosphere, intrigues, scheming, blackmail, mudslinging, allegations, divisiveness, bad blood, threats, inflammatory and unguarded utterances, propaganda like the forth coming poll which many see as a tight race between the two top contenders namely President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) of the All Progressive Congress (APC)." The two candidates, according to Samuel (2016) were commonly depicted in a variety of stereotypical terms, with Buhari being seen as northerner, militarist, ostensibly ascetic, jihadist; while Jonathan was presented as a southerner, civilian, indolent, and religiously moderate.

Buhari was a four-time opposition candidate who contested in 2003 and 2007 under the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP). In 2011, he contested under the platform of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) against Jonathan, who won and in 2015, he became the presidential candidate for the All Progressive Congress (APC) and emerged the winner. Jonathan became the acting President in 2010 following the demise of the President, Umaru Musa Yar'adua. He then contested in 2011 and won.

These two candidates were popular and given much coverage by the media. The mass media influence the public opinion by canalizing attention toward the topics and themes that they consider important. The approaches mass media use regarding these themes can induce

specific effecte in their evaluation by the public (Carstea, 2012, p. 97). The media and political parties share a symbiotic relationship. The former generate income from electioneering advertisements while the latter need publicity to get their message across. This arrangement is a critical component of the discourse on media commercialism (Omojola & Morah, 2014).

Sambe (2015, p.119) asserts that "Governments around the world, knowing the power of the media ... tend to hold unto it or fear the level of freedom allowed because of the power of the media toward public opinion and mass mobilization." Media and politics are inseparable in any democratic culture and environment" (Ekeanyanwu, 2015, p. 198). In media contents, frames exist or are created which affect election fortunes and influence political destinies. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the frames used in reporting PDP and APC Presidential candidates during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

As elections draw near, citizens are faced with many choices to make regarding candidates. Since it is quite impossible for them to interact personally with these aspirants, they look up to the media for information about them.

The media can influence the public opinion and perception of a candidate with the way they frame and construct news reports. Framing is a central process by which political actors and government officials exercise political influence over each other and over the public (Oksanen, 2011, p. 481). Ideally, framing research examines the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames (Carragee & Roefa, 2004, p. 215).

This study investigates the frames used in the coverage of Mohammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan by four dominant Nigerian newspapers. It specifically identifies the frames, especially the preponderant ones that formed the basis for discussion in the build-up to the election.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the frequency of coverage of the APC and PDP candidates in the selected newspapers.
2. To ascertain the frames employed by the press in their reportage of the two candidates.
3. To identify the dominant frames in the coverage that dominated public discourse in the build-up to the 2015 presidential election.

Significance of the Study

Many reports have been written about the 2015 presidential election

in Nigeria but only very few are visible in the area of framing patterns. This is a contribution to help increase the knowledge of students, reporters and readers about media framing and its usage.

Literature Review

Rather than reporting the facts of a story, the media have been accused of inserting their personal biases or opinions in news content (O'gara, 2009, p. 1). The lack of objectivity in news presentation has made visible the existence of alternative media which are usually online-based. This is not just a Nigerian phenomenon. Sani's (2014, p.71) study of Malaysia's 13th general elections concluded that "…there was an element of contradiction between the mainstream print media and alternative online media. The biased coverage of mainstream print media has pushed readers to look for alternative news in online news portals." This is in line with Ekeanyanwu's (2015, p. 17) assertion that "the media are not the sole source of information for voters but in a world dominated by mass communications, the media determine the political agenda."

The history of political crises in Africa appears to be incomplete without references to the media as a promoter of the problem (Onyebadi and Oyedeji, 2011). In their study of the newspaper coverage of the post political election violence in Africa,

specifically Kenya, the authors concluded that "the media and ethnicity are readily blamed in conflicts" (p. 216). Olayode (2015) supports the assertion and stresses that from the presidential through gubernatorial, national and state assemblies elections, aspirants are largely chosen on the basis of ethno-regional identities. He adds that "political parties and candidates are easily perceived as representatives of a particular ethnic or religious group and voting pattern in Nigeria largely mirrors the various cleavages in the country" (p.3).

Several studies have been conducted by researchers on the framing on the coverage of elections, debates and campaigns in different countries (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis, 2014; Groshek and Al-Rawi, 2013; Kasmani, 2013; Schuck, Vligenthart, Boomgaarden, Elenbaas, Azrout, Spanje and DeVresse, 2013; Buller, 2012; Oksanen, 2011; Dimitrova and Stromback, 2011; Zurbrigger and Sherman, 2010; Squires and Jackson, 2010). Carstea (2009) studied the opinion articles on the 2009 presidential elections in Romania and found that the mass media provided mainly negative interpretation (attack/conflict type) to the electoral campaign and focused mainly on secondary themes that were rather related to the candidates' moral conducts and

characters than their manifestoes. On the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria, Samuel (2015, para. 1) opined that "what is in contention in the election may not be the superiority of one ideology over the other, as understood in the Western democracies. Rather, what is becoming evident is that the election is about two quarrelsome camps, each seeking a popular mandate to determine the fortunes (or the lack thereof) of nearly 170 million Nigerians"

Issues like insecurity, corruption, religion, ethnicity and the economy were popular in the public discourse. The 2015 general elections were seen by northerners as their golden opportunity to wrestle back power, which they felt had been unjustly denied them after the untimely death of kinsman President Musa Yar'adua that saw Jonathan taking over as the acting President (Olayode, 2015, p. 17).

Studies have been conducted on the 2015 elections in Nigeria. While some researchers looked at political participation, voting behavior and the role of the media in Nigeria (Olowojolu, 2016; George-Genye, 2015), others analyzed the 2015 elections political advertisements (Alawole and Adesanya, 2016; Ojekwe, 2015; Batta, Batta and Mboho, 2015). The study by Alawole et.al (2016) on political advertisements in selected

newspapers on the 2015 elections found that PDP and APC dominated the political landscape with low presence of adversarial contents.

The mass media in their everyday duty of informing, educating and entertaining the society, create frames that can serve as a prism through which the audience understand issues and events as they happen in the society. Mchakulu (2011, p. 30) opines that frames are deliberately created by political organizations or their agents to be used publicly, disseminated widely, and repeated often by speakers that are affiliated with one political party or another.

Sambe (2015, p. 115-6) asserts that contemporary writings on political communication must be a serious – theoretical and empirical- evaluation of the importance of the mass media in relation to public opinion. Although researchers have conducted studies on the influence of the media on voting behavior and also analyzed the 2015 elections political advertisements, there exists a dearth of study on newspaper framing of the two presidential candidates of the two most influential party-PDP and APC during the 2015 elections. How these two candidates were depicted in the media with regard to the themes used informed this study.

Framing Theory

It has been said that the way a particular issue or event is presented affects the way it is perceived and understood (Ajaero, 2014). Ideally, framing research examines the construction of new stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames (Carragee and Roefa, 2004, p. 215). The framing approaches in media studies relate to the psychological and sociological proposition that individuals need certain interpretative frames to be able to establish an opinion or an evaluation about a matter (Carstea, 2012, p. 98).

Framing is a central process by which political actors, such as government officials, exercise influence over each other and the public (Oksanen, 2011, p. 481).When Nisbet and Newman (2015) state that "there is no such thing as unframed information", they point out how framing is such a large part of communication and society. (p.325). Ritzer and Goodman (2003) conclude that "without frames, our world will be little more than a number of chaotic individual and unrelated events and facts" (p.363). Framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by the audience (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

This means that through the use of frames by the media, several events can be understood by people in the society.

Baran and Swan (2007, p. 13) see media framing as "shaping the news we're exposed to and the issues we think about. It can move people to vote against their best interests, buy products that are not good for them, and help dissolve boundaries separating facts, marketing, dogma and ideology." Framing must be perceived as a process in which *frame-building* happens first, followed by *frame-setting* in a process that leads to positive or negative outcomes (DeVresse, 2005).This work investigated the type of frames employed by newspapers in their reportage of the 2015 presidential election candidates.

Method

This study adopted the content analysis method and the population of this study includes all the national dailies published in Nigeria. Using the purposive sampling technique, four titles - *The Guardian, The Sun, The Nation* and *Vanguard* -were selected. The dominance (Odiboh et al, 2017) of the newspapers in Nigeria informed their selection. The issues studied spanned December, 2014 - March, 2015. This period covers the time when the primaries were conducted up to the presidential elections that was

held on March 28[th,] 2015. Using the continuous week formula, 28editions (four weeks) of the newspapers were studied.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Issues studied from the four selected newspapers

	Week	*Editions*
Daily Sun	3	15,16,17,18,19,20,21
The Guardian	2	12,13,14,15,16.17.18
Vanguard	1	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,
The Nation	3	16,17,18,19,20,21,22
Total	4	28

The instrument used in collating data for this work is the code sheet. The units of analysis for this study are straight news stories, features, opinion articles, editorials and letters-to-the-editor on the 2015 Presidential elections.

It is important to note that the hard editions of these newspapers were investigated without prejudice to their online versions. They were selected for the study because they still attracted significant readership according to composite opinion of the newspapers editors. One of the editors maintained that the hard copy issues would not have been published had they been deemed inconsequential.

What is the frequency of coverage given to the PDP and APC candidates in the selected dailies?

Table 2 below shows that a total of 110 issues on the 2015 Presidential election were retrieved from the 28 editions of the newspapers studied. This shows that the media gave adequate coverage to the issue, although the highest report on the 2015 Presidential election was seen in February. This could be attributed to the fact that INEC shifted the elections from February to March.

Table 2: The frequency of coverage of the selected newspapers on the 2015 Presidential elections

	Frequency	*Percentage (%)*
Daily Sun	7	6.4
The Guardian	19	17.3
Vanguard	46	41.8
The Nation	38	34.5
Total	110	100

Table 3: Story genres employed by the newspapers in their reportage of the 2015 Presidential elections

Story Genres	Daily Sun	The Guardian	Vanguard	The Nation	Total	Percentage (%)
Straight News	3	6	28	30	67	60.9
Features	0	8	11	2	21	19.1
Editorial	0	1	0	0	1	0.9
Opinion article	4	4	7	6	21	19.1
Letters-to-the-Editor	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3 shows that most stories on the 2015 Presidential candidates were written using the straight news format (60.9%) with features and opinion articles having equal percentage (19.1%). Only one editorial from *The Guardian* newspaper was recorded. This shows that the media were basically reporting what happened on the campaign trail, the states these candidates visited and what people were saying about them. This set the tone for the opinion article and feature stories.

What kinds of frames were adopted by the four selected newspapers in their coverage of the two candidates?

A total of 245 frames were identified from the 110 articles assessed. The type of frames used are 14 namely: corruption (12.7%), age (4.5%), history (17.9%), religion (3.7%), economy (11%), National security (13.1%), ethnicity (7.8%), good governance (3.3%), bad

governance (3.3%), rule of law (1.6%), education (4.1%), power (2%), electoral violence (2.9%) and miscellaneous (12.2%). Table 4 below presents the numbers visibly.

Table 4: The type of frames used by the selected newspapers in their reportage of the 2015 Presidential elections

Frames	Daily Sun	The Guardian	Vanguard	The Nation	Total	Percentage (%)
Corruption	3	6	10	12	31	12.7
Age	2	3	2	4	11	4.5
History	3	9	18	14	44	17.9
Religion	1	0	3	5	9	3.7
Economy	3	6	10	8	27	11.0
National Security	3	9	15	5	32	13.1
Ethnicity	1	2	9	7	19	7.8
Good Governance	2	0	3	3	8	3.3
Bad Governance	0	1	4	3	8	3.3
Rule of Law	0	2	2	0	4	1.6
Education	1	2	5	2	10	4.1
Power	0	2	1	2	5	2.0
Electoral violence	1	1	2	3	7	2.9
Miscellaneous	4	6	10	10	30	12.2

What is the dominant frame used by the selected dailies?

The chart below shows that the *history* frame was dominant, followed closely by *national security* and then *corruption*. This can be attributed to the fact that since President Muhammadu Buhari was a former military Head of State and a former Chairman of a government body, his experience must be cited when reporting issues about him in the media. The *national security* frame came second because of the insecurity issues plaguing the country – the Boko Haram insurgency; abduction of the 219 Chibok school girls in Borno;

the spate of kidnapping and so on.   Figure 1 illustrates the frames.

Fig. 1: The frames used by the selected dailies
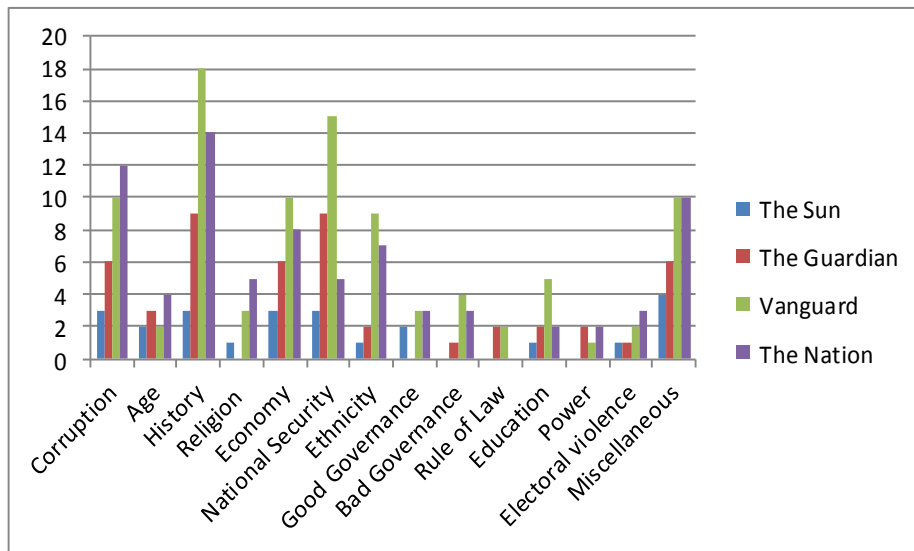
Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the themes/frames that dominated the media landscape during the 2015 presidential elections. As earlier stated, there were 14 candidates who contested the election but only two – Jonathan and Buhari - were popular. The frequency of coverage given to these candidates can attest to this fact. A total of 110 articles were harvested from the 28 editions of four newspapers studied. This leads to the conclusion that the issue was frequently discussed in the media. The peak of the reportage was seen in February as the election was shifted from February to March. The

shift sparked off a lot of comments and criticisms from citizens as it was alleged that the ruling party (PDP) was trying to buy more time as it faced an impending loss. The opinion article published in *The Nation on* March 17 was proof of the criticisms.

