



SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AMONG SELECTED ENTREPRENEURS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social media technology has become 'the mouth-piece' of the millennium, especially in Nigeria and Africa. It provides the much-needed oxygen for universal democratisation processes and considered as most suitable for expression of opinion on public issues, affairs and debates. Though its impacts are still incipient, it is palpable that social media platforms promote a new public sphere for negotiation between political, national, public and cultural interests, especially in Nigeria. The survey investigates how entrepreneurs are using social media to participate in governance actively and inherent challenges hinged on Technology Determinism and Agenda Setting theories. Deploying purposive sampling, to select 200 respondents from Enugu and Anambra States of Nigeria, findings show that social media, especially Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp augment interest, participation, interaction and socialisation among artisans and traders with regards to politics to a great extent. The findings, however, contrast the notion that media literacy is a barrier to social media use, which assumes that uneducated people may not be able to manipulate social media effectively. Results also demonstrate that social media could be an excellent strategy for futuristic political development in selected cities. The study, therefore, recommends a decrease in the cost of data tariff to enable artisans and traders, especially the rural-based entrepreneurs have access to the Internet and social media.

Keywords: Political Communication, Social Media, Media Use, Entrepreneurship, Nigeria, Democracy

INTRODUCTION

Citizens of every country have not only the potential but also the right to express their ideas and opinions worldwide through the new media, especially on social media. While talking about new media, it is apt to understand that what is an "old" or "traditional" media for the advanced societies may, for other regions, be a revolutionary new in its use— such as the community radio in India. The new media and access to them remain critical tools for democracies to correct themselves (Morah, Ekwenchi & Chiaha, 2019) and for citizens to become aware of their government's abuses and violations of human rights, and the right to be informed. Swanson and Mancini (1996) observe that "election campaigns are critical periods in the lives of democracies. They select decision-makers, shape policy, distribute power and provide venues for debate and socially approved expressions of conflict about factional grievances and issues".



There is no doubt that Internet penetration, has expanded in the last two decades, especially in Africa and Nigeria. Globally the Internet penetration rate as of June 2019, according to Internetworldstats report (2019) was 4422,494,622 while that of Africa was 525, 148 631. For Nigeria, with an estimated population of 200, 962, 417, as of June 2019, there is a massive transformation in internet use. The penetration rate increased sharply from 200,000 in 2000 to 123, 486 615 in 2019. The significant gap in the figures is a clear indication that most Nigerians became more Internet-hungry and conscious; probably because of the pervasiveness and disruptiveness of the new media technology. Social media, which is a new media offspring, however, ballooned over the past few years. Though Facebook has grown exponentially since 2006 worldwide, the leading global social networking site according to reports on (napoleoncat.com) has 22960000 users in Nigeria users who are 11.2% penetration rate of the Nigerian population as of December 2018. Majority of them were men (61.7%) demarcated within people aged 25 to 34; while the largest user group are young people within 18 to 24 years comprising 7800000 people. The report indicates that women had a total of 38.3% user only (<https://napoleoncat.com>)

The use of the new media technology in delivering campaign messages to voters during elections is not only critical to political parties and candidates but also in the election campaign process as social media is now affecting political campaigns. It plays a crucial role in informing the public about politics, campaigns and elections. Social media also influences what issues voters should care about in elections and what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates. In the past, traditional media in the forms of Newspapers, TV, Radio, billboards and printed material, such as pamphlets and letters were indispensable tools for delivering credible forms of political campaign messages despite their shortcomings of direct communication. The traditional media has intense competitions with social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. For instance, Smith (2011) found that one in five adults (22%) who were online used Twitter or a social networking site to make political decisions in 2010. Morah, Udeze and Ekwenchi (2019, p.8) establish that preponderance respondents (67.9%) reacted positively to the 2015 election results disseminated through Facebook in Nigeria. The preceding demonstrates a firm reliance on social media for political engagement.

Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) also argue that the growth of online political behaviour is aided partly by the recent emergence of new interactive, media-rich websites. The social media transformation initiated by new media in the political environment has globally impacted substantially on political campaigning. It is stimulating a move towards a more interactive form of campaigning, with politicians being in direct contact with constituents via different platforms of social media. Haynes (2008) collaborates that new media are presently the leading innovation for presidential candidates, just like radio and television and computerised databases revolutionised the election process in earlier decades. Cary (2010) also agrees that Internet restructures how Americans do everything—including electing their leaders. The author thinks political candidates who would have had no chance before the Internet can now overcome tremendous odds; with people, they energise serving as the backbone of their campaign. This viewpoint propelled the trajectory of the study on social media use of selected entrepreneurs in selected cities in Nigeria with a concentration on their political decisions and activities.

THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

Social media platforms like Facebook enable users to create profiles and establish connections with friends and acquaintances online. Some level of media literacy is required to manipulate social media platforms and the Internet. The condition equally applies to blogs,



microblogs, and video sharing sites, among others. For all social media sites and platforms, an underlying commonality is a user-generated element characterised by openness and collaboration enabled by media literacy. Therefore, due to the opportunity offered to people to express political views and opinions online the social media plays a vital role in political campaigns. However, there exists little knowledge on the extent and pattern of use of social media among Nigerian artisans and traders with regards to political communication. Social media allow users to not only seek information but also interact with others through online expression such as posting political commentaries on blogs and social network sites and sharing multimedia commentary (Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). It also makes the polity to acquire information and governmental communication for political empowerment (Duru & Morah, 2015; Morah, Udeze & Ekwenchi, 2019).

Therefore, effective use of social media for political purpose should require some level of media literacy and media availability. This study will be relevant in examining the adoption of social media among traders and artisans as a popular tool in terms of its potentialities, issues and role in political development in Nigeria. The following objectives inform what the study sets out to achieve:

- To determine how Nigerian entrepreneurs are using social media for political participation.
- To examine how social media are initiating new political sphere among selected entrepreneurs.
- To identify challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the use of social media in politics.

Research Questions

- **RQ1:** How are Nigerians entrepreneurs using social media in political participation?
- **RQ2:** To what extent is the social media, initiating new political sphere among selected entrepreneurs?
- **RQ3:** What challenges are faced by Nigerians entrepreneurs in the use of social media in politics?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Technology Determinism and the Agenda-Setting theories formed the theoretical basis for this study. McLuhan's (1962) Technology Determinism theory states that media technology shapes how individuals in a society think, feel, act; and how society operates as there is a transition from one technological age to another. In essence, people learn and feel and think the way they do because of the messages received through the most current and available technology (social media). The theory further explains that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. It predicts that with every new system of media technology, society will change and adapt to that technology. There is a simple cause and effect analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing. Since humans do not have much free will at all, whatever society as a whole is using to communicate, people will always adapt. Therefore, people will quickly adapt to social media which is vague in today's politics- as it enhances interactivity and more democratic participation (Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019).

Theorists Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw propounded the Agenda-Setting Theory which states that the media (mainly the news media) are not always successful at telling



people what to think, but specifically, what to think about each day. The agenda-setting process is an almost unavoidable part of newsgathering by the large organisations which make up much of the mass media. Stuart Hall points out that some media organisations are accorded a high degree of respect and authority because they produce contents which are often competent, impartial and severe. The public is bribed with good radio, television and newspapers contents into an acceptance of the biased, the misleading, and the status quo through the agenda-setting process.

The media are not, according to this approach, crude agents of propaganda. The interpretations provided by media, in the long run, are the most preferred by, and least challenging to those with economic power. Greg Philo demonstrates the reality of the preceding in his 1991 article, "Seeing is Believing". He showed that recollections of the 1984 UK miners' strike strongly correlated with the media presentation of the event, including the perception of the picketing as mainly violent when violence was rare; and the use by the public of phrases which had appeared originally in the media. Therefore the use of social media could help set some agenda for people in a developing economy like Nigeria. Social media is presently setting an agenda for the world, unbridled, including political agendas (Morah, Ekwenchi & Chiaha, 2019).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND GLOBAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Political campaigns have existed as long as there have been informed citizens about campaigning objectives. Politicians seeking victory at the elections need to persuade and convince the electorate in order to win their votes. It is now commonplace for politicians to use new media technology like social media in announcing their interest to vie for elective positions. Politicians, therefore, employ several channels of persuasive and interactive communication, including the new social media to communicate with their constituent and the electorates. The use of social media in political campaigns has drastically changed the momentum of politics all over the world.

Studies reveal that citizens increasingly use media technologies such as the Internet and social media to learn about political campaigns, follow the news, and engage in political activities by volunteering, donating funds, or researching public policy options (Morah, Udeze & Ekwenchi, 2019; Morah & Uzochukwu, 2019; Howard, 2005; Hamilton, 2011). Political parties are becoming more aware of these new trends, and politicians are increasingly making use of social media tools for political campaigns, to make campaign announcements and to communicate with potential voters. YouTube and Facebook potentialities enable updates of voter's registration, political campaigns and debates, while Twitter is used for personal views and opinions about candidates, political parties and their ideologies. Today, every politician in Nigeria has at least one social media account which they treasure as their mouth-pieces and selling points.

During political campaigns, social media platforms provide real live political rallies and party conventions online, such that supporters who cannot participate physically are considered at a reduced cost. Even the media industry appreciates the potentials of social media during elections as the use of social media has made non-professional journalists and news commentators to become alternative commentators and opinion leaders in election campaigns through blogging and citizen journalism (Bruns, Saunders, Wilson, 2007). Many presidential candidates have provided notable cases in new media use for election campaigns. The United States Presidential campaign in 1996 of President Bill Clinton and Bob Dole was among the first campaigns that utilised the Internet on a national level. Howard Dean's 2004 bid for the



Democratic presidential nomination offered a glimpse into what Internet campaigning was capable of producing. His use of the Internet leads to his rise to fame. Again, during the 2008 United States Presidential election between John McCain and Barack Obama, the Internet was extensively utilised by both candidates. Barack Obama's extensive use of the Internet during his campaigns earned him the name the King of Social Networking by the Washington Post.

Evans (2008) succinctly demonstrates the extent of politician's engagement on social media during the 2008 USA election's political campaign. He argues that in the US primary elections, both Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama utilised social networking sites to a great extent. Clinton however, only employed the main sites, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, to speak in communities, rather than making use of their full potential and engaging with her audience. Obama, on the other hand, operated at this engaged level, using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube page and niche community sites such as Faith-based and Glee. Obama reached out to individual groups in society including African American, Asian, Latino and religious-based communities. He was able to successfully tap into these communities where they were often more passionate and dedicated about particular causes (Evans, 2008).

President Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, however, changed the way political campaigns utilised the Internet, specifically the social media, for political purposes. According to an April 4, 2011 article on the political blog (Politico), Obama brought the long-promised political power of the Internet to bear on a presidential campaign, raising millions and organising thousands through a groundbreaking website and massive email list (Tau, 2011). Obama's use of social media in the 2008 campaign compared to former President John F. Kennedy's use of television. The election of Barack Obama as president was notable than others in history because he used the new media that has forever changed politics. Miller (2008) posits that both leaders initiated a new paradigm in political communication as Mr Kennedy, used television while Mr Obama, explored the Internet. In addition to using email and a website, Obama concentrated on social media use to mobilise volunteers and reach young voters (Graber, 2010, p.194).

SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN AFRICAN POLITICS

Social media generally used as a primary platform for disseminating information has undoubtedly become a powerful political communication tool in Africa and Nigeria is not an exception. It allows candidates and their party's privilege to reach larger audiences in shorter periods than the traditional mass media used formerly. Political candidates and parties use social media platforms for political campaign purposes, to drum up support for various candidates seeking positions in government and to publicise their manifestos and promote political party ideologies. Social media play useful and significant roles not only for mobilising voters but also in integrating all other facets of campaigns, including rally, organising and delivering campaign messages to potential voters consistently, at relatively no cost (Morah &Uzochukwu, 2019).

In the Nigerian political terrain, the new media of the Internet and social media appeared to be playing a massive role in shaping the country's political landscape. President Goodluck Jonathan made history as the first head of government to use Facebook to make his formal declaration to stand for election. The president's decision changed the political tide in election matters in the country. In the same vein, other politicians in the country also made concerted efforts to gain electoral relevance via the Internet, Facebook and Twitter. Although only a



small percentage of the Nigerian electorate then possesses their computers, many people used internet cafes and increasingly mobile phones to go online and get political updates. The politicians also used social networking sites to leverage the younger generation and harnessed new phases in the country's online revolution.

The 2011 Nigerian general election witnessed the use of social media to announce the intention of the Nigerian presidential candidates, Goodluck Jonathan, to run for the presidential seat and to campaign during the election extensively. Also, other aspirants: Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and Nuhu Ribadu of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) used social media extensively. The use of social media had a significant influence in the subsequent elections of 2015 and 2019 in Nigeria. In Tanzania, presidential candidate, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, in the 2010 general election also used social media. Since global leaders achieved political successes with social media adoption in campaigns and governance, empirical insight into the extent of social media use in Nigeria among artisans and trader will help appreciate its essence in African grassroots politics.

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in the study was the survey method. This method was adopted because it is suitable for examining issues in social media use in politics and for eliciting the response of the residents of Awka and Enugu metropolises concerning the objectives of this study. Survey research was, therefore, essential in collecting data for a population too large to be observed directly. The study adopted the questionnaire as a measuring instrument, while SPSS version 19 and the simple frequencies figures and percentages were utilised for data analysis.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population of the study comprises residents of Anambra and Enugu State out of which a sample of 200 was drawn from Awka and Enugu metropolises through purposive sampling technique to represent this population. This choice emerges because there is always a heavy concentration of potential voters who are entrepreneurs in the two major cities. Purposive sampling was, therefore, deployed to select only 200 artisans and traders resident in the two cities in an equal ratio of 1:1 to attain the purpose of the study. The two purposively selected cities of Awka and Enugu are in Anambra and Enugu states respectively and found in the Southern part of Nigeria. They are predominantly of the Igbo extractions and are mainly business people and entrepreneurs.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data for this analysis was collected from a sample of 200 residents of Awka and Enugu metropolises who are artisans and traders. A response rate of ninety-eight per cent recorded; that is, 196 copies of questionnaires were completed and returned.

Table 1: *Demographic Patterns of Respondents*

Age	Frequency	%
Variable		



18-24	45	23
25-34	68	35
35-44	30	15
45-54	18	9
55-66	12	6
65+	23	12
Total	196	100%
Sex		
Male	105	54
Female	91	46
Total	196	100%

The demographic data presented in Table1 indicate that out of the sampled population for the study, 54 per cent of the respondents were males, while 46 per cent of the respondents were females. The finding affirms research (Morah & Omojola, 2018) that more males are entrepreneurs in Nigeria than females. Males are more likely to be interested in politics than females.

In terms of the age distribution of the respondents, 35 per cent of the respondents were 25-34 years, 23 per cent were 18-24 years, while 15 per cent constitute respondents within age brackets 35-44 years. The finding implies that most of the respondents are young people aged 18- 34 years. These respondents are regarded as millennial and are most likely to use social media technology for political engagement more than other age brackets.

Other tables generated in this study were used to answer the various research questions raised in the study. For research question one that sought to find out if the Nigerians/audience uses the new media to participate in politics actively, responses on Table 2 provided the answer.

RQ1: How are Nigerians entrepreneurs using social media in political participation?

Table 2: *Frequency of social media use in political participation*

Response	Frequency	%
Always	102	52
Often	68	34.6
Sometimes	16	8.2
Rarely	5	2.6
Never	5	2.6
Total	196	100

Data on Table 2 shows that a majority of 170 respondents (86.6%) mostly use social media to participate and get political information. The finding implies that entrepreneurs are conversant with the application of social media, which influence their interest in use and fall in line with Morah &Uzochukwu (2019). The finding further affirms the assumptions of Technology Determinism theory.

Table 3: *Social media use and active participation in politics*



Response	Frequency	%
Agree	84	43
Strongly Agree	68	35
Disagree	34	17
Strongly disagree	10	5
Total	196	100

In Table 3, the result of the survey shows that majority of the respondents (78%) agree that social media make them participate actively in politics. The above is a reflection of both high internet penetration and acceptance of the social media in Nigeria as a futuristic means of political engagement. The finding corroborates data on Table 2 and attests the findings of Morah, Udeze & Ekwenchi (2019). It is, thus, plausible that given the political space, most Nigerians entrepreneurs are likely to have increased active participation in politics and governance in the next five years.

RQ2: To what extent is the social media, initiating new political sphere among selected entrepreneurs?

Table 4: *Social media and promotion of interactivity and understanding about politics*

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	127	65
No	69	35
Total	196	100

Data on Table 4 indicates that the majority (65%) of the respondents agree that social media promotes interactivity and understanding about Nigerian politics. This finding implies that, even though the social media dramatically plays a role in political development in Nigeria, its ability to stimulate interaction and improve the understanding of politics has not been fully achieved among selected entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The real-time interaction, most often possible with social media, makes it attractive as a tool for political communication. The finding is a deviation from the findings of Morah & Uzochukwu (2019) that found small and medium scale entrepreneurs mostly using Whatsapp for commercial purposes.

Table 5: *Potentialities of social media as a tool for political development*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Necessary for political development	67	34
Not necessary	78	40
To an extent, important	45	23
No opinion	6	3
Total	196	100

The potentialities of social media as a veritable tool for political development, according to Table 5, is yet to be appreciated by a good number of respondents (40%). However, 34 and 23% of the respondents think that social media is necessary and to an extent significant respectively, for political development. The finding, therefore, showed that the majority of respondents (57%) regard social media as an indispensable tool for political development. Further probe shows that selected respondents mostly prefer using Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp for political communication and news because of the features of those platforms. The findings further substantiate <https://napoleoncat.com> report on connectivity static in



Nigeria. It is reasonable to see Nigerians as a people eager to affect the political process using new media technology such as social media platforms.

RQ3: What challenges are faced by Nigerians entrepreneurs in the use of social media for political communication?

Table 6: *Challenges in Social media by Nigerian entrepreneurs*

Variables	Frequency	%
High Tariff cost	97	49.5
Connectivity issues	50	25.5
Availability of technology	30	15.3
Media Literacy	15	7.7
No Idea	4	2
Total	196	100

Responses on Table 6 demonstrate that significant challenges to effective use of social media among artisans and traders for political development are high tariff cost (49.5%) and connectivity issues (25.5%). Availability of technology (15.3%) was mentioned as another obstacle; while media literacy (7.7%) was the least challenge to social media adoptions among selected entrepreneurs. The finding here implies that media literacy is no longer a serious threat to the internet and social media usage in Nigeria. Table 6 data is in agreement with the 2019 www.internetworldstats.com report on African internet penetration and demonstrate that the media are setting exciting political agendas for Nigerians.

Table 7: *Dispositions of respondents toward the utilisation of social media*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Positive	90	46
Negative	54	28
Indifferent	30	15
No Idea	22	11
Total	196	100

Data on Table 7 indicates that a higher percentage of respondents (46%) have a positive disposition towards the use of social media by politicians in Nigeria. While only 28% has a negative disposition, 15% of the respondents are indifferent to the use of social media by politicians in Nigeria. The results suggest that for social media to contribute substantially to the development of the political process in Nigeria, more work done in order to elicit more positive disposition to social media.

Discussion of Findings

The potentialities and challenges of social media use in politics have been demonstrated in the study. The expansion of social media in Nigeria, and its exploitative nature, should, therefore, be effectively manipulated in its use in a political campaign. Though Jonathan used social media effectively during the 2011 election, Nigerians were somehow unpersuaded by his numerous Facebook messages resulting in the January 2012 fuel subsidy protest that shook the PDP regime and queried the people’s trust on the government. Likewise, since 2015, President Buhari could not control the freedom of speech enjoyed by Nigerians online and on social media despite the proposal for anti-hate speech regulations, the Social Media



Bill and the Cyber Crime Act. These instances affirmed the finding that inadequate media literacy does not have a significant effect on social media usage in Nigeria. With most Nigerians having access to the Internet; discussion of the democratising potential of internet-related social media technology seems not hurried. At present, political discussions online is a privilege for those with access to smart devices, computers and the Internet. Those who would benefit the most from the democratising potential of social media technology do not have much access to it. Much participation in political discussion helps but does not ensure a healthier democracy. Social media technology enhances increased, but not necessarily more diverse, participation in political discussion since they are still only available to a small fraction of the population.

Social media platform makes participation in the political sphere more convenient. Though they do not guarantee active participation, online political discussions are limited to those with access to computers and the Internet. Therefore, people without access to the Internet do not necessarily pursue political discussion. As a result, online discussions are mostly dominated by a few. While social media has the potential to advance the public sphere, at least in terms of the information that is available to citizens, only a few people are able or willing to take on the challenge. There abound cases of legal entanglement by individuals and governments on victims of perceived hate speeches online. Access to more information might not necessarily create more informed citizens or lead to more excellent political activity or ensure election victories. Even though access to information is useful to socialisation, the democratising potential of social media remains obvious as examined earlier. Also, responses from selected entrepreneur show that social media provides information on political matters and is therefore vital for political development in Nigeria. Though access to information is not universal and equal to all with mainstreams, social media allows freedom of speech and is proximal to people. Those who can access online information are guaranteed additional tools to be more active citizens and participants of the public sphere under the social media dispensation. The findings and literature demonstrate the tenets of the technology determinism theory and the agenda-setting theory. The study, therefore, situates on the words of Cary (2010): “Politicians have long sought to go around the mainstream press filter—from fireside chats, to whistle-stop tours, to snail-mail newsletters—but the new media take it a step further by even more directly connecting them with voters.”

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that selected artisans and traders in the two selected cities in South Eastern Nigeria use social media for political decision makings to a great extent. There are critical limits to the political influence of social media, however, as findings demonstrate. Social media is expected, for instance, to lose some of their disruptive impact as politicians and others learn to take better account of them. However, the researchers predict that social media will eventually become an increasingly pervasive tool through which politicians and others will seek to influence political debate soon. The implication of the paper so far remains that; social media is a two-sided sword that should be handled with care. The findings of this study are thus a beginning, not an end to social media studies.

The political consequences of social media are unlikely to be limited to the particular mechanisms explored here. Fortunately for political scientists, social media provide a uniquely rich set of data exploited in order to explore a variety of research questions. Relevant research remains to be done, for example, on the consequences of blogs, Facebook groups, Twitter groups and Instagram for political mobilisation, and fundraising in other regions of Nigeria and Africa. The study recommends a decrease in the cost of data tariff to



enable artisan and traders; especially the rural-based entrepreneurs have access to the Internet and social media. The study further recommends that the Nigerian government formulates a proactive regulation to control the abuse of social media in the country.

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USE OF RADIO AS A TOOL OF LEARNING IN CRISIS PERIOD

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Abstract

Radio has remained a powerful medium of communication and this is due to the fact that its message contents can be received at distant places as a result of its wide coverage and its ubiquitous nature. It has the ability to reach large audiences because it is relatively cheap and can function without electricity. Therefore, it is regarded as the most accessible tool of technology used for information dissemination. Studies have found out that radio is the most popular broadcast medium used for teaching in times of crisis all over the world. This is due to the fact that it is relatively cheap and can be easily accessible. Unfortunately, little attention is being given to radio as a tool that can enhance education especially in crisis period. An instance is the COVID-19 pandemic that has shut down the academic walls in Nigeria and elsewhere around the globe. Against the foregoing, this paper sought to conceptually look at the power of radio broadcasting as a platform that will not only provide a new way of teaching, but make available effective tool that will augment class room teaching during and after the ravaging Corona virus pandemic. The paper highlighted the role radio could play as well as the benefits of radio as a tool for educational learning in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlights the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic effects on education could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of education in Nigeria if not tackled with the utmost urgency it deserves.

Key words: Radio, Radio Education, Crisis, COVID-19, Pandemic, School closure

INTRODUCTION

The world has suffered from some pandemics that have brought its socio-economic activities to a standstill. The Corona virus disease (COVID-19) which is the latest pandemic the world is currently experiencing started out as an epidemic in Wuhan China in December 2019 and ended up as a pandemic that has thrown the whole world into a war like situation with thousands of deaths recorded in many countries, Nigeria inclusive. Health systems are bewildered, local and global economies are at their worst in decades and the educational sector of the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions closed down.

The past months have heralded an array of government regulations across Nigeria and other parts of the world in a bid to decrease the spread of this deadly corona virus disease. Starting from airport closures, to nationwide closure of schools and lockdowns in different states of the country, these strict regulations were put in place to forestall an epidemic that could put a



lot of lives at risk. These regulations did not come with its own drawbacks especially in the educational sector. The impact of school closures has been felt largely by students and pupils as they had to stay home with little or nothing to do. As children stayed home and time went by, it became increasingly necessary for some form of learning to be taking place to keep the children engaged as the solution to the deadly virus is sought. While the government released a COVID-19 contingency plan, the information contained within the document focused on keeping schools safe during the pandemic, counseling and providing information to the students about preventive measures and actions to curb the spread. However, with this contingency plan it was evident that there was a gap that needed to be filled – to ensure that learning continued even in the face of stay at home and lockdown directives. For an existing ailing education system, the COVID-19 presents monumental challenges on the government, students and parents that will highlight and could amplify some of the cracks in the system. Given the situation of events today, the nation’s capability to continue learning will hinge on their ability to quickly utilize available technology, make available adequate infrastructure and deploy stakeholders to prepare substitute learning programmes.

In most cases, Nigeria’s educational sector is not adjusting and is likely to struggle on that front for the expectable future. However, the major socio-economic burden will be shared excessively by students in public schools as compared to those in private schools. As most private schools took the direction of online learning for its pupils and students, it became evident that most pupils and students particularly those from public schools where internet connectivity might not be certain may miss out from the online teachings. Obiakor & Adeniran (2020) noted that while private schools have started to establish distance learning programs and getting benefit of the host of ICT learning amenities offered by the international community, the government constrained by funds and incessant inadequacies in planning are still to announce any official strategies for providing distance learning amenities, particularly for public schools. The consequence being that these students and pupils presently have no formal learning arrangements and could be missing learning entirely.

Broadcasting educational programmes during the COVID-19 period can be done speedily and easily and if done correctly, will produce exceptionally satisfactory education outcomes for learners. And utilizing radio remains one of the only ways to impact majority of the most deprived students and pupils at a reasonable cost. This paper looks at how radio as a cheap and accessible communication tool can be maximized to ensure sustained learning, even in the period of the lockdown. Radio according to Onyejemezi (2006) is recognized as a useful and most accessible means of providing learning experiences for a large number of students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Corona virus disease, a highly infectious disease which started as an epidemic in Wuhan China and has gradually become a world pandemic has without doubt negatively affected the global economy. It has compelled many businesses to temporarily shut down and governments across the globe had to place a restriction on movement while exempting purveyors of essential services who are to accurately observe social distancing rules while offering services as a way to contain the spread of the virus. Obiakor & Adeniran (2020) states that there has been an array of control measures by the government in their bid to curtail this pandemic which has become a worldwide problem. From a nationwide closure of schools to several lockdowns in various states, a decline in the educational learning process of children is expected. Access to vital educational services provided by schools have been denied most Nigerian students as a result of the school closure. Most private schools in an



attempt to close the gap that trails the lockdown have resorted to online teaching. But the question is: how many children would gain from the online teaching considering the current economic situation in the country? Even where some of them might profit from the exercise based on their social status, how many would generally have this benefit when the monetary competence to power most of the platform that enhance e-learning is capital intensive? This of course, is where radio comes in as a panacea. Several studies amongst (Onyejemezi, 2006; Akpan, 2008; Owuamanam, 2010) have demonstrated that radio is the cheapest and most affordable technological means of information dissemination. Unfortunately, radio has been under-utilized when it comes to educational learning, this is especially in Africa, Nigeria in particular where this platform has not been successfully employed as a learning tool. What could be the cause of this? These are the particular problems that necessitated this study. Can radio be maximized effectively in Nigeria as a tool for educational learning? It is against this backdrop that this paper tries to highlight the benefits of radio as a tool for educational learning and critically assess how it can be maximized towards ensuring a constant learning experience for Nigerian schools. This is from the beginning to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Radio is one of the most popular means of communication. It was first utilized by the government and military to transmit information to each other especially in times of war. As time went by, it became a popular means of receiving information for many people as well. It permitted the common man to have a voice that could be heard. DUBY (2006) asserts that radio is one of the simplest and most affordable broadcast media technologies and as a result is being used for educational purposes especially in time of crisis.

Onyejemezi (2006) states that using radio as an educational tool allows the students to listen and get a feel of what their teachers are talking about. Sometimes, some of the lessons are written in a way that allows the students to have a grip of the information temporarily but the radio is often more entertaining than reading the same material. Cirrell (2004) opines that radio helps bring students together and connects them to one another; hence, the usefulness of radio in times of crises. Educational radio aids the students to continue learning especially in the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria; thus, helping to keep the students at home to reduce the spread of the disease and at the time keeping them busy with academic teaching.

According to DUBY (2006), educational radio has been applied within a wide collection of instructional design contexts. In some cases it is assisted by the use of printed materials, by local discussion groups, and by regional study units. It is sometimes designed so as to allow and inspire listener reaction and comment. In some cases, there is opportunity for the audience to raise questions and to receive feedback.

In their evaluative study focusing on interactive radio, Bansal and Choudhary (1999) revealed that radio holds great prospects in terms of assisting students who are learning at a distance or who are confined at home as a result of a crisis breakout or pandemics. The first program of study to use interactive radio as a mode of distance education delivery was a radio project focusing on students enrolled in IGNOU's Management and Bachelor Preparatory Programme. Students registered in this introductory effort reported that the interactive radio sessions proved functional in helping them achieve their coursework targets. Students registered with other institutions and the general public also partook in these interactive radio sessions. These two groups remarked interactive radio as an 'interesting experience.' Fundamentally, the Management and Bachelor Preparatory Programme students also enrolled



a higher rate of involvement using interactive radio, than during teleconferences and even face-to-face sessions.

Karim, Kama, and Islam (2001), examined the role of radio and TV programmes used in distance open learning system at the Bangladesh Open University. They revealed radio and TV programmes aid learners on how to utilize the courses, and provide adequate explanations of concepts.

Sukumar (2001) conducted a study of interactive radio counseling as applied in IGNOU. He found that radio counseling makes available an excellent opportunity for learners in remote areas to point out their concerns, ask questions, and generally interact directly with teachers and speakers. Interactive radio counseling also provides a chance for the general public to connect with speakers, thus adding a brand new and enhancing dimension to the general publics' learning experiences. Sukumar's study also revealed listeners considered radio counseling as both popular and successful.

Sambo (2012) stated that radio is a tool that invests the past with an air of reality. They provide the learners with realistic experience, which capture their attention and help in the understanding of the historical phenomena. They appeal to the mind through the visual auditory senses. Also, Ortyoyande (2006) noted that we receive knowledge through our senses; they also noted that if we hear we forget, if we see we remember, and if we do something we know it. So, access to educational radio makes learning process more effective and productive which is why radio learning is advocated for especially in the time of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria and the world at large. Also, those educational programs can be recorded to benefit Learners by listening and viewing the lesson programs severally, hence aids their retention. Therefore, educational radio encourages learning, makes it easier and interesting.

Eyyam and Menevis (2010) found that teachers agreed that the educational radio has a positive impact on their experience. In the same way, Ozcinar, Hursen, Ozdamli (2009) observed that teacher trainees believed in positive effects of educational radio in times of crisis. More so, educational radio can provide instruction for one group of students whilst the teacher is occupied with another. As a medium that can be listened to in the privacy of one's home or room, they are often the preferred choice in times of pandemics like the COVID-19 where students are expected to be indoors and still be engaged in learning.

Jaminson and MC Anancy (1978) report four main advantages of educational radio which are; improve education quality and relevance especially in crisis times, lower per student educational costs; enhance access to education especially for under-privileged students or groups and ; It provides an evident clear audio and visual signal, which is specially necessary in instructional programs. Thus, radio remains a medium that had proven its educational worth in terms of both pedagogical relevance and geographical reach.

Right from the early days, the Nigerian Broadcasting system has given preference to educational service (Agba & Brown, 2012). According to them, the kind of selection then was the informal and mobilization kinds. At best, their concept and method of educational broadcasting was the mobilization kind that was planned towards mobilizing the populace. In the context of African struggle at that time, mobilization was educational. Agba & Brown (2012) stated that by 1954, it was observed that radio broadcasting can be utilized for comprehensive formal educational purposes.



According to them, a pilot study was carried out by the western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) under the direction of one Tom Chalmers. The assessment was on subject lessons to schools in Lagos area. It was then realized that schools broadcasting could be of great use in inspiring and assisting teachers and pupils alike could hasten the speed of educational advancement in Nigeria. This discovery led the British government to send Richmond Postgate to Nigeria to study the potentiality of beginning school broadcasting in Nigeria. He was directed to report to the federal adviser on education “a comprehensive programme on broadcasting on English and the main vernacular at primary and secondary school levels with special reference to regional essentials. In 1955, Postgate in his report suggested school broadcast. He also recommended that school broadcasting should be partnership between National Broadcasting Service (NBS) and educational establishments. The role he anticipated for NBS are: Set up the broadcasting apparatus; recruit broadcasters, scriptwriters and performers and assist in training teachers in the use of broadcast. The role for educational authorities was to:

- Confirm that inspectors and teachers receive proper training to use broadcasting.
- Establish the content of syllabus of the subject to be taught.

Agba & Brown (2012) noted that the Postage submission could not be carried out by the Federal government due to lack of money. But the northern government according to them, in May 1957 started school broadcasting on Radio with a programme on English Language for primary schools. Regardless of the set back encountered in the purpose of using broadcast amenities for formal educational objectives; there has always been the resolve on reviving the concept. La’aro (2004) states that in the early 80s, several state broadcasting stations developed educational programmes on radio that were created after the schools’ curriculum. He noted that the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, the manager of “Radio Nigeria” produced many programmes that are derived from the books produced by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) or other materials approved by the council. The target audience for such broadcasts was Junior Secondary School Students, Senior Secondary Students and Primary school teachers, particularly the pivotal category. La’aro (2004) again noted that the objectives were the augmentation and strengthening of what the children have been taught in classroom and to stimulate the minds of the teachers focused on. But regrettably, such programmes could not be maintained due to lack of funds and they were sidelined to the background.

Obiakor & Adeniran (2020) states that the advent of the corona virus has brought about a rude awakening to the necessity of using radio for formal education in times of crises as children are not in school as a result of the lock down. Government in its bid to keep the children busy at this period has resuscitated the use of radio for formal education. Though most private schools took to online teaching to continue the learning experience with their students and pupils, Radio is adjudged to be the best tool for continuing the learning process in times of crisis.

Modes of Radio use in Educational broadcasting during Crisis period

The concept of radio educational broadcasting means the system through which radio is used to attain the objectives of formal, informal and non-formal type of education particularly in times of crises or pandemics such as that of the COVID-19 which is currently ravaging the world. Radio educational broadcasting can pertain to programmes that are enlightening,



informative and intellectually stimulating. It can be introduced at home or at school. It is often directed to a target audience at desired locations. La'aro, (2004) in Agba & Brown (2012) stimulates that radio educational broadcasting can be observed from four different modes of education which are:

- **Formal Educational Broadcasting:** Addresses the use of radio for instructional objectives that conform to the characteristics of formal education- a formal syllabus, stringent grade system, formal school hours, formal certificates and general formal school experiences.
- **Non-formal Educational Broadcasting:** This means a situation in which the resources (human and material) of radio services are utilized to obtain the needed skills of adults without extracting them from their work-day habits. It involves the procuring of functional knowledge that is meaningful to the adult social/ working responsibilities.
- **Informal Educational Broadcasting:** This means the daily encounter with radio programmes that assist individuals to gain knowledge; however, the individual did not set out to acquire it but does through daily encounter with radio broadcasting. It is in this reason that radio broadcast houses affirm to be educating their audience. The layout may come in different formats like news, drama, discussion programmes and documentaries.
- **Mobilization Educational Broadcasting:** These are the purposively planned radio broadcast messages intended to encourage, convince, dissuade, motivate the general public to conduct themselves in certain, desired ways. It is about urging people to agree to the perspective of the sponsor. The format may be in Jingles; basically composed lyrics or any other broadcast programme pattern.

Radio Educational Broadcasting Strategy

According to Agba et al (2012), the strategy applied in using radio to promote the objectives of education in periods of school closure as a result of crises is different depending on the type of education under study. La'aro (2004) cited in Agba & Brown (2012) has discovered the following strategies:

- **Substitute for Teachers:** Direct classroom teaching can be organised through radio broadcasting. This kind of radio teaching is adopted where there are many pupils but fewer teachers and also in crisis situations that require students and pupils to be out of the school environment for a period of time. The growing necessity for constant learning inspite of the hindrances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in our country, where there is a temporal school closure call for the application of these educational broadcasting strategies to fill the gap. This strategy is most appropriate for educating pupils and students at home. This will go a long way in continuing the pupil's learning process that had been halted as a result of the pandemic.
- **Supplementary/ Enrichment Role:** This is utilizing radio broadcasting to complement the efforts of teachers. In this case, radio programmes are prepared in accordance with the curriculum content of specific subjects. The planning of the broadcasting programme will be based on research findings regarding the time use pattern of the target audience. The teacher would then turn the attention of the students or pupils to the programme as enhancing or augmenting what has been



discussed in normal classroom setting. For absolute utilization of the programme, the teacher must emphasize the importance of the programme to their students' or pupils' academic performance. As most private schools have taken to online teaching, this strategy would supplement the teaching and enrich the students with a more rounded knowledge of a particular subject.

- **Distant Learning:** Radio broadcasting is fundamentally used as part of the distance learning plan to reach students in the comfort of their homes. This is completely dependent on the success of the operational arrangement. Though it is prone to large operational and environmental challenges that may be discouraging, it could go a long way to aid in the continuous learning of students in a crisis period.

COVID-19 Crises and the Educational sector in Nigeria

According to Obiakor & Adeniran (2020), in Nigeria, on March 19th 2020, the Federal Ministry of education permitted an approval for the closure of all schools to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. School closure has not only had a distressing impact on students and pupils, teachers and their families, but has led to far-reaching economic and societal consequences. There is the worry that if schools continue to stay shut down, the learning process of students and pupils will be highly threatened. According to UNESCO as cited by Obiakor & Adeniran (2020), about 35.9 million primary and secondary school learners in Nigeria are currently out of school as a result of the school closures. They further stated that in Nigeria, school advantage is connected to income level and public schools differ from private schools in the populations they serve. While private schools benefit learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds who are ready to pay more to obtain the better resources provided by private schools, public schools which are often free constitute students from lower socio-economic households and low income earners. In cases, where distance learning opportunities are accessible, response will be low from the students in the public school section and this could be as a consequence of poor infrastructure such as lack of electricity or poor/no internet connectivity.

A longer term aftermath of school closures will intensify educational inequality as findings have revealed that most private schools have started online classes with their students and pupils while those students from public schools are left behind as this ICT based resources to promote learning relies largely on the level and quality of digital and internet access of both the learners and their school management. This introduces a major challenge around educational inequality, given the technical landscape and income driven digital-divide, how then can accessible technology be utilized to support already marginalized students and pupils during these closures?

Radio as a tool for Educational learning in crisis times

Reaching the susceptible population in Nigeria will necessitate adopting a learning delivery technique that can be easily available to the poor. Studies have proven that over 80 percent of the adult population in Nigeria have contact with radios and phones; it would then be possible to reach most children that may have been left out in the online classes through this medium. (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020) Radio is a powerful medium for mass communication. This is because of the fact that broadcasts from a powerful transmitter can be received at distant places; however remote the place is situated. Radio can play a major role in transmitting knowledge to school children. Buttressing the above view, Agba & Brown (2012) observed that "such broadcasts are used during particular days and specific school hours mainly to the advantage of the educational institutions"



Radio broadcasting continues to be recognized as a useful means of offering learning experiences for larger number of students. Onyejemezi (2006) posits that radio has a lot to offer especially in African schools where there is a dearth of competent and specialist teachers. The radio serves a combined purpose in the sense that on one hand, the learners profit much from the skilled and expert demonstration through the radio, the teacher on the other hand comes into interaction with the expert tutor of his special subject. Thereby they acquire in knowledge and methodology. Radio broadcasts assist teachers in the field where they find themselves relatively ignorant and inexperienced. It plays an important role in reaching, informing and educating people in periods of crisis; Mohanty and Rath (2007) note that it is one of the best educational media that can be applied to communicate educational programmes to distinct classification of audiences anywhere on earth. Again, Mason (2004) notes that radio in education can offer useful answers which different learners can easily utilize. He further maintains that radio can be significant to distant learning for students in primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. He also believes that radio programmes can provide flexibility and exposure and easy reachability to knowledge as well as better outstanding order thinking and skill transformation with high tech learning environment. According to him, radio can produce new distance milieus in which learners are able to take greater responsibility for their own in creating their own knowledge. Circell (2004:48) asserts that learners can share and communicate ideas, beliefs, opinion, knowledge and information through educational radio. Radio permits for live interaction among learners, instructors and resource persons. As most private schools have resorted to online teaching through the internet, it is estimated that most students from low income homes who cannot afford the cost of data might be left out in the continuous learning process.

According to the Digital 2020 Global Overview published in January 2020, about 60% of Nigerians are not connected to the internet. The statistics for mobile phones which could also be utilized as a learning medium are more certain. According to the report, around 169.2 million people that is 83 percent of Nigerians have opportunity to mobile phone connections, however of these, 50 percent that is about 84.5 million people live in urban areas. For the population with access, the percentage would be slanted towards high socio economic households and urban households; a massive majority of whom are private school students who already have a learning leverage over their public school peers. For children from poorer backgrounds who are inclined to have less opportunity to internet connectivity, computers and other devices and live in rural areas where local languages take precedence over English, ICT learning uptake will be inadequate. Obiakor & Adeniran (2020) opine that the disparity in access to ICT based learning has the negative effect of further aggravating the existing disparities in learning resulting along socio-economic lines and the urban-rural divide. Given that the school closures are currently indefinite, these students and pupils would continue to fall further behind. To avoid this set back, radio is best suitable for this continuous learning to take place. This is because studies have revealed the simplicity and affordability of radio as regards access to educational broadcasts in times of crisis.

Benefits of Radio as a tool for Educational learning in the Crises times

The advantages of using radio as an educational medium in crisis times cannot be over emphasized. Besides the affordability of radio, below are some of the benefits of using radio for educational learning:

- Radio can connect to a wide audience, as wide as distance and reception will permit.
- Radio administers a less-expensive means for reaching a large geographically scattered population with consistent classroom teachings.



- Radio lesson can provide up to date or latest and accurate information about classroom teachings on different subjects.
- It sometimes supplies source of materials for the main stream of classroom work.
- It composes a supplementary source of information enabling the pupils to listen to original instructional talk by the experts of the subjects under study.
- Radio is readily accessible.
- Radio is easy to use. Almost everyone is conversant about and comfortable with the use of radio.

Radio Educational Learning: A Reprieve for Nigeria Education in times of crisis

The instant results of the pandemic might be critical, but this crisis provides a unique turning point; a chance to learn, reshape, and build doggedness into the educational system in Nigeria. The crisis has referred to the fact that there is a necessary need to entrench suitable technology into learning. Technological solutions, like the use of radio in classroom learning can guarantee continuous learning outside the classroom and has the possibility of delivering better learning experiences at low costs.

Obiakor & Adeniran (2020), state that the post crisis period is a chance to invest in technology in both private and public school systems. To realize this system wide, it will be necessary to enforce public-private educational partnership. The crisis is an addition to the policy menu towards managing the out of school children as the forced closure of schools has emerged various modalities in reaching children when out of school.

COVID-19 has accentuated a critical gap in school based learning crises planning and emergency preparedness inside the education sector in Nigeria. Learning based contingency planning is important to make certain learning continue during times of crisis, to protect students and educators and to build doggedness within the education sector. The radio plays an essential role in conveying instructions and knowledge to school children.

Onyejemezi (2006) posits that radio has a lot to offer especially in African schools where there is a paucity of competent and specialist teachers. According to him, the radio serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, the learners gain much from skilled and expert presentation through the radio while the teacher on the other hand comes into communication with the expert tutor (master teacher) of his special subject. They both gain in knowledge and methodology. This is where the role of the Ministry of Education will essentially move beyond traditional policy making and regulations but to instruct Commissioners of Education to employ and utilize radios for educational learning within states, while the federal government harmonizes the state efforts by improving capacity and finance gaps. The government could extract from the experience of Sierra Leone, where the Ebola crisis caused school closures for about nine months. To reach the most vulnerable and excluded children, the government of Sierra Leone utilized radio to deliver lessons. The government chose this strategy because it is cost-effective and easy to use.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article is anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory which discusses the effects of media on people. How people use the media to satisfy their needs. The theory challenges the direct impact of the media on people. It affirms that as rational human beings, people make choices of what they want and the possible media they can use to satisfy their need.



This theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurvitch in the year 1974. It explains how people use the media for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled. In other words it relies on two principles about media users. First, it characterizes media users as active in their selection of the media they consume. From this perspective, people don't use media passively. They are engaged and motivated in their media selections. Second, people are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. They rely on their knowledge of their motivations to make media choices that will help meet their specific wants and needs. The implication of this study is that people use the radio for the gratification of their educational needs. They are motivated to use the radio for their learning needs because perhaps it is affordable and simple to use. It is a mass medium that can be harnessed to enhance an education campaign since it can span great distances and reach a large number of listeners. Because of its wide coverage, relatively low unit cost, ability to reach those who are illiterate and without the use of mains power, it has proved to be an effective educational medium. The fact that it is non-visual can be harnessed to improve education quality since the listener is compelled to support the sound message by using his/her own imagination. No other medium has this educational power of stimulating and developing the abstract thinking of its audience and enriching and activating the listener's imagination. Education stakeholders and the audience in general could be made aware of the cogent reasons that make radio suitable for teaching formal education to children in this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The simplicity and affordability of radio could motivate them to make it their choice in meeting this specific need.

CONCLUSION

Since its evolution, radio has played a crucial role in the field of education. Radio itself has advanced over the centuries. But the basic principle has remained the same: reaching to the masses at a lower cost. The immediacy, the accessibility, the simplicity of the medium has the wherewithal to sustain its importance in the educational system in time of crisis.

The central view of this paper is to draw attention to how radio can be used as a tool for continuous educational learning in crisis times especially that of the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to shut down of schools in Nigeria. The point of priority of this paper however is on the prospect of discerning effective curriculum delivery at the various levels of education through the amenity of existing radio stations considering the fact that schools are closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without deliberate and concerted efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic effects on education could have a lasting consequence on the trajectory of education in Nigeria. The onus is now on us; do we permit this crisis to further intensify our education crisis or do we seize the chance to affect change that could address both pandemic-driven and pre-pandemic difficulties especially through radio educational learning?

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EXPLORING THE AESTHETICS OF AWON MASS WEDDING FESTIVAL AS POPULAR CULTURE

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Abstract

Popular culture or popular literature is often being referred to as trivial literature or para literature as it possesses virtually similar characteristics of writing. Among its other genres, abound in popular culture are the festival aesthetics which constitutes its dramatic genre. "Awon" Mass wedding festival is one of such festivals celebrated annually in Shao, Moro Local Government, Kwara State. The festival has its many features which are rich in oral tradition and tourist events deployable for modern cultural entertainment. This paper considers the aesthetics of Awon Festival as an exemplary popular culture with a view to explore the richness and impact of the mass wedding festival on the cultural landscape of Nigeria and global setting. The objectives of this essay are: to project the aesthetics as popular culture; to explore the role and tourist potentials of the festival towards the development of Kwara State; to promote the festival for global audience. The researcher participated in the annual two editions (2017 and 2019) of the festival to enable him obtain firsthand information for the analysis. Interviews and recordings were also carried out. The findings of the paper are that Awon festival is both entertaining and didactic as a popular culture in terms of events, oral texture and significance. It is capable of boosting the economy/IGR of the host state and the nation at large. The festival is recommended for global tourism and that the Kwara State Government and the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture should adopt the festival for invigoration in terms of packaging for international audience.

Key words: Awon festival, Popular culture, Tourism, Shao, Aesthetics

INTRODUCTION

It is high time literary minds looked beyond the projection of festivals for mere entertaining effect. Instead, we should begin to embark on literary exploration or artistic exposition of cultural festivals for adaptation and competitive consumption of global audience. This will help to drive home economic viability and development of not just the immediate context of production but in the continent as a whole. At the disposal of a writer are artistic materials/creative gadgets with which to explore, adapt, expose and present the rich and inexhaustible cultural milieu in the aesthetic repository of Africa for the consumption of the international audience. This paper sets out to explore a unique cultural mass wedding festival celebrated in Shao, Moro Local Government of Kwara State of Nigeria, West African sub-region as popular culture. Popular Culture is that artistic event which is meant for the consumption of the ordinary people but spread by means of technology. Examples are festivals, popular songs, drama, popular dance etc.

By its content and form, Awon Mass Wedding falls within the repertoire of oral aesthetics. It is a cultural festival which is both narrative and performative... An artistic exploration of the mass wedding festival presents a rich historical background as well as performances as may be inherent in poetics, narratives and spectacle. The term aesthetics is a branch of philosophy which has to do with beauty or ugliness as may be inherent in an object. Akano (2012:2-5) observes that aesthetics in its literary meaning entails both functional and



formal elements of a work of art as the basic distinguishing feature either in the oral or literary form. Aesthetics is what Stephen Pepper (1970:2) refers to as ‘a science, a department of the science of value’. It means the ornamental or embellishing artistic techniques inherent in a work of art. Aesthetics is the sum total of values, characters, themes or meanings in a literary piece. In undertaking an aesthetic appreciation, the result is usually edifying or delightful through interpretation or explication of the formal or functional materials in a work of art as contended by Yanai (1978:472). On the other hand, the term globalization covers the evolution of a global society in which economic, political, environmental and cultural events in one part of the world quickly come to have significance for people in other parts of the world. It results from advancement in communication, transportation and information techniques underlining the growing linkages of governments, individuals, communities, businesses around the world through economy, politics, technology and culture. Similarly, the term tourism according to Bonink C. and Richards G. (1992) has to do with traveling for recreation, leisure, holidaying.

This study approaches the global and economic exposition of Awon Mass Wedding Festival from the social role of art. Raji-Oyelade (13-20) has a more insightful observation:

Like all other material productions, the literary artifact is a capital superstructure of the base of national wealth, condition, policy and privacy. (And) In its grand conception as an artistic mode in the production of knowledge, literature is a cell of many other networks which determine the quality and extent of national development

Art harmonizes existence giving meaning and interpretation to interrelationship and interaction between man and his environment. Africa as a continent is not just blessed with cultural festivals; its cultural content is fathomless. The artist taps in creatively and produces for global audience with the aid of digital technology. As Ogunsina (297) puts it, “the kernel of literary sociology is that literature does not only reflect, it affects the society; Obafemi (2013:4) opines that the writer does not just reflect his society, he responds and reacts to socio-political happenings around him or her.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The annual Awon mass wedding festival is a tourism event that can catalyze development. The festival requires international tourist packaging for global marketing but as it is at present it does not have the touch of international tourism standards.

Research questions

- Q1. How effective/rich is celebration of Awon festival for tourist development of Kwara state?
- Q2. What is the role of Awon festival in cultural promotion of Kwara State?
- Q3. What challenges militate against the acceptance of Awon festival as popular culture?

POPULAR CULTURE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The invigoration of the study of popular culture or popular literature as the case may be is being emphasized on daily basis as researches keep pouring in from scholars. The field lends itself to oral rendition with a touch of artistry or performance. As observed by Tomlinson (1991), the content is so diffused that it is almost confusing demarcating between what is ‘popular’ and what is ‘unpopular’ in terms of cultural practices. There is also the delineation of the folk’s or cosmopolitan artistic ingredients especially distinguishing between old and modern, rustic and refined or primitive and civilized. Two things are clear about the term popular culture or popular literature; popular culture is para literary, sharing literary features



just as its sociological or scientific flavour. This is why popular culture is referred to as para literature or trivial literature. In other words, the field is artistic and entertaining; it has content and form; it can take a narrative, poetic or dramatic form. Thus, the entertainment may veil its didactic flavour just as literature can be interpreted. Popular culture has its genres as literature but its packaging and value may not be a serious artistic finesse. This implies that that practice or tradition realized as ‘popular’ can also be literary. It is both thematic and formalistic. What then is popular culture?

Raymond’s taxonomy of the form and content of pop culture may be instructive here. Popular culture could be referred to as a cultural product that are deployed, narrated, staged or practised for entertainment purposes as well as for moral lessons. According to Raymond Williams (2016) popular culture encompasses two main aspects: culture and media. He goes further that it is an artistic material that is a by-product of cultural practice and its spread to different parts of the world or target audience via certain channels. Thus a material that is cultural and made popular or known to a wider audience via technology which may be traditional or modern. The other aspect or meaning of popular culture is whether it is rustic or civilized. The word culture connotes a way of life that concerned with spirituality, entertainment, intellectualism and aesthetic of a particular people, race or group.

Culture as defined by Tomlinson (1991) can be considered to mean ceremonial processes; a people’s belief, ethics, customs, social codes, religion, value system and behavioural codes among other things. On the other hand, literature refers to oral or written artistic materials which bear permanent values. Popular culture is a subset of both culture and literature.

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines popular culture as popular art that embraces any dance, literature, music, theatre, or other art form intended to be received and appreciated by ordinary people in a literate, technologically advanced society dominated by urban culture. Popular art in the twenty century on such technologies of reproduction or distribution as television, printing, photography, digital compact disc and tape recording, motion pictures, radio and video cassettes.

Popular culture encompasses the artistic values emanating from folk’s culture and propagated or advertised through the entertainment industry, the media and targeted at ordinary people in society. Popular culture abounds in stories, events plays, poems, music, chants being written or performed by an individual or a group of performers but that is resplendent of cultural echoes of a given setting. Karin Berber(1999) captures the two components of popular culture as “visible things which would have otherwise been ignored; it is an area of traditional and elite culture, the vast area that is flexible and ever changing, representing a loose collection of different cultural expressions”.

In categorizing popular culture as a literary product, Peter Swirski argues that popular culture is popular literature which is referred to as paraliterature in French and trivial literature in German and that it is a literary phenomenon and not a mere cultural nuisance because it has its socio-aesthetic status which demarcates it as the beauty of “literary democracy”. Some scholars have defined popular culture as residue of cultural studies. The conclusion drawn by Swirski is instructive; that popular fiction has had no appreciable harmful effect either on highbrow literature, on its intellectually refined consumers, or on the society as a whole. What it does is to perform a valuable socio-aesthetic role rather than constitute a cultural menace.



The above position by Swirski corroborates Berber's that though "popular culture often escapes the attention of the outside world, it forms the ingredient of the lifestyle of the urban population". He asserts further that one of its commonest elements is the fact that pop culture:

are products of a dialogue between modern culture and modernity; it results from selective and creative arrangement of specific elements, forms, themes, materials and techniques. Western culture and indigenous forms form a new product that is adapted to new tunes and surrounding audience

Popular culture is a blend of the traditional, the rustic and the primitive that is/has been made popular by technological innovation in print, electronic and digital discs. It is the creative enterprise of the folks but enjoyed and embraced by the elite through technological aids and innovations. Popular culture is so popular by virtue of its graduation from its rural or rustic processes to its popularity through mass media and other advertising digitals. It is the product that cannot be tapped, accessed or consumed in its rustic setting but lifted and propagated via technological breakthrough to the rest of the world.

Popular culture is driven by its mass appeal and wider or global distribution brought about by its cheapness, availability, affordability, and accessibility. The utilitarian value of popular culture is its entertaining purposes. But beyond entertainment, the ideological or radical touch of popular culture as an art subsumes in the tenets of cultural materialism as propounded by Raymond Williams.

Williams himself gives three different definitions of popular culture which embrace its scope, utility and reference. He defines popular culture as "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development". This he relates to the role of philosophers, artists and poets in the formulation of cultural ethos. Williams (2001) also defines popular culture as "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group". This he captures under creative artistry as a signifying process which popular culture entails and can be utilized for. Culture underlines a people's way of life in terms of value specificity or uniqueness. These are notable in terms of social practices, cultural events, festivals, value orientation, celebrations among others as may be feasible in certain social settings. These signifying practices according to Williams "are texts obtainable in soap opera, pop music, comics etc."

As para literature, popular culture has its form and content which encompass both entertainment and moral values or didactic lessons. This is the aspect of ideology which may be radical or liberal which Graeme Turner contends is "the most important conceptual category in cultural studies". Above all, popular culture is in the categories of popular dance, popular theatre, popular music, popular festivals and a host of others. Even certain myths and narratives qualify as popular culture as already aided by technological innovations, media and advertising. Awon Mass Wedding Festival as Raymond William has contended of pop culture in general, is a typical example of popular culture being celebrated annually in Kwara State of Nigeria. It encompasses the narrative, the poetic and the dramatic.

AWON MASS WEDDING FESTIVAL: ORIGIN AND PERFORMATIVES

A festival is an event, usually and ordinarily staged by a local community. It usually centres on and celebrates some unique aspects of that community. Festival is celebratory centering on a theme. For Tomlinson (1991) a festival is usually a cultural fiesta or a feast which is



celebrated in honour of gods, goddesses and God. Thus we have music or dance festivals, religious festivals, cultural festivals, etc.

Awon Mass Wedding Festival is a feast in honour of the Awon goddess. Historically, this was a one-breasted goddess which appeared to the people of Shao of the earliest time of the ancient community precisely during the reign of Ohoro Olanibo, the first monarch of the Shao Community. Whatever is regarded as the authentic account of the historical origin of Awon Mass Wedding Festival must have been sourced from oral tradition which obtains in a community like Shao where written tradition was introduced to it via contact with western education. But even then, the historical account of the festival has since been reduced to writing by individuals as well as government. In his published work, **Shao: My People, their Tradition, Custom and Culture** (1996:92) Oke writes:

In Shao, the institution of marriage is given a pride of place in the culture of the people. Giving out a daughter in marriage in Shao is not the affair of the mother and the father alone; it is the responsibility of the entire community. Marrying off girls in Shao is being practised as it was enjoined by the mysterious woman, AWON, who had visited the town at the early life of the town.

According to the Awon Priest, Chief Oloruntoogun Ojetunde, the festival came into being through the contact between an ancient Chief in Shao, Omo Larele, (Son of Larele), one of the founding fathers of Shao, who was also a hunter. He had discovered a small stream where he was always visiting to drink water during his hunting expeditions. On one of such hunting adventures, he had an encounter with a strange woman who appeared to him mysteriously and claimed the ownership of the stream. Corroborating the story by the Awon Priest, the reigning Ohoro of Shao, Oba Bamidele Alabi Adegbite said the woman, Awon goddess, later appeared to Omo Larele in the larger community where she was received by Ohoro Olanibo and his other Chiefs. Omo Larele is today a principal Chief in the ancient community as Iboo of Shao and third in rank to the monarch. The mysterious woman who gave her name as **Awon** was taken to Ohoro Olanibo by Omo Larele where she was received with pomp and pageantry. She was later made to stay with another man for nine (9) days before departing the town. The man she stayed with is now known and addressed as **Alawon, the Awon priest**. (Wole Oke (1996) **Shao: My People, their Tradition, Custom and Culture**).

In her valedictory speech, the woman, Awon instructed Ohoro and his Chiefs, her hosts, to set a day aside to commemorate her visit by giving all marriageable girls out in marriage. She equally told them that the community should expect prosperity so far they took to her instruction. Awon had hardly finished her speech when she fell down and vanished into the air and immediately, water started to gush out and flow from the spot. Water flowed to join the erstwhile stream discovered by Omo Larele to become a big river known and called Awon River till the present day. The very spot where Awon goddess had fallen down and vanished to become a pool of water has since been referred to as *Awonyale (meaning Awon goddess has branched home)*.

THE PERFORMATIVES

As a cultural festival, Awon Mass Wedding is celebrated in stages as a number of activities are orchestrated to usher in the annual mass wedding fiesta. These events are not just significant; they are interwoven leading to great performances on the part of the custodians. These events are dramatically witnessed usually on important days marking the festival up till the climax and beyond. The events are as follows:



- Fixing of the Day for Awon Festival: It involves the Awon Priest (Alawon), Chiefs Iboo and Ajanki of Shao and other traditional titled chiefs all assembling at the Awon goddess shrine. The fixing of the day is normally done in consultation with Ifa Oracle while they usually pick thirty days (plus or minus) based on market days calculation. This is called “etadinlogbon” or “etalelogbon” (plus or minus 30 days). The fixing of the day event takes place every August or September.
- Gathering of firewood: This is an exercise carried out by family members of the intending bridegrooms. Family members, friends and well-wishers often join hands with the bridegroom in cutting and gathering trees into a big heap. They leave them to dry up before packing them home for cooking activities. Since the festival is celebrated for about a week, the gathering of firewood in heaps helps reduce the cost of cooking. The exercise is carried out with enthusiasm, ecstasy and solidarity.
- Ojo Inabi: It is the day preceding the eve of the wedding, two nights to the wedding day. Two major events take place on Inabi: women from the bridegroom’s house are seen carrying two bundles of firewood, two big baskets of yams and a big cock. Those items are parts of gifts from the bridegroom’s family for the bride’s family. They are meant to prepare delicious meal for the bride before her final departure from her parent’s house.

The other event takes place later in the evening usually around 8.00pm. This is the Inabi proper when the bride sets out accompanied by friends and well-wishers as she visits relations and sharing kola nuts, cigarettes, bitter kola, sweets etc. to people. This night is called the night of “Gidi-gidi, bomu bomu”. It is an energy-sapping procession as a crowd of energetic young men and women (youths) and teenagers join the procession which is usually riotous including a rigorous race. Even from the songs:

Solo: gidi, gidi

Chorus: Bomu bomu, B’omu

Solo: b’omo olomo doju dele; (should anybody’s child fall down)

Chorus: Ko si temi nbe (it does not concern me)

This riotous procession like a relay race goes around the town amidst singing and wild joy. The procession ends as participants withdraw in twos, threes as they get tired.

- **Aisun Iyawo** (Wedding Eve): This is the eve proper and it is the last night the bride spends in her parent’s house. The main event that takes place is the ‘Eka Iyawo’ or ‘Ekun Iyawo’. The bride files out with a lit lantern in her hand and she is accompanied by her friends and peer group members. She goes round her relations’ houses singing or reciting their Oriki (panegyric) and sobbing. The bride chants the praise name, outlining the heroic attributes and accomplishments of her forefathers in honour of her parents. The Eka Iyawo is expected to bring out the richness of Awon Festival in panegyric rendition as family ancestral backgrounds, exploits and heroes and heroines are praised. It is also a day when brides are challenged as spectators get to know how good the brides are in chanting their ancestral praise names.
- **The Wedding Day:** It witnesses many things as many events are staged: there is the display of bridal ware called Igba Iyawo. The bride’s earthenware – pots, plates, cooking utensils among others are washed and displayed on mat to dry up outside. The display readily informs passersby that there is a bride in that house.



Bridal Procession: The first activity the brides engage in on this day is the plaiting of hair which must be ‘Ojonponti’ (Rain does not beat ear). It is the hairdo that is unique to all the brides of the year in Shao community. Then the bride gets dressed which usually is done in a relative’s house. The bridal costume is made up of Aso ofi, umbrella, jewelries, bangles/iyun beads for the neck and wrists. The accompanying percussion signifies bridal background as hunter’s, Ifa’s or profession or exploits. Of this bridal procession are the following excerpts:

After these formalities, the march to the market square begins. At this time, brides are not in a hurry; they march slowly on their way and occasionally halt to sing the praise names of their relatives. This slow march is known as KIKASE IYAWO (counting the brides’ steps). At the market square, each bride carries an umbrella in her right hand and covers her face as tradition demands and starts reciting the Ekun Iyawo to bid farewell to spinsterhood.

(Kwara State Government Publication on Shao Awonga Festival, (p.8)

With Ekun/Eka Iyawo, the brides bid farewell to their family members and parents. Ekun Iyawo is the praise song or chant usually panegyric which is emotion-laden and tunefully rendered. It is the rendition of chants relating to their parental cognomen or ancestral exploits.

Bride: *Bi emo erin, egboun erin, bi eomo osa, ejiyo lobe*
Awa lomo oja melo la nna nile oluwojobi
Awa lomo oja meta la nna nile oluwojobi
Ajumo na won a na oja kola
To ba di lale won a na tataré
Tataré su mi loni, kola lo wu emi
Emi lomo oluwojobi

Translation:

If you don’t know me, you hear the voice of elephant
If you don’t know me, you taste salt in the soup
Even if you don’t know me, you hear my voice; I am the
daughter of Oluwojobi.

The brides are also expected to kneel down in honour of the Ohoro of Shao, the Monarch and sing his ancestral praise.

Awon Dance: usually performed by old women from Iboo and Alawon compound. Before, Awon Dance used to take place two months after the Awon Wedding Festival day. Of this past, Oke writes

It is a traditional dance by every woman in the town to the goddess of Awon. On the day set aside for the Awon dance, no woman must go out of the town to anywhere; every woman is expected to remain at home to ‘bake cakes’ for Awon (duro ko din akara – duodika). To prevent any woman from flouting this order, a masquerade by the name, Duodika goes to station itself along the road that leads to Ilorin which is the road that is plied daily by majority of the women. (p.94)

Then the dance used to commence in the late afternoon as women assemble at the arena, the frontage of the house of the Awon priest. The dancers would form a circle round a massive rock to dance round amidst drumming and singing. The drummers beat bata and gangan drums to enhance the rhythm.



But Awon dance was rejuvenated during the celebration in 1993 and it has since become part of the event featuring on Awon Day.

The dance was rejuvenated during the 1993 Awon to add colour and glamour to the festival. It involves the aged among the women folk. These never tired culture activists (women) engage in the very energetic and highly galvanizing dance. The very alluring traditional musical instrument is orchestrated by the bata drum. (Kwara State Council for Art and Culture publication, p.11).

Awon dance is performed amidst singing and drumming which are rendered in unique and sonorous rhythms. The songs, mainly ballads by its content readily give information about the town's (Shao) rich cultural background, the festival. Excerpts:

Chorus: Gboun mi, efufu lele gboun lodo Awon lodo

Gboun mi, efufu lele gboun lodo Awon lodo

meaning (carry my voice, ye wind, carry my voice to the river goddess)

Solo: Mo mo gbele koto de elekoto

Ibunbu la' tu okun – Elekoto

Ibunbu la' tu osa – Elekoto

Taloje tudo laarin – Elekoto

Keja oja won lomuje – Elekoto

Kodo out won re sale

(I have come with my swimming tactic; we approach swimming in slide; no one plung into the deep; lest the river drown them, lest fishes bite their breasts)

Solo: Mo mo gbelekoto de

Chorus: Elekoto

Solo: Lele lonfe, Ajoda di taya lefe lonfe

Omi maa kun, ko i to wa we

Omi maa kun

(Ajoda turns the swimming goward; let the river swell, it is not enough for us)

Solo: Iyawo bi mo lekan ko ro mi boju, bo o lo lo, enia ko ba nle

(the bride gives birth once, she doesn't have water to rinse her face; she may go away, you met people in the compound)

The songs chorus river Awon's attributes and invectives on lazy and dirty wives. The dance steps rise to a climax as the women disperse removing their veils. They usually end the dance with the song:

Solo: Bole dija, o dija

Chorus: Ko dija

Solo: Bomo olomo doju dele

Chorus: Ko si temi nbe (2x) meaning let it become a fight; let anybody's child fall flat, it doesn't concern me.

The festivity is also heightened with performances from **hunters** as they chant and display as well as the **acrobats**. There are usually **guest artists** from within and outside, Kwara State. The Festival usually comes to a close with the blessing of the brides by the monarch, Ohoro of Shao. The following day witnesses the Oko Ewu (bridegroom's caricature) celebration by the bridegrooms.



PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of events of the festival, the following findings are hereby put forward.

Globalizing the Tourist Potentials of Awon Festival:

In discussing the globalization of Awon Mass Wedding Festival, it must be emphasized that the festival's tourist potentials are huge, fascinating and multi-dimensional. But the concern here and now is the exploration and showcasing of these inherent tourist attractions as they are yet to be tapped or fully developed for global audience and consumption.

In this manner, the attention of the stakeholders in tourism industry in Nigeria is hereby first drawn to the untapped, unexplored and underdeveloped tourist endowment of Awon Mass Wedding Festival. The Federal Government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, should as a matter of policy, undertake the showcasing and marketing of the festival. Awon Festival is listed in the calendar of the National Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) as a national cultural fiesta. The Federal Ministry saddled with cultural promotion should provide the enabling law and environment for the entrepreneurial packaging of the festival through a public private partnership arrangement.

Awon Festival is open to corporate packaging and sponsorship: Multi-national companies, Tourism and Travel Agencies, Event Managers of national and international standard are favoured to step in and take over the modeling, showcasing and marketing of the unique features of the festival for tourist world over. Such enterprising packaging will rake in steady income for the nation and open up business avenues for all categories of traders, hoteliers among others. Awon Festival is a crowd puller as hundreds of thousands of spectators flock to the ancient town of Shao to behold and partake of the yearly exotic and spectacular traditional bridal display of maidens decked in traditional attire rich in embroidery and dye. The tourist attractions of the festival are not just dynamic and enormous but they are of traditional artistry and entertaining. Its ornamental segments and epoch-making six-day performance enterprises offer different tastes in aesthetics and entertainment.

Branding and rebranding of the Festival as a major revenue drive for government and the host community: Bridal costumes which are usually traditional *Aso ofi* of variegated colours and adorning neck beads are symbolic and up for branding by sponsors. There are also umbrella which are hovered over the brides. These are equally symbolic bridal attire for adornment. They could be in company's colours, logo and trade name among others. Opening up Awon Festival for Beauty pageant will drive its global and corporate social outlook. A yearly beauty pageant contest is fashionable for a unique cultural mass wedding as this. An Miss Awon Beauty Contest of international taste and standard will not only serve as promotional enterprise, it will as well help mobilize huge income in several fronts for the nation, individuals and companies.

Theatrical Adaptation of the historical Background of Awon Festival is germane for diversification of its revenue potentials. Professional dramatists and movie producers should find the festival a good artistic material for adaptation and rewarding economic venture. From the coming/discovery and encounter with the Awon deity, the one breasted-goddess by the ancient founders of Shao to the primal staging of Awon Mass Wedding Festival are rich cultural materials good for theatrical adaptation for international audience. The products will be soft sell to rake in bountiful harvest in naira and dollar.



Oral Exploration and uploading of the repertoire of Eka Iyawo (bridal chant) into digital gadgets is artistically diversifying: Eka Iyawo is quite unique to Awon Festival as an undying traditional bridal practice. These bridal chants are awaiting digital production which should be in mass number marketable by tourist agencies.

Serene Babamogba and Yelu Hills and River Awon Topography awaiting landscaping and occupation as tourist resort: These are open to investment in hotels, resorts and accommodation or event centres for local and international tourists during and after celebration. A number of organizations have been showing interest in packaging the festival for tourist attraction. This confirms the statement on www.ranscampus.org that Awon Mass Wedding is tourism potential that is yet to be tapped as Shao remains a centre of tourist attraction to the people world over.

Significance/Impacts of Awon Mass Wedding Festival: The celebration of Awon Mass Wedding goes beyond commemoration of the visit of the deity, the one-breasted woman which appeared and instructed the people of Shao on the annual staging of the festival. It is a celebration of fertility, procreation and motherhood.

In its publication of 1996, entitled **Shao: A Land of Mass Wedding** the Kwara State Council for Art and Culture portrays Awon Festival as ‘a celebration of womanhood during which all maids in Shao Town are given in mass marriage as instructed by the one-breasted fiery woman whose appearance and departure were all events of mystery’. Also, the Kwara State government official website www.kwarastate.gov.ng in its publication, *Historical Perspective of Shao Awonga Festival* have it that ‘Awon had pledged to always bless the people of Shao with children if her injunctions were followed.

Marriage institution was ordained by God and first between the Edenic Adam and Eve from where humanity has since taken the cue. Awon Festival is a mass marriage which centers on procreation, multiplication, and expansion of the people. Marriage is a legal union between a man and a woman who love each other and who have decided to make their relationship public, official and permanent. Annually between forty and eighty maids are given out in marriage during Awon Mass Wedding celebration. It is indeed a repopulation avenue for humanity

Legality: Awon Mass Wedding confers legitimacy on marital status or union of the maids given in mass marriage. It is one of the steps that bride price is usually given to the bride’s parents. The traditional kola nuts and the sum of five thousand naira are given to the bride’s parents during the introduction. All these are fulfilled to confer legality on the union even before the mass celebration. *An identity:* Awon Mass Wedding remains a unique cultural heritage of the people of Shao. It has put the ancient town in the world map of festival thereby propelling it to global limelight as a land of cultural tourism mass wedding festival. Founded before Ilorin, the Kwara State Capital, Shao is an ancient town named after Awon River as Shao Awon.

A unifying factor: The festival remains a unifying factor among indigenes of Shao. During the celebration, regardless of religion, clan or sect, sons and daughters of Shao usually come together to participate fully in the unique and culturally defined festival. It is usually worked upon and watched out for during the annual calendar of the people.

In addition to the above is the belief in the efficacy of the spiritual blessing of the Awon goddess. The goddess is a symbol of unity and spirituality for the people of Shao.



The ancient town of Shao is at the Northern fringe of Yoruba ethnic territory of Nigeria. Shao is located on the world map at longitude 4⁰ 35E and latitude 8⁰ 35N. It is bounded in the East by North Hills, and by Babamogba Hills in the West while in the North and South are rivers Moro and Awon respectively. The cognomen or praise Chants of the Community give ample information about its vibrant cultural festival, its farm endowment and minerals. The people of Shao are always proud of the town, mainly when they listen to their cognomen:

Shao Awonga, Omo Onibu eja	(Shao people blessed with the deep of
Shao Awon wowe, aribusola	fish, one who laughs, Warrior of Oya Ajoda,
apotubu erin	goddess, Awon of many children, with
Akogun Oya	mansions at Basa and Wede tributaries)
Olomo winkin winkin	
Abile gbangba ni basa	
Abodede pirimu pirimu ni wede	
Shao sodun Awon kodo magbe	(the people of Shao celebrates Awon Shao
sodun Awon kodo mafa	Festival, let the river swell 2x, Shao
	people blessed with the deep of fish, Shao
Awon omo onibueja	Your river full of tilapia with which
Shao Awon gbogbo odo kiki isin	we enjoy okro soup)
ati ikoro	
Shao Awon omo onibu remi remi	
Ati isin ati ikoro	
Lao fi jorunla ni Shao Awonga	

CONCLUSION

The paper has discussed features of Awon Festival and its suitability for tourist adaptation. Awon Mass Wedding has really metamorphosed into a symbol of cultural identity that amplifies the people’s social life. From the rich poetics of the Awon ballad songs and Ekun iyawo to the galaxy of costumes underlining a great fiesta, the festival remains a superlative attraction and taste for both local and international tourists.

Definition of Terms

- Awon:** a river goddess, one-breasted woman, the fountain of Awon mass wedding.
- Awon yale:** where Awon goddess had fallen to become a pull of water.
- Awon Ojubo:** the main grove/spot where the goddess is beseeched.
- Awon mu:** the spot where Omo Larele discovered during his hunting expedition.
- Alawon:** the Awon priest and custodian of Awon Festival.
- Ekun iyawo:** bridal chants in honour of their parents and ancestors.
- Igba iyawo:** bridalware usually displayed on Awon festival day



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HEALTH MESSAGES AND COMPLIANCE BY UNDERGRADUATE CONSUMERS OF ROADSIDE FOOD AROUND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The overall purpose of this study was to ascertain the level that undergraduate students in universities around Anambra State comply with health messages on the dangers of patronizing roadside food outlets. The study was guided by four research questions which include the following: To what extent are university undergraduate students in Anambra State exposed to messages on health implications of patronizing roadside food outlets? To what extent are the undergraduate students knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets? To what extent do these students comply with messages of health implication of eating at roadside food outlets? What demographic factors affect the undergraduate students' compliance with the health messages on the implications of eating at roadside food outlets? Anchored on the Health belief Model, the study adopted the survey research method. Findings suggest that: undergraduate students in universities around Anambra State were exposed to health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets. The research further reveals that majority of the undergraduate students were knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets. Surprisingly, irrespective of the undergraduate students' exposure and knowledge of the dangers of eating at roadside food outlets, it was discovered that they did not comply with health messages on the dangers of eating at roadside food outlets. Furthermore, the findings also reveal that such demographic factors like: age and class level of the undergraduate students' had influence on their compliance with dangers of patronizing roadside food outlet, gender however did not. The researchers therefore recommended that communication experts get fully involved in the development of health-behaviour change messages. They should look from within and identify factors that would negatively affect strategic health media messages intended to bring about sustainable health behavior change for a better living.

Keywords: Compliance, Exposure, Knowledge, Health Messages, Roadside food outlets

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that over 3 million of acute cases of food poisoning and 20, 000 deaths occur annually as a result of exposure, poor and careless handling of food items prepared for public consumption (WHO, 2010, Malangu, 2015). Recent studies have also demonstrated that over 200, 000 people die annually from food borne pathogens (Fashae, Ognola & Haastrup 2013; Adebukola & Opeyemi, 2015; Murad, Baydoun & Dagher, 2017; WHO 2020). This statistics no doubt presents a worrisome situation and therefore increasingly calls for an investigation. On the other hand, research has shown that when people become aware



of certain health issues through exposure to health messages that emphasize such issues and as much as possible comply with the messages, a more healthy living is promoted. This study therefore takes a look at the level that undergraduate students, who are consumers of roadside food around university campuses in Anambra State, comply with health messages on the dangers of eating roadside food.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A very common and regular sight in many Nigerian universities is the heavy presence of what is usually referred to as “*mama-put-joints*” in the Nigerian local parlance. These joints or eateries are usually built in scruffy and make-shift stalls around these universities (Adum, Ekwenchi, Orjiakor & Nwosu, 2019). A close look at these food stalls reveal a number of facts – they are usually scattered around the environment, looking shabby and dirty and besieged by hungry universities students who request for assorted types of food. Sadly, a large number of these eateries, research have shown, are implicated as having little or no decent handling of food items they serve ((Adum, Ekwenchi, Orjiakor & Nwosu, 2019). They most times, carry out their businesses in an unhygienic environment. The implication of the foregoing is that undergraduate students who patronize these food joints are frequently exposed to outbreak of food borne diseases – and as it were, endangered to serious health risks.

The above is certainly a serious problem. On the other hand, research (Heldman, Schindelar, & Weaver 2013; Farmula, 2014) has also demonstrated that in Nigeria today, a number of health message campaigns are sent out through different media channels to different target audience. Obviously, the essence of these health messages, which include: emphasis on healthy eating habits, avoidance of junk food, proper handling of food items for public consumption among others, is particularly to educate consumers on the importance of being careful of what they eat in order to avoid health risks associated with such eating habits (Nwabueze & Nwakor, 2015; Adedoyin & Oyewusi, 2015). Yet, irrespective of these health campaign messages undergraduate students of universities are seen to heavily patronize road side food vendors. The questions that thus come to mind in the face of this challenge are: do these university undergraduate students really have access to health campaign messages that harp on implication of eating at roadside food outlets? If they do, to what extent do they actually understand the contents of the messages and accordingly, comply with them? Or are there variables that affect their compliance with these messages? These are the core problems that this research work sought to investigate.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study is to investigate the undergraduates’ compliance with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets around university campuses in Anambra State. In more precise terms, the study pursued the following specific objectives:

- To discover the extent that university undergraduate students in Anambra State are exposed to messages on health implication of patronizing roadside food outlets
- To investigate the extent that these undergraduate students are knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.
- To discover the medium that undergraduate students in Anambra State prefer most in assessing health messages.
- To identify the extent that these undergraduate students comply with the messages of health implications of eating at roadside food outlets.



- To discover demographic factors that affect the undergraduates' compliance with the health messages on the implications of eating at roadside food outlets.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions of the study:

- To what extent are university undergraduate students in Anambra State exposed to messages on health implications of patronizing roadside food outlets?
- To what extent are the undergraduate students knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets?
- What medium do undergraduate students in Anambra State prefer most in assessing health messages?
- To what extent do these students comply with messages of health implication of eating at roadside food outlets?
- What demographic factors affect the undergraduate students' compliance with the health messages on the implications of eating at roadside food outlets?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Health Communication: Quick Conceptual and Historical Overview

Diseases remain one of the very daunting challenges affecting humanity today. It is indisputably a growing threat. From time to time, just like the world is witnessing the Corona virus pandemic, diseases that threaten the life and existence of humans emerge. Stake holders therefore understand that diseases cannot be wished away. For this reason, strategies are carefully mapped out to confront them. Health communication is one of the strategies often employed to combat diseases, whether at the epidemic or pandemic level (Okoro, Nwachukwu and Ajeoro, 2015). This area of study has emerged as a distinct and specialized discipline in recognition of the indispensability in not only fighting diseases, but communicating the implication of some bad health practices to the public. Although people have always communicated about health in the past, the field of health communication is a relatively new area (Qui, Rutherford, Chu, Mao and Hu, 2016, p.123).

The interest in health communication particularly began in the 1970s. Julie (2018) notes that: "In 1972, health communication was used to mitigate smallpox epidemic in Boston (USA)" That year, Cotton Matter, a political leader made use of pamphlets and speeches to promote inoculation of small pox." Furthermore, in the beginning of the 19th century The Women's Temperance Union led a movement against alcohol abuse, using extensive health communication strategy as a major tool to communicate their message to the masses. These efforts marked the early use of health communication in America as a field of scientific research (Julie, 2018). Health communication is also fairly new in the third world countries like Nigeria, where it has been utilized severally in carrying out strategic health developmental efforts (Okoro, Nwachukwu & Ajaero, 2015, p.63).