The dominant story genre was the straight news story. This is because the media were keeping people abreast of the activities of these political parties. The issues often raised in these straight news reports were then fully explained in feature reports. Young (2011) asserts that because of the reporter's need to have a new story each day on the campaign trail to compete for the

attention of viewers, campaign coverage often becomes less issue-focused and more focused on 'who's ahead and who is behind' as a campaign progresses. A typical example of such coverage can be found in a feature article published in *The Nation* on March 17:

> After a review of an opinion poll on the chances of the two leading presidential candidates-incumbent Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Gen. Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC)-Eurasia Group-the world's largest political risk consultancy firm-has rated the challenger above the incumbent, giving Gen. Buhari 60 per cent and Dr. Jonathan below 40 per cent … (De Pontet, 2015, p. 2-3)

A total of 14 frame types were identified with the *history* frame having the highest number of occurrence, contrary to some belief that corruption was the most important issue (Ekeanyanwu, 2015) at the time. Mchakulu (2011) contends that frames are deliberately created by political organizations or their agents to be used publicly, disseminated widely, and reported often by speakers that are clearly affiliated with one political party or the other. A report published in *The Sun* newspaper of December 19th, 2014 and written by the media aide to the President, Mr. Femi Adesina,

states that "…at 72 (his birthday was just two days ago, congratulations to the peoples General), Buhari still bears Nigeria and her weighty issues in his heart, and on his slender frame" (p. 57).   Also the APC chairman in Rivers State in the southern part of the country, Mr. Ikanya in a statement, said that "the wicked acts against Rivers State and its people, for reasons to be explained by Jonathan and his managers explain why we will do everything humanly possible to ensure that this man that has run aground our economy will never continue in office beyond May 29th, 2015" (*The Nation,* March 18, 2015, p. 12). Another writer asserts that "Buhari has a perception problem. May be it has to do with his eyesight or something else. But the point has to be made that if Buhari sees corruption, he won't even know. Buhari's understanding of corruption is antiquated" (*The Guardian*, January 18th, 2015, p. 60).

One point to note here is that media ownership and political inclination were among the determinants of the kind of themes that dominated reports on these candidates. *The Nation* is an outfit owned by a chieftain of the APC and thus its reports would have to be favorable to his party's cause. This is in line with Mchakulu (2011) explanation on frames.

The issue of ethnicity and religion were evident in news reports as opinions about Buhari and his history as a Fulani and then a Muslim were x-rayed. Ethnicity was the fifth most used frame in this study while religion came seventh. This underscores the importance of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria, given its diverse ethnic and religious nature. Even the choice of General Buhari and his running mate (a Christian) were strategically crafted to appeal to the northern and southern parts of the country. The following report is an evidence of the accusation about ethnicity:

> Gen. Buhari was an active participant in the revenge coup of July 29th, 1966. Rochas Okorocha, Ogbonnaya Onu, Sam Nkire and other historically blind politicians of Igbo extraction should investigate his role in the unexplained disappearance of dozens of Igbo officers and men of the Nigerian army in Abeokuta immediately after the murder of Gen. J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi(Anele, *Vanguard*, February 8, 2015, p. 11)

Northerners vote for Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, a southerner from a minority ethnic group was also an issue pointed out by Ajeluorou (2015, p. 60) when he opined that: "I do not know of any north-easterner who would reward Dr. Jonathan for his abysmal and vexatious handling of the Boko Haram menace. Nor do

I know any parent except one with empathy, who would ignore the more than nine months-old Chibok abductions" (*The Guardian*, January 18th).

The most dominant frame in this study points to the fact that the media were more focused on candidates' character rather than their manifestoes. This can be found in several articles published in the sampled dailies as the person of Buhari and Jonathan was more espoused than their programs. While Buhari talked about 'change', without specific reference to what this change would entail, Jonathan's team preached 'continuity and transformation' without clearly stating the policy issues that would drive this. This finding is in line with Carstea's (2009) study that the media focused on secondary themes that are rather related to the candidates' moral conducts and characters than their political programs. O'gara echoed same in his study when he found that the media continue to place greater importance on candidate's image and viability than on policy issues.

> Every Nigerian knows that this is a disciplined man, every Nigerian knows that this is a man that is not corrupt, this is the only Head of State in the history of Nigeria who has refused to receive even his own so called legitimate income because of the conviction that

that income has been so corruptibly and so undesirably that it is nothing but mere looting of the National treasury (Olarinoye, 2015. *Vanguard*, February 8, p. 52)

Here, the writer is trying to sell the person of Buhari as an incorruptible man. There was no mention of his policies but what Nigerians stand to gain by voting his person in as the president.

The frames used in reporting the 2015 Presidential elections were thematic as the feature and opinion articles explored the issues raised by the media in the coverage of the candidates. The nature of the candidates involved in the election is responsible for the dominance of *history* frame as reporters tried to compare Buhari's military rule in 1983 with his current disposition in a democratic society. Writers gave their opinion of the candidates and even went as far as analyzing the gains and woes of choosing one candidate over the other.

The media gave adequate coverage of the 2015 presidential elections but the frames used were more about candidates than issues. The frames focused mainly on the presidential candidates, their abilities, achievements and personal idiosyncrasies without recourse to their policies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out to assess the frequency of coverage and the frames employed by the selected dailies in their reportage of the 2015 Presidential election of PDP and APC. The candidate of the PDP, Jonathan and the APC candidate, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari were popular and given more attention than the other 12 contestants. Using the continuous week formula, a week was studied for each of the months under study (December, 2014-March, 2015). The simple random sampling technique adopted resulted in the selection of a total of 28 editions for investigation. The result of the inter-coder reliability test was high at .78.

The issue of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria cannot be pushed to the background in Nigeria owing to the more than 250 competing ethnic groups in the country with all kinds of faith. Since the two presidential candidates were from different regions and different religions, reports found in the newspapers appealed to peoples' religious and ethnic leanings.

Nevertheless, the media did a good job in reporting events surrounding the candidates in the 2015 Presidential election but these reports were focused more on individual capabilities and character than policies. The reports projected the candidates' more than their manifestos. To this end, the following recommendations should be noted:

- The media are the purveyors of information and the people look up to them for their information need as noted earlier. The public rely on the media to help them make their electoral decisions. As such, the media should pay more attention to the manifestos of these candidates to generate discourse on issues rather on the personality of the candidates. Professional reporters should understand that they need to do this to differentiate themselves from citizens or 'emergency' journalists (Omojola, 2014, p.172) who lack an ethical standard that guides their practice.

- There were other candidates who contested the elections but these candidates were not known due to the fact that they did not belong to the two major political parties. The media should be able to give adequate coverage to all contenders especially in a presidential election.
- This work only assessed frames used in the reportage of the PDP's and APC's presidential candidates in the 2015 election. Further studies can be done to ascertain the influence these frames had on the people and if they informed their choice of candidates during the 2015 elections.

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Awareness and Perception of Media Campaign on E-waste effects among Residents of Ado Odo-Ota, Nigeria

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Abstract: Scholars' concern about environmental pollution and the attendant diverse health disorders have grown lately in Nigeria owing to the problem of electronic wastes. The challenge is compounded by citizens' insensitivity to the damage these wastes can unleash on lives. This paper investigates respondents' rate of awareness and knowledge, through the media, of e-wastes and how that rate affects attitude to the problem. Findings show that exposure to the media on the e-waste hazards was critically low. The broadcast media and the internet were identified as significant sources of information but residents were less frequently exposed to e-waste issues in the news. The awareness of health and environmental effects of e-wastes among the residents was also extremely low even as the menace was not perceived as a serious problem. The outgrowth of this was an unimpressive attitude toward resolving the problem. In addition to the traditional media and their online versions, it is recommended that interpersonal communication channels should be utilized to educate and persuade the citizens to adopt globally accepted standards for managing e-wastes.

Keywords: e-waste, public health, environmental pollution, media campaign, perception

Introduction

Surge in information technology and the proliferation of devices have increased the generation of electronic wastes (Christian, 2012). Public concern on the issue, especially among environmentalists, has remained visible as many waste materials are toxic and not biodegradable. These wastes contain lead, mercury, arsenic, phosphorus, cadmium and selenium, just to mention a few (Widmera, Oswald-Krapf, Sinha-Khetriwal, Schnellmannc & Boni, 2005). The lethal substances that e-wastes produce could lead to health disorders, including kidney damage, liver damage, respiratory failures, damage to the brain and nervous systems (Osibanjo & Nnorom, 2007; Adeola, 2012; Iyatse, 2016). Research has also linked the rate of toxic compounds in e-waste to cancer, foetus developmental defects and other health problems from samples of breast milk, placenta and hair (Needhidasan, Samuel & Chidambaram, 2014). Improper disposal of e-wastes burning constitutes an immeasurable danger to the ecosystem as these actions could lead to diverse environmental problems such as groundwater contamination, atmospheric pollution and soil leaching (Terad, 2012).

Some 20 to 50 million metric tons of e-wastes are generated annually, which is five percent of all municipal solid wastes worldwide - almost the same volume as plastic packaging, "but it is much more hazardous" (Greenpeace International, 2016). Furthermore, StEP initiative has predicted 33% increase in the global e-waste generation by 2017 (Lewis 2013). Regrettably, Nigeria has been ranked among the highest generator of e-wastes with "about 1.1 million tons of e-waste generated annually, far more than the combined volume generated by most other countries in the ECOWAS region" (Basel Monthly Waste News, 2014; Obaje 2013).

Nnorom (2009) speculates that the lack of awareness of the e-waste hazards and danger associated with improper disposal techniques are the major hindrances toward eliminating the e-waste problem. Similarly, Sivathanu (2016) warns that awareness of the toxic effects on human health, awareness of environmental hazards, awareness of proper disposal of e-waste, awareness of e-waste management by stakeholders and awareness of convenience of recycling were the five significant factors that influence consumer's preference toward proper e-waste disposal and

management. Ignorance about the dangers of e-waste to human health is no doubt a fundamental factor militating against its proper disposal and management. Thus, adequate awareness of the health and environmental effects of e-waste can stimulate individual perception of the problem and the eventual reaction to the issue.

In the bid to create public consciousness about e-wastes, the mass media both local and international have carried out diverse news reports that have been investigated by scholars. However, systematic investigation on the extent of public exposure to media content on e-waste effects as well as the awareness/knowledge of health and environmental implications of stacking e-waste in homes, offices and business premises, and indecorous disposal practices in Nigeria have not been ascertained. This drawback informed this study.

Objectives of the Study

To bridge this gap in the e-waste literature, this study sought to accomplish the following objectives;

1. To discover the residents' knowledge/awareness of e-waste effects.
2. To ascertain the media through which the residents of Ado-Ota obtain information on the health and environmental effects of e-waste.

3. To determine the extent to which the residents of Ado-Ota are exposed to media campaigns on e-waste effects.
4. To find out the residents' perception of the e-waste effects on public health and the environment.
5. To determine the extent to which awareness of the health and environmental risks associated with e-waste influence residents' current behavior toward e-wastes.

E-Waste's Health and Environmental Effects

E-waste as defined by Puckett, Byster, Westervelt, Gutierrez, Davis, Hussain, and Dutta (2002, p. 5) is waste from a broad and growing range of electronic devices "from large household devices such as refrigerators, air conditioners, cell phones, personal stereos, and consumer electronics to computers which have been discarded by their users." E-waste has been categorized into three namely; the large household Appliances (refrigerator, air conditioner, washing machine, etc), ICT appliances (computer and accessories, cell phones, etc), and consumer equipment consisting of television, DVD players, mp3 players, video cameras and others (Violet, 2008).

E-waste has become a serious social problem; an environmental and health threat to many nations of the

world, especially the developing countries as they constantly depend on imported used-electronics which are cheaper than brand new ones (Puckett and Fogel, 2005). Little wonder, Olukoya (2008) once asked rhetorically: "if the western countries with their technological sophistication and organized waste management still encounter challenges of controlling the e-waste stream, what then would be the fate of developing countries like Nigeria?"

Toxic elements in e-waste could have adverse effects on human health and the environment if not handled properly. Studies have established that direct contact with harmful e-waste components such as lead, cadmium, chromium, and mercury causes damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, genitourinary system and DNA. It also causes seizures, retardation, high blood pressure, inflammation and oxidative stress. Repeated exposures to e-waste toxic elements could cause severe damages to the kidney, liver, and lungs. Furthermore, irregular heartbeats, cancer and damage to fetuses are traceable to these toxic wastes. (Violet, 2008, Needhidasan, et al., 2014; Recycling for Charities, nd)

E-wastes do not only endanger the human health. They are also environmental hazards. Atmospheric pollution, disruption in the supply of groundwater, degradation of soil nutrients and environment-to-food-chain contamination are conditions that have been linked to the unsafe handling of e-wastes (Lundgren, 2012). Informal recycling practices by scavengers also magnify the health and environmental risks as the toxic chemicals are emitted into the atmosphere in the process.

Research has also shown that residents of major recycling cities around the world exhibit various health conditions caused by the toxic components of the e-waste stream (Grant, Goldizen, Sly, Brune, Neira, Van den Berg & Norman, 2013; Awasthi, Zeng & Li, 2016). To reduce the environmental effects of e-wastes, Needhidasan, et al, (2014) recommended that adequate infrastructure for e-waste collection and recycling could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A medical expert (Iyatse, 2016) argues that the challenges associated with e-wastes are not different from those of radiation, which could emanate from other sources other than e-wastes, adding that reduction of all forms of human exposure to radiation should be the utmost concern.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the perception theory. While awareness is the capability to be familiar with or be cognizant of an issue or a state

of consciousness, perception refers to the process of individual's reception, selection, organization and interpretation of information to deduce meaning. The outcome of this individualistic sensory evaluation is manifested in diverse interpretations given to the same message, depending on personality variables such as personal beliefs, past experiences, social relations, cultural expectations and psychological dispositions.

The selective process is, therefore, at the core of the perception theory. Individuals, as a matter of preference, selectively go for the medium and content that offer them gratification. They selectively pay attention to certain issues that reinforce their existing beliefs or attitudes while excluding others.

Individuals are exposed to a myriad of media messages and interpersonal communication but they tend to perceive or decode these messages in accordance with their past experiences, current disposition, and needs (Okenwa, 2002). The e-waste menace is one of such messages. Public awareness of the health and environmental effects of e-waste, therefore, depends on how exposed the individual is to the media contents on the issue. The individual needs to pay attention in order to gain adequate knowledge in this regard but attention may not be visible if the message is not relevant to the individual's predispositions.

Perception of an issue affects the judgment and reactions of an individual toward it (Idiegbeyan-ose, Nkiko & Osinulu, 2016). The implication is that public knowledge of and reactions to e-wastes could influence its control. Education influences perception. Babu, Parande & Basha (2007) note that one of the most effective ways of dealing with the e-wastes stream is to educate citizens.

Method and Materials

The study adopted the survey approach. The study population consisted of adults residents in Ado-Odo-Ota Local Government Area, the commercial hub of Ogun State of Nigeria. The population of the study area stands at 527,242 with a projection of 621,830 by 2011, estimated at 3.36% per annum according to the National Population Commission Census figures (2006). The local government also has a total of 133,398 households as at 2006. It has a dynamic integration of commercial, industrial and rural locale occupied by residents who are predominantly Nigerians. The area is well known for manufacturing, public and private business ventures, open markets, business complexes, commercial banks, healthcare facilities, secondary and tertiary institutions as well as training institutes. The implication of this is

generation of high quantity of e-waste.

The study adopted the multistage sampling procedures. The local government consists of 16 communities which were grouped into rural, commercial and industrial areas to give a true representation of the population. Sango-Ota, Agbara, and Atan were purposively selected to represent the commercial, industrial and the rural segments respectively. Their visibility attested to their selection. A total of 300 respondents each were purposively chosen from the selected areas totaling 900 respondents that participated in the study. The eligibility of respondents was based on age (18 years and above), ownership of household electronics and the willingness to respond to the instrument. All the 900 copies of the questionnaire administered were properly filled and found useable, yielding 100% response as a result of the stay and collect approach adopted in the administration of the instrument. By this approach, research assistants always waited to ensure that each respondent return the questionnaire after completing it.

Results

A. Are Residents' Of Ado-Odo-Ota Aware of E-Waste Effects?

Table 1: Awareness of health and environmental effects of e-waste

	Awareness of health and environmental effects of e-waste			Total
	Aware	*Not aware*	*Undecided*	
Agbara	71	145	84	300
Area Atan-Ota	56	169	75	300
Sango-ota	90	150	60	300
Total	217	464	219	N=900

Figure 1: Awareness of Health and Environmental effects of e-waste
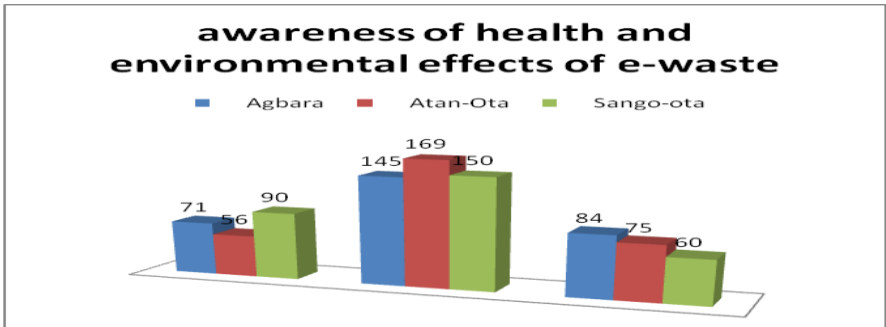
B. What is the medium/media through which the residents of Ado-Ota obtain information on the health and environmental effects of e-waste?

Figure 2: Sources of Information on health environmental effects of e-waste
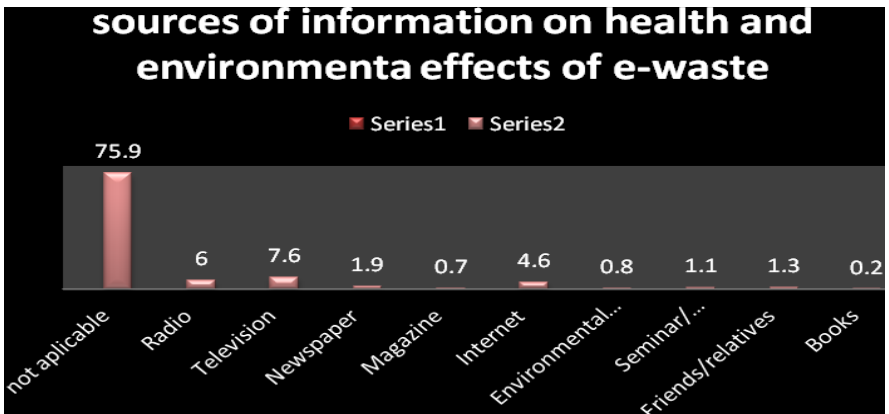
C. To what extent is the residents of Ado-Ota exposed to media campaigns on e-waste effects?

Figure 3: Frequency of exposure to media contents on e-waste effects
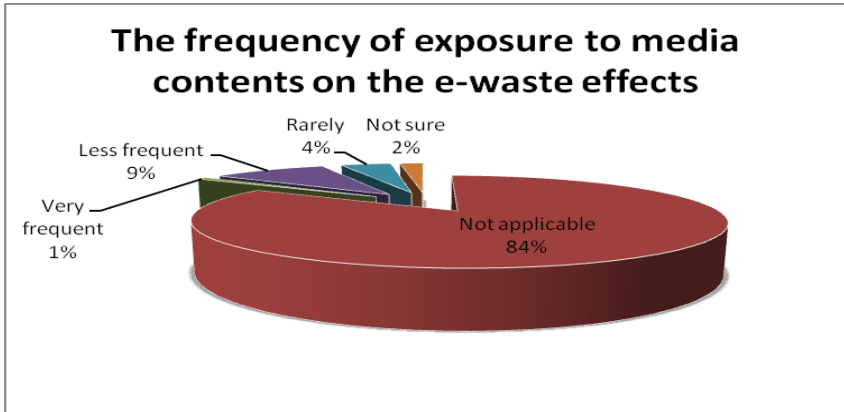
D. What is the residents' perception of the e-waste effects on public health and the environment?

Figure 4: Perception of e-waste hazards
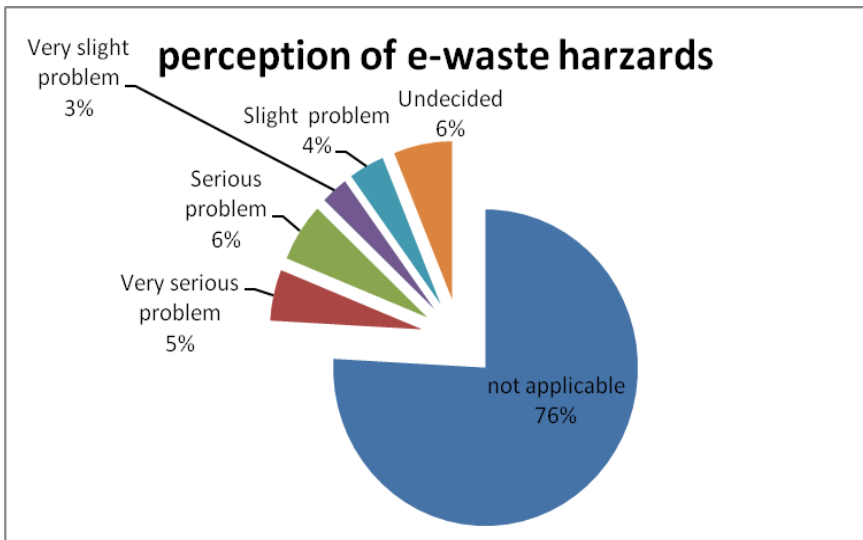
E. To what extent to which awareness of the health and environmental risks associated with e-waste influence residents' current behavior toward the e-waste stream?

Table 2: Awareness of health and environmental effects of e-waste

		Current possession of e-waste in homes, office or business premises		Total
		Yes	*No*	
Awareness of health and environmental effects of e-waste	*Aware*	150	67	217
	Not aware	332	132	464
	Undecided	147	72	219
Total		629	271	N=900

Figure 5: Current e-waste disposal methods
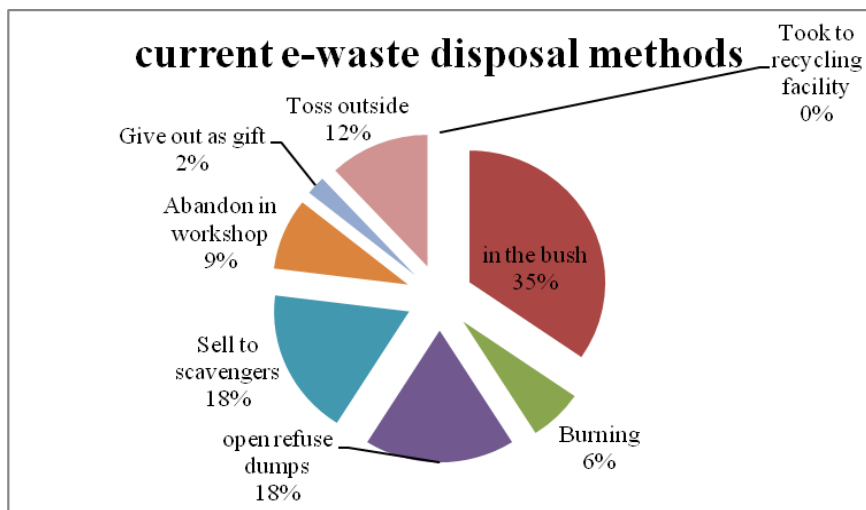
Discussion of Findings

The results of this study show that public awareness on health and environmental implications of e-waste was critically low. This outcome is in line with studies on awareness of e-waste effects carried out in the southeast of Nigeria (Okoye & Odoh, 2014; Ubachukwu, Phil-Eze & Emeribe, 2014). This implies that the health of Nigerians and the environment could be

adversely affected by the e-waste hazards since the majority of the citizens were not even aware of the risks associated with it.

The findings also show that the broadcast media and the internet were significant sources of information on the e-waste menace. This finding also supports previous studies on the significance of the broadcast media in publicizing health and environmental issues (Ugboma, 2002; McCarthy & Brennan, 2009 cited in Babalola, Babalola & Okhale, 2010). The role of the broadcast media in this aspect emanates from its coverage of a wide geographical area and has got nothing to do with better performance in terms of professionalism, ethics – global or self – (Omojola, 2008; 2014) sophistication and so forth. This outcome reaffirms the tenets of selective exposure and attention spelt out in the perception theory. Residents selectively exposed themselves and paid attention to these platforms and contents from which they obtained the information about the dangers of e-wastes to human health and the ecosystem. Therefore, these platforms could be widely utilised in sensitising the residents about the risks associated with stockpiling e-wastes in homes, offices and business premises.

According to Figure 3, respondents were not often exposed to media contents on e-waste. The salience conferred on an issue could transpose it into an item on the public agenda and elicit the subsequent actions taken by the public on it (as supported by earlier citations). The mass media focus on the e-waste menace, which was missing as results of this study have shown, could expand the audiences' scope of knowledge and the perception of e-waste implications. Development messages that demonstrate the severity of health as well as environmental implications and the benefits of taking desired actions, sustained for a long time, could enhance knowledge and risk perception, and induce expected actions. Unimpressively, however, respondents did not have access to such messages.

Another significant finding of this study is that many residents did not perceive the e-waste issue as a life-threatening health and environmental problem. The implication of this finding is the continued indulgence in unhealthy the e-waste practices which triggers more harm to human health and the environment than before. This finding reinforces the study which concluded that "there is a gap between the extent to which people are aware of the environmental conditions and the pro-environmental behaviors they display" (Kollmuss & Agyeman,

2002; Wood, Tam, & Guerrero-Witt, 2005 cited in Pelletier & Sharp, 2008, p. 210). It also supports Ideho's (2012) statement that the evidence of health hazards associated with e-wastes did not discourage the stakeholders in informal recycling to stop the trade. Though economic gain was cited as their motivating factor.

The finding also confirms the observations made earlier about the large volume of obsolete electronics temporarily stored for later disposal as "consumers now rarely take broken electronics to a repair shop as replacement is now often easier and cheaper than repair" (Puckett et al, 2002; Puckett & Fogel, 2005). The continuous acquisition of more and more ICT gadgets and electronic appliances for status symbol has become a tradition that exacerbates the stockpile of obsolete electronic and electrical items in homes and offices. Lack of awareness about e-waste recycling and other globally advocated methods of e-waste control as well as non-availability of e-waste recycling facilities within the community could be contributing factors for the continuous indulgence in uncultured e-waste activities.

Conclusion and Recommended

This study has established that public awareness of the health and environmental effects of e-waste among residents of Ado-Odo-Ota was extremely low. The broadcast media and the internet were identified as significant sources of information about the e-waste problem. However, the frequency of the residents' access to media contents on e-waste was critically low, implying that the mass media have not been effectively utilized to build public agenda concerning the dangers of stockpiling e-wastes in homes and offices. The few amongst the residents who are exposed to media campaigns did not perceive e-wastes as a critical problem affecting the community. Hence, they were not influenced to change their existing behaviors toward the problem. Therefore, the following are recommended:

1. Public awareness and education on e-waste control through the mass media should be intensified so as to sensitize the public on the importance of adopting globally accepted standards for eliminating the e-waste menace.

2. Interpersonal communication channels such as opinion leaders, environmentalists, health officials, religious institutions, group meetings, provincial administrators and development agencies should be utilized to stimulate public consciousness and participation for effective e-waste control.

3. Interactive approaches such as phone-in programs and social debate initiatives should be fused into the broadcast media time slot where environmental issues such as the e-waste menace are discussed. This would enable people to contribute or clarify issues that may affect their perception and reactions to the problem.