Health communication is defined by Center for Disease and Control as: "The study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individuals and community's decisions that enhance health" (CDC, 2011). Friemuth, Cole and Kirby (2000, p.120) define health



communication as “the study and use of methods to inform and influence individual community decisions that enhance health, such methods are used to create and increase awareness, educate the public about a disease, its causes and treatment; change individual behavior to prevent or control a disease, advocate for policy changes in favour of disease prevention and control and create social norms that favour healthy living.” Viewed from the foregoing, it becomes clear why health communication theories, according to Friemuth, Linnan and Porter (2000, p.122), “make use of the four key elements of communication process: audience, message, source and channel” The ultimate aim being to reach intended audiences with all inclusive interventions and messages that will ultimately protect public health outcomes. Furthermore, communication is a vital component of health care delivery. Current research on health communication clearly illustrates the powerful influences of communication on health care. Today, mass media health campaigns can raise awareness of an issue, enhance knowledge and beliefs and also reinforce existing attitudes (Okpoko, 2013, p.124)

The outcomes of health communication Okpoko (2013) notes, “can include increasing audience knowledge and awareness of health issues, influencing behaviours and attitudes towards health issue, demonstrating healthy practices, showing benefits of behavior changes of public health issues or policies, increasing demand or support of health services and arguing myths and misconceptions related to health.” Interestingly, health communication is a hybrid field that derives from communication studies, marketing, journalism and public relations and also overlaps with health education and health promotions (Glik, 2005, p.8). Scholars in the field are often trained in disciplines such as: sociology, psychology, public health or medicine and then focus in their field on either health or communication (Maibach, 2008).

The State of Local Eateries and Roadside Food in Nigeria

The rate at which fast food shops and what is usually referred to as road side food outlets is growing in Nigeria today is alarming (Majara, 2010, p.10). Although literature has clearly shown that these fast-food shops have continued to boost the economy of different regions of the country (2004), they have been identified to pose health challenges sometimes, to people that patronize it (Bamidele, Adebimpe, Oladele & Adeoye, 2004, p.124). Westernization, urbanization and the need to struggle for survival on daily bases have remained one particular factor that has made Nigerians to abandon the culture of cooking at home, while besieging roadside food vendors and local eateries in order to satisfy their need for hunger (Bamidele, Adebimpe, Oladele & Adeoye, 2004, p.127). However, it is instructive to note that the health safety of customers that patronize roadside food outlets is of great importance. This in other words, behooves the handlers of roadside food to prepare their food in an extremely hygienic manner. But today, a large number of roadside food outlets have been implicated as being careless in their handling and preparation of food items for consumption (Adum et.al 2019).

A number of factors, ranging from ignorance (Walker, Pritchard & Forsythe, 2003), uncaring and poor attitude towards personal hygiene, lack of basic hygiene infrastructure and sanitary facilities such as: water, soap and toilets, lack of food storage and preservative facilities all contribute to poor attitude toward food hygiene practices among roadside food handlers in Nigeria (Okojie, Wagbatsoma, & Ighorege 2005).

The situation is not different in Nigeria universities. A study carried out among Nigerian food handlers in some Nigerian universities revealed poor level of food hygiene practice among roadside food vendors who are patronized by Nigerian undergraduate students – the



handlers of these food shops were identified to have low level of personal hygiene (Okojie, Wagbatsoma, & Ighorege 2005).

Regrettably today, the agency of government whose responsibility it is to regulate food sale and marketing, the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) acts centrally and as such, has failed to effectively curtail the excesses witnessed in the regional, state and local council levels. Extant literature has also shown that before now, food regulatory agencies in Nigeria have failed to focus on the local and some community's food handlers, irrespective of the fact that some of them have been implicated as carriers of infectious disease (Adum et.al. 2019). The above scenario is the picture of local eateries and roadside food in Nigeria – the picture painted here is also reflective of what is witnessed in university campuses around the country, especially as it concerns roadside food vendors.

Health Message Campaigns and Consumers Compliance

In spite of the high level advancement in healthcare services, challenges of food borne diseases have remained a worrying issue (Adum et al. 2019). This challenge has led to the emergence of health communication as a vital tool for achieving public health objectives of the 21st century (Bernhardt, 2004, p109). In periods of health risks, the media through their campaigns have always served as an outlet for intervening in modifying health behaviours. They have done this by not only creating awareness but mobilizing the public for prevention of health hazards (Salawu, 2016, p.22). Literature dominantly recognize the role of the media as the society's watchdog and sensitizer, with the capability to enlighten heterogeneous audience about certain conditions that could predispose one to disease (Okorie, Oyesomi & Olusola 2014). The media employs single or multiple media and conventional strategies that use television, radio and print media, and recently, the new media, such as internet websites in reaching their diverse audience with health messages (Okorie, Oyesomi & Olusola 2014). Interestingly, these media campaign exercises are prominent because of their ability to reach out to vast and diverse audiences cost effectively (Salawu & Okorie, 2016, p.24).

Exposure, Awareness, Knowledge and Compliance to Health Messages:

The term exposure means the process of seeing, hearing or reading a message. The message can be political, educational, financial or health messages (Nwosu, 2019). Studies have shown that exposure to certain media messages do not only increase awareness of the audience toward such messages, but also increases the depth of knowledge and understanding about the issue under focus. Again, being exposed to certain media messages may change attitudes, social norms and behaviours that lead to positive public health outcomes (Gustav, Patterson, Sandberg, Kabakvenger & Agardh, 2014). In other words, increased media exposure to such health behaviours like patronizing roadside food outlets would apparently reduce health risks that is associated with such patronage.

Okunna and Omenugha (2012, p.247) argues that “a mass media message which an individual has not been exposed to, either directly or indirectly, can hardly be expected to have any effect on the person” Therefore, it becomes instructive to note that when an individual is exposed to a health message, such individual is bound to become aware of the cues emphasized by that health message (Gustav, Patterson, Sandberg, Kabakvenger & Agardh, 2014).

Valkenburg, Peter and Walther (2016), agree with the above position when they note that “researchers have always examined an audience after a media exposure for changes in cognition, belief system, and attitude, as well as emotional, psychological and behavioural



effects” Such studies have often revealed the effect that media exposure leaves on the audience after. In addition, Adum et.al (2019) citing Maibach and Maccoby (1989), note that “the media have always played a very vital role as primary health change agent through educating, supporting, helping as program promoter and supplement” The above roles are particularly achieved when the target audience are exposed to media messages. The above therefore, underscores the importance of “exposure” in fostering health messages that can help change behavior”.

Awareness on the other hand is another important factor that enhances health promotion. It is a necessary step for persuasion to occur (Don, 2002, p. 189). Awareness is the state of being conscious of something. More specifically, it is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or be cognizant of events (Don, 2002, p.186). Awareness is a state where a subject is conscious of some information and when that information is available to bring to bear in the direction of a wide range of behavioural actions (Chalmers 1997, p.122).

The concept of awareness is often synonymous to consciousness. The ability to generate awareness among large numbers of people is considered one of the strengths of the mass media (Don, 2002, p.127). Basically for audience awareness to occur the audience must be exposed to information, they must attend to such information and also remember it (Flay & Sobel, 1983, cited in Don, 2002). Therefore, media campaigns that fail to raise awareness generally do not achieve the necessary preconditions like messages being aired or distributed so that the target audience is exposed adequately, or messages constructed in a manner to capture attention.

Knowledge transmission to large numbers of individuals is another strong point of the mass media. Knowledge expansion is an important outcome to the extent that it leads to desirable attitudes; it is a necessary condition for subsequent health behaviors. Communication persuasion models posit that attitude change is contingent on knowledge gain (Peart 2013). Knowledge, however, is not a single domain. There are a variety of cognitive and affective components to knowledge (Peart 2013), and different types of learning may differentially effect subsequent change. Furthermore, the type of information presented, and the situation in which information is presented can influence what people learn and how they apply it. Knowledge can influence the attitudes and behaviors of people that are highly involved with a health issue but may fail to affect people with low issue involvement (Peart, 2013).

In fact, level of knowledge (recall, comprehension, analysis, and synthesis), audience information needs and audience involvement are clearly important to the knowledge definition process. Considerations of media channels and message formats within channels e.g. special programs on television, doctors' columns or ads in newspapers) are particularly important for knowledge gain. From the foregoing, it is clear that exposure, awareness and knowledge are important variables that help in fostering health behaviour change – this is so because when one is exposed to media contents that educate one on the importance of certain health practices, it consequently increases the awareness of that person toward being more knowledgeable about such health practices. There is strong research evidence that exposure, awareness and knowledge lead to behaviour change, which is the main focus of every health intervention programme (Ngigi, & Busolo, 2018; Yaya, Uthman, Amouzou, Bishwajit, 2018).

Similarly, studies have also shown that exposure and knowledge correlates significantly with compliance to health messages which particularly aims at encouraging adaptive preventive



health behaviours (Gordon, 2002; Yaya, Uthman, Amouzou, Bishwajit, 2018). This explains the reason health advocates spend much time and effort optimizing message design, presentation and distribution to share knowledge effectively with the target audience. However, many cases exist in which exposure and knowledge do not result in adoption of healthful behaviours, as well as compliance to health messages. In other words, when exposure to health messages, awareness and knowledge of the target audience fails to translate to logical behavioural outcomes, it becomes difficult and frustrating. However, a number of factors have been identified to influence preventive health behavior adoption or compliance to precautionary health messages (Gordon, 2002). We are going to look at these factors below:

Factors that Affect Compliance to Health Messages

The major purpose of every health message is to effect change in behaviour; this change can be from a harmful health practice to a precautionary and safe health practice. When viewed from the prism of the present study, the above submission would mean that when an effective health message campaign is directed to a group of people who patronize roadside food outlets that are considered to operate under poor sanitary environment, it is mainly to make such group of people aware and knowledgeable regarding the implication of exposing themselves to such health risk and consequently having their behavior changed towards such practice. However, studies have shown that most times, a number of health messages and campaigns fail completely to achieve their main purpose (Gordon, 2002). Gordon outlines some factors that have been identified as causes for the failure of health messages as: “perception of risks; perception of self; environmental conditions (physical and social) and perception of cost and benefit”

Commenting further on militating factors to effective health messages passage, Gordon (2002) notes:

Perception of risk is an established factor associated with preventive health behavior. Here when risk perception is low, people are usually unenthusiastic to change preexisting behavioural patterns. In perception of self, a number of personal characteristics have been identified as factors influencing compliance to health messages. More so, environmental factors, both physical and social in which individuals operate affect the likelihood of adopting health behaviours. Availability of health services, costs, and transportation needs, for example, have long been recognized as barriers to adoption of beneficial health behaviours. Such considerations are particularly pivotal in rural locations or low-income areas. Availability of health services, costs, and transportation needs, for example, have long been recognized as barriers to adoption of beneficial health behaviours. Such considerations are particularly pivotal in rural locations or low-income areas. Another factor that affects the likelihood of complying with health messages that helps people adopt a healthy living is that of the perceived cost and benefit. Here, if one expects the benefits to exceed costs, then one is more likely to adopt recommended.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Health belief model (HBM). The model was developed in the 1960s by social psychologists to help explain and predict certain health behaviours by focusing on the attitude and beliefs of individuals. As an aspect of change theories, the model stipulates that an individual’s health behavior is guided by the following:

- Perceived susceptibility – one’s opinion of chances of getting a condition.
- Perceived severity – one’s opinion of how serious a condition and its sequence are.
- Perceived benefits - one’s opinion of the efficacy of the advised action to reduce risk or seriousness of impact.
- Perceived barriers – one’s opinion of the twist and psychological cost of the advised action.



- Demographic, socio-psychological and structural variables that affect individual's perception and thus indirectly influence health related behavior.
- Cues to action – events, either bodily (e.g. health symptom) or environment e.g. (media messages) that motivate people to take action.
- Self efficacy – confidence in one's ability to take action (Mboho & Batta 2008, p.18).

The theory maintains that people's health behavior are a product of what they perceive and think about the threat to themselves, the benefits to be obtained if a suggested action is adopted, the cost of action, the impact of external forces such as age, status, education, family etc, other motivating factors and self confidence.

The theory also notes two important facts that are relevant to health communication – the first is that a highly credible message can stretch the hearer's latitude of acceptance and the second is that people who are dogmatic of every issue have had their minds made up or have chronically wide latitude rejection (Mboho & Batta, 2008, p.18). The import of this theory for health communication is that it is very important to study the audience's knowledge, attitude and perception of health issues before designing messages. Therefore, in relation to this study, this paper hypothesizes that the extent an individual who is exposed to the dangers of eating in roadside food outlets complies with health messages that focus on the implications of patronizing poor sanitary roadside food outlets will largely depend on the competence of the health campaigners. In other words, when health messages are properly disseminated with the right cues, there is the tendency that the target audience (students who patronize roadside food outlets) will be motivated to take healthful actions.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this study was the survey design. Babbie (2010, p.85) describes the survey design as “an excellent method for measurement of attitude and opinion of people within a large population.” This design therefore adopted entails asking the respondents about their opinion on the subject matter.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of study comprise of undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (NAU) Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University Igbariam (COOU) and Paul University Awka (PU), all in Anambra State The researchers decided to use this population given that the three universities, which cover both the federal, state and private institutions of the population have undergraduates who heavily patronize roadside food outlets in the different schools. The population of these universities put together is about 48,600 students. This is according to the records obtained from the Registry Department of each of the universities.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample size of the study is 400. This is in line with Taro Yamane formula for determining sample size. Therefore 400 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the randomly selected students, and 381 were successfully retrieved and analysed. The multi stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents across faculties, departments and levels of study for the purpose of instrument administration. In other to achieve the above sampling, the researcher used the multi stage sapling procedure to select the three universities (NAU, COOU and PU) studied at the first stage. At the second stage, two faculties were randomly selected from each of the three universities. The procedure yielded for NAU: faculties of Social Sciences and Arts, for OOU: faculties of Law and Management and for PU: faculties of Social Sciences and Management. At the third stage, the researchers also



randomly selected two departments from each of the faculties. This procedure yielded Mass Communication and Psychology, English Language and Music departments from the faculties of Social Sciences and Arts NAU, Criminal Law and Civil Law, Accountancy and Banking and Finance from COOU, and philosophy and Sociology, Marketing and Accountancy from PU. Using the proportionate sampling allocation technique, 296 sampling size was allocated to NAU, 100 sampling size was allocated to COOU and 4 sampling size allocated to PU, bringing the total sampling size to 400.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In presenting and analyzing the data gathered for this study, the researchers made use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in obtaining frequencies and percentages. Statistical tables were also employed in presenting the data. This method became important in order to interpret the relationships between different variables.

Demographic Variables

The data analysed in the demographic section of the questionnaire indicates that a greater percentage of the respondents were males (257) 65.5%, while females were 124 representing (32.5%) of the respondents. Also, the respondents were categorised under three age brackets. The data shows that 19.9% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 16-20 years, 43.40% of them were in the age bracket of 21 -25 years, while 37.0% were in the age bracket of 26 and above. The data in table 1 suggests that that the students in the age bracket of 21-25 years constitute the highest population sampled. With regards to their level of study, 24 respondents representing (6.3%) are in their 100 level, 284 of them representing (74.5%) are in their 200 level, 36 (9.4) are in their 300 level, 12 (3.1%) are in their 400 level while 25 (6.6%) are in their 500 level.

Research Question 1: To what extent are university undergraduate students in Anambra State exposed to messages on health implications of patronizing roadside food outlets?

Table 1: Undergraduates’ Exposure to Health Messages on Patronizing Roadside Food Outlets

	Access to advertised messages	Encounter to Health messages	Encounter on health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food
Yes	76.6%	93.7%	65.7%
	N=292	N=357	N=257
No	23.4%	6.3%	34.3%
	N=89	N=24	N=124
Total	100%	100%	100%



(N=381)

(381)

(381)

Table 1 above shows that 76.6% of the respondents have access to advertised messages on different media platforms, while only 23.4% of them indicated that they have not heard such access. Again, 97.3% of the respondents indicated that they have in one way or the other encountered health messages on different media platforms, while 6.3% of them noted that they have not. Furthermore, 65.7% of the respondents said that they have encountered health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food vendors while only 34.3% said that they have not. The deduction here based on the above data is that undergraduate students of the selected universities in Anambra state were exposed to health messages on patronizing roadside food outlets.

Research Question 2: To what extent are the undergraduate students knowledgeable on the implication of eating at roadside food outlets?

Table 2: Undergraduate students’ knowledge on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets

	Knowledge of dangers associated with patronizing roadside food	Knowledge of contacting food poison from roadside food	Knowledge of poor sanitary environment of roadside food outlets	Knowledge of hospitalization that results from consumption of roadside food	Knowledge of deaths that results from consumption of roadside food
Yes	61.2% N=233	75.5% N=284	70.3% N=268	33.9% N=129	19.9% N=76
No	38.8% N=148	24.5% N=97	29.7% N=113	66.1% N=252	80.1% N=305
Total	N=381	N=381	N=381	N=381	N=381

Data in table 2 shows the respondents’ view on the extent that undergraduate students in universities around Anambra State are knowledgeable on the implication of roadside food consumption. From the table, 233 respondents which represent 61.2% agree that they are knowledgeable of the dangers associated with roadside food patronage, while 148 of them representing 38.8% of the respondents said that they are not. 75.5% of the respondents attested that they know that one can contaminate food poisoning from roadside food outlets, while only 24.5% of them said that they don’t. Again, 70.3% of the respondents said that they know about the poor sanitary condition of roadside food outlets, while 29.7% said they don’t. Only 33.9% of the respondents indicated that they know that a large number of people get hospitalized yearly for being infected for patronizing roadside food outlets, while 66.1% of them said that they don’t. Similarly, only 19.9% of the respondents showed that they have knowledge about the level of deaths that occur annually from food poisoning, while 80.1% of them did not know about this. The foregoing data therefore suggests that majority of the respondents are knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.



Research Question 3: What medium do undergraduate students in Anambra State prefer most in assessing health messages?

Most preferred medium for assessing health messages on dangers of patronizing roadside food outlets	Percentage.	Number
Newspaper	3.8%	N =10
Radio	17.1%	N= 45
Television	13.3%	N= 35
Outdoor adverts (fliers, handouts etc)	11.4%	N= 30
Social media	32.2%	N= 200
Interpersonal medium	13.3%	N= 35
Others	8.9%	N= 26
Total	100%	N= 381

Data in table 3 shows that 10 respondents representing a 3.8% preferred newspaper to any other medium in assessing health messages. 45 of them representing 17.1% preferred radio, 35 of the respondents representing 13.3% said they preferred television to any other medium, 11.4% of the respondents had preference for outdoor adverts, 200 of the respondents representing 32.2% said that they preferred the social media to any other medium, about 13.3% of them had preference for interpersonal medium and 8.9% of them fell into the category of “others”. From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the social media had the highest preference as a medium that the undergraduate students used most in assessing health messages on the dangers of patronizing roadside food outlets. This is followed by radio, then radio and interpersonal medium. The category for others was the least preferred medium that the students used in assessing health messages.

Research Question 4: To what extent do students comply with messages of health implication of eating at roadside food outlets?

Table 4: Undergraduate students’ compliance with messages of health implication of eating roadside food outlets?

Agree with media campaign messages that encourage avoidance of roadside food		
Response	Percentage	Number
Yes	23.4%	N= 89
No	76.6%	N= 292
Total	100	N= 381



Reason you disagree		
The food is tasty	54.6%	N= 208
Can't buy food from big restaurants	26.2%	N= 100
Government should provide alternative	6.3%	N= 24
Have not died since I have been taking roadside food	12.9%	N = 49
Others		
Total	100%	N= 381

Compliance with Messages that discourage the patronage of roadside food outlets		
Yes	16.8%	N= 64
No	83.2%	N= 372
Total	100%	N= 381

Data in table 4 shows that 89 respondents, representing 23.4% indicated that they agree with media campaign messages that encourage avoidance of eating at roadside food, while 76.6% of them disagreed. On the reason for disagreement on the messages of compliance 54.6 % of the respondents said that roadside food is tasty, 26.6% said that they can't afford to pay for food in bigger restaurants, 6.3% of them said that the government should provide alternative, while 12.9% were of the view that they have not died from eating in roadside food outlets. Furthermore, while only 16.8% of the respondents complied with messages of health implication on eating at roadside food outlet, only 83.2% of them did not comply. It is based on the data supplied here that the researcher infer that undergraduate students around universities in Anambra State did not comply with the health messages on the dangers of eating at roadside food outlets.

Research Question 5: What demographic factors affect the undergraduates' compliance with the messages of health implications of patronizing roadside food outlets?

Table: 5 Cross Tabulation of Respondents' Gender and compliance with Health messages on implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.

Compliance with health messages on roadside food consumption	Respondents' Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	25.3%	19.4%	23.4%
	N=65	N=24	N=89
No	74.7%	80.6%	76.6%
	N=192	N=100	N = 292
Total	100%	100%	100%



N=257

N=124

N = 381

$X^2 = 381.200$; $df = 1$; $p < .199$

Table 5 above shows that 25.3% of male respondents complied with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food, while 74.7% of them did not comply. On the other hand, only 19.4% of the respondents who are females complied with health messages, while 80.6% of them did not comply. From the data here, it is clear that male respondents complied more with health messages on the implications of patronizing roadside food outlets than their female counterparts. However, it is obvious that the relationship between the respondent's gender and their compliance with health messages on the implications of patronizing roadside food is not statistically significant at (0.999) level. This data consequently tends to suggest that gender as a demographic factor did not affect the respondent's compliance with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation of Respondents' Age and compliance with Health messages on implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.

Compliance with health messages on patronizing roadside food outlets	Respondents' Age			Total
	16-20	21-26	26 and above	
Yes	0.0%	39.0%	17.7%	23.4%
	N=0	N=64	N=25	N=89
No	100%	61.0%	82.3%	76.6%
	N=76	N=100	N=116	N=292
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=76	N=164	N=141	N=381

$X^2 = 48.139$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.000$

Table 6 shows that 0.0% of the respondents who fell between the ages of 16-20 years did not comply with health messages on the dangers of patronizing roadside food outlets. However, 39.0% of them within the age brackets of 21-26 years complied with the health messages, while 61.1% of them did not. Furthermore, 17.7% of the respondents who were between 26 years and above complied with the health messages, while 82.3% of them did not. Going by the outcome of the data in table 5, there seems to be higher compliance with respondents within the age bracket of 21-26 years. This relationship is found to be statistically significant at 0.000 level. From the foregoing therefore, it is evident that the undergraduate students appear to have complied more with the health messages on implication of patronizing roadside food as they advanced in age. For this reason, it could be stated that age of the undergraduate students influenced compliance with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.

Table: 7 Cross Tabulation of Respondents' Level compliance with Health messages on implication of patronizing roadside food outlets.

Compliance with the implication of health messages on patronizing roadside food outlets	Respondents' Level					Total
	100 level	200 level	300 level	400 level	500 level	
Yes	50.0%	22.5%	0.0%	0.0%	52.0%	23.4%
	N=12	N=64	N=0	N=0	N=13	N=89
No	50.0%	77.5%	100%	100%	48.0%	76.6%
	N=12	N=220	N=36	N=12	N=12	N=293



Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=24	N=284	N=36	N=12	N=25	N381

$X^2 = 35.707; df = 2; p < .0.000$

Table 7 shows that among the different class levels of undergraduate students, 50.0% complied with the health messages on implication of patronizing roadside food outlets, while another 50.0% of the same level did not. About 22.5% of respondents in 200 level complied with the messages, while 77.5% of the same class did not. No respondent complied with the health messages in 300 and 400 levels, while 52.2% of them in 500 level complied with the messages. It is therefore clear from the present data that students in 100 level, 200 level and 500 level complied with the health messages as against the ones in 300 and 400 levels who did not. The relationship between the respondents' level and their compliance with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets here is found to be statistically significant at (0.000) level. As a result of this, while it could be stated that the class level of the undergraduate students is found to influence compliance with health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets, the distribution does not follow a regular pattern that would have precisely revealed the exact ranking of each level in terms of the extent it influence the compliance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Generally the findings of this study suggest that the undergraduate students in around Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam and Paul University Awka were exposed to health messages on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets. This position is in line with Chowdhury, Zaman and Bari (2014) who argue that “consumer knowledge influences food safety behaviour and that this knowledge is usually successfully passed on to the audience through their exposure to health messages on different media platforms like the radio, newspaper, social media, fliers and television”

In addition, the researchers also discovered that majority of the undergraduate students were knowledgeable on the implication of patronizing roadside food outlets. Ma, Chen, Yan, Wu and Zhang (2019) also made similar observation in their study “that the media have continued to emphasise on the dangers of eating from roadside vendors and that this health messages have helped in exposing, and therefore increasing the knowledge of people on the dangers of eating at roadside food outlets”

Again from the findings of the study, it was evident that the undergraduate students preferred the social media as a platform for assessing health media messages than other forms of media platforms. This finding to a large extent lends credence to the emerging trend of the social media becoming increasingly important as a preferred medium for assessing media messages; this is especially among young people (Uzuegbunam, 2019}

Surprisingly, irrespective of the undergraduate students' exposure and knowledge of the dangers of patronizing roadside food outlets, it was discovered that they did not comply with the health messages. Gordon (2002) had similar finding where he reported that, “there were factors that affected the respondent's compliance to health messages even after their exposure to health messages – factors like: environmental problem, cost benefit and self perception.” As a result of this, one could extrapolate that similar factors would have come to play here.



Furthermore, the findings also indicate that such demographic factors like age and class level influenced the undergraduate student's compliance to dangers of patronizing roadside food outlet. However, gender did not. Based on the above findings one could extrapolate that such demographic factors like age and level of studies became influencing factors to the undergraduates' compliance to the health message on implications of patronizing roadside food outlets because it is natural that as individual grow in age and level of education, they develop a better maturity and experience toward their attitude to health matters (Emily & Woolf, 2014; Tilicia, Gamble & Mouton, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this study shows that through different media platforms, different health messages might be exposed to a target audience. This audience most times, becomes not only aware but knowledgeable about the health message focused on. However, the target audience of such messages might fail to comply with the content of such messages and as such fail to have his or behavior changed. What this signifies is that sometimes, health media messages on either television, radio, outdoor adverts or even interpersonal mediums sometimes, might not ultimately achieve the aim it intends to achieve – that is, change behavior; this somewhat portends danger and therefore requires that communication experts get fully involved in development of health-behaviour-change messages. They should look from within and identify factors that would negatively affect strategic health media messages intended to bring about sustainable health behavior change for a better living. The framing of these messages should not be left for ordinary radio/TV advertisers or social media blog owners but health communication professionals who understand the intricacies and dynamics of coming up with effective health messages that will precipitate behavior change.

Furthermore, such strategies like health message framing, the type of media channel employed to disseminate health messages and strategic plans to reach the target audience to comply with health messages should be top priority for health message planers. This is so because when these variables are not put into the right perspective, there is the possibility that health messages might not be complied with, even when the audience are exposed to it.

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NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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Abstract

This study examined the coverage of domestic violence against women in select Nigerian dailies. Among the national dailies under review are Daily Sun, Vanguard and Guardian newspapers. The researcher used the content analysis research method in reviewing the manifest contents of the three papers from March 23rd to June 2020. The study period covered a total of 100 days which translates to 300 publications of the three newspapers under investigation. The specific objectives of the study are to ascertain whether the newspapers give prominence to domestic violence; find the dominant source of interventions for victims of domestic violence against women; observe whether the newspapers gave adequate publications to the rising domestic violence against women and find out if the newspapers actually follow-up domestic violence cases within the lockdown in their publications. The social responsibility and Agenda-setting theories served as the theoretical framework for the study. Findings revealed that the newspapers neither gave prominence nor adequate coverage to domestic violence against women within the lockdown period. It was also found that the newspapers hardly follow-up their stories on domestic violence within the period. The researcher concluded that the select newspapers did not do well in their coverage of domestic violence in the period under investigation by publishing only 115 news items on such crimes within the period. The study recommended among others that the media should as a respect to their social responsibility functions expose the people to the harmful effects of domestic violence against women in the country.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Newspapers, Corona virus, Women

INTRODUCTION

Women form a greater percentage of the population of human population around the globe and as well play significant and varying roles both at home and at their places of work (Sambe, 2015). Unfortunately, this set of people face the highest level of unimaginable inhuman treatment globally, tearfully from their much-needed spouses who are expected to provide for them and protect them from all kinds of harm. On the contrary, their husbands unleash harm on them at every slightest provocation. Violence generally, is a threat to the globe with women and children as the most vulnerable and its outcome highly devastating. Domestic violence against women is a global infestation that transcends boundaries and occurs in all cultures and societies around the world (Albana, 2017).

Culturally, some societies have long historical records of male domination, in which women were mostly taught how to obey their husbands; accept their submissive roles and subscribe to be under their first male children when their husband dies. This is a reflection of the strong patriarchal traditions dominant among the majority of human societies. These traditions and cultures at varying degrees provide the templates for the relegation of the women to the background. This makes domestic violence very common and a global issue of concern. It is widespread; often considered socially acceptable among some cultures and globally underreported. Significantly, the most worrisome situation of universal interest is that women



hardly report or disclose physical, sexual and or any other forms of violence especially when committed against them by an intimate partner (Sutherland, McCormack, Pirkis, Easteal, and Vaughan 2015). Surveys undertaken in 2012 and 2013 indicated that around 30% of women had experienced some form of physical, sexual or emotional domestic violence during their lifetime (IAGCI, 2016). Although there seems to be a change in attitude among some societies, recent reports demonstrated a surge in the rate of domestic violence around the globe owing to this lockdown (Wikipedia, 2020; UN, 2020; Lennard, 2020; Townsend, 2020). For instance, the call to helpline in Tunisia increased by fivefold in the first days of the lockdown (Graham-Harrison, Glufriida, and Ford, 2020). In Uk, the first week of the lockdown witnessed an increase in the number of calls to the helpline by 25% with 150% increase in the number of visits to the website (Fraser, 2020). In Cyprus and Singapore, helpline calls increased by 30% (NDVH, 2020) within the first week of lockdown, 40% in Australia and 67% in Argentina (UN women, 2020).

Globally, domestic violence is one of the most pervasive violations of fundamental human rights which affect women of all ages, race, creed and economic backgrounds (Sutherland, McCormack, Pirkis, Easteal, and Vaughan, (2015). It is harm that goes beyond the physical realm and transcends into perpetual emotional feeling leading to torture, severe pains and depressions.

According to WHO (2013) cited in Galvão, (2015), there is a shred of strong evidence establishing links between women's exposure to violence and direct health outcomes. Reports from the review revealed that domestic violence against women could be as dangerous as leading to mental health problems, subscription to substance use, and the desire to commit suicide and harm oneself and unleash fatal and non-fatal injuries on one. Drawing from the above research reports, it can be seen that the effects of domestic violence are enormous and all-encompassing ranging from the individual victims to the entire society where such lifestyles are harboured. Considering the impact of domestic violence, Sutherland, *et al.* (2015) argues that domestic violence influences the health, welfare and development of individuals and families, the communities in which they live and the entire society as a whole. Generally, domestic violence or violence of any kind is overwhelmingly committed against women by men. Such violence includes direct and indirect threats of physical assault, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, social isolation and any related and similar behaviours that result or can force women to live in perpetual fear (Cripps & Davis, 2012; WHO, 2013; Sutherland, *et al.* (2015).

Drawing from the facts provided above on the influence of domestic violence against women to the victims, the families and the larger societies, it is imperative that the mass media must make some moves in exposing the causes of domestic violence and with a view to provide precautionary measures to restrict the surge. Efforts should be geared towards unraveling the underlying causes and at the same time providing primary preventive measures owing to the negative impacts of the menace on the society to restrict the rise in domestic violence. For instance, in Australia and overseas, public policies addressing violence against women are increasingly focused on primary prevention strategies targeted at preventing violence before it occurs (VicHealth, 2007). In the context of addressing violence against women, the target of primary prevention should be to reduce the incidences leading to its occurrence by targeting factors that give rise to or create conditions in which violence against women sets in (Quadara & Wall, 2012). Against this background, this study will look at the newspaper coverage of domestic violence against women with particular reference to the causes and measures of controlling the menace in the country.



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although domestic violence had existed long before 2020, it reportedly escalated within this period of lockdown (Wikipedia, 2020; UN, 2020; Lennard, 2020; Townsend, 2020). Perhaps, domestic violence may not be totally absent in any society with the majority of its population, leaving below the poverty line. The state of chronic poverty in Nigeria made it evident that a good number of anti-social acts, such as crimes and violence must be prevalent in the nation within this lockdown because many people were stock in one place with little resources to fend for the family. This fact and several others, such as frequent demand for sex by idle men and high level of incompatibility among spouses forced the domestic violence curve to rise within the lockdown period. In keeping with their social responsibility roles to the less privileged and oppressed as the voice of the voiceless, the press is expected to pick up these unhealthy acts against women; challenge those cultural and social norms that condone, tolerate or excuse violence against women elsewhere in the globe. Drawing from this context, the news and information media are considered as dominant forces that can play significant roles in shaping the discourse on matters of international concern like domestic violence against women.

Unfortunately, how newspapers covered the acts of domestic violence within this *Corona virus* lockdown period cannot be ascertained without an empirical study of this nature. The attention of the media is needed by the less privileged and oppressed for in the end, the domestic violence victims and survivors shall remember not the voice of their killer-spouses or domestic violence supporting cultures and traditions, but the silence of their friends (the media). Against this backdrop, this study examined newspaper coverage of the domestic violence against women in their various lockdown environments within the virus ravaging period.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The central objective of this study is to examine the newspaper coverage of domestic violence against women in Nigeria during the global Corona-virus lockdown period. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Ascertain if the newspapers gave prominence coverage to domestic violence within the lockdown period.
- Determine the dominant source of interventions for victims of domestic violence against women within the lockdown period.
- Observe whether the newspapers gave adequate publications to the rising domestic violence against women within lockdown period.
- Find out if the newspapers actually follow up domestic violence cases within the lockdown period through the frequency of their publications.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA: A PREVENTIVE APPROACH

Domestic violence has no generally accepted interpretation because it has different dimensions and perspectives. For the sake of this study, the UN (1993) definition which sees domestic violence as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life, was adopted.

From the above definition by the United Nations, it is clear even though men can equally suffer domestic violence (Domestic Violence Death Review Team, 2015), this study is



more concerned with media coverage of violence against women within the lockdown period in Nigeria. The reason for the high rate of domestic violence in the country is most rooted in the fact that rules are just made in Nigeria only to be violated. Generally, Nigeria has laws guiding against domestic violence, but these laws don't count in the real-time when the need arises (Vanguard News, 2016). What did the law on domestic violence say? How had those who violated the rules been handled in respect to these laws? These are among the duties expected of the media to carry out for the repositioning of the society. Reporting the sections of the laws violated and the consequences of violence against any woman may in the media go a long way in deterring others from taking similar actions against their spouses in the society.

In discussing domestic violence, the mass media are placed on the side of responsibility to deliver the needed views to ensure that the lives and health of the women are set free from domestic violence of any kind. This is because of the media power to shape and manipulate the public opinions and discussions in matters that affect the larger society. This was captured more clearly in Carll (2003) when he argues that the mass media features are seen as the most vibrant priority area in primary prevention of domestic violence because it has the potential influence to guide and shape public understanding of violence against women.

In several studies on the influence of mass media contents on people's perception of issues, efforts have passionately concentrated on the source of the materials; its gatekeepers and the audience. With this, little is known about the structures of the materials in the media and what the structure got to do with the acceptance or rejection of information. It is the structure of the materials that can explain how and why readers of materials are influenced by what they see, read or hear in the media (Sutherland *et al.* 2015). Considering the why and how of media influence on its audience belief system, Easteal, Holland, & Judd, (2015) vehemently argued that unquestionably, the way information is structured can increase public understanding of violence against women and, more importantly, challenge its place in society.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Rollè, Abbà, Fazzino, Marino and Brustia (2014) examined the media represented domestic violence in two (2) none politically aligned Italian-newspapers in the years 2002/12. The study which used the content analysis research method found that there is a preference to generally explain the phenomenon of domestic violence rather than discuss the problem to the society. This finding creates a room for a study of this nature to investigate the media contents in line with providing the extent to which the media showcased the primary causes of domestic violence against women. This will help in tackling the menace if adequately x-rayed.

Owusu-Addo, Owusu-Addo, Antoh, Sarpong, Obeng-Okrah and Annan (2018) adopted media framing in their study on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). The survey which sees the women and girls as critical public of the mass media was interested in the public health-related issues that domestic violence can cause in society. The study which focuses on media framing of the problems demonstrated that how the news media cover public health issues is critical for designing effective health promotion interventions. Moreover, this study points to the fact that studies on domestic violence are scarce in low-and middle-income countries of the world. The study adopted the Qualitative content analysis research method in providing the analysis of how Ghanaian media represented Violence against Women and Girls in Ghana with a total of 48 news articles on the study. The findings indicate that media



framing of VAWG was episodic in nature. It shows that the victims are primarily the ones that carry the blames from the news articles reviewed. In framing VAWG as an individual incident and women as helpless victims, the media fail to shape society's perception of VAWG as a social and public health issue. The study, therefore, concluded that for the media in Ghana to contribute to the prevention of VAWG, there is the need for news coverage to focus on the social construction of the issue, and also raise awareness about support services available to victims. This study opened a gap for the current one when it argues that there was shortage of literature in studies on media and domestic violence in low income and middle income earning countries. Nigeria is one of the middle if not among the low-income earning countries where domestic violence is rampant.

Daniel, Aniekeme and Nnamdie (2019) examined Uyo Residents' Perception of Selected Newspaper Coverage of Gender-based violence in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research method investigating the perception of newspaper coverage of domestic violence among 400 respondents. The findings reveal that majority of the respondents (51.3%) thought that Daily Sun and Vanguard newspapers do not cover Gender-based violence issues frequently. The researchers recommend that there is need to strategize ways that will facilitate the prominence of Gender-Based Violence stories in the newspapers (like putting GBV stories on the centre spread or front pages) where all genders are well covered and given prominence to aid readers in understanding the issues of GBV. This study is related to the current one, given that it discusses media coverage but differ in the research method. As the previous research is looking at the perception of the audience, the current one is concerned with the efforts of the media in performing their social responsibility and agenda-setting function with a view to eradicate evils in the society. This study looked at the frequency and prominence of coverage. At the same time, the current one is concerned with the causes and possible information provided by the media to stop domestic violence against women.

In another study, Yusuf, Arulogun, Oladepo, and Olowokeere (2011) study examined gender-based violence with emphasis on physical violence among men and women in an intimate relationship. The study adopted the survey research method in reviewing a total of 989 respondents sampled through multi-stage cluster sampling procedure conducted around the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The researchers found that more females experienced physical violence than males. The study recommended that strategies should be put in place, and all major stakeholders should help to curb this menace. The mass media are among the stakeholders in this recommendation. That makes this current study very apt in considering the efforts of the media in finding out the causes of violence and condemning the same for the evil to cease in society.

In a different study, Talabi (2016) examined the dominant frames adopted by the print media in reporting abuses against homemakers. The study adopted the manifest content analysis research method with stories, features articles, opinion articles, editorials and cartoon/graphics as the units of analysis in this study. The findings showed that newspaper actively reported homemakers' abuse incidence, but the tone of editorial bias in most abuse stories portrayed in the newspapers was not given. The study recommends that the newspaper should do more than just creating awareness about homemakers' abuses by mere reportage, but a mediatory and change-stimulating coverage of homemakers' abuse should be done. This recommendation is a wake-up call to this current one which looks at how the media placed their report on the causes of domestic violence and expose all customs, cultures and norms that provide an excuse for committing violence against women.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

On the previous scholarly views which have stressed the importance and indispensability of theories in social science research, this study was anchored on two theories, namely- The Social Responsibility and Agenda-Setting theories of mass communication.

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory places the media on the obligation of doing the needful in getting the evils in society and exposing them to see if society can do away with it. By the provision of social responsibility theory, the press has the duty to engage in coverage of issues causing domestic violence in the society since it has been classified as a global issue against the life and rights of women. It makes the media responsible for being the voice of the voiceless. The social responsibility theory of the press states that though the media should have the freedom to carry out their duties, such duties should have a level of obligations and responsibilities (Nwabueze 2012). McQuail (2005) writes that while it is necessary for the press to be free, the public also have the right to a free press and the right of the people takes precedence. Justifying the responsibility of the media; the theory holds that the press has a right to criticize negative actions in society. Drawing from this position of the argument, it is the duty of the media to identify the causes of domestic violence against women for the societal liberation of domestic violence. This means that the media should identify all customs, cultures and values that guarantee and or provide a template for excuses for committing domestic violence against women, condemn them and bring them to ridicule before the public. Relating this theory to the study, the newspapers are socially responsible to the public; they have the obligation to objectively inform the public the cases of domestic violence and its leading causes with a view to provide an end to it uniquely within the lockdown period. As the voice of the voiceless, media has the duty to wage war against all kinds of domestic violence against women. It is the view of the researcher that identify the causes of domestic violence, exposing those cultures and customs that encourage them and ridiculing them through media interpretation can go a long way in reducing the rate at which it occurs in the society.

Agenda-Setting theory

Despite being a theory in progress, the proponents of the agenda-setting theory of mass communication maintain that through effective and repeated reporting of an issue in the focal points of the news media, the people will get to know about the activity and possibly act in line with the media directives on such development. This theory makes the mass media critical opinion controller and directors of public views and discourse on prevailing issues around the world. The import of this is that if the increasing rate of domestic violence gets frequent reports in the news media, soon, it will command the attention of the media audience. In doing so, the media reports could force the audience to device means of restricting domestic violence. This is because of the dangers it portends to the individual victims, the family and the society at large which the media expose to the public. This is because, the mass media can produce a change of the cognitive structures, and the perception that the public has about what is happening around them (La Rocca, (2017). The media's ability in doing this according to Agudosy and Ikegbunam (2020) rests in their strength of not only bringing events closer to the people but in drawing their attention to their preferred events which otherwise would have been far away from them. Through bringing these events close to the people, media can then, provide a frame of interpretation to enable their users read and understand what is happening.



Relating this theory to the current study, media interpretation of domestic violence must provide the direction of opinion and action against it. If the media offer a contrary analysis of the cultures in some societies that aide the commitment of domestic violence against women in the negative light, such analyses must impact on the people and possibly change the rate at which domestic violence thrives in the society.

METHODOLOGY

Considering the nature of the study, Content Analysis was used as the study method to help the researcher in achieving the research objectives. The population of the study comprises of all publications of *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *Guardian* newspapers from March 23rd to June, 2020. These months covered a total of 100 days in the lockdown period. It means that 100 publications of the three newspapers under investigations were covered within the period since all the three papers are daily publications. This amounts to 300 editions in all. The three newspapers were selected based on accessibility and wide circulation in the country. The manifest contents of the selected papers for the period of study were explored from every single publication of the hard copies. In contrast, the researcher reviews the online versions of the publications using such keywords as *couple violence*, *domestic violence*, *family violence*, *husband violence* and *wife violence*.

Given that 300 editions of the three newspapers were manageable, a census study of all the editions of the newspapers was conducted. The researcher's adoption of census study was informed based by Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo, and Okphanachi, (2012) assertion that census is attractive for small and manageable populations. On this note, all the editions of the newspapers under investigation published within the period of the lockdown were examined and their contents concerning domestic violence were all analyzed.

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is the placement of stories, frequency of the publications, source of interventions and follow-ups. The content categories are front page, inside page, inside page center spreads and back page stories for placement. The domestic violence interventions from the government, NGOs, Human rights and ministry of women affairs are categorized for interventions sources. The study also looked at the frequency of publications using the numbers of stories published within the months under investigation. Stories that are published in the front page are categorized as front page like-wise those published at the back page, inside page and inside page center spreads. Contents that showcase the actions of the government in curbing and rescuing domestic violence victims are classified as government intervention. In contrast, contents that reveal the activities of NGOs, Human rights and ministry of women affairs on their efforts to curtail, help out or rescue victims of domestic violence are classified in like manners. Further, the researcher categorizes contents on the activities into follow-up and not follow-ups. Stories that are reported and followed in subsequent reports are classified as followed-up stories and those that are flashed once without any further review were seen as not followed-up.

The instrument of data collection

The Coding Sheet, however, was used as an instrument to generate data on the manifest contents of the reports in the selected newspapers on domestic violence against women during the lockdown. The coding guide also was used to provide a guide on the units of analysis and contents categories that the researcher is interested in.



Inter-coder reliability: To ensure that the instrument is reliable, the researcher adopted the Holsti’s inter-coder reliability formula. The inter-coder reliability is accepted as the correlation coefficient is up to .72.

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Holsti’s inter-coder reliability formula. The Holsti’s inter-coder reliability test was calculated thus:

$$\text{Reliability} \quad R = \frac{2(M)}{N1+N2}$$

Therefore Inter-coder reliability

$$R = \frac{2(12)}{18+15} = \frac{24}{33} = 0.72$$

Method of data presentation

Data from the investigation were presented in tables and simple percentages given the fact that the study is concerned with the examination of the manifest contents of newspapers on domestic violence against women during this global lockdown.

Table 1: *Placement of stories on domestic violence against within the lockdown period*

Variables	Daily sun	Vanguard	Guardian	Frequency	Percentage
Front page stories	4	7	3	14	12.1
Inside page stories	21	20	25	66	57.3
Inside page center spread	9	10	7	19	22.6
Back page stories	2	4	3	9	7.8
Total	36	41	38	115	100

Source: researcher’s content analysis 2020

This table shows the kind of attention given to domestic violence by the newspapers under investigation. The number of stories published in the back page, front page and inside page center spread collectively is 42.7% of the total stories while the ones published inside the page stories account for 57.3%. This means that the media in Nigeria pay less attention to domestic violence against women during the lockdown period.

Table 2: *Media portrayal of sources of interventions for victims of domestic violence*

Variables	Daily sun	Vanguard	Guardian	Frequency	%
Government intervention	7	8	5	20	17.3
NGO intervention	12	14	11	37	32.1
Human rights	10	14	11	35	30.4
Ministry of women affairs	7	5	11	23	20
Total	36	41	38	115	100

Source: Researcher’s contents analysis, 2020

From the data available, the most dominant source of intervention on domestic violence against women is the non-Governmental Organizations’ efforts in the control of domestic violence against women. This was followed by the human rights efforts in this direction. This implies that the government gets less information on domestic violence to act on perhaps because of the prevailing cultures in various lands and climes that prohibit women from exposing some of the dastardly acts against them by their husbands.



Table 3: *Frequency of coverage of domestic violence cases within the lockdown through the frequency of their publications*

Variables	Daily sun	Vanguard	Guardian	Frequency	Percentage
March	4	3	4	11	20.8
April	11	16	13	40	48.6
May	13	8	9	30	22.6
June	8	14	12	34	7.8
Total	36	41	38	115	100

Source: Researcher’s contents analysis, 2020

From the data in this table, it can be seen that the newspapers under investigation did not report domestic violence frequently within the period of lockdown. There are total of 100 days and more within the period, yet the total number of stories published in the newspaper was 115. This implies that as domestic violence against women increases, the media reports on the incidences decreases. A normal news report that can serve as a better reflection of domestic violence against women within the period would have had an increasing number of items as the lockdown lasts.

Table 4: *Whether Newspapers follow-up stories on domestic violence during the lockdown*

Variables	Daily sun	Vanguard	Guardian	Frequency	Percentage
Stories followed up	5(13.9)	11(26.8)	7(18.4)	23	20
Stories not followed up	31(86.1)	30(73.8)	31(81.6)	92	80
Total	36	41	38	115	100

Source: Researcher’s content analysis, 2020

This table revealed the negligence of the media to domestic violence in Nigeria. Of the three 115 publications observed and analyzed in this study, only 20% were followed up by the media. The remaining 80% were fresh news stories some of which were published in passing by the press. The reason for this result may form the bases of another research.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

With 12.1% and 7.8% publications on the focal points of the newspapers, this study found that the news papers in Nigeria do not give prominent to coverage of domestic violence in Nigeria. The focal points of the newspapers according Nwabueze, (2011) provides the news stories the ample opportunities to be read by almost all the people that came across the newspapers. This finding goes contrary to the agenda setting theory of mass communication which in the words of Miller (2002), posits that the media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues by positioning them in focal points. In keeping with the agenda-setting functions of the mass media, publishing domestic violence against women in the front and back pages of the newspapers using critical interpretative frames will impact on the audience perception of the crime. Until the domestic violence against women is reported in the media in a language that will jettison the act and all its supporting cultures or agencies, the society will forever remain with the crime. Drawing from the views held in Nwabueze and Oduah (2013), all forms of domestic violence can best be fought if ridiculed in the media for the public to see. This study has shown that the media fail short of the responsibility placed on them by the social responsibility theory. It is their responsibility to ascribe meaning to events through interpretations of issues surrounding such activities for the public to see (Okugo, Onwukwe, Ihechu & Okereke, 2015)



The second research question which sought to identify major source of intervention in cases of domestic violence in Nigeria, the investigation revealed that the NGOs are the major intervening bodies with 32.1% of the total contents observed and analyzed. This finding shows the level of concern given to domestic violence by NGOs. The finding also reveals low level of government attention to domestic violence and related offences in the country as the main reason for persistence of such offences and acts among the people. It however, shows the position of domestic violence on the scale of fundamental human rights.

The data from the third research question seeking to verify whether the media did well by issuing frequent report of domestic violence against women, the researcher found that the media failed to report more on domestic violence within the period under study despite the increase of such acts and crimes within the period. This finding corroborates earlier finding by earlier media scholars that domestic violence is usually under-reported (Daniel, Aniekeme and Nnamdie, 2019). It is a fall out of the media on the social responsibility theory which sees the press as the voice of the voiceless in the society (Ekeli, 2008, p. 338; Agudoso, Ikegbunam and Obiakor, 2018). By virtue of the level of vulnerability, the women and girl children are susceptible to different kinds of dangers especially during war, natural hazards like hurricane, earthquake, and global pandemic like this.

The fourth research question investigated if the newspapers followed their reports up as events unfolds. The data from table four demonstrated that the while 20% of the news stories published on domestic violence were followed up, 80% were not followed up. This finding is in tandem with the views of proponents of vulture-reporting-hypothesis. It was the views of the proponents that the media are usually interested in breaking the news with little or no attention to details after the jinx are broken. Lack of follow-up against domestic violence against women contributes to the reason why victims hardly get justice. This finding agrees with that of Uguwanyi, (2018) who concluded that once follow-up were not staged, there will be absolute lack of thematic analysis of events which creates windows for the perpetrators of crimes to go scot free. Lack of follow-up on domestic violence against women translates to violations of expectations of the public. This study lends credence to Raji (2019) who argues that once the media expose the unhealthy behaviours of people in their publications, their audience may, with time learn to take the right attitudinal change to suit the required behavior expected of them. With these kinds of coverage, attitudinal change for the better is not forthcoming anytime soon.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the data, it is concluded that the media failed to give adequate and prominent coverage to domestic violence in Nigeria within the lockdown period. The study concludes that as domestic violence is on the increase, media reports on it in Nigeria are decreasing. The necessary media services to the people is generally lacking in their reports on domestic violence. This is because of the media negligence of the need to follow-up their stories. For lack of follow-ups, the thematic details of domestic violence against women were in short supply. This simply means that change of attitude can hardly be obtained so as to reduce the level of domestic violence in the country. Generally, the media violated the expectation of the public who believed them to be the voice of the voiceless.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the data discussed above, the researcher recommended that:

- The mass media should as a respect to their social responsibility functions expose the people to the harmful effects of domestic violence against women in the country. This



can best be done through publishing issues and activities of victims and perpetrators in the focal points of their newspapers.

- The government should as a matter of responsibility pay attention to domestic violence response especially within this lockdown period.
- The media should encourage adequate coverage of domestic violence against women to suit their social responsibility to the vulnerable group. It is through adequate publication that the media can get it right in setting-agenda on the ills of domestic violence against women in Nigeria.
- The mass media should as a matter of necessity follow-up their stories on domestic violence against women. Following up will help them to provide thematic analysis that can help the people to adopt the change of attitude to reduce violence against women.

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THREATS TO JOURNALISM PROFESSION: NEGOTIATIONS FOR EFFICIENCY AND SAFE PRACTICE

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Abstract

Despite a plethora of threats such as funding, violence, ownership etc., challenging Journalism profession; amateurs who engage in the practice, seem to continually pose more threats. Amateurs arguably exacerbate the spread of fake and misleading information, disinformation, misinterpretation of issues, improper delivery of information etc., despite the existence of some environmental threats which tend to be hampering efficiency. The aim of this work is to crusade for efficiency and safe practice of journalism in the face of these threats. This paper further seeks to redefine a journalist; the basic qualities required of practicing journalists; the distinctions between professional journalists and amateurs; other environmental constraints confronting practicing journalists; ways the safety of journalists could be observed, and what roles the relevant bodies and individual journalists are to play in the process. This is in view of the possible impact of media contents on the general public. This paper therefore advocates for efficiency and safe practice of journalism profession devoid of litigations, conflicts, hate messages, ethical or language issues as well as the provision of good work environment for practicing Journalists to boost their productivity. We conclude that existence of amateurs and other environmental constraints should not downplay or discredit the prestige of the profession as a highly disciplined one

Keywords: Journalists, Safe practice, Amateurs, Safety, Threats

INTRODUCTION

Journalism is a disciplined and heavily contested field, with many perspectives. Scholars have documented the recent developments in the field of journalism and its widening scope with prominent strands of thinking, not only around objectivity, professionalism and truth-seeking, but encompassing also gatekeeping, agenda-setting, source relations along with ethics, convergence, and reception (Barbie, 2008; Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey & Richardson, 2005). Incidentally, some environmental factors, the Internet era and the influx of social media seem to threaten the practice of journalism. Amateurs, who are armed with knowledge of mobile and digital facilities, often present news and articles online for public consumption notwithstanding a number of other environmental threats which hinder professional journalists from efficiency. New technologies seem to be increasing the threats as anybody with internet access and digital gadgets, can create and share all sorts of messages to others whereas the environmental conditions of the professionals need improvement.

With affordances of mobile technologies and the Internet, argument about possible displacement of old media became widely contested among scholars. Since the first empirical attempts to explore the potential impact of new media on old press in the 1940s, there have



been two main approaches to the issue: one is centred on the medium and its attributes in support of a displacement and replacement (absolute displacement) argument (Nguyen & Western, 2006). The other is focused on users' needs and often results in proposing a complementary effect of the new on the old (Lee & Leung 2004). The first approach has a link with the unprecedented emergence of the Internet as powerful news and information medium, which led to speculations about the death of old media in the face of new communication technologies with keyword phrases 'death of print', 'death of television' 'death of radio', etc. These speculations have received intense attention in both academic and industrial research (Bromley & Bowles 1995; O'Toole 2000; Kayany&Yelsma 2000; Lee & Leung 2004; Dutta-Bergman, 2004).

Majority of these previous studies are based on the medium-centred perspective, which assumes that different media serve the same functions for users so that new media will eventually drive old media out of existence (McCombs 1972). Nguyen and Western (2006) suggest that online news and information usage at different usage levels is positively related with the use of traditional news and information sources, especially those that are more information-intensive. They suggest therefore, an apparent complementary effect of networked sources on traditional ones: despite the apparent 'power' of the Internet in communication and information capacity and quality, receivers of online news and information at different levels still use traditional sources substantially.

In Nigeria, Dunu, Ugbo and Ezepue (2015) studied the media consumption pattern among elites in South-East Nigeria under the framework of the Uses and Gratifications approach, to determine if any similarities as observed in developed countries of the world will prevail in Nigeria. They found that respondents still widely use the traditional media for gratifying their various needs as opposed to the findings in other parts of the globe that suggest a seeming displacement and replacement effect of the traditional media by the new media. Besides these scores of debates and in spite of the various aspects of media convergence occasioned by the Internet and mobile technologies, the central focus of this paper is to reestablish who a journalist is; what stands a practising journalist out among a host of others who package stories for public consumption. As Fernández (2010) submits, Journalism is based on the search of the truth to spread it and transmit it to others and that, whatever the means are chosen, it will remain in force.

WHO IS A JOURNALIST?

This burning question had raised concerns in recent times. It is often noticed that some persons who have access to online digital facilities and believe they can write, engage in Journalism Profession. Some may not bother to possess the fundamental training and skills that should improve the quality of their job. It is crucial to note that there are necessary foundational requirements and trainings that should improve the output of a professional journalist and also peculiar guidelines such a journalist should observe for more seamless practice. These skills among others include; knowledge of the various media dynamism; uniqueness of the individual media organizations and their house styles; how to safely practice journalism with good morals; without infringement on the fundamental rights of others, without threat to the public and to the culture etc. However, Goldstein (1984 p.175) attempts to draw consensus from the sociologists with a list of professional attributes. He identifies four essential qualities:

- (1) A body of esoteric knowledge mastery of which is the indispensable qualification for practice of the profession;



- (2) Monopoly – that is, recognition of the exclusive competence of the Job in the domain to which its body of knowledge denotes;
- (3) Autonomy, or control including who can legitimately do that work and how the work is done; and
- (4) A service ideal – that is a commitment or ethical imperative to place the welfare of the public or the individual client above the self-interest of the practitioner.

Professional Journalists should therefore demonstrate an appreciable competence level, always reporting on facts, not advertising or ideological propaganda.

Meanwhile, Scholars had attempted defining who a journalist is. Some definitions have been contested owing to the complexity and widespread Internet use as well as the art of self-publishing among both professional journalists and amateurs. For instance, Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, (1976) had described journalists as those whose responsibilities lie in news and information gathering, information processing, and editing, or those who supervise and manage media operations. Journalists are also news-media personnel with editorial responsibility who prepare or transmit information to audience of media organisations (Hanitzsch, & Hoxha, 2016). Nisbert (2012) had added that journalists are public intellectuals who view the world deductively, immerse themselves in research and offer necessary analysis.

Similarly, Donsbach, (2010) suggests that journalists are professional and detached traders of information (mediators), who pursue subjective goals (communicator) for the sake of public good. He further suggests a redefinition of journalists based on their fields of competence; subject, process, skills and values. Above all the critical role being played by these professionals should not be downplayed. Across all these definitions, we hereby present a definition of a journalist as a good writer, a reporter and editor or a correspondence for a media organization who is trained, very knowledgeable and possess the basic requirements for the job. He or She should be able to produce in-depth, thorough, elaborate, comprehensive, discriminate and very lucid reports of any specific area or field of coverage. In other words, journalism is a profession which requires some level of expertise in writing and speech as well as decency, dignity and high sense of responsibility.

THE QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF A JOURNALIST

The Qualifications

We now suggest some essential attributes of a journalist as follows:

- A journalist should possess a university degree or diploma in Mass Communication, Journalism or related disciplines
- He or she should be accredited or registered with the professional association as the case may be, in the country of practice.
- He or she must be a good writer, analyst, interviewer, reviewer, speaker, and highly disciplined.
- He or she must be a versatile reader.

THE QUALITIES OF A JOURNALIST

Writing

One of the necessary skills required of a practising journalist is effective writing. He or she should know how to play with words and should be able to produce an error-free, grammatically correct and concise article with factual information.



Research and Knowledge

Journalists should always engage in research, conduct interviews and always get regularly updated on contemporary issues. The journalist should be versatile in knowledge which is a product of research. Being versatile will enable the journalist report problems objectively and with needed facts and information.

Investigation

A Professional Journalist should have the ability to investigate facts and obtain needed evidence with which to present issues. He or she should remain vigilant and possess strong analytical skills to assess any troubling or controversial situation. The Journalist should be able to examine a situation critically and present same with sound judgment.

Communication

A Professional Journalist should be able to maintain good contact with people, especially the sources of information and then use both the verbal and non-verbal communication cues effectively. This skill will enable the Journalist to excel in the profession by breaking the barrier of communication

Self-confidence, Persistence and Discipline

A journalist should demonstrate self-confidence, always take up responsibilities and should meet up with the deadline. He should be eager to explore new areas and accept constructive criticisms. Indeed, journalism is a highly disciplined profession which requires persistence to satisfy the needs of the audience. This includes all such activities including the hunt for stories, gathering same, editing and processing of the stories in a systematic manner, devoid of legal and ethical problems.

DISTINGUISHING A PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST FROM AMATEURS

The Professional Journalist should be distinct from amateurs in two dominant ways:

- I The Writing of a Professional Journalist**
- ii The Ethical behaviour of a Professional Journalist**

The Writing of a Professional Journalist

A Professional journalist should demonstrate a mastery of the various journalistic writings and how to gather, process and present accurate reports objectively to the audience. The Professional Journalist should also use the appropriate language, tenses and expressions devoid of grammatical, syntactical and factual errors, omissions or biases. The journalist should also be an expert in any chosen field of Practice. For instance, a Print Journalist should master the intricacies of Print Journalism while a Broadcast Journalist should also have adequate mastery of Broadcast Journalism. Accordingly, Okunna, Omenugha and Ebeze (2002) have explained that broadcast messages are written usually in a conversational style, the informal manner in which a person ordinarily speaks, and, that simple words are used even to the point of oversimplification. They also maintain that print media is the most exciting in terms of word usage where a writer's register of words, utilisation of sentences, clauses and phrase, the deployment of rhythm, and the power of persuasion are most prominent and exciting. According to them, while writing for broadcasting should be done in a layperson's language, which means using familiar words, print media enjoy the latitude and elasticity of verbal usage that tends to bother on poetic exuberance.

Despite the uniqueness and differences between broadcast journalism and print journalism, a practising Journalist should understand the peculiarities of all the various journalistic writings. For instance, writers of news stories do not inject their subjective views. The stories are written in the present tense or in the present continuous tense to emphasise newness, otherwise it is no longer 'news'. Editorials and feature articles are usually embellished with



the writer's opinions, arguments and could contain analysis of past events but news stories are usually straightforward reports.

Besides, news stories contain some vital ingredients. They include a clear headline, the lead; often containing the basic 5Ws and H (Who, What, Where, When, Why and How), byline etc. News stories should also include the criteria for newsworthiness (timeliness, proximity, prominence, unusualness or oddity, human interest) etc. On the other hand, 'feature' refers to that form of journalistic writing which is distinct from a news story by going beyond the mere statement of the facts of an event to provide the background, course of development and the implications of the occurrence of an issue to similar activities and process in society; A feature is also written in an exciting and creative manner with information drawn from people involved, eye-witnesses, experts on the subject, and those affected by the issue (Okoro&Agbo, 2003). It is instructive also to note that all the journalistic writings have their unique peculiarities and should be presented as such to the readers to avoid misconception and biases. Also, Mallette (1996) as cited in Okoro and Agbo (2003), recommended some specific checkpoints for good writing as follows:

- Use of active voice
- Relying heavily on definite nouns and verbs
- Using simple and short words
- Avoiding fad words, buzz words, cliché, and clutter especially in the Lead

Besides, Okunna, Omenugha and Ebeze (2002, p.253) had maintained that to write and communicate effectively; the writer has to:

- Understand the theory and practice of effective communication fully.
- Bear the target audience continually in mind and place himself or her in their shoes.
- Avoid semantic noise which refers to any distortion of the encoded message arising from the meaning of the words or symbols used in putting the news together that could result from poor word choice, wrong use of words, and flamboyant and ambiguous expressions.
- Be familiar with and respect common elements of style such as accuracy, precision, clarity, originality, vividness, simplicity, coherence, brevity, and good figures of speech and idioms.
- Have a good command of the appropriate vocabulary for the topic being addressed.
- Possess a good knowledge of sentence forms, patterns and common errors in sentence construction and paragraphing.

Unfortunately, most amateurs who engage in Journalism profession seem not to observe this uniqueness. It therefore, becomes imperative to understand that reports should be presented in an orderly manner and achieve the expected aim for its creation. A good story is like a good highway; it provides a smooth ride to the destination (Mallette, 1996 as cited in Okoro&Agbo, 2003).

The ethical behaviour of a professional journalist

Ethics, which is related to journalism profession, refers to a set of principles of conduct governing an individual or group (Bowles & Borden, 2004). In this instance, the individual or



group are professional journalists who serve the public. Neher and Sandin (2007) further provided several elements of ethics as follows:

- ❖ First, ethics is targeted at providing people with a system so that the decisions or judgment/s one make can be justified to others and oneself clearly and objectively;
- ❖ Second, ethics is concerned with decisions about actions that can be determined to be right or wrong according to the principles of this method;
- ❖ Third, the decisions are about activities in which the actors appear to have a choice; they could have done otherwise;
- ❖ And fourth, the decisions are seen as intentional: the persons seemed to know what they were doing and intended to do what they did

Therefore, Ethics is a branch of philosophy which is universal, concerns the conduct or intended decisions of people or approaches to an issue. With the context of Journalism, ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy that assists journalists decide what is right to do by giving them standards by which they can judge actions to be right or wrong, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible (Merril&Lowensten, 1979). Okunna (1995) has explained that the purpose of ethics in mass communication is to assist journalists in being more moral professionals and in stipulating rules, guidelines, norms and principles that will guide the journalist in making moral decisions, and that these rules and guidance as well as the standards, values and policies usually appear in the form of codes, which are prepared and adopted by the journalists themselves. Even the New NPO (Nigerian Press Organisation) code of ethics, which was formally ratified and adopted in 1998, is a more comprehensive document than the old one and comprises 14 subject heads which answers a wide variety of ethical questions on journalism practice. Among these subjects are; truth; accuracy and fairness; privacy; privilege/non-disclosure; decency; plagiarism; and so on. Besides, Okunna (1995) also insists that codes of ethics at all levels of adoption contain certain principles that are cherished as ethical ideals in the field of journalism in practically all regions of the world. In addition to this, practising journalists should demonstrate adequate knowledge of the applicable laws in the field of journalism. Oyakhilomen (2009) succinctly provides some definitions of law as follows:

A set of rules governing human activities;

A rule of action recommended or given by some superior which some inferior are bound to obey;

A general body of rules of conduct, which expresses the will of the ruling class as are established by legislation and such customs and rules of community life as are sanctioned by the government. It also entails the application whereby the body of regulations is secured by the coercive force of the state for the protection, consolation and development of the social relations and the public order, beneficial and desirable for the ruling class.

These Laws include; the privacy law, the copyright law, the defamation law, the obscene and indecent prohibition laws etc. It is indisputable that knowledge of media law and ethics will



guide the Journalist to safely perform his or duties within the acceptable legal and ethical standards. It is on this basis that this text presupposes that practising journalists should remain conversant with both the legal and ethical expectations of them. It is obvious that some professional journalists engage in blogging which they perform in a professional way; this work contends that in spite of other environmental threats, journalism profession should be accorded the needed regard. Activities of amateurs should also not be perceived to have downgraded the integrity of the job as many professionals still measure up to appreciable levels.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING PRACTISING JOURNALISTS

Threats by Amateurs

There appears to be increased threats by amateurs who engage in journalism practice. These amateurs could lack journalism background and training but present information for public consumption. Sometimes, they are armed with web publishing tools, digital technologies and mobile devices. Part of the worries is that the mainstream media, where most trained and professional Journalists are attached, is not the only news and information source for public consumption. In fact, there are many alternative and rapidly evolving information sources especially blogs, portals and social media where amateurs publish and share information. Bowman and Willis (2003) had emphasized that the venerable Journalism profession finds itself where its hegemony as gatekeeper of news and information is threatened not only by new technologies and competitors but, also by the audience it serves. These make the amateurs potent in information creation and dissemination. With regard to these, Newman (2009) established that social media and user-generated content change the nature of breaking news and contributes to the compression of the "news cycle", thereby releasing pressure on editors over what and when to report. Therefore, with the increasing Internet and other information technologies, amateurs are enabled to share information to receivers who could become vulnerable to both disinformation, misinformation etc. Consequently, Vanderwagen (2014) had also confirmed a shift in ways journalists source and share information as a result of the challenges posed by the new media. The new media are basically where amateurs operate. This way, normative principles of fairness and accuracy required by professional journalists get endangered by excessive information from less credible sources pushed out by amateurs.

Violence

Torture, beating, death and expulsion from duty have remained peculiar challenges being confronted by practising journalists who are perceived to have dissenting opinions. Stories surrounding these incidents abound in recent times among practitioners. Amidst these conflicting situations, practising journalists are encouraged to fundamentally uphold ethics and discharge their duties much responsibly.

Funding and Ownership

The nature of ownership of any media organisation determines to a great extent whether the organisation is dynamic, vigorous, responsive, and responsible or an emasculated, timid, spineless, ineffectual or irresponsible press (Okoro&Agbo, 2003). As an effect of ownership, most media organisations conform to peculiar housestyles and editorial policies. Apart from the nature of ownership, inadequate funding of the industry constitutes a fundamental challenge to media professionals which affects their practice. In Nigeria, three main categories of media ownership exist, which include: Government Ownership, Private



Ownership and Mixed Ownership. In an instance of corrupt government, Journalists who work for the government could deliberately dish out unbelievable falsehoods without recourse to conscience and chant praises for government programmes that fail to address the problems of the people at the grassroots.

Institutional Bureaucracy

Media professionals, especially during elections, get encumbered by public demands for the dissemination of political information, especially campaigns which are sometimes full of propaganda and ridicule of opponents. The demand by both the government and non-governmental institutions on these media organisations to set agenda and disseminate information appears enormous. This can affect the credibility of the organisation. Apart from agenda setting, it is obvious that the media also confer status and legitimacy on political leaders and issues. Okunna and Omenugha (2012) had also explained that the media could enhance or uplift the status of a political candidate in the following ways.

- the media can give more massive headlines to the favoured candidate;
- the press can feature more lead stories on the candidate;
- the press can print more prominent quotations from the candidates' speech;
- photographs and other prominence-enhancing strategies can accompany stories on the candidate;
- the press can publish more remarks praising the candidate

WAYS TO SURMOUNT SOME OF THE THREATS IN JOURNALISM PROFESSION

Training Programmes

Practising Journalists should be regularly updated on dynamic changes in the industry and be very conversant with use of online digital facilities. This can be achieved through training programs in the form of conferences, seminars, workshops and other forms of on-the-job trainings on various aspects of the profession. In recent times, traditional or mainstream media have online versions of their dailies or broadcasts which require some technical knowledge for efficiency. Some media organisations also create social media 'pages' where users can follow and get updates on news and information. Given these changes, practising Journalists should always be trained on the dynamics of digital technologies to be able to maintain and embrace the online atmosphere.

Modern Digital Gadgets

Procurement for these Journalists, very functional and modern digital gadgets will inevitably boost their quality of service. Some digital cameras, microphones, consule, vision mixers etc. produce more quality output and are amenable to non-linear editing and enhanced content, unlike some old-fashioned devices. It is therefore critical for practising Journalists to possess the essential and updated facilities.

Safe Practice

Safety is vital for both practising journalists and their institutions. There should also be an appreciable level of expertise and work environment upon which the Journalists may operate. Any intending practitioner should measure up to an acceptable level and be examined by relevant bodies before being allowed to operate. To a reasonable extent, avoidance of defamatory or provocative language by professionals, which is part of the mastery of



journalism, is recommended. Also, provision or acquisition of essential facilities by the practising journalists is also imperative.

Besides, these journalists and their sources are sometimes victims of attacks. Criminal organizations, authorities, activists, and citizens often attack journalists and media outlets which results in severe consequences. In the worst case, journalists and sources get killed and essential news stories silenced.

Brennan (2018) then introduced the three-dimensional concept of new safety which suggests a blend of safety and news, the interrelated actors involved in sustaining security for journalism and the information processing, as well as actions that could enable security in infrastructures. The three sub-dimensions of the concept are; 1) Safety and infrastructures, 2) Safety in practice and 3) Safety and its consequences.

It can be understood that the first dimension emphasises how news media and their actors develop and use the necessary infrastructures (platforms, systems and tools etc), to improve safety issues applicable to the protection of self, story, journalists' role, as well as their sources.

The second dimension revolves around the knowledge of Journalists about safety and how they should engage in research to improve their knowledge level about safety in journalism practice.

The third dimension highlights the different kinds of effects that emanate as a result of threats to the safety of journalists, how such constitute societal problems and how they could be managed.

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF PRACTISING JOURNALISTS

Remuneration

There is a need for an upward review of the salaries being paid to Journalists in both the private and government-owned organisations, and also be motivated especially those who demonstrate commitment and loyalty towards their job. These Journalists should always be rewarded to encourage proficiency and service delivery among them

They should also not be relieved of their duties arbitrarily often without terminal benefits or entitlements. They should be protected and encouraged to always stand on the truth.

Special Allowances

This text recommends that practising journalists receive work-related allowances, especially for hazards. There should be special considerations for investigative journalists who risk their lives. Similarly, those who report on rural communities with poor access roads and other hindrances are also to receive these allowances. These provisions can give practising journalists a sense of belonging.

Role of Government Institutions

- The government institutions should protect Journalists at all times and should demonstrate absolute regard and support for them.



- The government institutions could set up an independent body that could protect the rights of practicing Journalists.

Role of Individual Journalists

- Journalists should desist from false or fake news reports.
- Journalists should demonstrate good moral.
- Journalists should demonstrate the responsibility of verifying, proofreading and editing the contents they wish to push out for public consumption.
- Journalists should always update themselves on the changing dynamics of the profession.
- Journalists should desist from hate messages, propaganda and provocative contents aimed to defame or ridicule the character of people.
- Journalists should present reports devoid of sensationalism, mockery, satire, or exaggeration.
- Journalists should avoid reports that can attract legal problems but should practice their profession in the best acceptable and honourable way.

Role of Relevant Bodies

- Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and other affiliated international, local and regional bodies should set boundaries for safe practice of Journalism and ensure that journalists comply with the directives.

CONCLUSION

This text concludes that aspiring journalism practitioners should endeavour to equip themselves with the fundamental requirements needed for safe and more efficient practice. Besides, existence of amateurs and other environmental challenges should not downplay or discredit the journalism profession and its integrity. There is the certainty that most practising journalists are proficient and religiously observe the fundamental requirements of the profession. This work further concludes that Journalism profession requires some appreciable level of expertise even in the face of the threats. Therefore, the foundational requirements, morals and integrity of the profession remain essential for efficiency, and journalists should practice safely and responsibly.

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IMPACT OF NIGERIA SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON THEIR FOLLOWERS IN ONLINE COMMUNITY

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Abstract

The main aim of this research was to investigate the Nigerian influencers and their influence on their followers in an online community – Twitter. The study adopted a mixed method comprising of online social media followers and a content analysis of influencers' posts across three themes of interest: marketing, political and advocacy. The specific objectives of the study were to: (i) determine whether influencers with high personality attributes exert more significant influence on their followers than those with low personality traits; (ii) determine whether influencers with high personality traits and social characteristics have more significant reliability and thus exert greater influence on their followers than those with lower personality traits, social attributes and lower credibility; (iii) examine if there is a significant relationship between influencers' communication ability and the impact they have on their followers; and (iv) examine the difference between the level of impact that political influencers have on their followers than marketing influencers. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 significance. The findings of the study were that: (i) the frequently used communication strategy employed by the influencers is informative (6, 42.9%) to influence their followers; (ii) personality attributes of all categories of influencers had a significant effect on the extent of influence their online activities exert on their followers; and there was no significant difference between the level of impact political influencers had on their followers compared to what marketing influencers had on theirs. The study therefore recommended that media literacy among youths should be enhanced to increase their capacity for following influencers reasonably.

Keywords: Influencers; Twitter; Marketing, Personality attribute; Social attribute

INTRODUCTION

Recently, with the events revolving around the internet and social media since its invention, it has become the wonder of the communication world. A lot of activities and phenomena take place through them. One of such wonders is online opinion leadership (influencers). They are the people who are very powerful because they exert a lot of influence on people. Nevertheless, they are individuals who have been found to exhibit specific characteristics or traits that mobilize or influence their followers. While the media play an essential role in developing and shaping public opinion, today, just anyone can assume this role on social media. The social media has lost its gatekeeping nature because it is easily manipulated by ordinary citizens who actively engage in the dual function of processing and disseminating information.

The concept of opinion leadership i.e. influencers or influentials was first introduced by Elihu Katz, and since then, it has been revisited in a cornucopia of studies across many academic disciplines (Katz, 1955). Weimann (1994) dismissed the term "opinion leader" because it suggests that the person has to have special leadership skills and abilities often associated with a formal leadership position. He preferred to address them as "influential".

In Nigeria, opinion leaders in online community, now known as influencers, have been able to penetrate the visible areas such as political, advocacy (Bring Back Our Girls campaign) and voting pattern or behaviour (#votefight, #electionnotwar). The phenomenon of social media influencers has become so prevalent in Nigeria online community that there are now



more than thousands of self-acclaimed and established online influencers with millions of followers on the Nigerian online community (Bello, 2018). This phenomenon of social media influencer has become very significant given the names of internet users in Nigeria today, which, according to Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) report, the numbers of internet users was released as marginally 98.3million (Nigeria Communications Commission [NCC], 2018). Opinion leaders in various ways have emerged as influential members of online communities and have been ascertained to be a source of advice for other consumers. Nowadays, social media have become tools of greater influence wherein consumers actively garner information and make choices based on them (Casaló, Cisneros, Flavián, &Guinalú, 2009; Thakur, Agriawan, &Summey, 2016).

One of the new media tool is the twitter which is the sole social media platform that is of interest in this study. A baseline review of the activities of the social media influencers in Nigeria, especially on Twitter, indicated that the influencers do not show any form of disparity as they all mix everything. This means that the influencers in Nigeria online community somewhat perform political, advocacy and even marketing roles interchangeably. However, there is a need to desegregate the Nigeria social media influencers to identify their categories and also to determine the extent of the influence each type exert on their followers Taking all this into account, in spite of all the studies conducted to understand the influencers, particularly in many Western countries' online communities, little or nothing is known about the emerging influence of the influencers in Nigeria online community.

Many previous studies on the use of social media among Nigerians had rather concentrated their efforts at describing social media, social media use by various political actors, explaining social media adaption rates or investigating the content created within the platforms (Akinlade, 2015; Chiemela, Ovute&Obochi, 2015; Nnanyelugo & Nwafor, 2013 cited in Ekwueme and Folarin 2017; Olasinde, 2014; Tokunbo& Felix, 2013; Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah&Iroeze, 2013). Few or no studies have systematically tried to develop a theoretical understanding of social media use that could explain the extent to which social media influencers in Nigeria online community change the political and social behaviour of their followers.

This research extends previous researches on opinion leadership on Twitter and it is specifically tailored to three objectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two-Step Flow Theory

Given that the opinion leadership emanated from the Two-Step Flow theory, the theory states that the mass media messages are now mediated by specific individuals who are known as the opinion leaders now commonly referred to as influencers. Two-Step Flow theory is an effect theory which was founded by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, (1944). Two-step flow theory posits that mass media do not directly influence individuals. Instead, mass media is filtered via a two-step process through influential community members with specialized interests who then control the individual (Anaeto, Onabajo&Osifeso, 2008). Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) cited in Kononova and Akbar (2015) established that political decision-making depends on interpersonal communication more than on mass media. Importantly, the concept of the Two-Step Flow theory suggests that the flow of information disseminated by mass media goes through two stages to reach recipients. First, from the mass media to certain people known as opinion leaders and, second, from these opinion leaders now known as influencers to the general populace. In relation to this study, it



is understood that these social media influencers have a mastery of the mass media communicated messages so they can demonstrate high intelligence on it in order to achieve any goal intended.

Therefore, this study intends to extend the traditional opinion leadership framework to political activism on social media. Traditionally, opinion leaders have both greater access to information and more platforms for disseminating information.

Source Credibility Theory

This theory was introduced by Hovland, Janis, and Kelly in 1953. Source Credibility theory proposes that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible. Using this theory to explain the forming of the influence of social media influentials on their community of followers as well, Self (2007, p. 435) described ‘Source Credibility’ as “the believability of a communicator as perceived by the recipient of the message”.

So, influencers are going to be analysed to understand if they are seen as credible and reliable for information and how these factors provide satisfaction to their followers. The theory in itself proposes that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source of a message presents itself as credible. Here, it would be determined if the personality traits and characteristics of these influencers would pose a great foundation or basis for the believability of the influencers by the opinion followers (those being influenced).

Formulation of hypothesis

To locate influencers, for example, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955, p.147) employed the questions such as “Have you recently been asked your advice about...?” and “Compared with other women belonging to your circle of friends, are you more or less likely to be asked your advice on...?” Subsequent research often criticized that these questions were not sufficient to measure the concept (e.g., Katz, 1957). Therefore, more complex scales evolved, and completely different methods emerged as well. From a social science perspective, Weimann and colleagues (2007) distinguished six traditional methods of measuring opinion leadership: (1) according to a person’s formal position or (2) their reputation, (3) by observing the communication patterns in a community, (4) through self-designation by responding to items in an opinion leadership scale, (5) sociometric by analyzing the social network structure of a group, and (6) by asking key informants. In researches that had been conducted, four basic techniques have been successfully tested: socio-metric methods, interviews with key informants, observations, and self-designating techniques (Jacoby, 1974; Rogers and Cartano, 1962; Weimann, 1994) cited in (Langner, Hennigs & Wiedmann, (2013). Of these methods, self-identification techniques are the most popular method as they can easily be administered in surveys cited in (Langner, Hennigs & Wiedmann, (2013).

In political communication, several efforts have been used in identifying and measuring the disposition of opinion leadership and have centred on the scale of ‘personality strength’ (Noelle-Neumann, 1985; Weimann, 1991; Weimann & Brosius, 1994; Shah & Scheufele, 2006). Personality strength is a trait of these individuals that cannot be disposed of because it is the heart or core of influencers’ behaviour; it is a reflection of their confidence in leadership roles, their talent for forming others’ opinions, and their self-perceived influence on social and political outcomes. Weimann (1991) successfully validated the scale by finding that those higher in ‘personality strength’ held central network positions and engaged in more communication activity. This validation leads to the first hypothesis:

H₁ Influencers with high personality attributes exert greater influence on their followers than those with low personality attributes.



Using the same Weimann's scale, Shah and Scheufele (2006) corroborated that opinion leadership is primarily explained by dispositional characteristics such as self-assuredness and innovativeness. When it comes to public affairs, those who are more knowledgeable are likely to be highly motivated to take part in the talks, and therefore, to expect a psychological reward for such actions. Political knowledge and commitment are to be predictors of opinion leadership in the issue sphere of politics; just as personal involvement and product familiarity are for the sphere of consumption (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Political knowledge and involvement alone may not be enough for assuming opinion leadership unless the individuals are equipped with competence in disseminating and influencing others using a medium of choice. Based on the review of the literature, the following hypotheses were generated:

H₂ Influencers with high personality traits and social attributes have greater credibility and thus exert greater influence on their followers than those with lower personality traits, social characteristics and lower credibility.

H₃ There is no significant relationship between influencers' communication ability and the level of impact they have on their followers.