4. One of the ways government and other stakeholders can increase awareness is by making use of billboards and digital street signs (Morah & Omojola, 2013) located in strategic points to create awareness on the e-waste menace.

5. The Ogun State Environmental Protection Agency (OGEPA) should develop and implement effective e-waste management facilities in partnership with development agencies, NGOs (Odiboh et al., 2017) and other interested bodies while educating the residents on the need to patronize the facilities to rid the environment of hazardous substances from e-wastes.

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Exploring the Awareness-Perception Profile of Operation Green Lagos Campaign in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: The government of one of Nigeria's most prominent political subdivisions - Lagos State – initiated the Operation Green Lagos campaign recently, as part of efforts to address the climate change aspect of its environmental challenges. Communication strategies were put in place to drive the project. This study starts a debate on the campaign by assessing the profile of awareness and perception of the target audience, as this profile is crucial to its success. A total of 385 Lagos State residents responded to questionnaire items, complemented by an interview with the relevant government official. Findings show that the campaign recorded a high level of awareness (89.6%) through the instrumentality of the broadcast media while 83% viewed the project as an act of social responsibility to improve the quality of life. In spite of these impressive outcomes, respondents noticed an inconsistency in the strategies, which slowed their response to government's environmental activities. This informed the recommendation that

officials of the state's Ministry of the Environment should do more to sustain citizens' positive attitude.

Keywords: Environmental communication, Diffusion of innovation; Operation Green Lagos, Awareness, Perception, Transformation.

Introduction

Water, land and air pollution is getting worse by the day, with serious detrimental effects on many carefree, slow-responding countries, including Nigeria. (Aluko, 2004). Man's physical environment is endangered. Besides the increasing cases of pandemics such as Lyme diseases, SARS and HIV/AIDS ravaging humanity, the world is faced with serious environmental challenges, including the continued depletion of the ozone layer, which now makes global temperature intolerable for mankind. It is obvious the earth is sick (Nwodu, 2007).

In Europe and United States of America, the environmental conditions that existed during the 18th and 19th centuries were poor – a reason why the missionaries of that period preached the 'doctrine of cleanliness' (Nsude, 2007). Since the earth summit in Rio De Janerio, Brazil in June 1992, interest in global environmental change has been on the increase. The growing interest is an upshot of the fact that environmental health is crucial to development as enunciated in the United Nations Agenda 21, which represents the hallmark of the Rio conference. The preamble to Agenda 21 states that;

> The integration of environment and development concerns will create greater attention and lead to the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protection and managed eco-systems and a safer more prosperous future in the context of a global partnership for sustainable development. (Keghku 2006, p.50)

Unfortunately, today, environmental problems have reached the roof. The degradation of the Nigeria environment has contributed in no small measures to the exacerbation of drought, acute water scarcity, low - agriculture productivity, rural poverty and the proliferation of diseases associated with extreme temperatures and poor environment conditions. The world is witnessing systematic and steady degradation with the attendant growing inability to support life (Anyaoku, 2004), thereby making environmental protection imperative.

Environmental protection is the method of organizing and stabilizing the environment to make it conducive for human habitation. In order to protect the environment, various authorities and individuals

have warned against continued degradation. More individuals and organization than ever before are interested in seeing the environment cleaned up. Governments have established departments for the environment. Technology now exists more than ever before to help deal with the problems though the implementation of many programs has been faulty. Many governments do agree on how to tackle environmental issues but find it difficult to enforce the agreement. The same problems confront both individuals and organizations (Nsude, 2007).

In Nigeria, there has been a growing concern for environmental protection in recent times. This could be hinged on the rapid increase in the nation's population and industrialization with the attendant impact on the environment and public health. The need to manage the environment elicited the establishment of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) and the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). These agencies organize re-orientation programmes at federal and state levels in a bid to make people adopt environmentally friendly innovations, create awareness and change their attitude. This raises the question of how the issues regarding environmental protection and

education could be successfully resolved (Nwabueze, 2007).

The Lagos State government in recent time has reinforced its commitment to environmental protection for a healthy environment. Through the Ministry of the Environment, it has established agencies to handle the different aspects of environmental issues in the state. Agencies like the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and Lagos State Advertising Agency (LASAA) have been very prominent in addressing environmental challenges in the state saddled with enhancing and protecting the aesthetics of the metropolis. The step taken by the Lagos state government is consistent with the observation of Oso (2006) that for an emerging mega city like Lagos, environmental communication is very essential. Oso noted the development in socio-economic activities within the state present social challenges in urban governance as established in some other mega cities across the world. Such challenges include overstretched and decaying infrastructure, widespread poverty, unemployment, high level of insecurity, high immigration rate, emergence of slums and environmental deterioration.

To harmonize its objectives of a cleaner Lagos, the Lagos state government introduced an aggressive program tagged "Operation Green Lagos" (OGL) to achieve its environmental transformation agenda. The vision is to create a new, modern Lagos State. All over the state, the aggressive beautification and redevelopment of available open spaces stand out prominently. The reclamation of these open spaces from garbage, illegal structures and miscreants who used them to unleash terror on innocent citizens and make the state look like slum has received accolades both at home and abroad (Banire, 2009). The Lagos State government uses communication campaigns to endear and explain the objectives of its programs, including OGL, to Lagos residents. Some related programs that have been launched include the Climate Change Club in public schools, the yearly commemoration of the World Environment Day, the one-man, one-tree initiative, Lagos State Government Housing Estate Award and so forth. This study explores the profile of awareness and perception of the OGL campaign among Lagos State residents.

Statement of the Problem

According to Meisner (2015), environmental communication is communication about environmental affairs. This includes all of the diverse forms of interpersonal, group, public, organizational, and mediated communication that make up the social debate about environmental issues and problems, and our relationship to the rest of nature. As with communication in general, environmental communication serves two broad social functions. The first is that we use communication to do things. For example, we communicate in order to inform, persuade, educate, and alert others. Similarly, we use communication to organize, argue, reconcile, and negotiate with each other, among other things. In this way, environmental communication is a practical, and indeed essential, tool for action.

In Nigeria, developmental programs, geared toward the self-sustenance and enrichment of the populace, have failed in many instances. Operation Feed the Nation (1977-79), the Green Revolution (1979-83) and War Against Indiscipline (1984-85) are programs that did not last beyond the tenure of their initiators. One factor noticed in the failure of these programs is the poor communication strategies adopted to drive them. An observer has noticed that the communication not used systematically or strategically to drive a campaign in developing economies like that of Nigeria can lead to challenges of misperception, maladaptation and lack of

acceptance on the part of the audience (Okiyi, 2007). Thus, this study investigates the profile of awareness and perception of the OGL campaign among the residents of Lagos State of Nigeria.

Research Objectives
In view of the aforementioned, the objectives set out in this study are:

1. To ascertain the level of awareness about the Operation Green Lagos programme among Lagos residents.
2. To examine the communication channels and strategies used by the Lagos state government for the Operation Green Lagos programme.
3. To examine the perception of residents about the Operation Green Lagos programme.

Significance of the study
This study will provide insight into the sentiments and adaptability of the populace to development programs. Besides serving as an addition to existing literature, this study is also significant in identifying communication channels and strategies that are crucial to environmental communication.

Theoretical Framework
The diffusion of innovation theory, as a development communication theory, provides the support for this study. As popularized by Everett Rogers, it is a theory of how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures.

Rogers (1983, p.34) defines diffusion as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" and innovation as an object, idea or practice perceived as new or novel by an individual or other unit of adoption. Young (2009), while studying the theory noticed the time lag between an innovation's first appearance and its general acceptance by a population. Among the factors suggested were delays in acting on information, a desire to conform, learn from others, and changes in external factors. Young also reasoned that people might realize different benefits and costs from the innovation or they might hear about it at different times, have different amounts of information, different predispositions to conform and so forth.

Rogers (1983) identifies the key elements that may be considered in the process of diffusion of innovations. They are:

- *innovation*- an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption;
- *communication channels*- the means by which messages get from one individual to another;
- *time*- The innovation-decision period is the length of time required to pass through the innovation-decision process

while the rate of adoption is the relative speed with which an innovation is adopted by members of a social system; and

• *social system*- a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal.

According to Rogers, diffusion of an innovation occurs through a five-step process. This process deals with decision making that is influenced through series of communication channels over a period among the members of a similar social system. These five stages are: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. As a development theory, Nwodu (2006) agrees that:

> Innovation and diffusion would mean strategic exposure of change targets to new idea, object or practice (that is innovation) in a manner that they will pay attention to understand, internalize and adopt the new idea, object or practice (which is diffusion) for their own benefit. (p.102)

Thus, change agents concerned with engineering innovation diffusion, must as a matter of necessity, understand the socio-cultural milieu in which change targets live and borrow extensively from such socio-cultural milieu in other to be productive. Information on the media usage patterns of the prospective adopters will facilitate

the fashioning of innovations to suit the media and satisfy needs (Obi cited in Nwodu, 2006)

This theory is relevant to this study because the Operation Green Lagos programme is an innovation, which has been necessitated by natural and human factors. Because of the peculiar nature of humans to sometime resist change particularly when such change requires some sacrifices, this theory provides insight on factors that may influence the process of adoption such as reflected in the perception of Lagos residents about the OGL program. However, the scholarly reviews of the assumptions of the diffusion of innovation theory also provide change agents with hindsight that may help in their approaches to strategically communicate environmental issues and how targets respond to innovations such as the Operation Green Lagos programme.

Relevant Literature
Conceptual Overview on Environmental Communication
An environment consists of all living and non-living things in our midst-solid, liquid and gaseous element that we can see, touch, smell and feel. Most of these things are essential for our day-to-day existence and are referred to as environmental resources. The environment, like culture, knows no bound and encompasses air, water

and land. It therefore follows that environmental consciousness ought to be everybody's contribution to the preservation of mother earth (Keghku, 2006). The concept of environmental communication simply means communication (interpersonal and or mass communication) efforts geared towards environmental affairs. It is a conscious communicative effort to bring people to the full knowledge of environmental problems around them; encourage them to desist from actions that are harmful to the environment; and sensitize them to show greater commitment to activities aimed at safeguarding the environment. (Nwodu, 2007)

Environmental communication is an information effort by either the government or other bodies on the one hand or the mass media on the other to enlighten the audience on how best to live and make the most out of nature (Agba, as cited in Nwodu, 2007). Among the areas of focus for environmental communication are environmental advocacy and education campaigns, media role in environmental affairs, public relations around environmental issues and green marketing, which is the advertising of environmental-friendly products (Meisner as cited in Nwodu, 2007).

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), environmental communication can drum up support or champion advocacy for the enthronement of an environment that is friendly to man's existence on earth. It must be noted that environmental communication is the planned and strategic use of communication process and media products to support effective policy making, public participation and project implementation geared towards environmental sustainability. It is a two-way social interaction process enabling the people concerned to understand key environmental factors and their interdependencies and to respond to problems in a competent way. Environmental communication aims not so much at information dissemination but at a shared vision of sustainable future and at capacity building in social groups to solve or prevent environmental problems. It transforms the power generated by project managers and the people concerned into action. It provides the missing link between the subject matter of environmental issues and the related socio-political processes of policymaking and public participation (OECD, 1999).

A long-standing convention in environmental correspondence has been to furnish lay people with the data to trigger genuine ecological concern and conduct. Many studies do exhibit the deficiency of simple

instructive correspondence procedures but a base measure of information about the earth and natural issues might be a critical pre-requisite to manage ecological issues and gain more advocates for a sustainable environment. For instance, activity based learning – or knowing particularly what one can do about environmental issues – is a vital to good ecological conduct. Activity related learning, which alludes to behavioral alternatives and conceivable strategies, might be a more grounded determinant of pro-ecological conduct than learning about the causes and ramifications of environmental issues. Social information, or the learning about the thought processes, expectations and practices of others toward the earth, is likewise frequently urgent for pro-environmental activities (Jarreau, 2015).

Issues in Environmental Communications

Environmental communications have been challenged in recent past, thus limiting their level of success. Reasons for this limited success may include basic constrains resulting from the way people think or behave. Some of the identified reasons are:

• Assumption on the part of environmentalists that scientific facts of ecological concerns are convincing and compelling on their own. However, what affect people's perception is influenced by emotions and socialization as well as by reason and knowledge.

• Inflated expectations that the 'cognitive power' of the world and the image alone will solve a given problem. By taking a shortcut from 'said to done', communication barriers are often disregarded.

• Conflicts of interest, which are fought by stakeholders, not negotiated by shareholders. Confrontational approach leads to one-way information dissemination, disregarding understanding instead of relying on two-way communication towards shared meaning and win-win situations. In addition, practical limitations arising from absence of communication strategy lead to shortcomings. For example:

 a) A systematic and holistic communication strategy that takes into account people's perceptions and saves fund is rarely considered but it could determine the success or failure of a project.

 b) Communication activities are often conducted on an ad-hoc and sporadic basis mainly using top-down mass media while neglecting public participation in community media

 c) Many decision makers do not know how to

incorporate a communication strategy in their environmental project life cycles and hence are not willing to invest in this. (OECD 1999, p. 6)

In view of these limitations, change agents must note that communication will play a crucial role throughout the policy and programme life cycle recognizing, gaining control over, solving and maintaining control over an environmental problem. It is vital that policy makers or planners realize that different actors are involved at each stage and that each actor has different perceptions, interest and hidden agendas. Understanding where project is in its progression from identification, formulations, implementation and management is an essential basis for determining which communication instruments should be used to eradicate misconceptions.

Many planners tend to think that producing posters and video films or launching a mass media campaign is a solution to problems rooted in environmentally unsustainable practices. However, isolated products of this type (environmental communication) only have a chance of success if they are integrated into a comprehensive communication strategy which defines up-front for what purpose and for whom information is meant and how

beneficiaries are supposed to translate it into communication and action. Change agents must demonstrate adequate understanding of the complexities of the environmental issues; the target audiences' comprehension gap; personal (traditional beliefs and socio-cultural norms) impacts; risk elements; and the possibility of large scale interactions (OECD, 1999).

To address the challenges of environmental communication and enforcement in Nigeria, there must be a strategic communication plan that is pragmatic and deliberate. Initiators of developmental projects such as the Operation Green Lagos programme must understand that appropriate population segmentation with appropriate media equals successful environmental communication campaign. Moemeka (as cited in Aliede, 2006) agreed that environmental communication makes efficient use of methods, instruments and techniques, which are well established in development communication, adult education, social marketing, agricultural extension, public relations, non-formal training etc. Moemeka underscored the need for an efficient method stating that:

> Effective communication can hardly occur unless there is an understanding between the communicator and the target audience, a basic for mutual

understanding arising from identical socio-cultural background or knowledge and opinion about the society, thus providing conditions for identical meanings in content, context and intention. This is so whether communication is directed towards development within the urban area or to development within the rural area. (p.59)

In effect, failure to go through those fundamental procedures (of identifying and choosing the right media) in some instances has led to unsuccessful outcomes and wastage of resources in developmental campaigns. Such ad-hoc approach negates the crucial inputs of the beneficiaries and their reactions to the impact the program would have on them (Aliede, 2006). To mitigate such unproductive venture into development programmes, Uwakwe (2016) recommends developing participatory communication strategies that takes care of media specific concerns of the target audience. Such participatory communication approaches will adequately consider the type of media, levels of media, nature of media, institutional characteristics of media, the economics of the media and the participatory and empowerment potentials of the media before adoption.

In addition, Wilson (2006) advocates an interface between the indigenous and modern media of communication. He posits that there should be focused and sustainable environmental development programme supported by articulate, critical and perceptive media. For such articulation, there should be an interface between indigenous channels of communication and modern mass media in order that the problems may be adequately addressed. This process is what Innocent (2016) refers to as media education and interpretation. Innocent (2016) notes that it is not enough to wish that individuals adopt new ways of doing things without been educated properly on the need for adopting the new innovation which may include the benefits and the advantages over the old ideas. There is also the need for education on the procedures for adopting the innovation.

Empirical Review in Environmental Communication

Scholars have attempted to study and examine approaches, successes and challenges of environmental communication. In a cross-respondents study among environmental psychologists, environmental communicators and residents of a coastal town in Louisiana (United States), Jarreau (2015) discovered that environmental psychologists emphasized communication from a local angle and took into account the readers concerns and motivations

and value messaging to appeal to specific cultural and pro-environmental values. Both psychologists and communicators in the study emphasized knowing the audience, telling local stories, building relationships with target audiences and targeted messaging; including source credibility, avoiding controversial terms and talking about issues, impacts and solutions that the target audience can relate to. Unfortunately, the study found that the development agents who acknowledged the effectiveness of these strategies failed to adopt them on a large scale in their programs. It recommended that specific strategies, which would include action knowledge, value-based messaging and social norms, were essential for environmental communicators who aim to initiate changed behaviour among their target audience.

Findings from Ojobor's (2016) study on the role of communication in waste disposal system as adopted by the Enugu State Waste Management Agency (ESWAMA) also indicated the same problem in the adoption of communication action knowledge and the use of social normative messages. A total 81% of respondents were of the view that an insignificant relationship existed between ESWAMA's media strategy and the people's involvement in waste disposal activities. He explained why Enugu residents continued to dump refuse in unauthorized places, set the refuse heaps and dumpsters on fire, refuse to put their thrash in bags, and generally resist any attempt to get them pay for environmental sanitation fees. These also include those who claim no relationship whatsoever. The respondents claimed the communication strategy was non-participatory, unsustainable and not consistent. The study recommended that ESWAMA should reverse the trend and make its communication strategies more participatory.

To assess the issues of approaches in environmental communication, Ayedun-Aluma (2007) in his exploration of the structure, channels and activities of the Lagos State government in environmental communication discovered that the State adopted inter-organizational communication networking using both formal and informal structures and activities. They included the National Council on the Environment; the Annual National Conference on the Environment; the Advisory Committee on the Environment; the weekly State of the Environment Meeting; and the Stakeholders Forum. Others were: the Lagos State Environment NGOs Network; the State of the Environment meeting by LAWMA, the annual Inter Cohorts Assembly

of LEAD Nigeria conveyed by Foundation for Environmental Development and Education in Nigeria (FEDEN). It also included the monthly meeting of environmental NGOs in Lagos conveyed by the Community Conservation and Development Initiative; and the Lagos state Association of Private Sector Participation (PSP) Operators in waste collection (and management).

Ayedun-Aluma (2007) also discovered that the channels used by the organizations had four categories namely:

(1) Face-to-face channels, which comprise meetings, workshops, seminars and public reviews
(2) Mediated interpersonal channels which comprise the telephone, letters, e-mail and reports
(3) Print mass media, which comprise posters, pamphlets, leaflets, newsletters, journals, magazines, newspaper advertisements and books and
(4) Electronic mass media, which comprise television advertisements and websites.

Experts have also studied approaches to participatory environmental communication as identified by Ayedun-Aluma (2007). Using an evaluation metric based on western concepts of participation, particularly access, standing, and influence Schmidt (2008) in his study on public participation in environmental planning and decision making by tribal governments in Citizen Potawatomi Nation, found that individual participation was satisfactory to participants, but that participation at the local, state, and federal level was not.

Moore (2008) examined the relationship between religion and environmental communication in the United States of America. The study assessed the ways in which information provided by religious sources such as church leaders, intersects with information from mainstream secular media and the impact this has on evangelicals' perceptions of environmental issues. Using a multi-methodological approach, including media diaries from a National Science Foundation study, focus groups and observations in evangelical churches to establish the interconnections, the study indicated that there are several factors that shape the way evangelicals think about the environment. These factors include political affiliation, beliefs about media bias, commercialism, and religious conviction. He concluded that the American evangelicals are important to study for several reasons, including that they are an increasingly influential group in U.S. society and thus are an integral part of the changing face of U.S. politics.

In an earlier study, Ogwezzy (2006) asserted that environmental issues became part of the agenda of the Nigerian business community. They were top priorities for companies and this doused the impression of interest only in making profit. The study revealed that greening and beautification of streets were among the most conspicuous aspect of social responsibility. They wanted to be seen as environment friendly as that could influence customer service. Of the 20 beautified sites studied across Lagos state metropolis, ten were constructed by banks, two by oil companies, and eight by others.

However, Ndisika (as cited in Ogwezzy, 2007) argues that companies' engagement in street beautification was driven profit motive. He argues that these beautifications exist only in conspicuous places that are exposed to heavy human traffic. By putting their brand names and painting much of the site in their corporate colors, they are able to attract attention and customers. It should be noted their signage do not attract government tariffs which have made some observers seen them as a cheap advertisement medium.

Ndisika's observation notwithstanding, Philippe (2010) in his study on the effect of environmental communication on a company's legitimacy and the antecedents of such communication, found that organizations react to heightened institutional pressures on environmental issues to acquire legitimacy. In a content analysis of the annual reports of companies randomly selected, the study revealed an increasing dissemination of environmental information as a key component of the annual reports in reaction to intense institutional pressures.

Method

This study adopted the survey and in-depth interview research methods. According to Baran (2002), surveys "allow mass communication researchers to measure characteristics, opinions, or behaviours of a population by studying a small sample from that group, then generalizing back to the population which is the group under study" (p. 408). Sobowale (2008) notes that in-depth interview "enables the researcher to probe deeper into the inner recesses of the interviewee. The interviewees are presented with an opportunity to express themselves and not limited by responses" (p.67).

Population of the Study and Sample Size

The population of this study consists of residents of Lagos State. Using a ballot system, four local government areas from the 20 in Lagos State were randomly selected, namely: Lagos Island, Ikeja, Lagos Mainland

and Ojo. According to the 2008 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Atlas of Electoral Constituency, the populations of the selected local government areas are as follows: Lagos Island- 209, 437; Ikeja-313, 196; Lagos Mainland- 317, 720 and Ojo- 598, 071. The total population for the selected areas is: 1,438,424. Using the Survey Monkey sample size calculator, set at 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error and a 50% normal (response) distribution, the calculated sample size is 385.

Sampling, Instrument

The 385 sample size was divided among the 4 selected local government areas as follows: Lagos Island- 96; Ikeja- 96; Lagos Mainland-96; and Ojo- 97. Using a ballot system, one ward was selected from each local government and four streets selected from each ward using the same system. The streets selected were: Seriki Aro Ward (Ikeja) - Olowu Street, John Akinjide Street, Obanta Street and Muri Busari Street. Ojo Oniyun Ward (Lagos Mainland) - Olaogun Street, Ojo Oniyun Street, Cole Street and Thomas Street. Iba ward (Ojo) - Great Challenge Road, Oba Goriola Street; Aratumi Street and Olaoye Street. Balogun Ward (Lagos Island) Balogun Street, Alagbede Street, Issah Williams street and Enu Owa Street.

The number of houses on the street was counted and divided by 24 (allotted copies of questionnaire for each street) to determine the sample interval. Using a ballot system, a random start was selected between one and the interval on each selected street for the houses. The Press and Public Relations Officer in the Lagos State Ministry of Environment responded to the interview questions on OGL. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and is a full member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR).

Data Analysis

Analysis of data is simplified and devoid of complex statistics. Figures on tables are also rehashed in a few sentences. This is to enable illiterate and unsophisticated readers understand the details. Omojola (2016, p. 836) has observed that in some cases the audiences of a research output include less literate persons, which means that analysis of findings should be simplified for easy understanding. The analysis is presented below using simple percentages. Both the responses from the survey and the in-depth interview were anaylsed simultaneously under each research question.

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of Operation Green Lagos program among Lagos residents?

Table 1: Level of awareness of respondents on the Operation Green Lagos programme

Responses	%
Yes	89.6
No	10.4
Total	**100**
N	**385**

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are aware of the *Operation Green Lagos* program. Here awareness is conceptualized in terms of *actual* experience (Omojola, 2008) of knowing about the campaign and responding to it. The Principal Public Relations Officer at the Lagos State Ministry of Environment Mr. Ogundeji also confirmed that the level of awareness was very high among the residents, as the Ministry received feedbacks from the residents and enquiries particularly from artisans on how they could support the program. According to him:

> The feedbacks are quite encouraging. We do media appearances, which are usually talk back shows where people give immediate feedbacks on environmental reports in their area. That

shows that many of the residents are aware of our programs. People send in text messages on those destroying the planted trees or illegally occupying areas meant for beautification. Some send letters while others call. Through our emails and websites (www.moelagos.org; publicaffairsenvirons@yahoo.com), the residents are able to get back to use quickly on issues. Once the people give us information, the ministry swiftly moves to address them. All of these activities indicate a high level of awareness and positive attitude of the respondents toward the project.

Research Question 2: What are the communication channels and strategies used for the *Operation Green Lagos* programme?

Table 2: Communication channels and strategies

Communication Strategies	%
Through mobile announcers	0.9
Through the television	57.8
Through the radio	4.7
Through the newspaper	5.7
Through interpersonal communication	11.8
Through the billboards	7.3
Through the community/association meetings	0.9
Other	19.9
Total	100
N	385

Table 2 shows that Lagos State Government has used a combination of the channel and strategies for passing across the OGL communications. Television is the major channel through which resident get the information followed by interpersonal communication and other communication channels, which may include the social media and SMS. The findings corroborate Ogundeji's comments on the communication channels and strategies used by the Ministry. According to him, all major activities of the agency are broadcast on the television and radio particularly the state-owned television station *Lagos Television*

(LTV) and the radio stations *Radio Lagos (AM)* and *Eko FM*. The tools used include radio jingles, TV, media talks, media briefings, newspaper adverts and press releases. Weekly programmes featured on television are: "Our Environment" on LTV on Wednesdays and "Environmental Waka" on TVC, which use Pidgin English.

According to the PRO local government chairmen, traditional rulers and chiefs, trade unions, schoolteachers and pupils and the community development association (CDA) members gather on World Environment Day when communication messages are disseminated. He said:

The event has been decentralized into five divisions of Lagos State. Decentralization ensures that the commemoration takes place simultaneously while the State Governor is represented at each venue. Traditional rulers as well as state and federal legislators from Lagos State are all represented at the events. Such a wide involvement is to ensure that communication gets to the grass roots.

Research question 3: What is the perception of Lagos residents about the *Operation Green Lagos* programme?

Table 3: Residents perception on whether the project is of any benefit to Lagos residents

Responses	%
Yes	96.0
No	4.0
Total	**100**
N	**385**

Table 4: Perception of residents on the most appealing benefits of the project

Perception	%
It helps beautify Lagos metropolis	52
It helps in purifying the environment and improve the quality of life	33
It helps generate employment for the Lagos residents.	3
It helps address issues of climate change	13
Total	**100**
N	**385**

According to **Table 3**, majority of the respondents think that the program is beneficial to Lagos State residents. **Table 4** shows that the beautification of Lagos metropolis and its environs is the most appealing benefit of the *Operation Green Lagos* program among Lagos residents. Environmental purification becomes the next most important benefit while employment generation is the least perceived benefit of the programme among the residents.

Table 5: Perception of residents on the overall objective of the project

Responses	%
It is an act of social responsibility	83.0
It is just to make a political statement	10.0
It just a waste of state resources.	3.2
Others	3.8
Total **N**	**100** **385**

Table 5 indicates that the most notable objective of the Operation Green Lagos programme is that of social responsibility although few residents still perceive it as a political gimmick. Thus, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents perceive the Lagos State government as socially responsible towards its residents because 91.6% in a follow up question also agreed that the programme should be sustained.

This perception was highlighted in the response of Ogundeji where he stated that the State has been able to solicit and get the support of one of the most difficult set of Lagos residents i.e. the area boys some of whom hitherto use the open spaces now beautified as their abode. More so, due to the communications, members of the community now appreciate more the need for trees to beautify and make the environment healthier.

Discussion

It is important reiterate that findings on the communication channels and strategy of the State showed that over half of the residents got the messages on the television, reflecting the effectiveness of programmes such as "Our Environment" and "Environmental Waka" which are weekly programmes of the Lagos State Ministry of Environment featured on LTV and TVC regularly amidst other media. This debunks the growing claim that the Internet has rendered broadcast media useless. In a similar study conducted in Enugu State in the southeast of Nigeria, Ojobor (2016) notes that the radio was the most effective medium. This implies that the broadcast media is still relevant and instrumental to environmental communication.