Interestingly, opinion leader can assume the role of a follower at the same time (Jung & Kim, 2016). This is one of the dynamics that makes influencers so successful: that they can be consumers themselves. Individuals can easily be influenced by opinion givers/seekers that follow mass media closely, either by personally trying products/services or comparing social media messages to their own value systems, and conveying these messages or endorsements to others in their community. With this, the study intends to investigate the level of impact of the influencers' political or marketing messages on their followers. Based on the review of the literature, the following hypothesis was generated:

H₄ There is no significant difference between the level of impact that political influencers have on their followers and the level of impact marketing influencers (mavens) have on their followers

METHODOLOGY

The data to test these hypotheses was collected from twitter accounts of the influencers after a baseline study had been conducted on the activities of the influencers and the intensity of their tweets. This study adopted mixed methods consisting of survey method with an online questionnaire as the instrument of collecting data as well as content analysis was adopted in the study. A total of seven social media influencers whose contents focus on the themes of Politics, Advocacy and Marketing were purposefully involved in this study. Respondents included individuals who were the followers of these influencers and who intended to participate in the survey after the link to the survey had been shared by the influencers. The population of the study as it was identified on the 5th of March, 2019 showed that about 611,400 individuals were the followers of the seven identified influencers on Twitter. Therefore, for the sake of statistical convenience as it concerns the management of complex primary data and large population like this study, the researcher used the Israel model (1992) to statistically determine the sample size statistically. Based on the 95% confidence level and the Israel (1992), population size table for the population greater than 100,000 as in this case is 400 constituted online followers mainly youths within the ages 18-35 of the influencers on Twitter. So, for the content analysis, posts were selected from and analysed from the timeline of each of the seven selected influencers using the constructed week method of two weeks from each of the influencers across three months. The tweets from each of the influencers'



timeline were selected purposively based on the comments of the followers under them with scrutiny of such thread of tweets containing elements of communication strategies. This study adopted a non-probability sampling procedure of quota, simple random sampling as well as snowball sampling methods.

The researcher adopted these procedures because the questionnaire was administered online through the identified influencers. Seven social media influencers were systematically identified across the three categories of influencers owing to their popularity and the political undertone of their online activity. So, the number of followers selected from each of the identified influencers depended on the total number of followers each of them had. Again, the selection of the respondents from the followers of each identified influencers was determined by the numbers of influencers in each category. The following are the selected influencers; Dr. PamPam (@thepamilerin), The AjeButter of Lagos (@Theajebutter103), EbukaAkara (@ebuka_akara), Falilat (@Falilatt_), DADDY THE BAALE (@kingtanda), WHAYASAY (@iamwillsteel), #hashtagMFR (@hashtagMFR). So, each of the identified influencers was asked to post on their timeline or wall the links to the questionnaire so that their followers could specifically fill it.

This study, therefore, used a two-week constructed sampling of all tweets posted on the timeline of the Twitter influencers between March and May, 2019. The tweets selected cut across various activities of the influencers; marketing, political and advocacy. Tweets were randomly selected from the timeline of the influencers and were selected each day of the week twice (i.e. Two (2) Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays) within the time frame selected for the study which then resulted in a 14-day collection of tweets. The constructed week sampling technique was employed to draw tweets for the study to understand the communication strategies used by the influencers. A total of 14 tweets were systematically selected over three months. Two weeks were selected from the three months' study period. From the two weeks, two posts per day for the 14 days of the two weeks were systematically selected for communication ability analysis covering the three categories of influencers. Items on the personal characteristics of the influencers were included such as innovativeness, expertise, self-confidence, manoeuvring, dogmatism, assertiveness. Social attributes of the influencers, also such as a social tie, gregariousness, strategic social location were included. Social media posts of the influencers ranging from its frequency, types, politeness, purpose; the language was not left out.

For the content analysis, based on Dodd & Collins, (2017) study, they identified some message strategy used online in communicating: informative, facilitative, persuasive and cooperative approach. Tweets of the influencers that possess the informative strategy present unbiased facts using neutral language and allow audience members to draw their conclusions. A facilitative approach allows people to act in ways they are already predisposed to by making resources, such as money, available. A persuasive approach appeals to emotion and may involve language that expresses a particular point of view. These messages include a call to action. Also, the cooperative strategy showed tweets that suggested the "we" language, but it is designed to bring people together in enlightened self-interest. In the quantitative arm of this study which focused on the followers, a semi-structured self-administered online survey was deployed using Google Forms®. The survey was designed in three templates for each of the themes of the study and the links to these themes were shared with the respective social media influencers earlier identified. Data were collected for the content analysis of the tweets by using the constructed coding schedule that consisted of specific variables and their categories relating to communication strategies. The coding schedule is attached as



For the qualitative arm of the study, a content analysis, which involved the use of a coding schedule to analyse the tweets of the influencers across selected measures/concepts was employed. The themes being looked out for were listed and coded accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H1: Influencers with high personality attributes exert greater influence on their followers than those with low personality attributes.

Table 4.1: Comparison between Personality Attributes of Influencers and Extent of Influence on their followers

Personality Attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test	P
Political (137)					
High	83	37.29	7.22	4.01 (df = 135)	<0.001
Low	54	31.91	7.97		
Advocacy (N=115)					
High	58	55.40	6.25	3.32 (df = 95.09)	0.001
Low	57	50.32	9.75		
Marketing (N=140)					
High	86	6.58	2.57	3.07 (df = 138)	0.003
Low	54	5.28	2.23		

The result of the t-test presented in the table 4.1 showed that personality attributes of influencers have a significant effect on the extent of influence their online activities exert on their followers. Influencers with high personality attributes exert a larger extent of influence on followers compared to those with lower personality attributes as shown in the table 4.1. The mean extent of influence score was higher for influencers with higher personality traits compared to those with lower personality traits in all the research themes, as a result of which it was statistically significant in all groups (p value <0.005). For instance, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean level of influence on followers for political influencers with high personality attributes compared to those with lower personality attributes (t = 4.01, df = 135). A similar observation was made to advocacy (t= 3.32, df = 95.09).

Thus, higher strength of personality attribute significantly contributes higher level of influence on followers compared to a lower strength of personality attribute.

H₂ Influencers with high personality traits and social attributes have greater credibility and thus exert greater influence on their followers than those with lower personality traits, social attributes and lower credibility.

Table 4.2: Relationship between Influencers' Personality Traits and Social Attributes and Extent of Influence on their followers

Extent of Influence



	Little	Great	Total	X ²	P-value
Political (N=137)					
High	49 (74.2%)	17 (25.8%)	66	8.89	0.003
Low	66 (93.0%)	5 (7.0%)	71		
Advocacy (N=115)					
High	5 (27.8%)	13 (72.2%)	18	11.06	0.001
Low	67 (69.1%)	30 (30.9%)	97		
Strength of Personality traits & Social Attributes (N=140)					
High	84 (84.8%)	15 (15.2%)	99	4.63	0.031
Low	40 (97.6%)	1 (2.4%)	41		

In table 4.2 above, forty-nine (74.2%) of the influencers who had high personality and social attributes had little extent of influence on their followers compared to 17 (25.8%) who had a great level of influence on their followers ($X^2 = 8.89$, $p = 0.003$). This suggests that a higher personality traits and social attributes of the political influencers do not necessarily in turn result into greater level of influence. Though, the strength of the two parameters (personality traits and social attributes) separately may have a positive relationship on extent of influence as established by the results of the interactive effect of the personality traits and social attributes of the influencers. The result showed that the social attributes of the influencers does not predict the level of influence.

A similar observation was made among the marketing respondents where 84 (84.8%) of the influencers who had high strength of personality traits and social attributes ($X^2 = 4.63$, p value = 0.031). However, the results obtained from the advocacy respondents showed that a high strength of personality traits and social attributes results in higher extent of influence on respondent. This means there is a significant relationship between the combined factors and the level of influence of advocacy influencers on their followers ($X^2 = 11.06$, p value = 0.001).

So, in general, fewer respondents were classified to have great level of influence exerted on them (especially for political and marketing respondents) unlike in the advocacy theme. However, this does negate the fact that there was an observed relationship between influencers’ personality traits and social attributes and extent of influence on their followers (p value < 0.05 across all themes).

H3: There is no significant relationship between influencers’ communication ability and the level of impact they have on their followers

Table 4.3: Relationship between Influencers’ Communication Ability and the Level of Impact on their followers

	Parameters of Influence		Total	X ²	P-Value
	Likes & Retweets	Comments & Hashtags			
Informative & Facilitative	3 (33.3%)	6 (66.7%)	9	2.8	0.942



Persuasive & Cooperative	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5
Total	7	7	14

As shown in table 4.3, the content analysis result carried out on the influencer’s tweet was used to test this hypothesis. Communication ability was measured using the informativeness, facilitativeness, persuasiveness and cooperativeness. On the other hand, the level of impact on followers was measured using likes, retweets, comments and hashtags generated by such tweets. Only 3 (33.3%) of the informative and facilitative tweets resulted in the followers liking or retweeting while 6 (66.7%) resulted in the followers further commenting or putting up an hashtag for the tweet. Four (80.0%) of the persuasive tweet led to likes and retweets, while only one resulted in followers commenting or putting up an hashtag on Twitter. So, no statistically significant relationship was observed between communication ability and level of impact (p value >0.05) as seen in the Table 4.3.

H4 There is no significant difference between the level of impact that political influencers have on their followers and the level of impact marketing influencers (mavens) have on their followers

Table 4.4: Comparison between the Level of Impact of Political Influencers and Marketing Influencers (mavens) on their Followers

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
Level of Influence of Marketing Influencer	137	46.91	11.518	10.44	<0.001
Level of Influence of Political Influencer	140	34.42	8.136	Df(275)	

In table 4.4, the t-test result showed that there is a significant difference between the level of impact political influencers had on their followers compared to that which marketing influencers had on theirs (t-test value = 10.44, p = <0.001). The marketing influencers had a higher influence value (Mean = 46.91 ± 11.518) compared to the political influencers (Mean = 34.42 ± 8.136). This means that the marketing influencers who put up posts on fashion or other attractive things exert more influence on their followers than political influencers who post tweets on political matters.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine if the social media influencers have an impact on their followers in online community using solely Twitter for the purpose of this research. This analysis was informed on the current literature on impact of influencers on Instagram and YouTube on their followers as conducted by Nandagiri & Philip, (2018). However, for this study, Twitter was specifically chosen. With the help of mixed methods, it was concluded that the work of an influencer is positive and that they do have an impact on the followers.

Through the findings, on communication strategies of the influencers, it was discovered that the informativeness of the posts, facilitative nature it consists of and the persuasiveness strategies all form how the followers would receive the message being passed across to attract their followers. Cooperativeness was found to be lacking and was rated low in the posts of



the influencers. Thus, social media influencers can better impact their followers by posting informative posts, persuading them and facilitating them through their posts.

Also, it was discovered that the extent of influence a marketing influencer will have on his followers is as a result of the reviews of brand or products he posts and not through recommendations. The results showed social media influencers exert a relatively acceptable level of influence on the opinions and decisions of their followers. Across the research themes, liking an influencers' post on a helpful political issue was observed as a major opinion behaviour indicator which indicates the extent of influence such post have on the individual. The fact that an influencers post created awareness on major social issues by creating a movement with the use of hashtag on the issue was observed as the major extent of influence measure among the advocacy group.

In other words, the proportion of respondents who had high strength of personality and also great extent of influence on their followers was low compared to those who had high strength of personality but little extent of influence. A possible explanation is because there were more respondents who were considered to have little extent of influence exerted upon them across all the themes (e.g. there were 115 in the little extent of influence category compared to only 22 in the high level of influence category).

And finally, study found that both the social attributes and personality traits of political influencers contribute significantly to the level of influence they exert on their followers. Thus, it is concluded that online influencers have positive impact on their followers. Importantly, many respondents were reluctant to answer the questionnaires because of the subject matter and the particular platform (Twitter) that was used. Some of the respondents refused to click on the link as a result of unavailability of internet connection and not wanting to exhaust their monthly data subscription. In relation to this, using only one platform as the basis for this study cannot allow a valid and reliable generalization about other social media platforms that were not involved in this study.

The phenomenon of social media influencer is just fast rising in the society. Few researches have been carried out on its benefits and importance to the society at large. It is on this note that it is recommended that this phenomenon be given much consideration as a skill can be developed into becoming an influencer. This study offers recommendations that social media influencers can better impact their followers by putting up informative, persuasive and facilitative posts. This means that the social media influencers across all categories should be conscious of their message strategy or writing skills so they can exert a greater influence. Influencers should post impactful messages that could have greater impact for the continuity of exerting influence on their followers. Also the government should take note of the activities of the social media influencers especially the political and advocacy influencers because they pose a great skill in mobilizing their followers into doing certain things they do not even wish to do. Thus, awareness on a new policy about to be implemented can be released to the social media influencers. The personality traits and social attributes of the influencers that were supported by the findings should be enhanced by influencers in order to boost their capacity for wining more followers. Foremost, this study might be the first study regarding impact of social media influencers on their followers' marketing knowledge, political adaptability and advocacy knowledge, influencer types and influencers' personal traits across three specific themes.



The results can be served as a start point for future research for whoever aims to go deeper and more detailed in the same themes or has interest in the impact of an influencer marketing on other important social issues. Yet the previous studies have not pointed out the difference in the activities that lead to an impact on followers. Other studies should be carried out on other demography since the young adults are not the only ones exposed to the influencers. Such further studies should aim at confirming the extent to which social media influencers translate their online followership to offline political/social decisions/behaviours and influence.

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SOCIO-CULTURAL VARIABLES AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF GIRL CHILD MARRIAGES

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Abstract

Girl-child marriages have been an ongoing practice in many traditional and modern societies. It is a common practice which exists in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Presently, girl child marriages predominate in developing countries, most of which have not accepted or domesticated the Child Rights Acts which aims to legalize the protection of children from different kinds of abuses. The media are expected to play roles of advocacy by setting agenda on such issues as child marriages by providing adequate coverage through news reports, editorials, interviews, features and other kinds of contents. This paper is a systematic critical analysis which relied on secondary data to examine issues explored. The study is underpinned by the mutedgroup and spiral of silence theories. While the latter examined communication patterns and social representation of non-dominant cultural groups like women and other minorities, the spiral of silence theory posits that the mass media work simultaneously with majority public opinion to silence minority beliefs or cultural issues. Literature revealed that the media do not significantly report social problems of child abuse and violence. Reportage of other sections of societies occupies more prominent media space. However, as part of roles of the media, they are to sensitize and create awareness of issues related to rights and protection of children.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural, Media Coverage, Girl Child, Marriages

INTRODUCTION

The girl child in the history of mankind has always been at the receiving end of social injustices perpetrated. These are manifested in different forms, including forced labour, sexual violence, rape, slavery, child prostitution, inadequate or lack of education, and forced early marriage. Elaborating on this, Thomas-Odia (2018) observed that there are about “100 million Nigerians who are currently living below poverty level. They account for over 61 percent of our population represented by the countless numbers of women who are unemployed, have no access to healthcare, and the girl child who is denied basic education.” By implication therefore, most social ills are borne by women, who include girl children.



A look at issues of insecurity also reveal that the girl child is most vulnerable than other groups in the Country. For example, from April 14th to 16th 2014 about 270 young college girls were abducted by the terrorist group Boko Haram, in Chibok, and till now, a large number of them cannot be accounted for. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, around 80% of refugees are women and children. Mass rape has been extensively documented in recent civil conflicts and has been used systematically as an instrument of torture or ethnic domination. A common denominator is that it is girls and women who are victims of such violence. And in some cases, they are bound socially and culturally by traditions and beliefs to acquiesce or submit to what is demanded for by their parents, guardians or abductors, as may be the case. This was emphasized by Igube (2004) when she observes that, “women live in a world determined by culture and tradition which restricts them to the home. Women are thus disadvantaged, vulnerable with respect to taking advantage of economic opportunities.” She further pointed out that ‘early marriages and obnoxious widowhood rites keep girls out of school, contribute to female vulnerability and poverty.’ According to Nworgu & Shebbs (2016), “the girl child is regarded as a liability to the family in some places and at other times maltreated, denied access to education, denied proper health attention, subjected to ‘slavery’ in the guise of home training and above all forced into marriage against her will.”

A UNICEF Africa advocacy advertisement stated that 125 million girls are married before 18 in Africa. This statement reveals the extent to which the culture of girl child marriage has been accepted across the continent, and steeped in traditions, cultures and religions which define the different nations, ethnic groups and peoples of Africa. Demographically, girl child marriages occur mainly in poorer geographies of society, especially in rural communities where standards of living is low. This is because girls are seen as options which can be traded off to richer men to ease their families’ financial difficulties, and this is accepted by communities and societies they live in. As Okoye (2016) observes, “girls stand the risk of being given out as house helps, being given out in early marriage, being abused both physically and otherwise, and often at the risk of premature death”.

While socio-economic factors determine parents/guardians acceptance or submission to society’s allowance for girl child marriages, religious and traditional factors also play significant roles. Besides, members of middle-upper class of societies, engage in girl child marriages. For instance, Ahmed Sani Yerima, a former governor of Zamfara state who also served as a senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was alleged to have married a 13 year old Egyptian girl. Ironically, this took place, after the Child Rights Act was signed into law in the Country in 2003. According to him, “I do not work with such laws that run counter to my religion. For clarity, I do not have to obey the Child Rights Act so long as it contravenes my religious belief...”. Another story that trended recently on social media was that of a Sudanese child bride, Noura Hussein (16 years at the time of marriage) who killed her husband on May 3 2017, as a result of rape and violence against her. The legal age for marriage in Sudan is 10 years, and there are no statutory laws which protect women from rape, as it is not considered a crime. These instances reveal dominance of religious precepts and beliefs over statutes which a nation’s Constitution provides for. These are institutional influences through which long held attitudes and beliefs can be modified, and changed for new thinking and ideas.

The media are those channels through which newsworthy information are transmitted to a widely spread heterogeneous audience members who have the means to receive and interpret the contents. There is also the Internet which has further broadened the availability of



channels through which individuals and groups can reach each other, and on which virtual communities are built. Through the Internet, social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and others have been created and popularized. Popularity, availability and interactive abilities of social media have further made them veritable means through which campaigns are carried out, amplified and sent across millions of individuals who exist virtually on cyber sphere. Bearing in mind the functions, roles and availability of different media types, it is presumed that they will engage in public interest campaigns against practices like, girl child marriages.

The media are expected to play significant roles of advocacy by setting agenda on the issue through news reports, editorials, interviews and features meant to generate discourse that will impact through implementation of legislations, policies and regulations put in place to stop such practices. As Lasswell (1945) observes in Okiyi (2016), “societies require communication in order to learn what is going on around them, to enable different parts of the society to keep in touch with each other and coordinate their activities and to pass on their cultural heritage from one generation to another.” It is the function of the media to sensitize the public of the need to change the practice of child marriage which has deleterious consequences on society.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE OF KEY TERMS

Various terms are considered key throughout this paper. These include the following:

Cultural impediments

In every society there are norms, values, ideas, thinking and mores which more or less define what that society is all about. These values are also used as forms of identification by others for the generality of the other people. According to Ihechu, Okugo, Amah & Afulike (2017), “culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts”. It deals with the essence of existence within a particular milieu of the human being in a given society. Citing Schreck (2000), Ihechu, *et al* noted that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society cultural practices against women.

To Famade (2016), culture is defined as, “a way of life of a group of people, the behaviours, beliefs, values and symbols they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.” To change attitudes formed as a result of such cultures, education and new information, especially through the media, can bring about such transformation. As Ihechu, *et al* (2017) further observed, “culture of patriarchy has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian and African societies. Male dominance and cultural arrogation of ‘powers’, ‘rights,’ and ‘privileges’ in matters affecting both males and females, are the order of the day.” It is accepted as Nigerian culture and tradition or customs. Finally Nwaolikpe (2018) observes, “Child marriage is a product of cultures that devalues women and girls and discriminates against them.”

An impediment is a hindrance or an obstruction which stops one from doing what otherwise he or she would have done. It is also related to the lack of progress. By implication when societal issues are not given the attention expected, it draws back, reduces progress and retrogresses rather than move towards the achievement of a goal, a cause and other factors pertinent to development in society. Cultural impediments therefore are those values, practices and attitudes which ensure that pursuit of ideals which shall enhance development



in a society are hindered. For instance, whereby institutions of society such as the media are not used to foster growth as a consequence of cultures, the latter (cultures) become impediments.

Girl child marriage

Concept of the girl child marriage or early girl child marriage is topical, and a well-known travesty in different societies. It is a practice that has existed with man and as a result of traditional and cultural variables, is not given much attention or prominence, except in such situations when a notable figure like Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima is involved or some other spectacular consequence arising from such a union.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) considers all individuals who are below the age of 18 as children, and the generic title, ‘children’ is used for them. The girl child is defined as a young woman. Etymologically, it is a female human from birth, to adolescent to adulthood, when she becomes a full-grown woman. According to CDC, 9 – 11 years, is a period of middle childhood ages, a period when the child tries to wear more complex looks, make friendships and share emotional attachments. Nwaolikpe (2018) says that, “child marriage as a global issue involves the giving out to marriage a child who is not mentally, psychologically, emotionally or physically prepared for a marital life to an older man who most times has children same age as the girl bride.”

There are some sociological reasons which are drivers of early child marriage these include poverty, poor educational attainment, and strong social and religious factors. These factors determine what happens to the girl child, and her place in the rungs of society. UNICEF rates child marriages highest in sub-Saharan Africa across the Globe; around 4 in 10 girls marry before age 18. West and Central Africa have the highest percentage (42%) of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and after age 15, but before age 18. Child marriage in Nigeria is centred on religious and cultural norms. Citing Fayokun, Nwaolikpe (2018) observes that, “it is believed that early marriage for a girl child maximizes her childbearing potentials.”

Offshoots of girl child marriage are enormous and have debilitating effects on society at large. Okafor (2016) citing UNFA (2012) observes that early and forced marriage remains a key issue and important factor limiting young women’s engagement in both education and economic activities. According to Nworgu and Shebbs (2016), “the girl child is regarded as a liability to the family in some places and at other times maltreated, denied access to education, denied proper health attention, subjected to slavery in the name of home training and above all forced into marriage against her wish, mostly, at early age of life.”

To Ihechu, *et al* (2017), “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 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 too many female children in the past.” The manifest expression of discrimination against the girl child in society therefore includes considerations given to her as an inferior being who can be traded off like chattel, or married off against her will to provide financial gain or some form of friendship, alliance or support for her immediate family.

Mass media and gender issues

According to Asadu (2007) in Goodluck and Ojo (2014) the mass media refer to all avenues through which information can be passed from one person to numerous scattered and



heterogeneous audiences. They are also vehicles through which messages, information, ideas, knowledge and culture are transferred from one person to the other. Continuing, Nwachukwu and Okiyi (2014) observe that, “mass media forms and others have significant impact on the society as channels of message conveyance to the modern society at large in a variety of ways. The mass media play pivotal roles as they bring issues to the public sphere, which impacts society, affect public opinion and define how audience members see or respond to topical issues that happen around them, and invariably affect them.

They are channels which over time keeps changing and defining societies till the present. Through the media injustice and man’s inhumanity to man are exposed, and offenders punished. Such are public interest roles which the media play when they serve as watchdogs of society, and ensure orderliness in the society for the common good. The media are expected to significantly play roles which examine place and proper representation of women in society through contents of their presentation and messages passed across. As McQuail (2010) observed, “the question of gender touches almost every aspect of the media-culture relationship” (p. 121). A notable observation is in the selection and production of news which is male dominated, and which covers less female subjects or news.

Mass media channels have impacted society in several ways. According to Obasi (2003), “as agents of socialization they have induced and will induce a great deal of positive behavioural and attitudinal change among the people of Nigeria. Through information, they increase the people’s awareness; and by their educational role, they fight backward practices and beliefs and help the people to appreciate and adopt new ways.” Stressing this, Ibraheem (2014) observes that, “the mass media are responsible for the circulation of particular ideas and images, and insofar as these shape thoughts and actions, the mass media are thought to wield discursive or ideological powers” (p. 413). Citing Schlesinger (1978), he notes that what really influences the content is the performance of the journalist as an impartial umpire ... journalists define reality in terms of what they perceive legitimate or acceptable interests in the society.

As Uzochukwu, Morah and Okafor (2015) observe, “media coverage of the abuse and neglect of children perform an important and significant role in placing issues such as child abuse on the public and political agenda” (p. 284). Citing Lindsey (1994), they further observed that media has a central role in mediating information and forming public opinion. The media casts an eye on events that few of us directly experience and render remote happenings observable and meaningful (p. 285). Mass media channels and journalists therefore determine how discourses of national interests are shaped, and through them attitudes and behaviour can get changed through information provided.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Theories on which the work is underpinned are: *muted group* and *spiral of silence theories*. A major proponent of the muted group theory is Cheri Kramavae (1974). It is a feminist and cross-cultural theory which explains communication patterns and social representation of non-dominant cultural groups like women and other minorities. It recognizes that customs, norms and values tend to favour men more than women. As Asemah, Nwamuo and Nkam-Uwaoma (2017) observe, “every custom, norm, value, etc. in all societies, tend to be to the advantage of the men and to the disadvantage of the women and other subordinate groups” (p. 253). Mutedness occurs as a result of lack of power, and people with little power do not often voice their perceptions, and when they do, they are muffled and invisible. Most media organizations are dominated by men, and this affects the ways in which women’s issues are



reported, or framed in the first place. This further confirms Igube's (2004) assertion that, "the print media in Nigeria has not been women friendly. Women issues rarely if ever, get front line coverage in the national dailies. The Nigerian media tend to be hostile to women and their issues." (p. 179). According to proponents of the theory, manmade language aids in defining, depreciating and excluding women, thereby making them a 'muted' group. Asemah, *et al* (2017) asserts that, "men are the gatekeepers of communication and this is because men attend to and treat as significant only what men say." (p. 255) In relation to this, Igube (2004) observes that, "the Nigerian media characterizes women as sex objects, passive, frivolous people." The muted group theory is considered appropriate for this work as issues of girl child marriage are not given prominence as a result of the media being male dominated.

The *spiral of silence theory* was propounded by Noelle Neumann in 1984. It posits that the mass media work simultaneously with the majority public opinion to silence minority beliefs or cultural issues. Fears of isolation make those with minority views to examine the beliefs of others. Those who fear to be socially isolated are likely to conform to what they perceive to be the majority view.

According to Asemah, *et al*, (2017), "the theory says that ... the media create opinions and that ideas, occurrences and persons exist in public awareness partially, only if they are lent sufficient publicity by the mass media, and only in the shapes the media ascribe to them" (p. 89). By implication, as media are male dominated, the fear of holding opinions which negate the belief system or cultures which are popular with such media will push such persons and their views into spirals of silence, and from which they may not be heard. As such reports of girl child marriages may not be heard, given that such views go against those of majority of the people. People are unwilling to express their opinions if they fall within the minority purview. The more marginalized one is, the less likely he will speak out, and will spiral into a fully marginalized position.

The implication of the *spiral of silence theory* is pertinent here as it reflects on a group which is considered subordinate (females) and are pushed to silence as a result of the dominance of male positive media types which is seen in media organizations, structures and in news contents. Appropriateness of the *spiral of silence* of theory is on principles guiding relationship between social problems like girl child marriage to impact of culture and religion, and a male dominated media system in lack of prominence it requires.

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Human rights are as old as society itself as they derive their existence from the need of humans to live, develop and achieve their destinies in life. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights which constitutes the most comprehensive and central document on human rights was adopted on the 16th of December 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Children's rights are part of human rights and are embedded in the Human Rights Declaration. Nwodu & Ezeoke (2013) summed up ratifications and adoption of the rights of the child by the United Nations at its General Assembly of 20 November 1989, to include but not limited to: freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religious association, privacy, access to appropriate information, parental responsibility; protection from abuses and neglect of child without a family, adoption, education, social security, standard living, protection from child labour, sexual exploitation and drug abuse, protection from sales, trafficking and abduction, and protection from torture and deprivation of liberty.



Indeed, children's rights span a wide range and cover a lot of issues. A cursory look reveals that they are interrelated; however the right to protection from sexual exploitation is our focus. And by listing it, the UN gave it international recognition which calls for the protection of children from sexual abuse which early marriage encourages, as the girl child is forced to engage in sex without consent, an activity which is also illegal, since the practice is outlawed.

Attempts to safeguard rights of the child were described succinctly by Oyero (2009) when he observed that it began with the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, followed by the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the declaration of 1979 as the International Year of the Child by the United Nations. There is also the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was adopted and ratified on November 20, 1989. Relevant articles of the Convention include the following;

Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or unlawful sexual practices;
- c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Articles 34 – 36 above provide for the protection of rights of children against sexual abuse and misuse of children, abduction and sale of children which some cultures carry out when they forcefully marry girl children out, and the need to stop the exploitation of children. By implications Governments and individuals need to seek for promotion and protection of child rights. Article 13 of the Convention enshrined children's right to freedom of expression, while Article 17 called on the mass media to disseminate information and materials of social and cultural benefits to the child. The Organization of African Unity, OAU adopted a charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. This charter was enacted taking into consideration the situation of the African Child which is at critical social, economic, cultural and developmental circumstances.

Drawing nearer home, the Children's Rights Act (2003) was enacted as a legal documentation, and protection of children's rights and responsibilities in Nigeria. This law incorporates the rights of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the African Charter on Human Rights into the national law; which are to provide responsibilities for government agencies associated with the law, and to integrate children focused legislations into one comprehensive law. Again, it acts as legislation against human trafficking as it forbids children from being separated from their parents against their will except where it is



in the best interests of the child. Several states in Nigeria have adopted the Child Rights Act, and by their assent, such states believe that its' reenactment and passage will bring respite to the Nigerian child from parents, guardians and other erring relatives.

The issue of forced marriage, especially by abduction is treated under Section 272 of the Penal Code; abduction is akin to kidnapping whereby the victim is lured away by deception or trick. The offence is punishable by 10 years imprisonment under Section 273 Penal Code. And under Section 361 of the Criminal Code, any person who with intent to marry or carnally know or cause her to be married or be carnally known by any means, detain her against her will is guilty of felony, and is liable to 7 years imprisonment. Further, any person who unlawfully takes an unmarried girl under 16 years out of her parents' custody or against her guardians will is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable for 2 years imprisonment. This addresses the issue of forced marriages and abduction of women as sex slaves. Also, defilement of a girl under the age of 13 years attracts life imprisonment; while an attempt to have carnal knowledge of such a girl attracts 14 years imprisonment. A girl above 13, but under 16 or knowing a girl who is an idiot or an imbecile or attempts to have unlawful carnal knowledge of her, will be guilty of felony, and liable to imprisonment for 2 years.

These are some penalties created to serve as deterrence to sexual offences against women and girl children. Despite these legislations, different kinds of child abuse happen daily in Nigeria. Among these are girl child marriages which take place between children from tender ages of 8 to 14 to older men. These illegal marital contracts are forbidden by legislations enacted by national and states assemblies in the country. Some of the reasons adduced for its continuation are cultural inhibitions and religious dictates, while the media do not provide adequate coverage of such incidents.

Hindrances to reporting on girl child marriage in Nigeria

Underreporting of girl child issues by the media

This relates to issues of male dominance and influence of religion by the media that leads to underreporting of girl child marriages. The danger with this constraint is the multiplier effect it has not only on the media, journalists but also on likely target consumers of the news who could be interested in it. As Nwaolikpe (2018) observes in her study that there has not been enough focus on child marriage in Nigeria, and when covered, some of the news stories did not explain in details implications and consequences of child marriages to the Nigerian girl.

Despite statistics, the mass media have not really covered the issue of child marriage adequately despite its significance in the country and region. Further, Ihechu, *et al* (2017) in their study on media coverage and framing of cultural practices that target women, observe that there is, "insignificant coverage of cultural practices that denigrate women," while the framing pattern exhibits a non-condemnatory stance. They further pointed out that some major factors responsible for these include: low awareness and knowledge among journalists/reporters, culture of patriarchy, and lack of sponsorship.

Nwodu and Ezeoke (2013) confirmed the findings above on dominant women and children rights issues which include protection rights of women and children with disabilities, abuse and violence against women, and harmful practices such as child marriage, female genital cutting, and exploitation of women and children received 19.3% media attention. And in their three-month study of broadcast media (FRCN and AIT) coverage of issues of early child marriage received only 10% coverage within the period. They concluded that constraints to media coverage of such issues include low awareness and knowledge among journalists with



84%. Besides these, some studies revealed apathy by journalists on women and children issues. And when they do cover such, framing, story direction and the style of coverage de-emphasizes their importance, and affect consumers of such news.

Recent cases of gender-based violence, killing and rape of young girls and women have been reported nationally, including the sensational case of Uwaila Vera Omozuwa who was attacked and raped in a church, but died a few days after in Benin, the capital town of Edo state. Another college student Barakat Bello was raped and killed during a robbery attack in her home in Ibadan. These cases received wide coverage from popular national and private TV stations. However social media were used effectively by individuals and international NGOs like Amnesty International to complement, amplify and relay the news across virtual communities. Through these information sharing activities, gender-violence and sexual offences against women and children have remained topical in national consciousness. In an online CNN report, President Buhari reiterated his government's commitment to fighting gender-based violence. According to him, "I am particularly upset at recent incidents of rape, especially of very young girls. The police are pursuing these cases to bringing perpetrators of these heinous crimes to swift justice." It can be deduced that complementing conventional and online media coverage of gender-based violence and rape provide the impetus needed to give adequate reportage to such crimes.

Cultural influences

Societal and cultural factors such as media ownership structure, cultures, religion and male domination of the media account for the under-reporting of girl child marriage as a crime. These factors are interdependent and intertwined. Media are institutional organs which exist and are influenced by society, and in their own ways, influence and determine how society is perceived. As such, these factors, especially, religion and culture override how certain issues, may be reported or even perceived. Like Okoye (2016) observes, "even where the Constitution and national laws uphold gender equality, religion and cultural gender ideologies dominate in practice and have been used to express the notion that there can be no equality, as men and women are different from creation."

These two dominant values of religion and culture wield influences on other aspects of society, which explains why pertinent issues may not receive the attention they deserve. Consequently, the media are influenced to underreport, frame or position some news items in ways that conform with societal expectations. According to Nwodu and Ezeoke (2013), "as both social institutions and business concerns, the mass media constitute an indispensable arm of human society; in this context, what the media choose to emphasize or ignore, affect how people perceive or understand the issues" (p. 45). As such when the media ignore certain issues, there is the likelihood of the isolation of categories of people affected by the issue, and relevant members of the public who can influence and control such circumstances. To Okiyi, (2016), "without proper information, most people would be unaware, uninformed and would certainly be disinterested in the issue which is being propagated by the government or Agency" (p. 57).

Uzochukwu, *et al* (2015), citing the Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media (1996), and the Oslo Workshop (1996) observe that, "part of the Summit's resolutions is that media content aimed at children should be of high quality, made specifically for children, should not exploit them but support their mental, social, moral and spiritual developments" (p. 280). The implication is that for the media to carry out their roles on issues which impact children, they should be as professional and ethical as can be, without undue influence. Uzochukwu, *et al*



further provided guidelines which were suggested by journalists at the first International Consultative Conference on Journalism and Child Rights held at Recife, Brazil in 1998, and they state that:

All journalists and media professionals have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards, should promote within the industry the widest possible dissemination of information about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for the exercise of independent journalism. Media organizations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children's safety, privacy, security, their education, health and social welfare and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigations and public debate. Journalistic activity which touches on the lives and welfare of children, should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children. Journalists and media organizations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs

Using these guidelines therefore, media houses and journalists are expected to uphold the rights of children as determined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other charters that deal with similar rights. As Oyero (2009) pointed out, "the challenge to media professionals at all levels and in all media is to raise awareness in the media professions about the rights of children and how they can be protected and promoted by good professional practices or harmed through inappropriate policies or actions." The onus therefore lies with media houses and journalists to carry out such moral crusades with zeal, diligence, objectivity and fair-mindedness while covering children issues.

Different scholars (Nwaolikpe, 2018; Nwodu & Ezeoke, 2013; Okoye, 2010, Uzochukwu, *et al*, 2015 & Oyero, 2009) revealed that the media do not report social problems of child abuse and violence which go against dictates of various conventions except, where such are scandals or sensational news items on child abuse; they do not dominate the media. The media do not adequately cover stories of children, their lives, their rights and protection against abuse, labour, mortality, neglect, trafficking, and prostitution and so on nor do they reveal information about sources of information, concerning these. On the other hand, Molism (2016) observes that media coverage of girl child has gone high. According to her, media coverage has shifted from focusing on the issue, to a narrative that looks at solution. However, this perspective may have arisen taking into cognizance that she wrote from a western point of view where gender issues are given prominent attention which is at variance with what obtains in Nigeria and other developing countries.

Gendered dimension of the mass media

One of the major hindrances to effective reportage of girl child marriages is the existence of media landscape that is still very much male dominated in Nigeria. This is achieved through ownership, management structure and newsroom gender composition. One of the highlights of the 12 Platforms for Change from the 1995 Beijing Conference is found in number 6 which states that, 'men dominate the mass media and through it propagate the negative stereotypes of women'. According to Igube (2004), "the print media in Nigeria has not been women friendly. Women issues rarely, if ever get front line coverage in the national dailies, the Nigerian media tends to be hostile to women and their issues" (p. 179). This was further confirmed by Ihechu, *et al* (2017) when they posit that cultural practices against women in Nigeria is an offshoot of the patriarchy that existed in pre-colonial Nigeria, where women occupied inferior positions in socially constructed scheme of things. The culture of patriarchy has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian and African societies. Such is acceptable within Nigerian cultures, traditions and customs and as a result there is a tendency to de-prioritize issues such as cultural practices against women. From the above, we can deduce



that male dominance is a major factor which can hinder prominent coverage of girl child marriages.

Religious Influences

Religion is a significant cultural factor that impacts heavily on how issues of girl child marriage are reported by the media. Most religions support categorization of females in secondary positions, and as a consequence they are subjugated and suppressed in different aspects of life. Religion is a belief in a supernatural Being who created all things, and to whom much devotion and worship is bestowed. It is also a sub-set of our cultural beliefs, as it determines our values, norms, and ways of life, beliefs and morality. As a result, religious dictates which may go against societal values, are rather obeyed than laws of the land. According to Igube (2004), “under Islamic injunction, the woman is viewed as weak, incapable of decision making” (p. 27).

This maxim is also true of Christianity which holds that the woman should submit to the man and respect him. Sins committed in some cases have sterner penalties for women than for men, especially sexual ones, divorce. These have consequences for news reportage. Islam does not condemn marriage of girls, it may not be seen as a crime nor seem to hold much news value from a reporter who agrees with such religious views. According to Nwaolikpe (2018), child marriage in Nigeria is centred on religious and cultural norms. Citing Fayokun, she observes that it is believed that early marriage for a girl child maximizes her child bearing potentials. And as Ihechu, *et al* (2017) observe, “early marriage is practiced in different parts of Nigeria but more in the Northern parts of Nigeria (mostly among the Muslims). According to Bot and Kwaja (2015), Senator Yerima was accused of marrying an under aged Egyptian girl but the case was dropped because the Nigerian Constitution under Article 61, Second Schedule, the Nigerian Government cannot legislate on “marriages” under Islamic law (paraphrased). By implication, media coverage of issues related to girl child marriage may not give editorial consideration as a result of influence and perception of target consumers of the news media.

Commercial and Political Interests above moral crusades

Finally, there are altruistic reasons which may also have cultural offshoots, in the long run why news of early girl child marriages do not get the due attention they ought to, especially considering that they are criminal activities. However, media owners and editorial personnel also quantify news as to their worthiness, and influence on the potential receiver. According to Nwodu and Ezeoke (2013) the media is seen, “as both social institutions and business concerns, the mass media constitute an indispensable arm of human society. In this context, what the media choose to emphasize or ignore affect how people perceive or understand the issues.” By implication, what society gets to know, are seen through the perception of the media and these are defined by factors which include interests of owners, advertisers, political and economic forces. These determine what is reported, given prominence and what is not. In Nigeria, political issues receive more attention than other important issues such as education, environment, oil and gas and so on. The media are selective over what news items to allow, and due to this, they emphasize political and economic issues rather than others like girl child marriage or related issues. Further, sponsorship of media content and advertising also de-prioritize social issues like early girl child marriages. Prominent spaces in newspapers/magazines and prime time on radio/TV are used for more popular themes and for commercial purposes for the profitability of stations and newspaper houses. And through sponsorship, objectivity is affected.



CONCLUSION

This paper examined socio-cultural impediments which hinder reporting of girl child marriages in developing countries. World over; there is recognition of the problem of girl child marriage, which is enacted in conventions and charters, internationally and nationally. However this social malaise does not receive the prominence it deserves due to socio-cultural influences. It was discovered that principles guiding *muted group* and *spiral of silence* theories are applicable to this study as women and girl child fell into marginalized groups with no voice of their own, especially in male-dominated political structures, and in most newsrooms. Issues that relate to females may not receive the significant coverage they deserve because of different underlying variables that will impact such news items. Further, the dominant majority who are concerned with news creation and transmission are men who determine editorial decisions, and through such, they influence themes that set agenda for the audience. Invariably, dissenting voices or coverage will not receive as much attention as popular views expressed, and over time will join the dominant voices to express related opinions.