A percentage of the respondents indicated that they received the OGL messages from at least one of the channels identified in this study.

This affirmed the findings of Ayedun-Aluma (2007) that Lagos State environmental communication strategies use both the formal and informal structures. The respondents and interviewee confirmed all of the media and structures identified by Ayedun-Aluma as part of the communication strategies for the program.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The perception of residents about OGL campaign is quite positive. Majority of the respondents agreed that the beautification of the state is beneficial, as they perceived it to be an act of social responsibility by the government. However, in a follow-up question, some of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction about the consistency of the communication campaign to drive OGL, claiming that the vigor put into it was felt more at the beginning of the program than lately. The PR strategist replied that in spite of this shortcoming there is little doubt that OGL has worked. The government official noted the advice that the enthusiasm noticed at the beginning of the program should be sustained. In view of this conclusion, the following are recommended:

- The Lagos State environmental agencies should be consistent with their messaging to keep the objectives of the program top of the mind among the residents. Messages can also be made in the local language (mainly Yoruba) but where English is imperative, good subtitling should be given a priority (Daramola, Hamilton & Omojola, 2014).

- This strategy as executed for the Operation Green Lagos may be redefined and adopted for other developmental programs of the State because of its significant success in creating awareness and relatively positive perception among the residents.

- However, it will be more appropriate for Lagos State to conduct a holistic study of this program for the purpose of future projects.

- Other States in Nigeria and around the world willing to embark on projects of the same nature may adapt the Operation Green Lagos communication strategies although with an insight from socio-cultural mix of the target communities.

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Media Coverage and Framing of Cultural Practices that Target Nigerian Women

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Abstract: This study examines media coverage of unwholesome cultural practices with regard to women in Nigeria and its inherent framing patterns. Contents of five dominant broadcast and print media– Africa Independent Television (AIT), Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Vanguard, The Nation and Daily Sun were investigated while 121 media practitioners responded to questionnaire items in Rivers State, a political subdivision in the southern part of the country. Findings show an insignificant coverage of the cultural practices that denigrate women while the framing patterns exhibit a non-condemnatory stance. These unimpressive outcomes are upshots of reporters' low awareness profile of the issue, patriarchy and advertisers' lack of interest. Journalists will need to be sensitized toward these negative cultural practices to enhance their coverage and creation of framing patterns that favor of women.

Keywords: Broadcast media, framing patterns, cultural practices, media coverage, women.

Introduction

Generally, Nigerian women are victims of gender-induced violence and discriminatory cultural practices. They are regarded as objects to be used for pleasure, temptation and elimination. For instance, a man will beat his wife and nothing will happen. Nigerians would rather expect her to go on her knees and beg him. Cultural practices against the female gender constitute a ubiquitous plague in Nigeria and Africa (Odunjinrin, 1993). Governments and multilateral institutions have come up with some policies to tackle the problem but it appears solution is still farfetched.

Violence against women is under-reported in spite of its high prevalence in many cultural settings both in the developed and developing countries (Molloy, 2000; Odimegwu, 2001). For instance, studies indicate that 10-58% of women have experienced one form of physical abuse or another by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Furthermore, cross-sectional studies show that 40% of women in South Africa, 28% in Tanzania and 7% in New Zealand reported that their first sexual intercourse was forced (Weigert, 1999). Cultural practices against women are evident in many forms, including domestic, verbal and physical abuse, rape and sexual assault, early and forced marriages, incest and female genital mutilation.

In most societies, physical abuse is often considered an acceptable behaviour, and where it is frowned at, women are often blamed for inciting the men who engage in it (Odimegwu, 2001; Watt and Zimmerman, 2002). For example, among the Luhya community in Western Kenya and Tiv-speaking people of Nigeria, wife beating is even regarded as a sign of love, which women have been socialized to accept and sometimes encourage it (Odimegwu, 2001; Ifemeje, 2008). Cultural practices against women perpetrated often by male partners are widely condoned by many Nigerian societies where the belief that a husband may chastise his wife by beating her is deeply embedded in the culture (Odujinrin, 1993; Okemgbo, Omideyi and Odimegwu, 2002). Traditional attitudes regarding the subordination of women exacerbate problems of sexual and domestic violence (Otite, 2000). Therefore, violence against women provides one of the most obvious illustrations of the low position and status that women are accorded in many cultures in Nigeria.

Cultural discrimination against women is also an aspect of the practices against women. Discrimination against women occurs in all spheres of the Nigerian life and is characterized by features left by culture, colonial legacy, religion, education, politics,

employment and legislation (Mollory, 2000).

Cultural practices against women in Nigeria are an outgrowth of patriarchy where the roles of men and women are socially constructed in such a way that women occupy inferior positions in the scheme of things (Odimegwu, 2001). According to Omojola and Yartey, (2016, p.84) "Patriarchy, an age-long culture controls the polity through dialogic lockdown that allows only a very few opportunities for the subaltern, especially women." Due to preference for boys in most cultures, a woman without a male child is regarded as almost barren. For this reason, the husband of such a woman usually takes another wife with the hope of bearing a male child. This is borne out of the belief in male physical, psychological and social superiority. Only the male child is regarded as capable of upholding the lineage while the female gets married into another family. Consequently, girls are treated as temporary members of their families, sometimes denied equal access to education, feeding and inheritance. Unfortunately, women are also treated as strangers in their husbands' families because of the possibility of divorce. This is reflected in the traditional practice where daughters and natural members of a family have more rights than the wives.

Some societies in Nigeria such as the people of Abakaliki in Ebonyi State have food taboos for female children. Food sacrificed to the gods cannot be eaten by girls. They are also not allowed to eat gizzard and the anus or head of fowl. There is no nutrition-oriented reason for preventing girls and women from eating such foods.

The recent debate on the amendment of the 1999 constitution raised a controversial question on the position and treatment of women under the law in Nigeria. Many people have expressed shock and disappointment over the unequal treatment of women by the constitution, particularly section 29 (4) (b), which technically supports child marriage.

For the foregoing reasons, media coverage of the activities associated with practices against women becomes an important issue. News content can create the necessary awareness needed by society to promote development including in the areas that concern women. To do this, it is also pertinent that such coverage come with framed reports. Framing, thus, would direct the perception of the audience such as taking condemnatory stances against such practices that demean women in the society. This study aimed at establishing the extent the media have gone in covering and framing the cultural practices that

discriminate against women in Nigeria.

The Problem

In the pre-colonial Nigeria and a little after independence in 1960, cultural practices against women had received very little or no attention. This lack of visibility in public forums had been used as a weapon to perpetrate the practices. However, since the UN Declaration on the elimination of cultural practices against women (CEDAW), attempts have been made by governments, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in Nigeria to address the powerful cultural, traditional and religious forces that have hindered the elimination of dangerous cultural practices against women.

To this end and considering the self-assigned role of the media as agents of social change and development, it became imperative to investigate how the media in Nigeria had played its role with respect to discouraging negative cultural practices against women. We were particularly interested in the framing patterns that the news and reports on these cultural practices followed in the broadcast and print media.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are the following:

i. Determine the extent to which cultural practices against women are covered in the broadcast media in Nigerian;

ii. Ascertain the patterns of framing of cultural practices against women in the Nigerian broadcast media;

iii. Determine the factors that impinge on broadcast media coverage of cultural practices against women in the Nigerian, and

iv. Ascertain the level of awareness of cultural practices against women among journalists.

Literature Review

A brief on Culture

Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits music and arts. According to Schreek (2000), it is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of the society. It is the shared pattern of behaviours and interactions, cognitive constructs and effective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the member of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group. It is a people's way of life i.e. the fundamental ways of doing things common to a people.

Custom is defined in Black's Law Dictionary as a usage or practice of

the people which by common adoption and acquiescence and by long and unvarying habit has become compulsory and has acquired the force of a law with respect to the place or subject matter to which it relates. According to Egbuo (2005) the customary law embodies unwritten customs and traditions, which have been accepted as obligatory by members of a community; it is a body of unwritten customs and traditions accepted as obligatory by members of the community for the regulation of the relations between its members. Osborne (1998) cited in Salami (2012) adds: "One of the most striking features of West African native custom … is its flexibility; it appears to have been always subject to motives of expediency and it shows unquestionable adaptability to altered circumstances without entirely losing its character…" (p. 5).

The Concern with the Law
It appears there is a growing interest of activists in the rights of women under the laws of Nigeria. They have been able to raise some issues including the following:

- Gender-bias Language of the constitution: The language used by the constitution is not gender neutral, perhaps because it was written by men. For example, the pronoun "He" appears in the 1999 constitution about 235 times. Some advocates have recommended for replacing "he" with "a person" or "He and She."

- Lopsided Government's appointments and composition of agencies: Section 14(3) of the 1999 constitution does not show gender consideration in the composition of the government and its agencies.

- Indecent assaults on males and females: The Criminal Code discriminates against women on the issue of punishment against personal assaults. Section 353 of the Criminal Code provides that: "Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any male person is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years." Conversely, Section 360 provides that "Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a woman or girl is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is liable to imprisonment for two years." Why the difference?

- Marital rape: Can a man rape his wife? Yes, but not in Nigeria. Under the Nigerian criminal law, a man cannot rape his wife. Section 182 of the Penal Code provides that "sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape if she has attained puberty."

Those advocating recognition of marital rape claim that this provision condones the defilement of young girls.

- Spousal abuse/wife beating: Section 55(1) (d) of the Penal Code provides that "Nothing is an offence, which does not amount to the infliction of grievous harm upon any person and which is done by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife. Such husband and wife being subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful." One can argue that this provision condones domestic violence and may be used as justification for abuse against women in matrimonial relationships.

Cultural Practices against Women
Some of the cultural practices against women in Nigeria are:

i. Early and forced marriage
Early marriage refers to marriage of persons below the age of 18 years and is practised in different parts of Nigeria but more in the Northern parts of Nigeria (mostly among the Muslims) (Asadu, 2011). These young girls are given into marriage for various reasons, which include economic, maintenance of chastity and maintenance of family name. Most often the girls are forced by their parents and sometimes abducted by the rich and powerful in the society.

ii. Female Circumcision
Female genital mutilation is another cultural practise that leads to the abuse of women and is widely practiced in Nigeria. It involves the "partial or total removal of the external female genital and/or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any non-therapeutic reasons and is carried out for various cultural reasons such as maintenance of chastity and virginity before marriage, increasing sexual pleasure of the husbands, fidelity during marriage and intake of women into womanhood (Aduh, 2003).

iii. Wife inherited by husband's relatives
In some communities in Nigeria, the death of a wife of a customary marriage automatically brings the marriage to an end. However, where it is the husband that dies, the marriage does not come to an end, the wife is inherited within the family. Thus, the woman is given to any of the husband's brothers or relations and is expected to continue to perform her matrimonial roles to him whether she likes it or not (Reychler and Jacobs 2004). Even though this practice is gradually dying out because of the influence of religion, modernization, and the current scourge of HIV/AIDS, it is still going on in some communities in Nigeria.

iv. Divorce

In situations where a couple married under customary law goes through divorce, the woman is required to refund the bride-price paid on her regardless of the number of years she and her husband had been married and the number of children they have. Even when the woman has been married for forty or more years she would still be required to make the refund. Upon divorce, the children of the marriage, in most cases, are required to be in the man's custody. The woman is not entitled to properties: no house, no furniture, no farms etc. She is just asked to leave her matrimonial home for wherever (Ofie-Aboagye, 1994). The customary practice in relation to divorce as practiced by many traditional communities is certainly repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience.

v. Widowhood rites

In some Nigerian communities, whenever a man dies, his wife is usually suspected and often accused of knowledge of and/or complicity in his death. This is common in the southeast Nigeria. Such suspicion or accusation is never made when a wife dies. In some communities, the wife is made to undergo some life-threatening ritual to prove her innocence. In some areas, she is made to drink the water used in washing the corpse of her deceased husband in an attempt to prove her innocence.

vi. Domestic violence

Several women in Igboland, also in the southeast, are victims of all manner of domestic violence. According to Egbue (2009, p.6) on this, "Violence against women constitutes a highly damaging dimension of the dehumanization of women on the basis of culture. This still remains common practice in the localities studied, either as means of maintaining masculinity and male superiority, or of keeping female spouse in check."

vii. Payment and refund of bride price

From all indications, the aspect of the Igbo customary law that specifies payment and refund of bride price has attracted much criticism from women's rights activists. For instance, Enemuo (1990, p.32) has condemned the acts in the following terms: "One would observe that the picture painted by the refund of bride price is exactly the same painted by its payment. That portrayed a woman as a piece of chattel being bought or rejected by its owners." The author suggests that there should be neither payment nor refund of bride price. Aduh (2003) also argues that the payment and refund of bride price paints a portrait of commercialisation.

viii. Marginalization of Women's Rights in Dissolution of Customary Law Marriage

In the process of the dissolution of Igbo customary law marriage, women are often at a loss as they are given any financial compensation. Furthermore, they are also denied the custody of the children on the argument children belong exclusively to men under the Igbo custom.

ix. Male Preference Syndrome

Male sons are preferred under the Igbo culture. The birth of a son into any Igbo family calls for a big celebration and jubilation. The importance placed on the birth of a son is often reflected in the names often given to male sons at birth, such as ''Amaechina'', ''Ogbonna'', ''Nwokeabia'', ''Nwokedi, Nwokediuko etc. Literally interpreted, these names connote and extol the importance of male children in the family. Even in the home, the girl-child is practically forced to perform all the chores, for the simple reason that she is a girl and the place of a girl is in the kitchen.

Inequality, Violence and the Nigerian Woman

Discrimination against women is a universal phenomenon though certain socio-cultural practices that exist in some societies like Africa and some third world countries make women more susceptible than in others like Europe, America and other advanced countries where such practices are not as prevalent. The moment a girl-child is born in Nigeria, she starts to encounter discrimination. People who come to felicitate often greet the birth of a girl child with less glee than that of a boy. Some people even respond to questions on the sex of a new baby girl by saying she is another asewo (prostitute), especially if the mother had given birth to many female children in the past.

Nigeria is signatory to many multilateral agreements that frown at discrimination against women. For example, there is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), ratified by Nigeria in December 1991. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights in 1986, ratified and domesticated by Nigeria and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 and ratified by Nigeria in 1992 and most importantly the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003 – a unique piece of legislation which takes into consideration the provisions of other international instruments on human rights that touch on women's rights and the need for equality and freedom from discrimination.

Unimpressively, however, these have not succeeded in curbing the discrimination menace. But according to NCWS (2014):

> Some of these beliefs have been practiced for so long that they are embedded in the societal perception almost as a legal norm. Such that the laws of the land and international instruments which protect the rights of women, are flagrantly infringed in the guise of these age long cultural and/or religious belief (p.46).

Domestic violence is deep-rooted in many African societies, including Nigeria, where wife beating is considered a prerogative of men (Odumengwu, 2001; Ofie-Aboagye, 1994) and a purely domestic matter by the society (Rivera-Izabel, 1995). Domestic violence is one of the greatest barriers to ending the subordination of women. Women, for fear of violence, are unable to refuse sex or negotiate safer sexual practices, thus increasing their vulnerability to HIV if their husbands are unfaithful (Watts, Ndlovu, Njovana and Keogh, 1997).

Mass Media, Social Change and Development

McQuail (2010) has identified some functions that media perform to promote national growth and development. Prominent among these is media as social change. In media and cultural studies, two types of social change are visible:

First is major or macro social change that often appears to be revolutionary. Media were the catalyst of change in the following examples:

- The Arab Spring
- The emergence of South Sudan as a sovereign nation
- Barack Obama's win as the President of the United States
- Live telecast of Gulf War;
- The emergence of social media.

The second captures the minor or micro social change that appears to be quite subtle but can exert enough power to change the existing social order. Minor social changes often deal with ethnicity, individuality, social and cultural categories (social identity) (Ihechu, Okugo and Onwukwe, 2015) such as languages, emotions, conventions, rituals, hierarchies, deliberate praxis, exterior and interior behavioural expressions, milestones, traffic signals and all possible mundane exercises that affect life.

For media to be agents of minor or major social change the following are the processes that must occur in their contents namely:

- Priming: Publishing preponderantly about some issues in a way that alters the standards by which the audience evaluates those issues.
- Framing: Preparing some content preponderantly to make

them have more meaning than others to the audience.

- Agenda Setting: Publishing to influence the value or importance placed by the audience on the topics of public discourse or agenda.
- Media Cultivation: Using content to change the audience's behaviour (or even ideology) in the long run. This has capacity to change the socio-political and economic order.

On Framing and Agenda Setting Theories

The theories underlying this study are Framing theory and Agenda Setting theory. Framing expands the agenda-setting tradition by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand. In essence, framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning. The most common use of frames is in terms of the frame the news or media place on the information they convey. They are thought to influence the perception of the news by the audience. In this way it could be construed as a form of second level agenda-setting – they not only tell the audience what to think about (agenda-setting theory), but also

how to think about that issue (second level agenda setting, framing theory). Framing techniques according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) entail:

- Metaphor: To frame a conceptual idea through comparison to something else.
- Stories (myths, legends): To frame a topic via narrative in a vivid and memorable way.
- Tradition (rituals, ceremonies): Cultural mores that imbue significance in the mundane, closely tied to artefacts.
- Slogan, jargon, and catchphrase: To frame an object with a catchy phrase to make it more memorable and relate-able.
- Artefact: Objects with intrinsic symbolic value – a visual/cultural phenomenon that holds more meaning than the object itself.
- Contrast: To describe an object in terms of what it is not.
- Spin: To present a concept in such a ways as to convey a value judgment (positive or negative) that might not be immediately apparent; to create an inherent bias by definition.

In the light of the foregoing, we analyze the media coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory describes the "ability news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw (1968) cited in Ibrahim (2012) were able to determine the degree to which the media determine public opinion. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basic assumptions underlie most researches on agenda-setting:

1. The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;
2. Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

In relation to this study, we examine how the mass media in Nigeria have been able to capture or set agenda on cultural practices against women and some factors impinging on the agenda setting function in this regard.

Methods

The research design for this study encompasses survey and content analysis. The two methods were adopted to enhance the quality of results from three sets of population. The first set consisted of all the programme schedules of broadcast stations. The second had all the editions of newspaper and magazines in Nigeria while the third was made up of reporters, editors and other practitioners in Nigeria. Based on visibility, the following media were selected:

1. Broadcast: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and Africa Independent Television (AIT)
2. Print: Daily Sun newspaper, Vanguard newspaper and The Nation newspaper.

The first population set had 184 programme schedules from the two stations under study for March, April and May (that is, 92 days for each station).

The second accessible population was 276; being the total number of editions published by the three newspapers under study in three months. The units of analysis were representations of cultural practices against women in Nigeria as reflected in news, editorials, cartoons/pictures, commentaries/documentaries, advertisements/commercials, press/news release; etc. The frames are identified based on the patterns/techniques of framing as captured by Fairhurst and Sarr (1996).

The third population was 175 being the total number of journalists in Rivers State. This figure was gotten from the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Secretariat in Port Harcourt in the River State of Nigeria.

Results

Table 1: Coverage of cultural practices against women in the selected broadcast media

Media	Total number of programmes for the period under study	Number of programmes on cultural practices against women	Percentage
FRCN	1,245 (100%)	9	0.7%
AIT	1,567 (100%)	21	1.3%
TOTAL	2812 (100%)	30	1.066%

The table above shows data on the coverage of cultural practices against women by the media organizations within the period under study. Only minute percentages were recorded for the media organizations which in any case is just 2% added together.

Table 2: Specific cultural practices against women reflected in the broadcast media

Media	Early marriage	Widowhood practices	Female genital mutilation	Domestic violence/ battering	Divorce	Wife inheritance	Male preference syndrome	Bride price refund/ sale in marriage	total
FRCN	1	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	9
AIT	2	1	5	12	1	-	-	-	21
TOTAL	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	8 (27%)	14 (47%)	1 (3%)	-	-	-	30(100%)

Table 2 shows that domestic violence/battering has the highest reported cases in the media within the period understudy, followed by female genital mutilation, widowhood practices, early marriage and then divorce. Other issues such as wife inheritance, bride price refunds/ sale of women in marriage as well as male preference syndrome were not captured by the media.

Table 3: Genre of coverage of cultural practices against women in the broadcast media

Media	News	Talk show	Ad jingles	Documentaries	Drama/play/ soap-opera	total
FRCN	5	2	-	-	2	9
AIT	11	3	-	2	5	21
TOTAL	16(53%)	5(17%)	-	2 (7%)	7 (23%)	30(100%)

The table shows that within the period understudy, a majority percentage of 53% was recorded for NEWS genre in the coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria followed by drama, play/soap-opera, talk shows, and documentaries. Ad/jingles did not feature in the coverage of cultural practices against women within the period under study.

Table 4: Items and Genre of coverage of cultural practices against women in the print media

Media	News	Editorials	Cartoons/ pictures	Features	Adverts	Total
Daily Sun	2	1	2	3	-	8(38%)
Vanguard	2	-	-	3	1	6(29%)
The Nation	1	1	1	4	-	7(33%)
Total	5(24%)	2(10%)	3(14%)	10(48%)	1(4%)	21(100%)

Table 4 provides some information on both the items and genre of coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria. The picture that emerges from the table is that 21 items of cultural practice against women were identified within the period. Among the three newspapers, *Daily Sun* had the highest percentage in terms of coverage of the issues with the percentage of 38% followed by *The Nation* and *Vanguard*. The highest percentage was identified in Features (48%) followed by News (24%).

Table 5: Frames in the coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria

Media	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	Total
AIT	-	10	2	-	-	-	9	21
FRCN	-	4	1	-	-	-	4	9
Daily Sun	1	5	1	-	-	-	1	8
Vanguard	-	3	2	-	-	-	1	6
Nation	-	4	1	1	-	-	1	7
Total	1(2%)	26(51%)	7(14%)	1(2%)	-	-	16(31%)	51(100%)

KEYS: F1 = housewife syndrome; F2 = male preferences; F3 = widowhood rights; F4 = marital rape; F5 = wife beating; F6 = exclusions; F7 = wife-servants.

Table 5 shows that there are frames in the coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria, and using the framing techniques listed earlier, the patterns of framing of the issues in the media can be identified. For each of the items on cultural practices against women in each of the titles, the table reveals the framing pattern for each media.

Table 6: Awareness of cultural practices against women among the journalists

Responses	Scores	Frequency	%	Average score
Highly aware	5	12	10	0.49
Aware	4	17	14	0.56
Moderately aware	3	25	21	0.61
Unaware	2	24	20	0.39
Highly unaware	1	42	35	0.34
Total		121	100	2.39

Overall awareness rating = 47%

Table 6 shows that awareness is very low (47% with an average score of 2.39) and does not match the spate of increase in cultural practices against women.

Table 7: Constraints of media coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Low awareness/knowledge among reporters	32 (38)	84% (100%)
Low audience interest	7 (38)	18% (100%)
Culture of patriarchy	30 (38)	79% (100%)
Lack of sponsorship	31 (38)	81% (100%)
Poor government/NGOs attitude	15 (38)	39% (100%)
Scarcity of happenings/occurrence	3 (38)	8% (100%)

From Table 7 it is evident that low awareness/knowledge, culture of patriarchy, and lack of sponsorship are the most pronounced identified constraints to effective coverage of cultural practices against women in the media.

Discussion

RQ 1: To what extent do the media cover cultural practices against women in Nigeria?

Analyses of data in Tables 1 through 4 show the coverage of cultural practices against women in the media within the period under study. For the broadcast media, out of 2812 items/programmes for the period under study, 1.06% was on cultural practices against women in Nigeria. What is more, the media seem to be selective of the cultural practices against women covered. For instance such issues as wife inheritance, bride price refunds/sale of women in marriage as well as male preference syndrome were not captured in the media within the

period understudy. In the same vein, some genres of the media programs adjudged to be very efficient in facilitating audience interest and internalisation of media message (Asadu, 2011; Ibrahim, 2012) were missing in the coverage of cultural practices against women such genres include soap-operas/drama and short plays, advertisements, among others. For the print media, coverage of the issues was very low in Nigeria. Only a total of 21 items on cultural practices against women featured in the media analyzed. This is out of at least 70 items in each of the 36 editions of the newspapers analyzed within the period. However, high percentage (41%) for Features genre shows some case of some elaboration by the media on the issue and hence impressive.

From the analysis so far, it could be deduced that the extent of coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria is very low compared to the period under study. This was a

period set aside world over to celebrate womanhood and one would expect that more attention should have been directed at such issues within such period. Again , cultural practices against women in Nigeria has become a disturbing issue as most NGOs, government agencies as well as women ministries, agencies and civil society organizations in Nigeria have been re-echoing the need for all hands to be on deck in eradicating certain cultural practices against women. For instance, the National Council of Women Society (NCWS) in their communiqué at the end of their 2014 national convention observes as follows:

> The task of liberating the Nigerian woman and indeed the African women from obnoxious, barbaric and outdated cultural practices is a collective one. It is an action that requires all and sundry and most importantly the media…we need the media to tell our stories, our experiences and ordeals… that way, the society can fill our plight and that marks a big step towards ending ill-treatments against women in the name of culture (p.8).

However, some reasons could be adduced for the poor coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria. We live in a society overtly taken over by preponderance of political and economic issues. These issues take the media 'front burner' and as such are given almost all media attention and focus. Issues such as cultural practices against women are taken less seriously and can hardly compete for a space in the media. There is however, the need for the media to strike a balance in this regard.

RQ 2: Are there frames? What is the pattern of media framing of cultural practices against women in Nigeria?

Analysis of data in table 5 provides information on frames and framing of cultural practices against women in Nigeria. It shows there are frames which fall in line with Fairhurst and Sarr's presentation (1996). For the media organizations analyzed, three framing patterns were predominant. They are Stories/Myths, Spin and Tradition patterns. The stories/myths pattern suggests that cultural practices against women are vividly narrated in the media with little or no perspectives. The spin pattern suggests that audience are left to make value judgment while the tradition pattern implies that the media present the issues as more of tradition that should be left sacrosanct (or 'respected') as far as culture is concerned. What could be made out of this framing pattern and based on the explanation of these frames as done by Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) is that the media seem not to have taken a neutral stance with

regard to cultural practices against women in Nigeria.

RQ 3: What factor(s) impinge on the media coverage of cultural practices against women in Nigeria? Analyses of data in tables 6 and 7 reveal that some factors actually impinge on media coverage of these issues and the most predominant factors are low awareness/knowledge among journalists/reporters, culture of patriarchy, and lack of sponsorship. Knowledge/awareness among journalists is a very important index for determining media coverage of an issue. "One cannot give what one does not have," so the saying goes. In Table 6, it is clear that the level of knowledge/awareness of reporters on cultural practice against women is very poor considering the enormity of the costs of these to the society. Some respondents expressed the view that asking them about awareness on cultural issues against women is like asking them whether they know that there is culture. This explains the low awareness level.

Culture of patriarchy has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian and African societies. Male dominance and cultural arrogation of 'powers' 'rights' and 'privileges' in matters affecting both male and females are the order of the day. In fact such has come to be accepted as part of the Nigerian culture/tradition or customs. This transcends to a situation where in the early days of evolution, male offspring were given educational preferences than their female counterparts. The result today is that in most vocations, males seem to be more; the media job inclusive (Asadu, 2012; Okugo & Onwukwe, 2012). Consequently the penchant exists to de-prioritize such issues as cultural practices against women and simply consider it a cultural phenomenon which societies have come to live with.

Sponsorship of media content in Nigeria is common practice, which erodes objectivity in content and subjects journalists to undue pressure from their employers whose interests, amongst others, include profit. Issues such as cultural practices against women are among those topics that can generate sponsorship in good time. Hence, issues in the news that make sense in terms of profits is likely going to be given more attention than those that do not"

RQ 4: To what extent are journalists aware of cultural practices against women?

Table 7 shows that journalists' awareness level in relation to cultural practices against women was very low. There was an average awareness rating of 47% with an average score of 2.39 which was below the 3-point on a 5-point scale.