Issues of girl child marriage are not only common to Nigeria, but prevail in most developing countries without strong legal and political structures. In India, Pakistan, Sudan, South Africa, Ghana, Bangladesh, Niger, Latin American nations and a host of other countries, girl child marriages predominate as a result of religious and socio-cultural practices. According to a UNICEF 2019 report, about 12 million girls are married before they turn 18, and in the developing world, one in nine girls is married before they turn 15. Thus, more needs to be done to overcome the challenge of girl child marriage, rape and gender-based violence against women, which often takes other structural dimensions that needs to be studied.

To reduce or stop girl child marriages among other crimes committed against women, legislations enacted have to be made workable. That is, such Acts of parliament should be enabled to work against perpetrators of such violence. Concerned ministries including the ministry of Justice, Information, Education, Youth and Development, Women Affairs, Police Affairs and others should collaborate to produce a national roadmap or framework that will work to achieve goals of ensuring punishment of perpetrators, and carrying out campaigns against girl child marriages and other related actions. Roles of NGOs and the media cannot be overemphasized in such campaigns, with the intention to expose perpetrators and raise consciousness of Nigerians on ills of girl child marriage and effects on the society as a whole.

We can conclude with observations of the National Council of Women Society, NCWS (2014) in Ihechu, *et al* (2017) that:

The task of liberating the Nigerian woman and indeed the African woman 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 feel our plight and that mark a big step towards ending ill-treatments against women in the name of culture

It is encouraging that there are frameworks to fight girl child marriage, however cultural and attitudinal changes are needed through constant education and adequate media coverage to achieve desired results.

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RETHINKING A CULTURAL POLICY FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria is in pressing need of a cultural policy that could promote cultural values. The challenge of cultural erosion has affected the capacity of the country to ensure the security and welfare of the people for the sustainable development of the country. This article, therefore, examines the cultural dimensions of the country's national security problem. In addition to deploying qualitative research methodology, the researchers adopt a theoretical exploration of secondary sources for the article. The paper x-rays some related literature that unveil many security challenges that have to do with conflicts in the way of life of the people, such as, the Muslim extremists of Marwa, Maitatsine, El-zakzaki and their liberal counterparts in Kano, Maiduguri, Zaria, Gombe, Yola and so on, at various times. Countless instances of ethno-religious conflicts have occurred between Christians and Muslims in Bauchi, Kano, Kafanchan, Zango-Kataf, Kaduna, and Nasarawa among other parts of Nigeria. There have been sectarian conflicts in Nasarawa, Benue, some parts of South-East, South-West and South-South of Nigeria. More recently, there has emerged some difficult insecurity problems characterised by political violence, Boko Haram terrorists, banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, Fulani herdsmen attacks, militancy and so on. In addition to the above-mentioned plethora of insecurity, there are on daily occurrence instances of corruption and crimes such as suicide attacks, armed-robbery, oil theft, rape and so on. The article attempted a theoretical matrix of 'culture of security' and 'security of culture'. The paper therefore recommends a cultural policy could promote cultural education, values, sensitivity, and unity, as well as commitment through participatory communication by nationalist individuals and their involvement in the nation-building efforts, necessary to avert imminent crisis in the country.

Keywords: Culture, National Security, Culture of Security, & Security of Culture

INTRODUCTION

Culture and national security are so intrinsically linked that contemplating national security architecture without comprehensively factoring in culture can be justifiably accepted as the greatest bane of security design. Culture implicates national security because both are engaged in the transformation of human society for its well-being. Cultural policy as a tool of social engineering is very vital for the survival of the nation. National security is, in a critical sense, shaped by culture. A vital clarification of the material, institutional, and philosophical aspects of culture can help provide a more systematic analysis of the dynamic elements of culture(s) vis-à-vis national security (Abah, 2007). This cultural analysis situates the internal and external dimensions to national security. No country can achieve total safety at all times, and coping with perceived threats to national security can be actualized through the adaptation of the elements of culture to ensure survival of the nation (Oladiran & Adedevoh, 2007, p.1). According to Okwori (2013, p.1), "Culture is necessary in order to give purpose



and credibility to one's own existence. Rob people of their culture and you rob them of their reason of being".

Virtually every nation designs strategies to ensure its stability. Such approaches are usually enshrined in a National Security programme. Cultural policy as an instrument of social engineering demands a notion of culture as a strategic instrument (Oladiran & Adedevoh, 2007, p.1). Tukur (1999, p.4) describes this social engineering process as the deliberate political effort to channel behaviour in the direction that will maximise national objectives. The vital linkage between culture and security at any level is better projected by statements related to the nexus between culture and development. According to Okwori (2013, p.2), "the real problem of Africa comes from the inability of those in authority to make the right choice and firm commitment to cultural matters because they underestimate the value of culture in development". Extrapolating from the above statement, the capacity of a nation to survive has to do with her cultural values prevailing at any point in time.

One of the fundamental objectives and directive principles which underpin the policy of the Nigerian government towards its people is "security and welfare of the people". It is, therefore, the primary purpose of Government as provided for, in Chapter II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. Given the nationwide import of this duty, driving social security initiatives has been one of the constitutional responsibilities of the Federal Government. However, this responsibility suffers minimal attention, as the government of Nigeria sometimes prefers to paint a picture of a global problem rather than doing the needful. One of the significant challenges that have confronted Nigeria since independence is a rising state of insecurity which has, in most cases been attributed to foreign cultures and sources.

Most of the conflicts are ethno-religious. For instance, violent clashes have occurred between Muslim extremists of Marwa, Maitatsine, El-zakzaki and their liberal counterparts in Kano, Maiduguri, Zaria, Gombe, Yola etc. at various times. Numerous instances of ethno-religious conflicts have occurred between Christians and Muslim in Bauchi, Kano, Kafanchan, Zango-Kataf, Kaduna, and Nasarawa among other parts of Nigeria (Gyong, 2017, p.1). There have been sectarian conflicts in Nasarawa, Benue, some parts of South-East, South-West and South-South of Nigeria. More recently, there have emerged severe insecurity challenges characterised by political violence, Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, Fulani herdsmen attacks, militancy, communal clashes and so on (Agena, 2018, p.1).

In addition to the above mentioned plethora of insecurity, there are on daily occurrence instances of corruption and crimes such as, suicide attacks, armed-robbery, oil theft, rape and so on. Most of the security challenges have become sophisticated owing to the influence of foreign cultures. These security challenges have had enormous consequences on the developmental needs of Nigeria. These include mainly the loss of countless lives and properties, arrested and retarded development in various facets of the life of the nation. Nigerian government in recent times pointed accusing fingers on foreigners as the brain behind most of the security challenges in Nigeria. It is therefore imperative of the government to rethink its culture and social security arrangements rather than attributing the security challenges to foreigners (Agena, 2018, p.1).

Part of the reasons why culture is crucial to security intervention or any development effort is because the relationship between culture and development is also double-edged invoking a complex of senses. 'The complex of senses indicates a complex argument about the relations



between general human development and a particular way of life, and between both and the works and practices of art and intelligence. Within this complex argument there are fundamentally opposed as well as effectively overlapping positions; there are also, understandably, many unresolved questions and confused answers' (Idebe, 2018, p.3). The problems of development are attitude and behaviour related. Attitude and behaviour are processes of cultural seasoning. Yet it is through the same culture that active development is enabled. Culture, therefore, is both the problem and solution in development planning and engaging in development requires engagement with both the problem and solution aspects of culture (Okwori, 2013, p.2).

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

To properly situate the direction of this article, it is imperative to explore the critical concept of culture and how it is vital in national security. To understand culture, we need to understand nature, the world as created and given by God, that we have no control of but to exist within, either by manipulation, domestication or recreation. Once we begin to utilize nature, our human response to the way and manner of utilization then means culture (Okwori, 2013). Culture and national security are interrelated. They sometimes display conflicting variations, which may arise from inconsistencies which we notice in our set of beliefs. Sometimes the challenge to our beliefs may come from outside (Oladiran & Adedavoh, 2007, p. 1).

Studies by Anthropologists and other related disciplines found that culture has an immense impact on human beings in any society because it helps man to adapt to his society and hence to increase the chances of survival. There is an avalanche of definitions of culture as there are diverse cultures across the globe, although these definitions tend to be similar. Castro-Gomez 2002, p.26) holds that 'culture constitutes a sphere of moral, religious, political, philosophical and technological values that permit man to "humanise" himself, i.e. escape the tyranny of the state of nature'. According to Uroh (1996, p.11), it is evident that 'culture is a product of a people's experience. It is the knowledge of doing things which people have acquired in their attempts to solve some socio-historical problems'.

Also, according to Tylor (1996) as cited in Oladiran & Adedavoh, (2007, p.95), "culture is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'". Other scholars in their attempt at defining culture have reduced culture to mental phenomena, to ideas or the like in the minds of men. Nicolaides (2018) defines culture as a mental map that guides us in our relations with our surroundings and with other people. Hatch sees culture as 'the way of life of a people'. However, having assessed the various definitions offered by scholars on culture, we can say that 'culture is the totality of the way of life evolved of a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economical, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation.

Cardinal in the appraisal of culture is social control, which helps to ensure conformity to societal norms for an ordered society. Mohammed & Ihidero (2018) posit that virtually every culture embodies three separate but related spheres, namely, universal, alternative and specialties. Uchendu (1988) as cited in Kwaje (2014) explains the idea of cultural universals, alternatives and specialties in the following way: cultural universals refer to those elements of a culture open to all and shared by every culture bearer. To be competent in a culture implies sharing in its cultural universals. Cultural alternatives are various institutions provided by a culture to meet a given cultural demand; and cultural specialties are institutions for



specialised training and knowledge whose membership may be voluntary or ascribed. The analysis of the role of culture as the very texture of social contract theories and viable human organisations is related to the thematic issues of national security affecting both the persons and the community at large (Gbadegesin, 2010, p.162). This view tends to suggest that the protection and development of a nation-state are culturally contextual.

It is, however, important to note that no nation can achieve total security. According to Goulet (1987), a society may be presumed secure if there is a high probability of the occurrence of its preferred national values. Tukur (1999, p.19) defines values as the highest ethical standards and criteria through which individuals, groups and societies order their goals, determine their choice and judge their conduct as these pertain to fundamental aspects of life, be they in the sphere of personal or public affairs. The capacity to make judgments in interaction with the challenges of the human environment and society helps to formulate and institutionalise essential policies on culture.

There is a wide realisation that the critical area for the solution of a social and national problem is that of culture; since culture has the ultimate values which motivate human and civic action in historical perspective. This position is supported further by the fact that, in securing the various compartments of culture, such as language, customs, norms, art, science, metaphysical belief, there is concomitant security of the human social systems, which in turn creates a sort of individual and community alliance. Hence, the distinctive analysis of culture is historically necessary for any form of security and development. And given the fact that culture and security follow specific autonomous, as well as functionally dependent, dynamic trends regarding social and individual well-being; it is pertinent to analyse their two-tier operational functionalism either as ‘culture of security’ or as ‘security of culture’.

ATTEMPTING A THEORETICAL MATRIX: CULTURE OF SECURITY AND THE SECURITY OF CULTURE

Culture and security are dynamic social realities which involve continuity and change (Gbadegesin, 2010, p.173). Lifestyle and security cannot be treated outside of cultural values. Ackermann (1981, pp.447 & 450) posits that cultural values are ‘ways of ordering and evaluating objects, experiences and behaviours manifesting themselves in all situations of choice. Cultural values are viewed as a determining factor in the choice and impact of technology; on the other hand, technology is perceived as potentially transforming cultural values’. From the above, Ackermann (1981, p.451) draws the vital conclusion that ‘it is important to realize that cultural values and beliefs have a historically acquired force that is to some extent independent of the current social structure. As a result, they will be embodied in the projects of individuals and groups, contribute to the ordering of their priorities, and affect their strategies to achieve whatever goals they have set themselves’.

On the relationship between culture and security, Oladiran & Adedavoh (2007, p.98), maintains that “if through culture man slowly liberates himself from the chains imposed by nature, then cultural forms acquire ever increasing degrees of perfection to the extent that they permit the unfolding of spirit, that is, the exercise of human freedom”. In our effort for national and human security in Africa at large, we can agree with Epskamp & Boeren (1992) that “we on this African continent can enrich our knowledge and cultural heritage through our cooperative efforts and the pooling of our scientific and technical resources”. The goals of culture and security, which we have set before us, require a world order and peace charter derived from the diverse cultures.



The scholarly approaches to culture attempt to distill a distinction between culture and security, either as a ‘culture of security’ or as a ‘security of culture’. While ‘culture of security’ refers to the social and contractual orientation that ensures a people’s well-being with a community, the ‘security of culture’ signifies all modalities by which a people’s worldview and way of life are ensured. For Castro-Gomez (2002, p.26), the culture of security means all constitutive spheres of moral, religious, political, philosophical and technological values that permit man to ‘humanise’ himself. For Uroh (1996, p.11), the culture of security in the context of our analysis is a product of a people’s experience to enhance their well-being. This means that knowledge about the culture of security depends on the ways people have adopted or acquired it in their attempts to solve socio-historical problems.

In attempting a conceptual framework for this work, a three-tier analysis of culture of security is relevant. The three aspects are ideas, aesthetic forms and values. According to Odhiambo (1999) as cited in Agena (2018, p.7)

the culture of security in a society consists of three distinct elements; ideas give rise to habits and beliefs, aesthetic forms reflect the artistic expression of a culture in its visual arts, the values are formed by the interaction between ideas and aesthetics norms of conduct” with a bid to enhancing human well being

It is therefore, pertinent to evaluate how the culture of security is acquired and socialized by human beings in their society. These different aspects of culture can be challenged by internal and external forces. According to Frantz (1998) the culture of security is an essential element of the history of a people, because it allows us to know how to resolve the nature and extent of the imbalances and conflicts (economic, political and social), which characterize the evolution of a society. A culture of security allows us to know the dynamic synthesis, which have been developed and established by social conscience to resolve these conflicts at each stage of its evolution, in the search for survival and progress. The culture of security means the protective mechanism, which obtains in the land, a community enterprise, a body of laws and morals along with their metaphysical foundations that guide and ensure peace and order within the community. In this context, the culture of security refers to one of numerous distinct systems in which social theory and action are interrelated. It therefore means that the culture of security, as a social system, is dependent on the operation of human personality and positioning. That is, the culture of security is a system abstracted from both protective actions and theories on social existential affairs.

In other words, the culture of security is a system of values, meanings or significance and symbols regarding the structure of social life (Gary, 1997). Accordingly, the culture of security can thus be said to provide the perspective necessary to rethink the meaning of life, and the projection of such purposes from the prevailing circumstances of the present. Given this situation, the culture of security gives us the impetus to leap over obstacles that hamper human and social development and chart new pathways for prospects.

Furthermore, the proper clarification of the beneficial purpose of the culture of human and social security gives a clue as to how to bridge the gap between our means and our ends, and how to appropriate these means and ends for man’s technological development and the transformation of the individual and the state in society. Oladiran & Adedavoh (2007, p.95) points out that:



there are general principles or ethos governing the security of culture, especially the ones by which culture survives or operates. In this context, the security of culture can be sustained in either a materialised or objectified, as well as an idealised or spiritualised, way. The 'object or material culture' of a people can be those items of culture that can be sustained by empirical verification and justification. This aspect of 'security of culture' is tangible and in fact can be seen, described, and sometimes even touched. Under its tangibility, the characteristics of culture are discernibly protected. Security of the material culture thus comprises material, institutional, philosophical and creative aspects, as contained in our cultural policy and practice

The material security of culture has to do with artifacts in the broadest form (namely: tools, clothing, food, medicine, housing, etc., and institutional monuments such as the political, social, legal and economic structures erected to help achieve material and spiritual objectives). Indeed, the sociological culture of security measures can be adequately and better substantiated by the nature of an object or material culture, that is how the society produces its means of existence and the way the individual members and groups within the society relate to each other and organize themselves within the society, as well as the general code and ideas that bind people together' (Kweme, 1997). Another perspective on the security of culture is that it can be idealised. This idealisation operates at the level of inner dispositions to reality or a metaphysical projection of such a reality. Although this is where the spirit of the people depicts the subjective aspect of culture, nevertheless it depicts the transcendental reality of the African people aptly. Gbadegesin (2010, pp.172-174) states that:

For some social and political theorists security of idealised culture consists mainly of diverse ideas as initiators of action, as if ideas have an independent ontological reality moving in the brains of human beings. This means that the Africans guard jealously the process of their inner subjective dispositions. This is necessitated by the fact that the operation of an idea in the mind influences the external world and stratifies it in a definite and particular referential correspondence and behavioural dispositions

Against the backdrop of communicating the spiritualised and objectified typologies of culture, the main global method of the security of culture can be seen as a complex linguistic phenomenon, being constitutive of numerous elements of which the picture of the language of the culture is one. Because of the countless constituent aspects of a culture, there is a hybrid of cultural overlap, which makes room for cultural interdependence. Consequently, it is also possible for people trying to preserve them to share many aspects of a culture, without a shared language. This is possible if there is lively participation in the activities, goals, aspirations, and the fate of a broader cultural community (Kweme, 1997, p.44). The term security of culture is, therefore, referred to the totality of Africa's basic protective orientation in life (Dzobo, 1992, p.123). Security of culture in this perspective is an open-ended resource of social meanings upon which members of a community draw to mediate the contingencies of their everyday lives. As such, the phrase denotes the preservation of the material and spiritual resources of a community's material and moral worlds.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN CULTURE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Culture as the totality of the way of life of a people has enormous security influence on the nation, because, national security is the concern for the survival, peace and progress of individuals, groups and the society as a cultural whole. Hence, national security is a concept that cannot be easily understood without its application to social and cultural phenomena. Owolabi, (1998) corroborates this statement when he maintains that Security is a concept devoid of operational meaning in the absence of some identification of threats. In all discussions of security from the personal to the international, there is an implicit or explicit determination of risk.



Owolabi (1998, p.160) states that the threat to cultural perceptions forms the core of the understanding of national security. Particular risk to cultural perceptions of national security can be x-rayed by the weakening of states and communities, their erosion and in some cases even their implosion as well as their incapacity to ensure public order and to fulfill other functions. Amilcar (1998, p.2) observes that, objectively, security is an absence of threat to acquired values such as territorial sovereignty and independence, socio-economic interests and political traditions. Objectively, it is the absence of fear that such values will be infringed. The threat to the existence and survival of a nation comes in two broad spheres; the internal and external threats. An external threat is an attempt originating from outside the country either to destroy land or to force on it a line of action contrary to its interests. External threats usually result from conflict between a nation and another nation or even an international organisation. Internal threats are those unfavourable conditions which may result in conflict that threatens public order. These conditions may be due to social, political, economic, ideological, or ethnic reasons. Internal threats also come about due to influence from outside a country, especially by organisations or groups which promote values antithetical to integration or cohesion in a country. The internalization of such values may result in actions inimical to national security. For any nation to survive it must be appropriately positioned to combat any forms of the above mentioned threats.

On the other hand a nation is considered secured and un-threatened if there is a high occurrence of its preferred values even though no country has absolute security at all times (Kwaje, 2014). However, within the context of impending threats, a nation must put in place adequate measures to limit the possible adverse effects. Coping with perceived threats to a nation's security is actualized through the adaptation of the elements of culture to ensure survival. Such features may be specialised institutions, for example, the military, police, etc., education, cultural institutions, the media, and so on.

SOME SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING SECURITY IN NIGERIA

One of the most critical dimensions of the security problem faced by the country today is socio-cultural. Culture represents the fountain spring of all policies employed by the government of a nation, be they political, social, economic, or educational (Agena, 2018, p.5). Okwori (2013, p.2) posits that "most of the strategies for development of society hinge on the understanding of the culture of the people". In the case of Nigeria, there has been widespread adoption of Euro-American models for managing the country. Unfortunately, this has not worked very well because the indigenous cultural foundations of the ethnic nations which constitute Nigeria have not been taken into consideration. Our leaders have imbibed the way the colonialists administered Nigeria in the pre-independence era as a national political culture.

The motive for colonisation was the exploitation of resources. The political culture used to hold the nation together was coercion. This explains the reason why some societies have imbibed forceful means of managing their security, which is not working today. The police and the military were set-up to repress protests by the people which threatened the stability of the colonial order. It is this culture that has been acquired in the post-independence era which has brought about the exploitative nature of the political class and a failure of social cohesion due to ethnicity, religious intolerance, the militarisation of politics, economic deprivation and so on (Nicolaidis, 2018).



According to Heywood (2002), the political dimension of the problem is next in importance to the cultural aspect. The evolvement of a new culture dominated by western modes brought about a perverted orientation of the strategy by which a multi-cultural independent Nigeria could be governed. The method used by the colonialists to rule the country was adopted by the nationalists who found themselves at the helm of affairs. Things, however, fell apart due to the exploitation of the resources of the nation, leading to a lack of economic security on the part of the people and a breakdown of law and order.

The economic dimension is the third essential dimension of the security problem. The exploitation of the resources of the nation has brought about a breakdown in social service delivery, and entrenched poverty in the land leading to social and ethnic stratification (Davidson, 1991). It has further worsened the security situation, which often manifests itself in disobedience to law and large-scale conflict claiming many lives and properties. An economic poverty perspective can be perceived in the activities of some multi-national industries which engage in exploitative conduct, often resulting in violent national insecurity (Amilcar, 1998). For example, after the discovery of crude oil, many multi-national companies came in to assist in the development of the oil sector. The exploration of oil led to the degradation of the environment which the host communities relied on for their livelihood.

Also, the necessary infrastructure and amenities such as hospitals, roads, schools, were not provided in many of these communities. How then do people survive when their means of existence have been threatened and there are no contingency plans to remedy the situation? One result has been widespread violence which has claimed many lives, including expatriates and security operatives. Since the various ethnic groups in the area unite against the multi-national companies, these companies often employ the strategy of divide-and-rule. It involves the supply of weapons to ethnic groups to fight each other in the quest to position such a group for monetary benefits from these multi-nationals. The wanton destruction of lives and properties in the Niger Delta area has been a significant problem for Nigeria's security forces to control. Another dent to national security is the fact that from the Niger Delta area there has been an influx of light weapons into the wider Nigerian community. What this portends is that such weapons can be used for other criminal activities such as armed robbery, political assassination and so on (Oladiran & Adadevoh, 2007).

Education as means of cultural transmission has been designed in a manner it was bequeathed Nigerians by the colonialists. School has not functioned particularly well as an agent for transfer of the values cherished by the state (Chukwu-Okoronkwo, 2012). It has failed in the inculcation of viable ethical culture for the tolerance of others. Through a moral education both formally and informally, it becomes possible to see the consequences of involving oneself in any conduct which can destabilise the state. Moral culture is a necessary means of ensuring national security. Questions about national security in Nigeria are more significant due to the emergence and blossoming of a perverted idea of civil protection. It is evident by the proliferation of vigilante groups and ethnic militias that have emerged to fill the gaps and inadequacies in the defence and security functions of the society (Castro-Gomez, 2002).

There is evidence of a negative civilian input in security matters. The unyielding violence in the country has created a fertile substrate for the expansion of such groups. In some areas of the country, the actions of these groups have been institutionalised and legitimised. The so-called, 'area boys' and 'Almajiri' are recruited for the amplification of ethno-religious conflicts around the country. Small bands of political thugs known as 'Ecomog' are employed as personal security for political office holders, and for political violence.



However, the dangerous aspect is that they have received some legitimacy and now form part of the regular entourage of political leaders. There has been a more dangerous trend in the proliferation of ethnic militia and other dubious non-conventional community security and defence outfits, which have been put in place for the service of more extensive political, regional and economic interests (Egwu, 2015). The forms of violence produced by these ethnic militia groups surpass even the other unstable times. These militia groups retain the capability for violence and mayhem that are unrivalled in intensity. They are often capable of contending with the institutionalized violence of the military (Peters, 2010).

THE WAY FORWARD

A critical examination of the various cultural problems which threaten Nigeria's national security reveals that they are related in the cultural dimension. A lack of understanding of the far-reaching consequences of some of these social actions remains one crucial reason why it has been possible to subvert the Nigerian state. As a post-colonial African state and a developing nation for that matter, it is essential to develop a cultural transmission method through formal and informal education that will help create a greater awakening to the fundamental problem of Nigeria, which is an ethical one. There is the need to create a vision of a Nigerian dream in which the different groups have roles to play, despite our differences. There is the need to unite the various groups through the stressing of those areas, within similar cultures as a way of putting an end to the issue of stratification in the society. Very importantly, there is a need for an ethically based leadership. It is, therefore, necessary to enlighten Nigerians about the dangers of exposing ourselves to different cultural ideas, which can destabilise the country. It is necessary because culture provides all sorts of nuances in communication and the amalgamation of the ethics of protective differences and communal solidarity necessary for national security.

There is a need to involve educational institutions in the area of security. The formal educational sector needs to be re-invented by incorporating a curriculum on critical ethical education directed at breaking ethnically bound values, religious barriers and so forth. It is necessary to promote and teach social ethics to raise the moral consciousness of citizens. The use of electronic media will also prove very useful in this effort because a broader population can be covered in this way. It also pertinent to involve the various Councils for Arts and Culture in the states and at the Federal level. Such cultural administration establishments should be adequately staffed with people trained in applied anthropological research methods. These cultural centres can assist in researching on the kinds of collective conduct in the society which disturb peace and stability.

CONCLUSION

This work has emphasised the significance of a national cultural policy as an instrument of security and social engineering. It is crucial for national survival, insofar as national security is, in a significant sense, a product of culture. The critical clarification and interconnections of the material, institutional, and philosophical aspects of culture paved the way for a more systematic analysis of the dynamic elements of our culture(s) vis-à-vis national security. This cultural analysis situated the internal and external dimensions to national security. The article has revealed an avalanche of ethno-religious security related challenges in Nigeria. It therefore, recommends cultural education for value reorientation towards a safer society.



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INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL ECONOMIC VARIABLES AS DETERMINANTS OF PREFERRED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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Abstract

This paper sought to investigate the social economic variables as determinants of preferred social networking sites by International Students of Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Social Networking Sites (SNS) platforms are gradually replacing the known, traditional means of communication as a result of new improved communication systems. The application of Social Networking Sites in our present generation is inevitable due to its efficiency and capability of connecting the whole globe in a second. These Social Networking Sites have made great contribution towards socio-cultural and economic development thereby re-ordering the world and making it a global village. Two platforms are considered in this research; Facebook and Instagram to know the right prediction based on the demography of users. The research design is survey, while questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Uses and Gratifications Theory is adopted as theoretical framework. Using SPSS for the analysis, the CHAID method with the help of a tree diagram shows that some of the demographic factors are better predictors of social media platforms when it comes to communication with specific places.

Keywords: Social, Economy, Social Networking sites, Prediction

INTRODUCTION

The use of social media for interaction among young generation has really been impactful. Social media have altered interpersonal communication; more people now participate in online activities more than ever (Saul, 2016). Arikewuyo and Abdulbaqi (2013) opined that the availability and exposure that comes with this new technology Social Networking Sites (SNS) have great impact directly or indirectly on the social media users.

Bicen and Cavus (2010) assert that preference in the use of (SNSs) involves communicating online using a particular media platform. However, there are different platforms that can be used to achieve specific purposes. A similar understanding was expressed by Korhan & Ersoy (2016) when they posited that the availability and the functionality of each platform results in selecting the platform that best satisfies the users' need because their motivation and their assessments of the platforms are best known to them.



Re-echoing these views, Kircaburun, Alhabash, Tosuntaş& Griffiths, (2018) say that the uses and gratification of each platform is based on some factors such as: the motives of the user, individual differences; social economic factors, personality and popularity of the social media sites. This implies that a user's choice for a platform can be influenced by many variables, ranging from his economic to social status. This tends to pose a lot of challenges because meeting new friends and making effort to get acquainted with them are said to be associated with problems of using the social media at the users' disposal. (Bicen&Cavus 2010; Atkin, Hunt, & Lin, 2015)

Many researches have been conducted on preference of sites. For example, a study was conducted on *preference by intensity of usage*. Here, four platforms were compared based on students' motivation with online participants spending most time on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter (Alhabash& Ma, 2017). It was revealed that these participants in spite of their familiarity and proficiency in the use of these four different platforms still encountered difficulties deciding on which sites they can use for their needs and find gratification. It is against this back drop that this study is undertaken to ascertain the predictor that is most likely responsible for the choice of use and preference of SNSs using tree decisions.

In the last two decades (2005-2019), the Pew Research Center has been carrying out demographic surveys on social media users in the United States. Some of their surveys contain important statistics on the demographics of SNS Users especially those on Facebook and Instagram. A 2012 Pew survey on social media demographics uncovered some rich statistics on gender, age and racial distribution of users of two of the SNS in this review (Facebook and Instagram) (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Sixty-seven percent of internet users (comprising women and adults ages 18-29) use Facebook while only 13% (comprising adults ages 18-29, Latinos, women and urban residents) use Instagram.

In 2015, Pew Research Center added some more demographic component on its social media users' demographic component including race, level of education and level of income for Facebook. Facebook still maintained the lead among American adult internet users with 72% of users and Instagram rose to 28% (Duggan, 2015). Young adults ages from 18-29 and Black, Non-Hispanic had the highest number of users among other demographic categories with 55% and 47% Instagram users. Yet predictor is our major concern over the preference of use of social media.

To this effect, Facebook and Instagram are used for this study based on the argument presented by Alhabash and Ma (2017), that there are newer and old social media from which users can choose from, other platforms mentioned which users can choose from are Twitter and Snapchat.

BRIEF HISTORY OF FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

The history of Facebook is linked to the journey of Mark Zuckerberg, a 23-year-old Harvard University Psychology student experimenting on social networking in computer programming. It was launched globally in February 2004 as "The Facebook" with an initial subscription covering more than half of the Harvard undergraduate student population in the space of a month (Phillips, 2007; McFadden, 2019). Together with co-founders Chris Hughes, Eduardo Saverin, and Dustin Moskovitz, Zuckerberg extended the subscription to three other US elite university campuses: Yale, Stanford and Columbia (Greiner et al, 2019). The present name (Facebook) was adopted in August 2005 after the purchase of



Facebook.com for the sum of \$200,000 (Phillips, 2007). Facebook became opened for global subscription on 26 September 2006 (Barr, 2018). It emerged as the biggest global social network in 2012 with over a billion users (Hall, 2019).

Instagram on the other hand was co-founded in San Francisco by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. It was launched on 6 October 2010 (Instagram, 2019). The history of Instagram began when Systrom embarked on a project to create an app dubbed 'Burbn' designed as a mobile web app to help people to check-in, share pictures and their plans. The project was not successful due to the confusing nature of the app employed entirely by users to share all types of photos (Harrison, 2018). Notwithstanding, Systrom met with two venture capital firms in Silicon Valley (Adressen Horowitz and Baseline Ventures) to discuss his project weeks after the creation of Burbn and was able to raise seed capital to the tune of \$500,000 for his project (Woods, 2013) which was later launched.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There are different platforms used by various people for communication purposes; it is however, difficult to determine or predict the particular demographic factor responsible for their choice of the platform. This study therefore, explores the various demographic variables such as age, gender, educational level, and marital status and seeks to determine the ones that can be used to predict or determine the preference for a platform or SNSs used by international students in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) when communicating with family members, friends and other international acquaintances while in school in the year 2020.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the selected demographic factor, the research is aimed at finding out the following:

- The most predictor/predictors that determine the choice for the preferred SNS (Facebook/Instagram) when communicating with families and friends among international students in EMU in the 2020 fall academic session.
- The most predictor/predictors used to determine the two social media (Facebook/Instagram) when relating with other international acquaintances during the 2020 winter semester in EMU, North Cyprus.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ.1 Which are the most predictor/predictors that determine the choice for the preferred SNS (Facebook/Instagram) when communicating with families and friends among international students in EMU in the 2020 fall academic session?

RQ.2 Which are the most predictor/predictors used to determine the two social media (Facebook/ Instagram) when relating with other international acquaintances during the 2020 fall semester in EMU, North Cyprus?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The advancement in the use of technology for communication has also made different forms of communication to be used for interactive purposes especially the upgrade and changes that comes with the webs of technology. There are various factors that play vital roles in the choice of media platform while some are Psychosocial; others are influenced by demographic variables (Clark, Algoe& Green, 2018). Physiological factors that influence the choice of SNS include; economic, technology and culture.(Aksoy, Van Riel, Kandampully, Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, &Solnet, 2013).



Psychosocial and physiological factors come into play when students select an SNS. Hughes, Rowe, Batey & Lee (2012), argue that personality and differential relationships correlate with online socializing. This is to say that a person's openness, gender, age, sociability, agreeableness and need for cognition play an important role on the level and extend of information exchange. In general, preference is brought about by recommendation systems where by a network diffusion plays an important role (Rogers 2014).

The precision of a predictable outcome becomes blissful and the choices of a rational option turn out to be probabilistic yet variability of the outcome is a unique challenge students have to overcome. Kaplan & Miller (1987), explain that individuals and groups generally change their preferences after discussion. The precision of a predictable outcome becomes blissful and the choices of a rational option turn out to be probabilistic yet variability of the outcome is a unique challenge students have to overcome. De Dreu, Nijstad, & Van Knippenberg, (2008), suggest that social motivation and epistemic motivation influences the interaction and the decision-making process. However, the outcome of any interaction in a group in normative decisions can never be weighed nor be deterministic in nature thus bring about uncertainty.

Hinsz, (1999) comes to a conclusion that decision outcomes are also based on compromise instead of consensus processes on occurrence of discrete choices, based on preferences. Some platforms have been found to be very addictive in nature; however, the Social Media are used to send posts and peruse posting by other users (Huang & Su 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). It is a theory based on television viewing usage. The Uses and Gratification Theory was and still remains one of the essential theories of communication used especially in the 21st era (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). The Theory talks about the users choice in desiring one or more gratifications in a specific media (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973-1974). The Uses and Gratification Theory gives perspectives on users' motivation and choice of a platform to achieve needed gratification (Katz, 1957).

In this age of advancement in technology, more attention have been given to the uses and gratification theory (Dias, 2016). For instance, communication has shifted from the mainstream media to individual form where they are demassified, using a lot of platforms for users gratification; some are direct and instant messages from mobiles while others are applications such as WhatsApp.

The intrusive nature of the media have added to the uses and gratifications by users, aiding the audience to have more choices and preference of platforms. Thus, the media is capable of influencing the users over their selection of a platform through the diverse channels at their disposal (Atkin, Hunt, & Lin, 2015).

The social media which encompass SNSs are seen as very vital area in our lives today. (Garcia-domingo, Aranda, & Fuentes, 2017). This is because many scholars have attested to the fact that social media is used by various people for their personal or group gratification as emphasized by Whiting and Williams (2013).



Scholars such as Wei, Lin, Lu, & Chuang(2015); Froget, Baghestan, & Asfaranjan, (2013); Karimi, Khodabandelou, & Ahmad, (2014) have argued that users stick to SNSs because it assist in meeting “users” (students) need for information, need for entertainment, maintaining relationships, meeting new people and sharing informaton with them as well as keeping connected with them.

According to a research conducted in Mauritius, the social media platforms can be used for eight (8) different motives to predict the application of Facebook as a platform. Using 392 Facebook users in an online survey, the study revealed that the platform was used for meeting people, for entertainment and maintaining relationships with friends. The Facebook help a lot in interaction during social events and it is excellent for sharing the content produced by the media. The Facebook can be used among other things for inquiry, employment, discussion purposes and for information. Thus, these eight factors are found to be positively correlated with Facebook (Froget, Baghestan, & Asfaranjan, 2013).

According to Hunt, Atkin, & Krishnan, (2012) the uses and gratification theory is relevant in both mainstream and social media hence its application to this study.

Gratification always comes with Gratification sought (GS) with the use of the media and the media expectation (ME) gratification which is obtained (GO) as the media serves the user. This is given in the following formula: $GS + ME + GO$ with reference to the work they conducted to ascertain the gratification obtained when they use the SNSs of their choice (Heravi, Mubarak & Choo, (2018).

Weimann, Gabriel, Nirit, Germaw, Maya Mazor and Ravid (2014), in their submission described media users as no longer audience as the then form of communication permits but are regarded as users because of their involvement which is described as being active. Tools applied permits User Generated Contents of such activities.

And most of the users on SNSs are fulfilling the submissions observed by Ruggierro (2000) that users operate based on the demassification nature, assynchroneity and the interactive nature of the media which is social in nature tied to the assumption of the uses and gratifications that users are at liberty to choose from the media available and having the knowledge that these media compete with each other thus the need to ascertain the right predictor based on demographics f users.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research method was used to achieve the objectives of the study, from which meaningful conclusion can be drawn from information collected from the respondents (Ponto, 2015). Survey research makes use of different ways as means of collecting data which can be through questionnaire or conducting interview. The research instrument were administered by the researchers/researcher who are involve in conducting the research, thus the items in the questionnaire,are aimed at answering the research objectives. Therefore, the questions must reflect what is obtainable as the objectives, questions are grouped into different segments with the questions that are dependable research instruments (Dillman , Smyth, & Christian , 2014).

The tools employed for this study is a self-in-house questionnaire designed by the authors capable of giving answers to the research at hand, using quantitative research.

The first part of the questionnaire is the demographics, and the second part is the platform preference, hours spend and years of use of each platform are considered.



Respondents are students from the Eastern Mediterranean University, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (EMU, TRNC), irrespective of their age, gender and marital status, students are sampled from all the faculties in EMU, during the Fall semester for the year 2020 to be specific January and February ending. Considering the number of international students in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), they are 18,205 for the 2019/2020 academic session in fall semester; the population serves as a good world view for the research to be conducted, hence the sample size is taken from the population (About EMU, 2019).

Although there are a lot of studies that opined that if sample size is chosen from 10% of the total population thus this work depend on the submission that in some cases the actual sample size will be very difficult to be considered, hence the aims of the researcher and the type of the statistical manipulation can be chosen to carry out a research (Taherdoost, 2017). On this ground, this work will consider 400 EMU students since it is large enough to serve the purpose of the research and almost all the students are on the two platforms or the other hence, any students stands the chance of being chosen based on chart and graph of (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Given that: $s = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$ (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Where; x^2 = Chi square value at 5% level of significance (95% confidence level) which is 3.841 and N = population size and P is the population proportion which is 50% of the population and d = is the degree of accuracy or level of precision (5%). Although the number of those to be sampled stood at 375 to 380, 400 serves as the sample size by the researchers hence larger number in quantitative research gives more accurate results than lower figures based on law of large numbers which states that bigger samples are better (Lohmeier, 2012).

Simple random sampling was employed, where everyone stands the chance of being chosen. This is a probability sampling method where each participant is chosen by chance and randomly selected thus, it is termed as an unbiased sampling (Agresti, 2008).

In-house questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect the data. The questionnaire serves as a means of linking up with the respondents this also help the respondents to be sure that they are guaranteed of their confidentiality, personality and their identity on the process of information gathering (Brace, 2008).

The questionnaire drafted serve as a guide to assist the researcher to carefully answer all the research questions put in place for testing. This serves as a clear guide for understanding the aim and the objectives of the study.

Using the tree decision for the analysis this is because it is good for classification and estimation, data description and estimation, thus it can be applied for data reduction in a dimension fit into the group of non-parametric procedures (Milanović & Stamenković, 2016). Decision tree is structured in a hierarchical manner for the data in groups, referred to as nodes join together by branches of the tree.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Based on the research questions posed for the research, the research tends to answer the best predictor when students communicate with their family members thus; the result is presented as follows:



Four hundred and ten (410) copies of questionnaire were administered, only 400 were retrieved from the participants, based on the questions that are accurately answered and the questionnaire that the information are complete, it is on this basis that the 400 was considered valid for the analysis. Thus the return rate is at 97.6% which signifies that the return rate is good for the analysis.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Under the demographics of users, some of the variables are merge to make the work more concise and presentable thus they are under the analysis as that can be found on the tables below:

Table 1: *Demographic of Respondents*

	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Female	238	59.5
	Male	162	40.5
Age	18-22	143	35.8
	23-27	147	36.8
	28-32	60	15.0
	33 and above	50	12.5
Educational Background	Undergraduate	243	60.8
	Masters	92	23.0
	Ph.D.	65	16.3
Faculty	Architecture	21	5.3
	Arts and Science	63	15.8
	Business and Economics	64	16.0
	Communication and Media Studies	41	10.3
Marital status	Single	215	53.8
	Married	61	15.3
Which SNS do you prefer using most when communicating?	Facebook	115	28.8
	Instagram	285	71.3

With regards to the gender of the respondents, ($n = 238$; 59.5%) are females while males are ($n = 162$; 40.5%), respondents were within ages 18-23 ($n = 143$; 35.8%), 24-29 ($n = 147$; 36.8%) and 30-35 ($n = 60$; 15.0%), and 30-35 ($n = 50$; 12.5%). While accessing the educational background of the respondents ($n = 243$; 60.8%) are undergraduate, ($n = 92$; 23.0%) are masters students while ($n = 65$; 16.3%) are Ph.D. students.