This result is the opposite of the spate of increase in cultural practices against women. Most of the respondents seem to consider cultural practices against women as issues that deserve less attention. Some respondents expressed the view that asking them about awareness on cultural issues against women is irresponsible on the part of the journalists. In summary, the journalists are not aware and this invariably affected the coverage level as well as the level of framing of the issues arising from such practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data analysed and findings made in this study, we conclude that the cultural practices against women in Nigeria have not been given adequate coverage by the media. The media in Nigeria need to stand up to its responsibility of sensitising the citizens on so many social issues among which is cultural practices against women in Nigeria. We also conclude that the media have not set agenda on cultural practices against women in Nigeria. The framing patterns reflect a neutral stance which ought not to be so considering the increasing and disturbing cases of cultural practices against women in Nigeria. Moreover, the framing patterns of the media on this issue do not guarantee a possible change of perceptions/beliefs as it concerns cultural practices against women in

Nigeria. On the trail foregoing, the following are recommended:

i. Media organisations in Nigeria should realise the need to report cases of cultural practices against women in Nigeria. Therefore, the journalists should be enlightened on the societal expectations in these areas so as to make the society realise the negative impacts of those practices on the development of the society.

ii. At this era of civilisation, framing culture practices against women has become imperative so that NGOs and civil rights groups would be encouraged to sponsor analyses, columns, commentaries and programmes to enhance regularity of such media offerings.

iii. There is need for the media in Nigeria to utilize such genres of coverage such as soap-opera, drama, short plays, etc. These have been adjudged to facilitate internalisation of media messages. However, "a careful assessment of the content displayed is crucial" (Morah and Omojola, 2013, p.399) to avoid unpleasant reactions.

iv. They should also give in-depth reports as well as beef up editorials about harmful acts

v. The women should be involved in covering and investigating

such practices. Thus, they should ready to move away from comfort zones.

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Mass Communication Education in Nigeria: Current Status, Challenges and Way Forward

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***Abstract*:** Since independence in 1960, there has been a steady growth of mass communication education in Nigeria. However, recent studies have shown that a significant number of graduates in the discipline do not possess the requisite skills for employment. This paper reiterates the issue. It describes the current status of mass communication education in the country, with a focus on the challenges confronting it, and suggests the way forward. The discourse shows that the number of mass communication graduates continues to grow but quality is declining. The challenges identified are the inadequacy of modern journalism facilities, absence of good journalism institutes, the doctorate syndrome, inadequate curricula, few hands-on opportunities for teaching and learning, poor funding, and negative students' attitude toward research. The authorities and stakeholders must address these issues to enable the country keep up with the best global practices.

***Keywords*:** Communication education, journalism, journalism training, research, Nigeria.

Introduction

Formal mass communication education started in Nigeria with the establishment of the department of mass communication at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in

1961 (Ashana, 2012). The University of Lagos followed in 1967 as a UNESCO-backed program. Since then several tertiary institutions in Nigeria have established similar or the same programs to teach journalism and impart the skills. Besides universities and polytechnics, training schools were also established. *Daily Times* established its training school in 1965 known as the Times Journalism Institute (TJI), while the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) training school commenced in 1959. The number of journalism schools in Nigeria had risen to 63 as of 2008 some of them accredited, and several others not known to law. The following table shows the number of academic and tertiary institutions offering the mass communication or journalism programs lately. The figures were compiled from the books of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 2014 and Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) in 2017.

Table 1:Tertiary institutions offering Mass Communication in Nigeria

Ownership	Polytechnics	University
Federal	19	13
State	19	15
Private	16	43
Total	54	71

The foregoing table shows that there are more universities offering mass communication program than polytechnics at the undergraduate levels. It also shows that there are currently more private universities offering mass communication than both the federal and state institutions.

In this presentation, an attempt is made to discuss the current status of mass communication in Nigeria, paying close attention to the challenges facing this field of study and how these challenges could be tackled.

Current Status of Mass Communication Education in Nigeria

Journalism education in Nigeria has grown exponentially since the advent of the first department of mass communication at University of Nigeria in 1961, followed by that of the University of Lagos in 1967, and the one at the Institute of Management and Technology (MIT) in 1978 which pioneered the study of mass communication in the polytechnic segment of the tertiary education system. Currently, no fewer than than 120 universities and

polytechnics offer mass communication or journalism education programs in Nigeria (Ashana, 2012). This implies that mass communication education has flourished in terms of numbers.

However, recent studies have shown that the increase in number is not replicated in the quality of program and graduates. In newsrooms, new reporters are advised to forget what they were taught in the classroom as it hardly bears relevance to what obtains in the beats (Whitt, 1995). Seelig (2010, p.245) raises these important questions: "What is it educators are preparing Journalism or Mass Communication majors to do? What are educators going to do to keep up with the technology changes in the media industry?" Ashana (2012), in agreement to this position, notes that "the state of journalism education is in dilemma as a result of certain ailments that have besieged the profession." Akinfeleye (2009) also argues that:

> the proliferation of journalism institutions without the accompanying human and financial capital as prerequisites, inadequate funding, powerful regulatory bodies, proper accreditation benchmarks and enforcement of a few existing legal frameworks – inability of the Journalists to police their own ranks, abandonment of journalistic integrity, left-footed professional ethical codes and their enforcement to mention a few, have negatively affected good and enduring professional standards (p.2).

Furtherance to Akinfeleye's argument, it is necessary to note that journalism education in Nigeria, having existed for over fifty years, is still to a large extent anchored on the Western philosophy of journalism studies. The peculiarities of Nigeria are not visible in her journalism education of today. In agreement with this stand, Chibita (2009) raises some observations with regard to this gap. He is worried why the country's mass communication education does not reflect community problems and dynamics and why reporters' knowledge of the media poorly reflects poverty, environmental degradation, unemployment, energy crisis and other situations on ground. Odunlami (2014) adds that right from 1960 till today, the theories, models and applications of key concepts that guide media practice and education in Africa are embedded in foreign contents.

Challenges Confronting Mass Communication in Nigeria

In spite the growth in numbers, the discipline is confronted with challenges that affect quality. The current curriculum in several institutions belong in the past as it is not adequate enough to equip students with modern skills needed in the journalism practice of the

21st century. Due to the dynamism in the practice as a result of constant technological advancement, the fact is that mass communication curriculum also needs constant review.

It is important to dioscolse that a number of journalism departments still use the dummy sheet, partitioned studios, and short hand in teaching students! This is at a time when technological innovations have overtaken such archives. There is a huge disconnect between what the mass communication curriculum offers and what is obtainable in field (Okoro, Obayi & Onyebuchi, 2013). Oso (2012) argues that it is a concern that the current mass communication curriculum in Nigeria's institutions was inherited from the British colonialists. Since the advent of the study of mass communication in Nigeria, part of the concerns of journalism/mass communication educators have been how to ensure a blend of journalism curriculum with the changing needs of the media industry (Odunlami, 2014).

Observers have also noticed that today's curriculum is inadequate in applying journalistic knowledge to address societal problems and dynamics. Having the knowledge of journalistic operations is not enough, but using that knowledge to solve problems is more important. Chibita (2009) sums up the problem thus:

How, for instance, do we make writing tutorials work where space, equipment and human resource are limited, or strike the balance in training between the extremes of producing specialists and generalists? How do we provide sound journalism training while keeping an eye on the realities of the majority of our audiences, or grapple with the big political and economic questions while at the same time meeting the needs of indigenous language media and rural communities? (p.2)

Inadequate modern journalism facilities is also one of the most daunting problems facing journalism/mass communication education in Nigeria. A number of mass communication departments use out-dated and faulty equipment which are irrelevant to what is obtainable in the modern day journalism practice. It is quite unfortunate that many mass communication departments only struggle to update their practical studios with few equipment only when accreditation exercises are around the corner.

Odunlami (2014, p.48) has observed that the present decade is noted for the high adoption rate of technological innovations in journalism, and mass communication practice often creates a feeling of inadequacy for media/journalism educators because as they grapple to incorporate

technological phenomenon in the curricula, several others come in quick succession. This phenomenon illustrates how and why the newsroom appears to be constantly ahead of the classroom. This assertion agrees to the fact that lack of or inadequate modern journalism training facilties is responsible for why the modern day journalism operation is ahead of the classroom. The situation is even worsened by the ineffectiveness of bodies in charge of regulating and accrediting the profession.

Regulatory bodies, besides being incompetent in the discharge of their duties, which breeds poor accreditation exercises, have also been accused of collecting gratification in exchange for undeserved scorings. Odunlami (2014) asserts that this trend is still notceable in Nigeria like other developing countries of Africa and adds that no sooner people in these countries, especially Africans, adjust to the realities of an emerging technological innovation than same are upgraded with the attendant challenge to catch up.

Are lecturers in mass communication doing the right thing? If they are not, what are the reasons? The doctorate syndrome which makes a Ph.D holder in journalism or mass communication (or some other relevant disciplines) an automatic lecturer in a university or polytechnic is big problem for students. In most cases, these doctors do not have industry experience and it is unimaginable, for instance, for someone to be teaching sudents about a newsroom he or she has never seen or worked in before! This raises the question about the quality of what is being imparted to students and makes fragile the epistemology in Akinfeleye's assertion (2009) that a low degree of literacy rate contributes to a low degree of journalism education and training while a high level of literacy tends to contribute to a higher degree of journalistic training and professional standards. We reckon that a good journalism degree plus contemporary industry experience provides the platform to impart quality journalism education.

Ashana (2012) notes that the state of journalism education is now problematic owing to certain ailments that have besieged the profession. It can be inferred that the more rooted or grounded the lecturers are in the field of journalism, both professionaly and academically, the more deep-rooted their students will be, as the quality of graduates produced can be linked to the quality of lecturers that taught those graduates. Lecturers in journalism need to further equip themselves both theoretically and in the practical aspects (skill) so as to

be able to teach and orientate their students toward solving societal problems. Often times, more attention is given the theoretical aspect of journalism to the detriment of skill acquisition. This trend must stop in order to keep up the pace with the best global practices.

Poor students' attitude to research is worrisome. This concern is compounded by their lethargic participation in research classes, lecturers' inadequate knowledge of media research and the pressures of social life over academics. It is a common occurrence in most universities to see that a number of students dread carrying out their final year research project because of the rigor involved. Some students succumb to the act plagiarism when they find they can no longer cope and what's more, leturers in some cases cannot detect this abnormaly!

It is a fact, and very visible, that inadequate funding significantly undermines journalism education in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning and it wouldn't make any difference whether they are private or public. Heads of departments take advantage of accreditation exercises to get funds from their managements as 'no' or 'interim' accreditation portends misfortune for their departments. Unaccredited programs are not permitted to admit students besides the fact that not being accredited is a stain on the overall image of the university. The time of accreditation provides the opportunity to procure some badly needed equipment both for students and staff and put in proper shape office accommodation and toilet facilities, amongst others.

Chibita (2009) posits that one common feature across African universities in the last decade is that resource constraints have forced many of them to get into the 'numbers game'. As entry point qualifications are lowered to accommodate more 'clients', leading to the admission of weaker students from the outset, the future becomes bleak with regard to quality as students are not cut out for what they were admitted for. The implication is the production of half-baked graduates, which seriously undermines journalism as a knowledge production profession. Many institutions admit more students than they can cater for in order to generate more funds. This in turn impacts negatively on teaching and learning.

The configuration of mass communication into Print/online, Broadcast and Public Relations/Advertising sequences is generating argument in Nigeria. Some support it while some others do not like the idea. The pessimist's argument is that by asking a student from 300 Level and above to specialize in one sequence, he or she

loses the knowledge of other sequences which makes him or her half-baked. Besides that, a graduate who was oriented toward the public relations and advertising sequence, for instance, will find it difficult to cope working in a broadcast organization. This might be one of the reasons many media organizations are lamenting that media graduates are performing below expectation.

Mass Communication Education: The Way Forward

Omojola (2008) provides a list of media stakeholders as including media scholars, reporters, media owners, NGO's, media users and media audience. He asserts that for the profession of journalism to progress, there is need for all these stakeholders to work together and proffer solutions to challenges, adding that it should not be left only to journalists. Journalism education is a very classic platform to regard the profession as a "commonly- held value" (Sorauf, 1957, cited in Omojola, 2011, p.353).

There is an urgent need to update the current mass communication curriculum used by most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The curriculum must be reviewed to accommodate new ideas that reflect the realities of today's modern media culture. Updating the current curriculum will allow mass communication graduates to be

adequately equipped with skills needed by the industry.

Using the case of Makerere University's Department of Mass Communication as an example, Chibita (2009) notes that the department, in addressing the inadequacy of its curriculum, agreed to change its name from Mass Communication to Journalism and Communication. The new name would reflect a broader and more relevant scope as well as pave the way for a variety of separate, more focused qualifications such as a Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies, Bachelor of Communication (covering Public Relations and Advertising) and Bachelor of Development Support Communication. Nigerians can tap from this idea.

The idea of bombarding mass communication students with so many course units is not acceptable. A private university exists in southwestern part of Nigeria where students must take 170 course units to qualify for graduation. A careful investigation by our team shows this does not happen in any other university in the world. It was discovered during the investigation that in addition to departmental courses, students were asked to take college-wide courses and university-wide courses which made up the 170 units. Experts agree that 140 units are manageable for the

undergraduate mass communication or journalism program.

The profession of journalism is known to law and the constitution in Nigeria. Journalists are still regarded as the fourth estate of the realm, the activities of citizen journalists notwithstanding. Therefore, government should endeavor to assist journalism institutions financially. It is assumed that governments will not fund private institutions but universities and polytechnics owned by them should be given financial succour. Furthermore, professional associations like the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) just to name a few, could help mobilize wealthy Nigerians for endowments in these institutions.

Proper screening is advised when employing journalism educators.

Persons with quality experience in media practice should be employed to teach the core hands-on courses in mass communication. The need also exists for media educators to be ICT-inclined to be able to teach students the innovations of the 21st century which accommodate both theory and practice together (Kraeplin and Criado, 2005).

Conclusion

Having examined the current status and challenges confronting mass communication/journalism education in Nigeria, it is visible that there is a need for institutions in the country to upgrade the quality of these programs to be able to produce skilled graduates. This should start with the revising of the current curricula used by these institutions. The curricula should be designed and expanded to accommodate the emerging techno-deterministic and local contents in the field.

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