The respondents faculty varied Architecture ($n = 21$; 5.3%), ($n = 63$; 15.8%) Arts and Science, ($n = 64$; 16.0%) Business and Economics, ($n = 41$; 10.3%) Communication and Media Studies, ($n = 8$; 2.0%) Dentistry, ($n = 18$; 4.5%) Education, ($n = 64$; 16.0%) Engineering, ($n = 30$; 7.5%) Heath Sciences, ($n = 35$; 8.8%) Pharmacy, and ($n = 20$; 5.0%) Tourism and Hospitality Management,



With regards to marital status of the respondents are ($n = 215$; 53.8%) single, ($n = 114$; 28.5%) in a relationship, ($n = 61$; 15.3%) are married, ($n = 6$; 1.5%) are divorced, ($n = 4$; 1.0%) fall in the category of others.

Table 2: Inquiry about SNS Use

	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
How long have you been using Facebook	0-11 Months	22	5.5%
	1- 2 years	74	18.5%
	3-4 years	64	16.0%
	5-6 years	88	22.0%
	7 years and above	152	38.0%
How long have you been using Instagram	0 to less than an hour.	16	4.0%
	1 hour- 2hours	111	27.8%
	3-4 hours	120	30.0%
	5-6 hours	98	24.5%
	7 hours and above	55	13.8%
How long do you stay connected on Facebook	0 to less than an hour	55	13.8%
	1 hour- 2hours	208	52.0%
	3-4 hours	86	21.5%
	5-6 hours	30	7.5%
	7 hours and above	21	5.3%
How long do you stay connected on Instagram	0 to 59 minutes	30	7.5%
	1 hour- 2hours	174	43.5%
	3-4 hours	124	31.0%
	5-6 hours	47	11.8%
	7 hours and above	25	6.3%

Among the platforms you use for communication, which one do you prefer to use when communicating with?

Places and people like...

Family and Friends (People back home).	Facebook	210	52.5%
	Instagram	190	47.5%
People in North Cyprus (host community).	Facebook	136	34.0%



	Instagram	264	66.0%
Others (international acquaintances).	Facebook	143	35.8%
	Instagram	257	64.3%

Which strategy do you prefer to use mostly when you want to reduce uncertainty on social networking sites?

I observe and ignore messages on SNSs because it is not important (passive).	102	25.5%
I sometimes ask other people who are my friends on the platform (active).	128	32.0%
I ask the fellow who is directly involved (Interactive).	46	11.5%
Sometimes I become (extremely-active) by checking through my followers' wall	124	31.0%

Respondents were asked how long they have been using Facebook, answers ranged between 0-11 Months (*n* = 22; 5.5%), 1- 2 years (*n* = 74; 18.5%), 3-4 years (*n* = 64; 16.0%), 5-6 years (*n* = 88; 22.0%), and 7 years and above (*n* = 152; 38.0%). While accessing how long respondents have been using Instagram, they say 0 to less than an hour (*n* = 16; 4.0%), 1 hour- 2hours (*n* = 111; 27.8 %), 3-4 hours (*n* = 120; 30.0%), 5-6 hours (*n* = 98; 24.5%), 7 hours and above (*n* = 55; 13.8%).

Also respondents answered how long they stay connected on Facebook, answers ranged between 0 to less than an hour (*n* = 55; 13.8%), 1 hour- 2hours (*n* = 208; 52.0%), 3-4 hours (*n* = 86; 21.5%), 5-6 hours (*n* = 30; 7.5%), and 7 hours and above (*n* = 21; 5.3%). With regards understanding how long respondents stay connected on Instagram 0 to 59 minutes say (*n* = 30; 7.5%), 1 hour- 2hours representing (*n* = 174; 43.5%), 3-4 hours representing (*n* = 124; 31.0%), 5-6 hours representing (*n* = 47; 11.8%), and 7 hours and above representing (*n* = 25; 6.3%).

Among the platforms used for communication, respondents were asked which one they prefer to use when communicating with while interacting with people. While communicating with family and Friends (People back home) those who use Facebook are (*n* = 210; 52.5%) while those who use Instagram are (*n* = 190; 47.5%). While communicating with people in North Cyprus (host community) those who use Facebook are (*n* = 136; 34.0%) while those who use Instagram are (*n* = 264; 66.0%). Those who communicate with other categories of people like (international acquaintances) and use Facebook are (*n* = 143; 35.8%), while those who use Instagram are (*n* = 257; 64.3%).

TABLE 3

Tree Table

No	Facebook	Instagram	Total	Predic	Pare	Primary Independent Variable
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de	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	ted Category	nt Nod e	Variable	Sig. ^a	Chi-Square	df	Split Values
0	250	55.7%	199	44.3%	449	100.0%	Facebook						
1	128	71.1%	52	28.9%	180	40.1%	Facebook	0	Educational level	.000	28.994	1	Masters; Ph.D
2	122	45.4%	147	54.6%	269	59.9%	Instagram	0	Educational level	.000	28.994	1	Undergraduate
3	79	80.6%	19	19.4%	98	21.8%	Facebook	1	Gender	.002	9.453	1	Male
4	49	59.8%	33	40.2%	82	18.3%	Facebook	1	Gender	.002	9.453	1	Female
5	81	50.9%	78	49.1%	159	35.4%	Facebook	2	Gender	.027	4.903	1	Male
6	41	37.3%	69	62.7%	110	24.5%	Instagram	2	Gender	.027	4.903	1	Female

Growing Method: CHAID

Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with Families?

a. Bonferroni adjusted

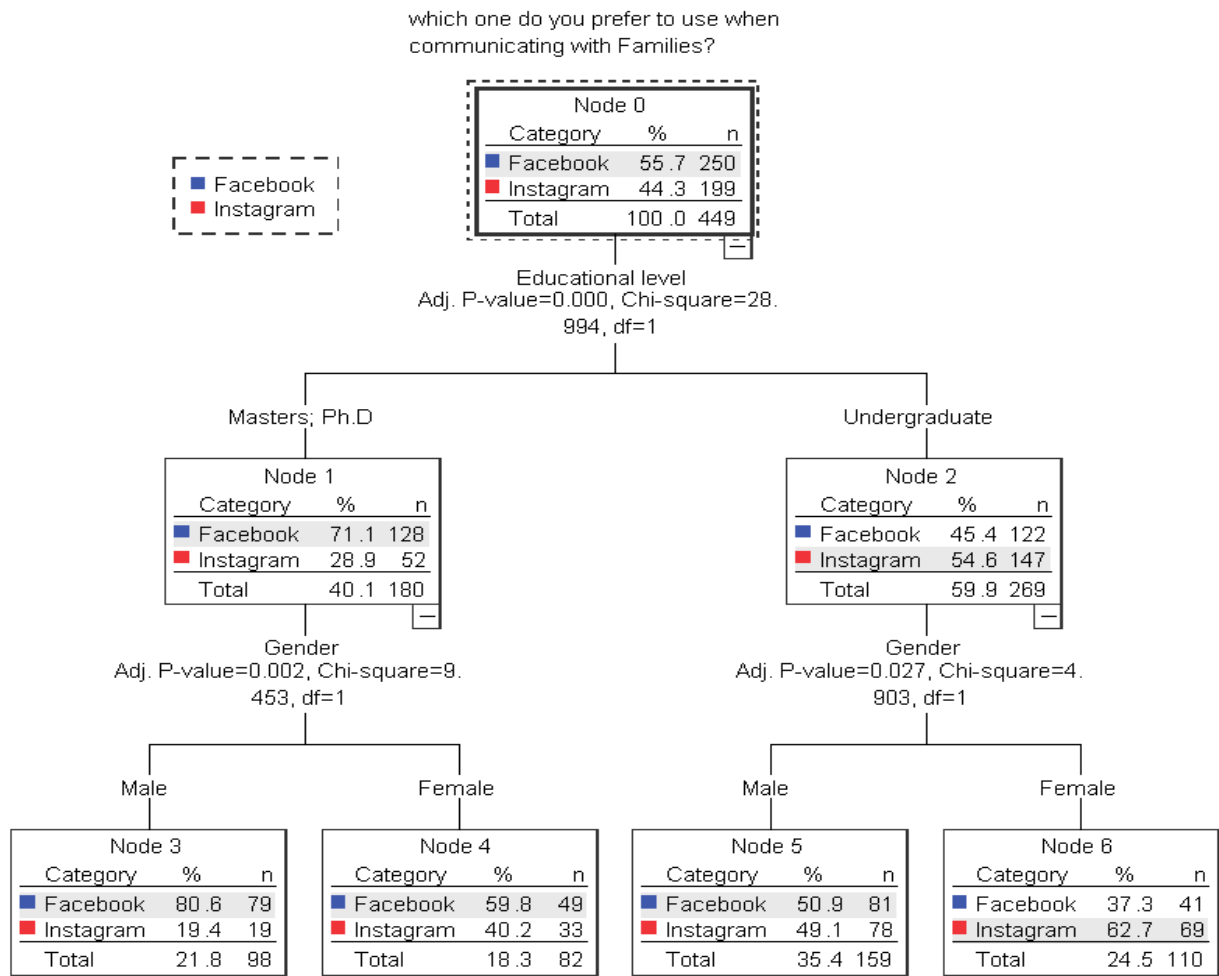
Risk	
Estimate	Std. Error
.381	.023
Growing Method: CHAID	
Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with Families?	

Classification

Observed	Predicted		
	Facebook	Instagram	Percent Correct
Facebook	209	41	83.6%
Instagram	130	69	34.7%
Overall Percentage	75.5%	24.5%	61.9%

Growing Method: CHAID

Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with Families?



Tree decision depicting the predictors when communicating with families (Educational factor and Gender are good predictors)

Figure 1: Decision Tree for Social Media Preference to communicating with Family Members

Using the CHAID method, the tree diagram shows that educational level is the best predictor of the most preferred social media platform to communicate with families.

The tree shows that Educational level and Gender are best predictors of social media preference in communicating with families ($p < 0.05$). The model shows that among Postgraduates students (Masters and PhD), 71.10% of them prefer to use Facebook more in staying in touch with families while only 28.90% preferred to use Instagram and this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). However, among undergraduate students, the undergraduate node revealed that 54.60% preferred to use Instagram while 45.40% preferred the usage of Facebook. The model shows that undergraduate students generally prefer to use Instagram platform to stay in touch with family members and this is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The next best predictor in the model is gender.



In the postgraduate student’s category, the model revealed that both female (80.60%) and male (59.80%) postgraduate students have preference for Facebook usage than Instagram in communicating with their families with a statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)

Research Question.2

Research question two the best predictor when communicating with their international acquaintances results revealed as thus:

The model summary table indicates the independent variables used in the model and their significance. The table shows that marital status and gender significantly predict which social media platform is preferred in communicating with others (International acquaintances). Five independent variables were specified, but only two were included in the final model namely marital status and gender. The variables for age, educational level, and faculty, did not make a significant contribution to the model, so they were automatically dropped from the final model.

Tree Table

Node	Facebook		Instagram		Total		Predicted Category	Parent Node	Primary Independent Variable				
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent			Variable	Sig. ^a	Chi-Square	df	Split Values
0	167	37.2%	282	62.8%	449	100.0%	Instagram						
1	119	32.1%	252	67.9%	371	82.6%	Instagram	0	Marital Status	.000	23.950	1	Single; In a relationship; Divorced; Others
2	48	61.5%	30	38.5%	78	17.4%	Facebook	0	Marital Status	.000	23.950	1	Married
3	81	36.7%	140	63.3%	221	49.2%	Instagram	1	Gender	.022	5.254	1	Male
4	38	25.3%	112	74.7%	150	33.4%	Instagram	1	Gender	.022	5.254	1	Female

Growing Method: CHAID

Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with others? International acquaintances?

a. Bonferroni adjusted

Risk

Estimate	Std. Error
.332	.022



Growing Method:
CHAID
Dependent Variable:
which one do you
prefer to use when
communicating with
others? International
acquaintances?

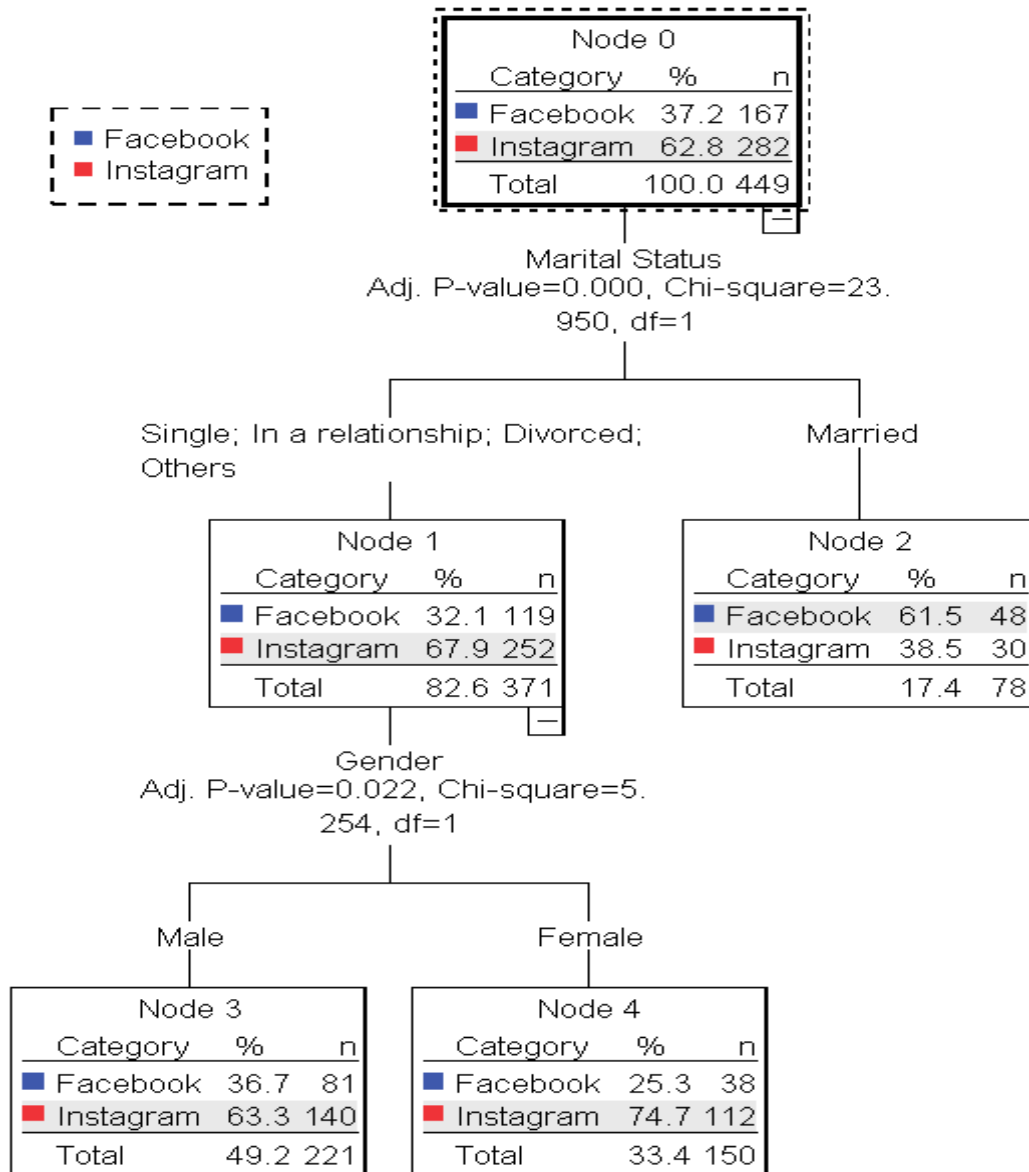
Classification

Observed	Predicted		
	Facebook	Instagram	Percent Correct
Facebook	48	119	28.7%
Instagram	30	252	89.4%
Overall Percentage	17.4%	82.6%	66.8%

Growing Method: CHAID
Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use
when communicating with others? International
acquaintances?



which one do you prefer to use when communicating with others? International acquaintances?



Decision Tree for Social Media Preference to communicating with others (International acquaintances)

Using the CHAID method, the tree diagram shows that marital status and gender were the best predictor of the most preferred social media platform to communicate with international acquaintances.

The tree shows that marital status and gender are best predictors of social media preference in communicating with others ($p < 0.05$). The model shows an immediate two nodes division. The first node comprises the singles, people in a relationship, divorcee and others while the second node comprises the married. Among the singles, people in a relationship, divorcee and



others, larger percentage of them (67.90%) have greater preference to use Instagram in communicating with international acquaintances while married individuals (61.50%) preferred to use Facebook in communicating with international acquaintances. Since there are no child nodes below the married category, it is considered a terminal node.

However, a further statistically significant predictor for the singles, people in a relationship, divorcee and others category is the gender variable ($p < 0.05$). In this aforementioned category, the males (63.30%) preferred using Instagram as well as the females (74.70%) in communicating with international acquaintances.

Risk

Estimate	Std. Error
.332	.022
Growing Method: CHAID	
Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with others? International acquaintances?	

Classification

Observed	Predicted		
	Facebook	Instagram	Percent Correct
Facebook	48	119	28.7%
Instagram	30	252	89.4%
Overall Percentage	17.4%	82.6%	66.8%

Growing Method: CHAID

Dependent Variable: which one do you prefer to use when communicating with others? International acquaintances?

The risk estimate of 0.332 indicates that the category predicted by the model (Facebook or Instagram) is wrong for 33.20% of the cases. So the “risk” of misclassifying a respondent is approximately 33%. The results in the classification table are consistent with the risk estimate. The classification table shows that the model classifies approximately 67% of the participants correctly.

Base on the result from the analysis, education is the best predictor when two platforms are posed for consideration. In a related research conducted on demographic variables and the use of SNS, when testing belief and attitudes in use, their results revealed that demographic variables are connected with attitude disparity and differences in users’belief (Lennon, Rentfro, & Curran, 2012). Thus the work revealed that education and gender are also predictors to preference of sites when selecting a specific network and communication with ones’ family by students.



Although there are other demographic factors that are used for the analysis when communicating with other international acquaintances, marital status serves as the best indicator and also gender, but the strongest is marital. There is correlation between communication skills and adjustment by the married (AhmadiGatab, &Khamen, 2011). The different marital levels posed for the research such as singles, in a relationship, divorce and the married have some disparity in levels they engage in communication with international acquaintances. In addition, gender serves as an indicator that based on the axiom of the uncertainty reduction theory and these two, “marital status and gender” may serve as a signal of whom to disclose ones identity to. Hence, self-disclosure is very essential that you may choose whom to disclose your personal information to. Consequently, people operate at different perspectives based on belief and so forth, thus female may be attracted to female while men may be attracted to men too, buttressing a point on “similarity” and “liking”. Thus they are essential with new axioms that are added in the theory which is “communication satisfaction” thus axioms 8 works (Redmond, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The place of prediction is an essential aspect that needs to be utilized in communication especially the type that has to do with different races, gender, and different marital status. It can be used to determine the level of relationship, but the use of platforms comes with different affordances which make users to select a network of their choice. Many factors could be responsible for such choices hence in future research, there may be need to get the right predictor that will serve as a guide for the work researchers will want to conduct for this will make their work a bit easier.

Future research can concentrate on the reasons why when communicating with families; educational levels play a major role for preference of sites and also the students’ gender. In addition the use of gender that predicts preference can be put into cognizance hence other demographic factors that are used will be reworked on in a different location to determine the acceptance of this result. This can be achieved when another method or approaches are adopted, hence the need for longitudinal studies.

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INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND AUTHORITY FIGURES IN BROADCAST OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC MESSAGES AMONG RURAL DWELLERS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the influence of the use of indigenous language and authority figures in the broadcast of COVID-19 messages among rural dwellers in South East Nigeria. This is against the backdrop of the failure of rural dwellers to pay attention and understand the COVID-19 pandemic messages which were disseminated in English language, and as such were not complying to the precautionary measures. The research was a descriptive survey. Five objectives guided the study which used the focus group discussion as the medium of data collection. The population was all rural dwellers in the five south-eastern states of Nigeria. The sample was 200 participants randomly selected from the five rural communities near the state capitals (Abakaliki- Nwofe; Awka- Achalla; Enugu- Uguuaji; Owerri- Nworieubi and Umuahia). The Limited Effects theory formed the theoretical underpinning for the study. Data were analyzed through thematic transcription of the responses of the participants during the focus group discussion. Results obtained show that most rural dwellers do not have access to social media platforms. Also, rural dwellers get their information basically from markets, churches, and towns meetings. It was gathered that use of indigenous language and leaders of thought provided the needed understanding, reach and conviction of the rural dwellers on the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concludes therefore that the use of indigenous language and authority figures are useful in helping rural dwellers in the South East zone to understand and comply with the COVID-19 pandemic messages and precautionary measures. Sequel to the findings, the study recommends that the ministries of Information should adopt the use of opinion leaders in disseminating such vital information. Also there is need for all communities to translate vital and sensitive information in local dialects to enable easy understanding and compliance especially by rural dwellers.

Keywords: Authority figures; COVID-19; Indigenous language; Social media and Pandemic,



INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 2019, media all over the world's major news were awash with story of someone at the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan China who was infected with a virus from an animal. Experts suggested that the animal pangolin was the staging post for the virus before it spreads to humans. The high level of uncertainty that surrounds the origin of the COVID-19 virus and the animals/species that passed it on to man, has set scientists working to unravel the mystery as it will help in forestalling future ones. However, the Head of Department of Microbiology at Melbourne's Monash University, Professor Stephen Turner, opines that the virus is most likely to have originated from bats. Professor Edward Holmes of the University of Sydney, in a study in 2018, examined the likely origins of the virus using its genome. He avers that the species that served as intermediate host for the virus has not been identified. However, the Medical Journal, the *Lancet* on the analysis of the first 41 cases of COVID-19, found that 27 of them were directly exposed to the Wuhan market. This finding asserts that the known index case of COVID-19 was not exposed to the market which cast doubt on the existing story (CNN, Aljazeera, NTA).

In January 2020, China had provided huge public health interventions to contain the coronavirus outbreak. But by 18th of March 2020, mainland China outside Hubei province confirmed 13,415 cases of COVID-19 infection with 120 deaths. The rate at which the virus spread to other parts of the world put all nations on their toes as they took measures to contain it (CNN). The WHO declared the COVID-19 a pandemic as it was ravaging nations and their economies and almost bringing life on earth to a halt. By 13th February 2020, the virus had spread to 15 Asian countries with the first case of an African that lives in China who contracted the virus (CNN). The 21-year-old Cameroonian student Kem Senou Pavel Daryl who lives in Chinese city of Jingzhou, according to CNN, said he does not want to take the virus to Africa. He was treated in an isolation center where he showed signs of recovery in two weeks.

By February 27th, a first Nigerian case was confirmed by the Federal Ministry of Health. The press release informed that it was an Italian who works with Agip Saipen in Banana Island, Lagos. He came into Nigeria from Milan with symptoms and tested positive to the virus in the virology lab of Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) which is part of laboratory network of Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

With the spread of the virus alongside spread of information on the precautions to take and need to report suspected cases, it was apparent from media reports that many Nigerians were not convinced of this negative reality; also, there was urgent need to protect the people. All these prompted the president to issue a lockdown order on the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Lagos and Ogun States while the NCDC, reportedly had to expedite action on contact tracing and provision of facilities that would help to contain and manage the pandemic. With this situation, states of the federation tried to adopt measures that would assist them in containing the pandemic. A veritable tool was found to be advocacy. The traditional media did not seem to be enough and because a lot of fake news had been spread through the social media including misinformation and disinformation, it became critical and necessary to spread the message of this pandemic to get to the masses. With the view expressed by Chen, Fay & Wang (2011) that the rise of social media and online communities enhances access and sharing of information, it is then auspicious to find out the extent to which broadcasts, which are mainly in English language, have been able to convey the message of the deadly COVID-19.



It was observed as reported in some media including ABS and NTA that many Nigerians especially rural dwellers do not care about the COVID-19 pandemic precautionary messages despite the numerous media campaign messages about the deadly pandemic. Could it be that many of them do not understand the COVID-19 messages being circulated across various media platforms; or could it be due to inaccessibility of media platforms especially in the rural areas or could this be due to the regard citizens have on the message medium and deliverers? Sequel to the above questions, in South East states, most communities had to translate the COVID-19 pandemic messages in their indigenous languages (dialects) to enable their people assimilate. Also, there was the need to use authority figures in these localities like the governors, traditional rulers, religious leaders, community heads, women's group leaders, and youths' representatives among others to educate rural dwellers about the pandemic. It is apparent that using these authority figures (who are held in high esteem by the rural dwellers) the people may have a rethink and may probably listen to the message on the premise that it may not be possible for their own sons and daughters to deceive them. It is against this background that the researchers examined how effective use of indigenous language and authority figures will be in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic messages in the South East states.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With all the recommendations on how to stay free from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not known to these researchers whether the people understand all the messages that are reeled out in the various media in English language. This erroneous belief may be the reason why many of them seem not to take any precautionary/safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible that this nonchalant attitude may have stemmed from their lack of understanding of English language (which is the principal means of disseminating the COVID-19 pandemic message).

Another possible reason may be the level of confidence reposed in the persons disseminating the COVID-19 messages. Some citizens have lost confidence in the authenticity of some messages in traditional and social media as a result of high rate of falsification or fake news. As a result, some may not pay attention to the COVID-19 pandemic message believing that it may also be false. These challenges create room for a search of better ways of enlightening citizens especially rural dwellers about COVID-19 pandemic. Now the problem of the study is to examine how effective the use of indigenous languages (dialect) and authority figures will be in helping rural dwellers in the South East understand COVID – 19 pandemic messages.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to establish the import of language and source in the spread of COVID-19 message. The specific objectives are:

- ascertain the level of access/exposure to media platforms by rural dwellers in the South East zone.
- find out the most popular media accessible to rural dwellers in the South East
- x-ray factors that determine attitude of rural dwellers in the South East to the COVID-19 pandemic messages being circulated
- determine if the use of indigenous languages in dissemination COVID-19 messages helps understanding and compliance by rural dwellers in the South East.
- ascertain the extent to which the use of authority figures in disseminating COVID-19 messages help understanding of and compliance to the message by rural dwellers in the South East.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent do citizens in South East rural areas have access to social media platforms?
- Which media platform do residents mostly use to obtain information in rural areas in South East?
- What factors influence attitude of residents of South East to the COVID-19 pandemic messages being circulated?
- To what extent does the use of indigenous languages in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic messages help citizens understand the message?
- How does the use of authority figures in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic message help citizens to understand and comply with the message?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous Language

As a major component of culture, language may be applied to improve various aspects of a person's life including health and economy. According to Gonzalez, Aaronson, Kellar, Walls & Greenfield (2018), indigenous language fits into the broader umbrella of cultural values and activities. This may be why language revitalization efforts are gaining grounds across the globe in the forms of language immersion, primary education programme and adult language nests (Gunderson 2010).

Thorpe and Galassi (2014) on the project "Rediscovering Indigenous languages" make a case for the use of indigenous languages to enhance community engagement and collaborations. The power of indigenous language to enhance social cohesion cannot be overemphasized, especially in spreading vital information as in the case of COVID-19 which was announced a pandemic and threat to existence on planet earth. Today, the mass media broadcast messages mostly in English language but experts, including NTA have made a case for increased broadcast content in indigenous language. This may have informed the use of local languages in passing on some information in the media.

While Wilson and Ogri (2014) stress the need for mass media broadcast in indigenous language they have a highlight on the positive implication on National development. Some indigenous languages across the globe are reported to be on the verge of extinction while some have died. According to a recent United Nations record, 7000 indigenous languages are spoken around the world today and 4 out of every 10 of them are in danger of going extinct. (Kayla 2019). Kayla (2019) also reports that following this disclosure, countries of the world have started taking steps to ameliorate the situation while UN experts have called for a series of steps including new laws and international commitments to reverse what they describe as "historic destruction" of indigenous languages.

This fate according to Akinkurolere (2011) befalls Igbo language and other indigenous Nigerian languages today which may have informed their inclusion as compulsory subjects in Nigerian Secondary Education curriculum. Nigeria's National Policy on Education as cited by Akinkurolere (2011) also encourages study of indigenous languages. In section 1 paragraph 8, it states that "the Federal Government beginning from late 1970s shall take official interest in and make policy pronouncements on the teaching of indigenous languages instead of concerning itself solely with English". Also in subsection 19(4), the document avers that "government should encourage the learning of indigenous languages". So far, one wonders the extent this policy has gone in promoting indigenous languages. It is however observed



that some social factors like class and status inhibit the study and propagation of Igbo language as some parents prevent their children from speaking the language. However, when government has messages to disseminate to the masses, evidence shows it is better achieved using indigenous language. This is seen in public service messages in government media outfits.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COVID-19 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The social media phenomenon is changed on the internet which affords the world all kinds of opportunities ranging from reading, watching to commerce. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre (2011) aver that consumers of the Internet adopt social media handles and platforms to create, modify, share and even discuss content. There is documented evidence indicating the extent to which the world depends on social media to seek information and interact with others (Greenwood, 2016). Many workers all over the world apply social media to work which became more common during the COVID-19 pandemic era when the world almost got grounded and most work, education and communication were based on the social media as one of the ways to control the spread of the pandemic. While describing the social media as ubiquitous for social networking and content sharing, Asur and Huberman (2010) forecasted power of the social media to influence sentiment which became evident during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The use of media in the Southeast Nigeria to disseminate information on COVID-19 was however common.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is an acronym formed by the WHO on the 11th day of February 2020 (Wu, 2020) for the novel Coronavirus disease that emerged in Wuhan City, Hubei province of China in December of 2019 which the WHO described as unprecedented and declared it a pandemic. Experts describe the COVID-19 as an infectious disease that is caused by severe/ acute respiratory syndrome driven by human-to-human transmission. There have been several speculations on the origin of the 2019 Coronavirus. Professor Perlman of University of Iowa contends that linking the origin to animals at the Wuhan market is coincidental though it cannot be ruled out even though he asserts that the possibility seems less likely because the genetic material of the virus had been found in the market environment. However, there is evidence that the so-called wet market where live animals are traded, had been connected to previous outbreaks of Corona viruses particularly SARS (Shereen, 2020) which an immunologist, Dr Michael Baker, upholds in the argument that people who were exposed to the Wuhan market were infected by the virus. By March 2020, COVID-19 has spread to all continents of the globe affecting 196 countries with four hundred thousand confirmed cases and over eighteen thousand deaths.

With the ravaging effects of the COVID-19 in parts of the world, the WHO came up with its research and development blueprint which was activated to accelerate diagnosis, vaccines and therapeutics for the novel Coronavirus (WHO, 2019). So far, there has not been a cure for this pandemic described as the enemy of mankind (Qian & Ren, 2020). The authors suggest that in spite of the safety measures which the people should observe, the international community should develop better cooperation and strong solidarity in the joint efforts to fight against the spread of the pandemic.

MANAGING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In Nigeria, managing the pandemic was a big challenge as it is critical that human behaviour and movement be controlled so as to curb the spread of the virus. Jelili (2020) avers that due to the cosmopolitan nature of Nigeria the country is prone to COVID-19 outbreak if stringent



public health measures are not in place, citing the July 2014 case of a Liberian diplomat who entered Nigeria with Ebola virus disease through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport Lagos. However, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the National Reference Laboratory Abuja geared up to face the challenges posed by COVID-19. Jelili (2020) informs that:

The NCDC has developed the Surveillance and Outbreak Response Management System (SORMAS) for case based reporting for epidemic prone diseases in eleven states of the federation. SirAware and Tatafo for event-based surveillance and incident management among NCDC staff members and Mobile Strengthening Epidemic Response System "mSers" for aggregate reporting. The establishment of National Incident Coordination Centre ICC for outbreak preparedness and response activities enables NCDC to gather intelligence reports daily identify impending public health threats and ensure that outbreak responses are well-coordinated and controlled.

With the above initiatives put in place Nigeria seems to be in good position to respond but there is a pressing need to communicate the dangers of the disease to the masses especially at the grassroots where communication may be impeded due to many factors including language and limited effects. With identification of Nigeria's index case of covid-19 on the 28 of January 2020, the Federal Government took the proactive step of closing all airports and shutting down international travels among others and providing quarantine and isolation centres for COVID-19 patients. These efforts trickled down to the States.

In a world of social media which is fraught with all forms of misinformation and disinformation, fraudulent claims and fake news as well as politicization of the pandemic some people were not ready to heed the safety advice that will prevent the spread of the virus. The imminent dangers of poor circulation of information and education on the COVID-19 pandemic made groups, individuals and governments to devise means of delivering the information to the masses in the most efficient ways. The various arms of government and media have been applied to this cause. In the South East (where Igbo language is predominant) public service advertisement and messages were received on both traditional and new media. This confirms the position of the Nature Medicine (2020) that communication, collaboration and cooperation can stop the COVID-19, hence this effort to investigate the significant contribution of indigenous language to spreading and adoption of the COVID-19 message on social media.

EMPIRICAL REVIEWS

Wilson and Ogri (2014) examined the role of indigenous language broadcasting in national development. These scholars x-rayed a multilingual, pluralistic and multi-ethnic country with upwards of 500 indigenous languages where language should be a tool for National development through promotion of indigenous culture, national Identity, national pride and unity. On the contrary, the choice of English language as an official medium of communication in the mass media and society at large remains an inhibition to growth of indigenous languages. They therefore made a case for ways the mass media can activate national development by highlighting and promoting indigenous language. This study was a content analysis of some programs on the stations under review while interviews were used to gather qualitative data. The research found that media outfits have not harnessed the potential in adopting indigenous languages for national development. The study relates to the current one as both of them focus on the potential of indigenous language to achieve a greater national good through the media. However, while the study under review adopted content



analysis and interview, the present study used FGD. Also, the study under review was in Calabar while this study is in South East Nigeria.

The research by Asur and Hubermann (2010) takes a look at the use of social media to strengthen languages with particular focus on endangered Sapmi languages in Europe. The study found that paucity of resources for teaching and promoting the language and the social media created the necessary ground for that. Apps and social media platforms and handles we are assorted to so as to augment but the researchers suggest avenues to strengthen endangered languages using the social media. This study relates to the current one in the sense that both have leaning to indigenous languages and social media. Also, the Sapmi language, though in Europe, is threatened likewise Igbo language which UNICEF noted is going into extinction. While the European scholars focused on learning and strengthening indigenous language using the social media, this work is on effectiveness of the use of indigenous language in spreading the COVID-19 message through social media.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will be supported by the Limited Effect theory by Paul Lazarsfeld (1940). The theory states that even if there is an effect created by the media on the thoughts and opinions of individuals; this effect is minimal or limited. The theory contends that messages pass from media through opinion leaders' opinion followers or social influences thus give rise to the two-step flow theory.

Opinion leader (June 2008) contends are individuals who are exposed to media content and spread the information and opinion provided by the mass media as far as they transmit them unchanged. However the consequences of direct effects on individuals who are not exposed to the media content give birth to the idea of "indirect effect". This theory has been linked to this study as information broadcast in indigenous language on social media passes through opinion leaders to opinion followers and have the tendency to be exposed to indirect effect.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a qualitative survey. The population for the study comprised of all residents in the states capitals of the five states that make up the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The sample comprised 200 respondents selected from 5 communities in the 5 states. Forty (40) respondents were selected from each state to give a total of 200 respondents. Data were collected by means of focus group discussion (FGD) scheduled with 5 lead questions. Each of the 5 groups comprised of 6 persons made up of 3 males and 3 females and the discussions were held in the house of the President-General of the community. The researchers as journalists were permitted by law to move about to gather reports on the pandemic and monitor compliance to the lockdown rules in the selected communities. It was during the monitoring exercise that the research team conducted the interviews in form of focus group discussion (FGD). The responses of the discussants were recorded which were later transcribed thematically to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent do citizens in South – East rural areas have access to social media platforms?

The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that their access to social media platforms is poor. Only a few of the respondents (about 10%) have access to WhatsApp.



According to one of the respondents, phone calls are limited to some areas due to poor network. Hardly do some residents in the area receive information via social media platforms. Most of the information the citizens receive are from newspapers, churches, news on TV and sometimes radio. In summary there is low access to social media by residents in rural communities in the South East. Some respondents however attest to the fact that some leaders in their communities who have access to social media information relay same to them.

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Research Question Two: Which media platform do residents mostly use to obtain information in rural areas in Southeast?

The respondents agreed that most of the information they receive are from the church (for parishioners). Others said they hear most news from market, streets and town meetings. One of the respondents lamented that some of them that have TV and radio at home do not enjoy them because there is usually power outage. The situation is made worse because not many people can afford generator as alternative source of power in the villages.

In addition, some other discussants noted that a few of them get news through phones especially when there is network. However, some of the respondents agreed to the fact that poor network and irregular power supply limit the extent to which their phones could be helpful in accessing information. Based on the analysis, it could be deduced that the most popular source of information among rural dwellers in South East is local information sources like market, church, towns meeting and social gatherings as well as Authority figures or opinion leaders.

Research Question Three: What factors influenced attitude of residents of South East to the COVID-19 pandemic messages being circulated?

In response to this question, some respondents noted that there have been series of fake news flying around, so they felt the COVID-19 issues may just be one of such fables. Moreover, some other respondents added that they found it difficult to believe some news relating to how contagious the disease is without remedy; especially when they do not know the person circulating the information. This, of course is traceable to a lot of deceptions that have been witnessed by many citizens in the community. Many people have been duped, killed or maltreated due to compliance to some fake news in circulation. At the end of the day, it was discovered that the sources of such news are not identifiable or authentic. According to one of the discussants, it may be very difficult for some people to believe any news circulating except they are sure of the source and the personality disseminating the news.

Another respondent quickly added that there was an instance where some people have been beaten up for spreading news which was believed to be fake. It was an unfortunate event. As a result, many of us here do not care to listen to most news especially if it has not come from a credible known source like radio or TV; more so, we don't even see light always, the man concluded. It then means that majority of the residents do not bother about COVID-19 news because of fear of being fake and the issue of authenticity of the disseminators.

Research Question Four: To what extent does the use of indigenous language and dialects in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic messages help citizens understand the message?

From the discussion held, many discussants testified that all the time the news of COVID-19 pandemic flew around, they never understood anything. The major reason was because many of the rural residents are not conversant with English language which was the principal means of dissemination. The few respondents who said they are privileged to listen to radio and television news complained that they hardly get the gist very well.



To make the matter worse, most of the times, there will be power outage so, one may not even be opportuned to hear the news. One of the respondents noted that it was only when their community heads held meeting and they translated the COVID-19 message in their local dialect that some of them knew what was happening. In the respondent's exact words he said "we were going about our normal business not minding all the rumor flying around about COVID-19 ... Later the chiefs in our town held a meeting, thereafter our community head instructed our town crier to go round the villages and announce the COVID-19, pandemic messages, its mode of operation, symptoms, mode of spread and preventive measures in our local dialect. Before then, one University don from my village (who is an expert in linguistics) was consulted at Awka to translate the COVID-19 message from English language to our local tongue. It was after the town crier went round that many residents began to understand and appreciate the message. The respondents noted that though many rural dwellers do not have phones that are WhatsApp compliant, their relatives, who have, helped in spreading those messages to them.

Notable among the messages mentioned by respondents are: the one produced by the traditional ruler of Okija and shared to members of the community; the one produced by a prominent Anam indigene in Anam dialect as well as those produced in Orumba and Nnewi dialects, all in Anambra state. Others mentioned are production in Nkanu and Nsukka dialects of Enugu state; the 5- dialect production for radio and television in Ebonyi state; the various productions by Mbaise clan of Imo state and the production voiced by the Governor of Abia state, Okezie Ikpeazu in local dialect.

One of the discussants even said that if they had not used our local dialect to spread the news may be people in our village will die too much because nobody cared to listen to news and radio all these while. In essence, the use of indigenous language helped residents to understand the COVID-19 pandemic message very well and to abide by the safety measures.

Research Question Five: How does the use of authority figures in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic message help citizens to understand and comply with the message?

Authority figures refer to personalities or entities that the people have respect and regard for. Examples are Pastors, Parish Priests, Reverend Fathers, Traditional rulers, village heads, community leaders etc. These people have voices among their subjects and as such can command great influence.

In responding to this question, some respondents noted that in their communities, there are people that when they talk, others will listen and there are others when they talk, nobody cares. One respondent stated that in their community, their Parish Priest took time (during one Sunday service) to explain to them (in their dialect) how to stay safe in the COVID-19 era. The Priest even gave few minutes for people to ask questions, she added. Another discussant told the group that their traditional ruler summoned everybody to the village square and explained to them why they must stay at home and take other precautionary measures against COVID-19. "The Igwe even told us that he (the Igwe) cannot be deceiving his own people, so he had to explain to us why we must obey the lockdown order, stating that it is for our good".

Another discussant added that "if not that our Reverend Father said so, me, I would not have listened to these their rumours; but after Father talked that Sunday, my mind was convinced that it is true". Going by the responses of the discussants, it could be seen that using authority



figures like traditional rulers, village heads, Parish Priests, Reverend Fathers etc was very useful and helpful in making the residents understand the COVID-19 pandemic message and to adopt the measures.

A lot of times, most people trust and respect these authority figures especially when they are indigenes. The people believe that their own sons and daughters cannot come to deceive their own people. If they do, they will always come home to face the consequences and possibly, sanctions. It could then be concluded that the use of authority figures in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic messages helped residents to understand, adopt and comply with the COVID-19 pandemic safety rules.

CONCLUSION

The study was on the influence of the use of indigenous language and authority figures in disseminating COVID-19 pandemic messages among rural dwellers in South East Nigeria. From the study, it was gathered that rural residents have poor access to social media platforms hence they hardly access news via social media. In the same vein, it was gathered that many rural residents in South East get news majorly from local sources like markets, churches or town meetings. Many residents seem to neglect the COVID-19 pandemic messages in circulation because of distrust about their truthfulness and authenticity of their sources. The study found out that the use of local dialect (indigenous language) was very effective in helping rural residents in South East to understand the COVID-19 pandemic messages. Finally the use of authority figures helped residents to understand, adopt and comply with the COVID-19 pandemic safety and precautionary rules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following are recommended:

- There is need to provide electricity and social media platforms for rural dwellers to enable them access news and information faster and better.
- Most rural dwellers lack media platforms for accessing information hence it is instructive for the government to extend communication network, and TV stations in rural areas to help them obtain first hand information.
- There is need for the Ministry of Information to monitor the authenticity of any information or news being disseminated to boost the confidence of the populace.
- The study found that the use of local dialect helped residents to understand the COVID – 19 pandemic message, hence it is imperative that all communities in Nigeria translate the COVID-19 message in their indigenous dialects to help rural dwellers understand, adopt and to comply with the safety rules.
- The government should sustain use of authority figures in the dissemination of important messages to the masses since the masses trust them and have more regard for them.

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INFLUENCE OF ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY ON IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

Juvenile access and exposure to online pornography is an alarming and escalating problem worldwide. This study attempts to find out the reasons for Internet pornography use and its influence among in-school adolescents in Imo State. To achieve these objectives, a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of research was employed. Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion were used to gather data for quantitative and qualitative research methods respectively. While 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 493 were retrieved and valid for the study, six different FGD's were constituted. Multi-stage, simple random and systematic sampling techniques were used for the selection of the respondents for the quantitative method because the population of the study cut across the three educational zones of the state and classes, purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This technique was used to select members for the study based on their relevance to the study. The study was anchored on Social Learning and Uses and Gratification theories. Results show that in-school adolescents view online pornography to a high extent. Results also show that curiosity and fun were the primary motivations for the use of Internet pornography among in-school adolescents in Imo state. The study also found that Internet pornography corrupts their minds and makes them have wild thoughts that are capable of distracting them from their academics. Based on these results, the researcher recommends that parents should use both technical and physical strategies to monitor what their adolescent children do on the Internet

Keywords: Influence, Motivation, Use, Internet-Based Pornography, In-school Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Unlike in the past, when pornography was found mostly in conventional forms of magazines, books and films, the Internet has become the central vehicle for the distribution of pornography, thereby, altering the ways individuals use pornography. The rise of Internet pornography is presumably because of its increased anonymity, affordability and accessibility (Carroll, Jason, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, McNamara and Madsen, 2008; Essays UK, 2018) that it provides. There are concerns about children's use of pornography, and these concerns have a long history that extends back to the Victorian era (Kendrick, 1987). In our current age, popular media discussions of the dangers of Internet pornography for children and adolescents have begun to revolve around public health conceptualizations (Kohut and Štulhofer, 2018).

Motivation has been described as an individual's inferred need, desire, or impulse which initiates, directs and sustains behaviour (Coon, 1997). It can also mean sources of purposive and goal-directed behaviour that serve "to energize and guide action towards desired ends. For one to embark on any activity or task in life, there are benefits that the individual intends to achieve. No one does anything without a purpose; likewise, adolescents must have reasons why they expose themselves to Internet pornography.



The Internet has substantially changed the way society consumes pornographic materials and has become the most popular venue for this original purpose. However, researchers have paid little attention to why people, especially adolescents, use pornographic materials online. Arguing that the use of Internet pornography is a motivated behaviour meant to obtain what one wants to see, this study attempts to identify specific motivations for Internet pornography use. Also, the study examined the influence of Internet-based pornography on in-school adolescents in Imo State, South-East, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the penetration of the Internet into Nigeria's cyberspace in 2001, many young people are using the Internet and this has negatively led to the pronounced level of moral decadence among Nigerian youths. Porn crept into our society beginning from playboy magazine (foreign magazine), Hollywood movies through the display of sexual scenes and then the Internet. The primary carriers of porn in Nigeria are the Internet and movies. Today, Nigerian youths seem to be the largest patrons of Internet porn, apart from America. Besides viewing porn materials, they can be seen on mobile phones which come in pictures and videos (Okafor, Efetobor and Apeh, 2015).

According to the World Internet stats (2020), Nigeria ranks sixth among the top twenty nations out of the 198 countries on earth that are using the Internet. Here, Internet User is an individual, of any age, who can access the Internet at home, via any device type (computer or mobile) and connection.

To better explain the ways people use Internet pornography and further understand pornography's effects on individuals and society, it is crucial to understand what motivations drive people to use Internet pornography and how these motivations work.

There has been little attention given to examining Internet pornography use from the user's perspective (Larena and Hoeber, 2012). Few studies have explicitly attempted to understand in-school adolescents' needs or motivations driving Internet pornography use.

This study is, therefore, an attempt to investigate the potential dimensions of motivation for using Internet pornography from a communications perspective; the primary goal of this study is to identify the motivations for Internet pornography use to understand clearly its influence on individuals and the society at large with particular reference to in-school adolescents in Imo State, South East, Nigeria.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To find out to what extent in-school adolescents view pornography on the Internet.
- To identify reasons for Internet pornography use among in-school adolescents in Imo state.
- To identify influences of exposure to Internet-based pornography on in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Research Questions

- To what extent do in-school adolescents view pornography on the Internet?
- What are the reasons for Internet pornography use among in-school adolescents in Imo state?
- What are the influences that exposure to Internet-based pornography has on in-school adolescents in Imo state?



LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet Pornography and Adolescents

Internet pornography is any material (either picture or word) that is sexually explicit and accessible over the Internet, primarily via websites, peer-to-peer file sharing, or Usenet newsgroups (Cowie, 2014). More than 100 million public websites host as many as 100 billion individual documents, a significant percentage of which is pornographic (Knutson, 2014).

The relationship between the Internet and pornography is symbiotic. Jonathan (2004) posits that pornography is one of the driving forces behind the expansion of the World Wide Web and on the other hand, the Internet has escalated the problem of pornography by increasing the amount of material available, the efficiency of its distribution and the ease of its accessibility (Wortley and Smallbone, 2012). While pornography had been available over the Internet since the 1980s, it was the availability of widespread public access to the World Wide Web in 1991 that led to an expansion of Internet pornography (Cowie, 2014).

Many scholars have established that adolescents have more access to the Internet. (Assael, 2005; Ballarotto, Volpi, Marzilli and Tambelli, 2018). Today's youth live in a highly sexualized media culture where the lines between pornography and popular entertainment have become increasingly blurred (MediaSmart, n.d). As one young person told the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, "Basically, porn is everywhere" (Horvath, Miranda, Alys, Llian, Massey, Kristina, Pina, Afroditi, Scally, Mia, Adler and Joanna, 2013; MediaSmart, n.d). Even those youths who don't seek out pornography are exposed to highly sexualized content; in fact, they are more likely to encounter sexual material on TV or in music than through the Internet. Popular culture has, in general, become significantly more sexualized (MediaSmart, n.d).

Research has also shown that the most popular venue for accessing pornography is mobile or personal phones, also known as GSM or mobile devices. This popularity is because it guarantees privacy, more access and higher opportunities to view pornographic materials (Hardy, Steelman, Coyne and Ridge, 2013). One of the reasons many adolescents prefer to connect to the Internet with mobile devices rather than stationary computers is the privacy afforded by mobile devices. Mobile phones allow them to view content that, in many cases, is not monitored by authority figures such as parents and teachers (Vanden, Abeele, Campbell, Eggermont and Roe, 2014).

One of the biggest concerns voiced by parents of young Internet users is the easy access to pornography that the web provides. There are millions of porn sites online, making hardcore sexual images that were once very difficult to obtain now just a click away (MediaSmart, n.d).

There are a vast number of studies related to pornography conducted over the past years. (Essays UK, 2018; Carroll, Jason, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, McNamara and Madsen, 2008; Romito and Beltramini, 2011; Mayungbo, Sunmola, Morakinyo, Oyinola, Famakinde, Obosi, Opayemi, 2017). Results from these studies reflect that the Internet is the most popular form of accessing porn among adolescents. In the United States alone, 90% of adolescents aged 12 to 18 have Internet access at home, and a vast majority of them have either visited a pornographic website accidentally or intentionally at least once in their adolescent life. Studies revealed as well that since the pornographic websites are free, and the



readers/viewers remain undetected or anonymous, adolescents became fond of accessing these websites (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2005; Essays UK, 2018).

The growing number of adolescents accessing porn websites on the Internet purposefully is quite alarming (Essays UK, 2018). Fifteen percent of these adolescents even resort to lying about their age to gain access to these websites (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2005).

Most pornography websites allow users access that is simple and fast with no verification of age required (DeAngelis, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell and Finkelhor, 2007; Mayungbo et al, 2017). This lack of restriction is evident in all forms of physical Internet access, including through computers, mobiles and iPods (Eberstadt and Layden, 2010; Grubbs, Wright, Braden, Wilt & Kraus, 2019).

Motivations for Internet Pornography Use

Searching for sexually explicit material on the Internet is an intentional and purposeful behaviour. Dutta-Bergman (2003) asserts that all Internet activities are above a specific level of cognitive threshold. In other words, online activities are goal-directed and reflect the user's experiential styles (Chen, Houston, Sewell and Schatz, 1998). This indicates that people type keywords such as "sex" or "pornography" into search engines to find what they want to see, or that they log on to specific sexual sites that they believe can meet their particular motivations. There are studies in the communication field on the role of motivation to media use. In particular, the uses and gratification perspective regards the concept of the motivation behind media use as a critical factor that can account for one's media consumption (Rubin, 1983). Media Dependency Theory (MDT) also posits that one's media consumption is not accidental; instead, it is a planned and intended behaviour (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). It means that individuals are motivated to maintain and enhance themselves via media use. Because information is indispensable for obtaining goals, the media are an essential resource as information channels for individuals' survival or growth (Ball-Rokeach, 1998). It is common for theorists to define motivation in terms of an individual's inferred need, desire, or impulse which initiates, directs and sustains behaviour (Coon, 1997). According to McKenna, Green and Smith (2001, p. 23), motivation can be defined as sources of purposive and goal-directed behaviour that serve "to energize and guide action towards desired ends."

Batty (2004) concludes that the majority of adolescents have already come into contact with pornography on the Internet. The average age of the first exposure to adult videos is 11 years old (Knutson, 2014; Perry, 2019; Fight the New Drug, 2020).

Sexual issues and encounters relating to sexuality are still not openly discussed within the family (Essays UK, 2018). Questions and discussions on sex are still a "taboo" topic for many families in Africa such that their children seek guidance and direction from their friends rather than their parents. This leads these children to improper notions of sex and the incorrect use of their sexuality because they lack proper guidance and knowledge (Essays UK, 2018). Studies also revealed that one-third of the adolescents today have had nasty sexual comments from other people which led them to become curious about sexual matters (Batty, 2004).

Moreover, studies revealed that the reasons why accessing pornography over the Internet were the most popular were anonymity, unlimited access and the less strict requirements of getting into a website (Batty, 2004; Essays UK, 2018).



Effects of Internet Pornography on Adolescents

The long-standing issues on pornography have been present in every generation. They have undeniably caused adverse effects on the way people viewed sexuality and their relationships to the opposite sex. As the spread of different kinds of technologies increased further, especially as the use of computers and the Internet became more prominent in the lives of the adolescents, the problems and issues on pornography worsened even more (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2005; Essays UK, 2018). The increase in access of young children and the adolescents to the use of the Internet and the viewing of pornographic sites has posed severe threats and harm over the health, psychological and social development of these people (Mesch, 2006; Essays UK, 2018).

Some may argue that watching pornography is part of the healthy sexual exploration and growth of a young person and should be encouraged, but Powell (2015) describes the critical highlights of a TED talk by Gary Wilson, a retired neurologist. The discussion was titled “The Great Porn Experiment.” In the video, Wilson details the devastating effects of long term consumption of pornography on the developing brain including, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), social anxiety and depression. Wilson (2013) opined that pornography also numbs the ability to feel real-life intimacy. The longer a brain is exposed to pornography, the more hyperactive it becomes at the sight of pornography. In other words, the more one views pornography, the more the brain desires it. It is a vicious cycle that ultimately erodes one’s willpower and self-control.

Some scholars have argued that most kids at a tender age do not understand the content of these pornographic materials; hence they cannot be affected by what they do not understand (Orlowski, 2012; Oyedunni, 2016). But other scholars are of the view that if young children can’t understand sex or its role in relationships, the images they see can leave a lasting impression on them. This is due to a concept known as neuroplasticity (Gomez, 2008; Armstrong, Quadara, El-Murr and Latham, 2017).

Neuroplasticity is the process by which a human brain creates new neural networks by continually reorganizing itself. This means that one’s brain is constantly optimizing itself to perform efficiently despite any loss of brain function due to age, injury, etc. (Beck, 2017). One of the known components of neuroplasticity is that as one age, his brain becomes less plastic and resists change at a higher degree than when he was younger. This is especially true for children: neuroplasticity is at its highest during childhood and adolescent phases, then decreases continually for the remainder of one’s lives. Our children’s brains are shaped by their experiences, and those experiences determine much of their character throughout their lives. So, due to the high neuroplasticity, any values or ideas that are learned from pornography will have a lasting impact on children’s lives if they are not addressed appropriately (Beck, 2017).

Outside of poor moral judgments about pornography, some research has indicated that compulsive pornography viewing can have significant effects in an adolescent’s life (Rossi, 2002).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study anchors on Social Learning and Uses and Gratification theories. Social Learning Theory (SLT), also known as the Observational Learning theory. The core tenets and basic assumptions of the theory were formulated by Albert Bandura. According to Bandura and the supporters of SLT, people learn new information and behaviours by watching and mimicking. They argue that behaviours are learnt through direct observation and internalization. SLT asserts that behaviours are usually triggered by some antecedents like observation and



watching that often lead to imitation of the observed behaviour through the process of retrieval, rehearsal, or training (Ali and Nafiu, 2018).

In this study, the theory is useful in understanding how exposure to Sexually Explicit Materials can affect adolescents. Bandura, 1978 in Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017; Ali and Nafiu, 2018 posits that learning from the new media is largely dependent on a series of mental processes that include attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation. Through the media, adolescents not only learn what is likely to be the outcome of sexual activity, but also consciously engage in it or approve of it and come to see themselves as able to participate in similar activities themselves (Ali and Nafiu, 2018). Although SLT provides an avenue to understand the relationship between observation and learning, it fails to give the motivational forces for imitation. The Uses and Gratification theory addresses this gap (Ali and Nafiu, 2018).

Uses and Gratification theory (UGT) is traced to the 1940s when researchers in the United States became interested in reasons for viewing the media. Studies conclude that different people use the media for different motivations and purposes (Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017; Ali and Nafiu, 2018). Elihu Katz first introduced the UGT and developed by Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch. The theory submits that people use the media and its contents to their benefits. This theory is contemporary as it contradicted older views that assumed the audience was a passive group (Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The UGT approach views the audience as active; meaning that they actively seek out specific media and its content to achieve precise results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs (Rossi, 2002). It presents the use of media in terms of the satisfactions of social or psychological needs of the individual (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974, cited in Chandler, 1994).

The Uses and Gratification theory provides a framework for explaining audience motivations for media usage (Oguche, 2014). Also, Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) corroborate with Folarin (1998) when they argued that studies of media “uses and gratifications” are ultimately an effort to understand effects. Since the objectives of this study are to find out the motivations for the use of Internet pornography and to identify the various ways in which Internet-based pornography affects in-school adolescents in Imo State among other objectives, the researcher is optimistic that the Uses and Gratification theory will serve as a good foundation for this study.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method comprising a quantitative and qualitative design. Whereas the quantitative design made use of a survey, the qualitative design used focus group discussions (FGD). The survey and focus group discussion played complementary roles. The rationale is not only to compensate weakness in a method with the strength of the other but also to substantiate statistical findings with the original statement of respondents (Frey, Botan and Kreps, 2000, p. 222). While the survey gives a researcher the opportunity to study people’s opinion on a given issue of public importance, the focus group discussion allows a researcher to study the respondents in a more natural conversational pattern. The strength of FGD lies in allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how the group thinks about an issue. Furthermore, the researcher



intends to use FGD as it can explore the meaning of survey results that cannot be explained statistically, the range of opinions/views and to collect a wide range of local terms.

The study area is Imo state. Imo state was chosen as it is an educationally high-achieving state which has over the years been one of the states that produced the highest number of candidates in Nigeria for external examinations such as JAMB, WAEC and NECO. For instance, Imo state has produced the highest number of candidates in the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) for many years (Abah, 2016; Erunke, 2018). The state is therefore assumed to have adolescents who are Internet and ICT savvy. The state has twenty-seven local government areas in three educational zones. The three educational zones are Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe educational zones.

According to the Open Registry of the Ministry of Education, Owerri, the population of students for the 2018/2019 academic year from 260 government-owned secondary schools and 328 government-approved private secondary schools in Imo state stands at 460,742. Out of this number, 500 students were chosen as the sample for the study. The sample size was arrived at in line with the submissions of Comrey and Lee (1992) rating scale of sample size adequacy: 100 = poor, 200 = fair, 300 = good, 500 = very good, 1,000 or more = excellent. The study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique involving simple random, systematic and convenience sampling techniques respectively. The sampling went through five stages. In the first stage, two local governments were chosen using simple random sampling through the table of random numbers from the three educational zones in the state. In stage two, one public (government-owned) and one government-approved private secondary school were selected from the local government areas selected in stage one using simple random sampling techniques. Here, again the table of random numbers was employed to select secondary schools from the local government areas selected in stage one. In stage three, simple random sampling was used to draw one class from the junior section i.e. JS 1-JS3 of the secondary schools picked in stage two and J.S. 2 was picked. In stage four, simple random sampling was also used to pick one class from the senior section i.e. SS1-SS3 of the secondary schools picked in stage two and SS 3 was picked.

At the last stage, a systematic sampling method was employed to pick students from the official class list of JS 2 and SS 3 of all the selected secondary schools in the three educational zones in the state. Twelve schools were selected; the researcher also selected two classes in these twelve schools. This means that twenty-four classes were used for the study and sixteen samples were studied in each class selected. This allocation is gotten by dividing the sample by the total number of classes selected. That is $500/24 = 20.8333$ app. 21. According to the Open Registry of the Ministry of Education, there are at least forty students in four streams of a class totalling one hundred and sixty students in public (government-owned) secondary.

Based on the above facts, the nth student in each of the schools was gotten by dividing the total number of students in a class by the class allocation thus: Nth student of public (government) owned secondary schools: $160/21 = 7.6 = 8$ (app.)

Hence, one student was selected from the official class list at intervals of 8 beginning from the 1st student on the class list. This continued until a total of 21 students were gotten for that class.

The researcher used the convenience sampling procedure to convene six focus group discussion sessions with at least eight to ten discussants per session. A structured



questionnaire and focus group discussion guide were the data collection instruments for the survey and FGD respectively. Quantitative data analysis employed simple percentages as well as mean scores and standard deviation scores. In contrast, a descriptive thematic method was used to analyse the qualitative data for the analyses of the qualitative data.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Out of 500 copies of the questionnaire administered to respondents in Imo State, 493 (98.6%) were returned and found useful for data analysis, thus giving the questionnaire a mortality rate of 7 (1.4%).

Table 1: *Distribution of responses showing socio-demographic data of respondents*

S/N	Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Age	11 – 13 years	92	18.7
		14 – 16 years	245	49.7
		17 – 19 years	156	31.6
2.	Gender:	Male	268	54.4
		Female	225	45.6
3.	Present Class:	JSS 1 – 3	235	47.7
		SS 1 – 3	258	52.3
Total			493	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The demographic data of respondents (i.e. in-school adolescents) shows that in-school adolescents between 14-16 years were predominant with 49.7%. They were closely followed by those between 17-19 years with 31.6%. Those 11-13 years made up 18.7 per cent of the respondents. Also, there is a preponderance of male in-school adolescents representing 54.4% when compared to their female counterpart 45.6% of the total respondents. The table on the present class of respondents showed that most of them were in the Senior Secondary classes as the data present 258, representing 52.3% in SS classes and 235, representing 47.7% in JS classes.

Research Question One: **To what extent do in-school adolescents view pornography on the Internet?**

Table 2: *Distribution of responses showing respondents' access to the Internet*

S/N	Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Do you have access to the Internet?	Yes	372	75.5
		No	114	23.1
		Undecided	7	1.4
Total			493	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents have access to the Internet. This implies that they can answer the questions of the study.

Table 3: *Distribution of responses showing respondents exposure to sexually-explicit contents*

S/N	Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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1.	Since you have access to the Internet, have you ever come across sexually-explicit contents?	Yes	312	83.9
		No	45	12.1
		I don't know	15	4
	Total		372	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 clearly shows that majority of the respondents have come across sexually-explicit contents on the Internet.

Table 4: Distribution of responses showing respondents opinion on their first exposure to pornography

S/N	Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	My first encounter with pornography was	Accidental	296	94.9
		Deliberate	12	3.8
		Undecided	4	1.3
	Total		312	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4 shows that most respondents' first encounter with pornography on the Internet was accidental; they did not deliberately go in search for it.

Table 5: Distribution of responses showing respondents' frequency of viewership of pornography online

S/N	Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	How often do you view pornography anytime you go online?	Always	82	26.3
		Occasionally	177	56.7
		Never	53	17
	Total		312	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents view pornography on the Internet occasionally (56.7%) while 26.3% of the respondents view it always. The least of all is 17% of the respondents who NEVER view pornography online. The picture, however, suggests that most respondents view pornography be it occasionally or always.

Research Question Two: What are the reasons for Internet pornography use among in-school adolescents in Imo state?

Table 6: Distribution of responses showing reasons for Internet pornography use among respondents

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	St.D
1.	Adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography to know more about sexuality and sex education	68	178	97	59	91	3.15	1.324
2.	Adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography to satisfy their curiosity on some issues they can't discuss with their parents or teachers	64	228	46	50	85	3.36	1.346
3.	Adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography because they see it as an	33	103	47	151	159	2.39	1.306



	adventure							
4.	Adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography due to peer pressure / influence	23	61	130	188	91	2.47	1.071
5.	Adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography to satisfy their sexual desires	59	82	104	120	128	2.89	1.280
6.	Internet pornography is educative	59	120	104	128	82	2.89	1.280
7.	Internet pornography is entertaining / fun	73	133	94	109	84	3.00	1.330

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The limit of a real number is used as a basis to determine the cut-off point for each level of measurement. Those responses that have mean scores within the range of the limits set for each range of analysis are named by those ranges of measurement. Here is a run-down of the limits set for real numbers that fall within each scale of measurement.

- For “Strongly Agree decision = (5.00 – 4.45) = 5point
- For “Agree decision = (4.44 – 3.45) = 4point
- For “Disagree” decision = (3.44 – 2.45) = 3point
- For “Strongly Disagree” decision = (2.44 – 1.45) = 2point
- For “Undecided” decision = (1.44 – 0.45) = 1point

The result in Table 6 shows a preponderance of decisions tilting towards “Disagree” based on the above benchmark called “Limit of real numbers”.

From the result, all the responses fall within the “Disagree” decision as indicated in the figures under “D” column (i.e. 3.44 – 2.45). Majority of the respondents agree that adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography to know more about sexuality and sex education. A higher number of them also agree that adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography to satisfy their curiosity on some issues they can’t discuss with their parents or teachers. However, a higher number of the respondents were undecided about adolescents exposing themselves to Internet pornography for adventure and to satisfy their sexual desires. Furthermore, a majority of them strongly disagree that adolescents expose themselves to Internet pornography due to peer pressure / influence and Internet pornography is educative. At the same time, a higher number of respondents agree that Internet pornography is entertaining / fun.

The classification of all the responses into the ‘Disagree’ decision (3.44-2.45) is because most of the respondents are undecided in their responses. The reason for this is not far-fetched as these respondents are still very young and or maybe naïve and shy to admit some of these motivations.

Research Question Three: What are the influences that exposure to Internet-based pornography has on in-school adolescents in Imo state?

Table 7: Distribution of responses showing the effects of Internet pornography on the developmental processes of respondents

S/ N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	St.D
1.	Adolescents who expose themselves to Internet pornography are more likely to have sex earlier than they should	135	182	58	67	51	3.570	1.299



2.	Adolescents who expose themselves to Internet pornography are more likely to have feelings of dissatisfaction with one’s body and sexual anxiety	124	212	52	54	51	3.620	1.258
3.	Exposure to Internet pornography can generate anxiety, confusion, weak social bonds and addictions in adolescents	152	183	60	30	68	3.650	1.340

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The limit of real number is used as a basis to determine the cut-off point for each scale of measurement. Those responses that have mean scores within the range of the limits set for each scale of measurement are named by those scales of analysis.

The result in Table 7 shows a preponderance of decisions tilting towards “Agree” based on the above benchmark called “Limit of real numbers”.

From the result, all the responses fall within the “Agree” decision as indicated in the figures under “A” column. Hence, respondents agree that adolescents who expose themselves to Internet pornography are more likely to have sex earlier than they should, have feelings of dissatisfaction with their body and experience sexual anxiety. Lastly, exposure to Internet pornography can generate anxiety, confusion, weak social bonds and addictions in adolescents.

The responses that rank highest in the “Agree” decision were: exposure to Internet pornography can generate anxiety, confusion, weak social bonds and addictions in adolescents (mean = 3.650, St. Dev. = 1.340). It was followed by adolescents who expose themselves to Internet pornography are more likely to have feelings of dissatisfaction with one’s body and sexual anxiety (Mean = 3.620, St. Dev. = 1.258). The least in the table are adolescents who expose themselves to Internet pornography are more likely to have sex earlier than they should (Mean = 3.570, St. Dev. = 1.299).

Results from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A total of 6 focus group discussion sessions took place in six secondary schools drawn from the three educational zones in Imo State. The focus group discussion addressed the three research questions and played a complementary role in the survey. One public and one private secondary school were selected from the educational zones. The FGD guide had twelve questions.

The strength of FGD lies in allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how the group thinks about an issue. Furthermore, the researcher used the FGD to explore the meaning of survey findings that cannot be explained statistically, the range of opinions/views and to collect a wide range of local terms.

From the six sessions, the discussants agreed and disagreed but at the end, some resolutions were made. The first research question wanted to find out the extent to which in-school adolescents view pornography on the Internet. Discussants agreed that they have Internet-enabled gadgets through which they have come across pornographic materials. For most of them, their first encounter was unintentional rather than deliberate. The discussants also revealed that after their first accidental encounter with pornography on the Internet, they



deliberately visit pornographic sites. Also, most of the discussants visit these sites once in a while and spend not less than one hour on these sites. Based on these, it is evident that these discussants viewed pornography to a high extent since they deliberately visit pornographic sites frequently visit these sites spending not less than one hour on the sites.

The second research question asked about the reasons for Internet pornography use among in-school adolescents. The discussion with the students saw them enumerating a lot of reasons for Internet pornography use among these in-school adolescents. Among the reasons mentioned, the primary motivation for use of Internet-based pornography is fun followed by adventure and then to satisfy curiosity. These results, however, disagree with a study carried out by Igyuve and Agbele (2018) on undergraduates of Nassarawa State University, Keffi on the gratifications derived from Internet pornography. The study found out that sexual gratifications were the primary gratification derived from exposure to Internet pornography. Other gratifications included stress relief, learning new sexual techniques, mere sexual arousal and strengthening family lives, particularly if viewed with one's partner. The variance in results of the two may be evident in the fact that undergraduates are more matured and have passed through various hurdles of life, unlike in-school adolescents who are still at a very early part of their lives.

The third research question which sought to find out the influences that exposure to Internet-based pornography has on in-school adolescents was highly revealing in the focus group discussion. Discussants were of the view that exposure to Internet pornography affects them in several ways with corrupt minds/wild thoughts taking majority closely followed by distraction from their academics and imitation among other ways.

These were some of the excerpts from the focus group discussion on this research question: "...it makes one absent-minded. While a teacher is teaching, one may be imagining what the teacher will look like when naked instead of paying attention to what the teacher is teaching..."

(Focus Group Discussion, 21st November 2019, 1. 15pm)

"...pornography makes adolescents have wild and negative thoughts all the time. When someone makes a statement, the person will interpret it negatively. The person's mind is already polluted by pornography. For instance, a physics teacher teaching the law of motion says that when the inward force is directly proportional to the force applied and then my friend interpreted it negatively to our surprise..."

(Focus Group Discussion, 28th November 2019, 12. 36pm)

CONCLUSION

The study examined how Internet pornography influences in-school adolescents and what motivates them to use Internet pornography. Based on the result of the study, the researcher concludes that about 80% of respondents who have access to the Internet have come across sexually explicit contents and visit porn sites after the first accidental encounter. Data from the study also show that in-school adolescents in Imo state use the Internet for the desire for knowledge and fun. At the same time, it affects their developmental processes physically, academically and psychologically. It however, leads to the conclusion that in-school adolescents' access to the Internet enhances their exposure to sexually explicit contents. Also, exposures to such pornographic contents influence the developmental processes of these adolescents despite their motivations for use.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents should make use of parental control software to monitor what their adolescent children do on the Internet. Companies now market new tools to track where children go online, who they meet there and what they do. Such parental control software includes Net Nanny, Family Time, OurPact, Norton Family Premier, Web Watcher etc. Parents can also block or control on an app-by-app basis, apply Internet filters, monitor calls and texts and keep an eye on contact lists.
- Parents should create time to go through the Internet browser history and photo galleries of their adolescents' phones from time to time and unannounced too.
- Since no filter is 100% effective, parents and teachers should establish an environment of open communication, where the adolescent is encouraged to take the lead in terms of their unpleasant experiences on the Internet. They should endeavour to discuss issues on sex and sexuality from an early age with their children since a majority of respondents submitted that they go to porn sites to satisfy their curiosity in some matters that they cannot discuss with their parents or teachers.
- Parents should discourage the use of mobile phones for their adolescent children. The Internet has potentials, and it is mostly used for homework by adolescents, there should be a desktop or laptop connected to the Internet and situated in a central place where these adolescents can do their assignments, thereby, making it less personalized.

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YOUTH'S EXPOSURE AND UTILIZATION OF INTERNET ADVERTISEMENTS IN AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined youth's exposure and utilization of internet advertisements, in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. It adopted survey research design. The population of study includes all youth in Awka metropolis. An appropriate sample size of 400 was gotten from the population using probability sampling technique. Six research questions were used as primary data instrument. The finding shows that youths in Awka metropolis were exposed to the Internet advertisements, that majority of youths in Awka metropolis accessed internet advertisements mostly via their android/mobile phones. Also, WhatsApp is the social media platform that youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to internet advertisements most; that social interaction drives Awka' youth to internet advertisements most, and their exposure to the Internet advertisements influenced them to buy and subscribe to advertised products and services. It is concluded that youths in Awka metropolis are not only exposed to Internet advertisements but also utilize them through buying and subscribing to the advertised products and services daily.

Keywords: Awka metropolis, Exposure, Internet, Internet advertisements, Utilization, Youth

INTRODUCTION

Internet is a medium of mass communication. With it, people can effectively communicate with one another, socialise, and transact businesses and services anytime, even from the comfort of their homes. This view is supported by McCarthy (2007), who posits that the world has been entirely permeated by information and communication technologies which now increasingly determine not only how humans communicate with each other but equally how they live their entire life.

Duru (2014, p. 7) defines Internet as a 'computer-based platform that enables the exchange of information among connected users worldwide', adding that its strength lies in its rich multi-media nature and inexhaustibility as well as the flexibility which it offers the user.

Agba (2001) further reiterates that uniqueness of internet is that it brings far greater information empowerment to humans. It could be because the Internet has continued to grow



in popularity since its invention owing to availability of numerous technological devices used in accessing it such as desktop computers, laptop computers, mobile phones, palmtops, and etc. Baran (2010) observes that Internet has become the most influential communicative force globally. His reason could be because the Internet helps people to live and relate effectively with their environments as well as to achieve economic, political, scientific and cultural aspirations.

According to Obiajulu (2008), access to the Internet is an essential variable in measuring social empowerment, enhancing one's active participation and self-assertion in the social milieu. Thus, Duru (2011) contends that sharing of texts, pictures, sounds, videos and graphics are parts of activities performed on the Internet.

This boils down to internet advertising or internet advertisements because they were placed on the Internet by identified persons with the aim of getting people to search and use them. Advertising is one prominent activity often carried out on the web with the primary purpose of attracting consumers (users) to buy products; goods and services. Thus, Nwodu (2017), while stressing that every media technology or content has a unique purpose it serves, describes advertising as a professional practice that involves the production of the commercial messages.

Statista (2018), an online United Kingdom weekly internet users reviewer adds e-mail, banking, communications, transactions, social media networking, news dissemination, watching of video clips and internet televisions, health, listening to internet radio/ audio services, government services, games upload and adding of content as forms of internet advertisements. There is no doubt that these various internet innovations gave rise to many internet or electronic terminologies like electronic mails (email), internet advertising, electronic books (e-Book), electronic journals (e-journals), to mention a few.

Adeleke (2016) further categorizes these internet advertising agents and products they market. The companies that deal on general merchandise or marketers of all kinds of goods and services are Jumia Nigeria, Konga, Dealdey, Yudala, Payports, Veonnet among others. Companies that deal on fashion and wears are Fashpa and Tracklist. The Glooing and others market groceries and food. Mall for Africa and others undertake delivery and logistics. The Dlx, Jijiing and others work for marketplaces. Also private property and property 24 companies are in real estate. Those in furniture are showrooming and furnishing. Sloting deals on electronics; Cheki Nigeria on automobile; while Wukan among others deal on travel. But there are also other internet platforms renowned for news dissemination, sports betting (Bet9ja, Nairabet), entertainment, etc.

Perhaps, this is why Deshwal (2016) posits that the rapid technological development and rise of Internet, new media and communication channels tremendously changed the advertisement business landscape. It has made it possible for people to largely depend on it (Internet) as the ultimate source of advertisements, information and communication. He gave types of online advertising as floating ads, expanding ads, wallpaper ads, trick banner ads, pop-up ads, pop-under ads. Others are, video advertising, advertising on social networks, mobile advertising, e-mail advertising, banner advertising, Google search advertising and a lot more.

McCoy, Galletta, Everard, Polak (2004) detailed some of the effects of these types of internet advertisements when they insisted that pop-up, pop-under, and in-line ads have essential effects on user perception and cognition. It could be why Li (2002, p. 2) posits "online



consumers are goal-oriented and perceive advertisements to be even more intrusive when viewed in other media”.

Among the world retinue of internet users are the youths, whom the United Nations (UN) classify as persons between the ages of 15 and 24; 18 to 35 by the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (the 1999 Second National Youth Policy Document of Federal Republic of Nigeria, p. 6.). Salako and Tiamiyu (2007) see the young generation (youth) as the most prominent users of these internet advertising and other information.

Okoye (2014, p. 18) supports this position, “The Internet is a relatively young invention and naturally the young who are usually adventurous and enthusiastic are jumping into it. The possible reason is having access to and being trained on the Internet is a gateway to such empowerment given that the Internet is at the heart of communications today”.

Also, Duru (2014) argues that students constitute an important segment of these young internet users and potential users since they are being trained to succeed within an information-based society. Hence, training on Internet is naturally indispensable to their success in this endeavor. Goldsmith and Lafferty (2002), while studying students’ use of internet advertisements noted that consumer (students) response to ads on web sites and their influences on them are impressive.

Chaubey, Sharma and Pant (2013) claim that internet advertisements motivate consumers to patronize goods and services. Also, that most companies and industries prefer to use it for advertising their products rather than use other media platforms like radio, televisions, and newspapers. Their reason is that internet advertising is less expensive in terms of money, time and other resources usually expended on it, wider geographical reach, easy result measurement, more targeted audiences, speed, informative, smooth audience engagement and product branding.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- Find the rate Awka youths exposed themselves to internet advertisements.
- Find out the various devices through which youths in Awka metropolis access internet advertisements.
- Find out the social media platforms through which youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to Internet advertisements.
- Determine the need gratifications that drive youths in Awka metropolis to expose themselves to internet advertisements.
- Find out the extent to which youths in Awka metropolis utilize internet advertisements.
- Find out if the utilization is as a result of their exposure to the Internet.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This study applied Uses and Gratification and Technological Determinism theories. Both theories are to cover any lapses either of them could have while exploring youth’s exposure and utilization of internet advertisements.



Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratification theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media content to satisfy particular needs. Onuegbu (2016) describes it as an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. It was propounded in the 1940's, when researchers became interested in why people engaged in various forms of media behaviour, such as radio listening or newspaper reading. These early studies were primarily descriptive, seeking to classify the responses of audience members into meaningful categories.

Uses and Gratification theory was used in this research because researchers, who use the approach theory, assume that audience members are aware of the impact of the media, and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media content. Herzog (1944) identified three types of gratification associated with listening to radio soap operas to include emotional release, wishful thinking, and obtaining advice.

According to McQuail (1983), this theory suggests that audience attitude toward media behaviour is an essential factor in media use, adding that original conception of its approach is based on the research for explaining the great appeal of specific media contents. In the mass communication process, uses and gratifications approach puts the function of linking need gratifications and media choice clearly on the side of audience members. That is, the Uses and Gratification theory is concerned with audience response to media contents such as advertising, news, etc. in the society) and tension free needs (use of the media as a means of escapism and to relief from tension).

However, Levy and Windahl (1984) add that there are many antecedent variables such as media structure, media technology, social circumstances, psychological variables, needs, values, and beliefs that all relate to the particular gratification pattern used by the audience. On his part, Swanson (1987) suggested that researchers should focus on (1) the role of gratification seeking in exposure to mass media, (2) the relationship between satisfaction and the interpretive frames through which audiences understand media content, and (3) the link between pleasure and media content.

Technological Determinism Theory (TDT)

Technological Determinism theory believes that growing technologies shape man's feelings, actions and thoughts. It was propounded by Marshal McLuhan in 1962, who believed that human beings act, learn, feel and think the way they do as a result of the messages they receive through the current technologies as the society moves from one technological age to another. Historically, these technologies started with the print (books, newspapers, magazines, etc.) to the radio, television, and currently, the Internet. That is, the current society believes, feels, learn and act in consonance with what they gather from these modern technological advancements. They were developed by humans, controlled by humans; yet they control humans. Thus Culkin (1967) says that users shape these tools, and they in turn shape the users

Webster (2017) says though there are different accounts of technological determinism, a view often associated with it is the technological imperative which involves rhetoric and underlying assumptions. He opions that technology has a controlling influence that is inevitable and unstoppable. It was further bolstered by Canole (2007,) who claimed that the introduction of new technologies has transformed the society.



Webster (2017) opines that educational technology leaders have an ideological orientation to technical change, and believed that it has an absolute autonomy and in charge in the society. Webster concludes that technological determinist assumptions and the technical imperative such as normative and unintended consequences were alive, well and significant in people's thinking. However, Goguen (2000,) while studying the social aspects of technology and science, said technological determinism is an autonomous force that changes society.

These theories are relevant to this study in that Uses and Gratification plays out in the advertisements while Internet is a major technology that drives all aspect of global business and undertakings.

REVIEW OF RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Over the years, some researchers all over the world focused on youth exposure and utilization of internet advertisements. This section reviews three works of these researchers and their findings.

Padon, et. al.(2018)investigated Alcohol brand use of youth appealing advertising.The researchers further tested the association between the youth-appeal of marketing content of televised alcohol advertisements and the brand-specific alcohol consumption of both underage youth and adults.

The finding shows that brand CAY scores were (a) positively associated with brand-specific youth consumption after controlling for adult brand consumption; (b) positively associated with a ratio of youth-to adult brand-specific consumption, and; (c) not associated with adult brand consumption. It therefore, concludes that alcohol brands with youth-appealing advertising are consumed more often by youth than adults.

Gupta, et.al. (2017) studied the association between exposure to social media alcohol marketing and youth alcohol use behaviours in India and Australia. The study objective was to discover if young people aged 13 and 25 are exposed to, interact with social networking sites-based alcohol marketing and their level of alcohol consumption (use).

It discovered that India and Australia have different alcohol consumption features due to variations in socio-cultural norms. In India, it found that 35% of youths consume 1/3 of alcoholic drinks every day due to online alcohol advertisements they are exposed, whereas 45% of youths in Australia do the same thing. The teenagers drinking habits increase in both countries as a result of their exposure to alcohol advertisements on Internet.

Bakare, Owusu, and Abdurrahman, (2017) researched on the behaviour response of the Nigerian youths toward mobile advertising: An examination of the influence of values, attitudes and culture. The findings are that the youths are exposed to internet advertisements and also utilize them for their behaviors diverse needs.

The above literature shows that people expose themselves to internet advertisements and utilize them. However, information on Awka resident youths on the subject is not known. Therefore, this work seeks to examine the rate Awka youth expose themselves to and use internet advertisements.

METHOD

The research design for this study is descriptive research. Akubilo (2003, p. 58) says that a descriptive analysis collects data when the issue involved is related to opinion, attitudes,



beliefs and behaviours. The researchers chose the questionnaire as the instrument of measurement. It is appropriate for this study because it seeks to study ‘Youth exposure and utilization of Internet advertisements’ in Awka metropolis.

Awka, the capital of Anambra State, is the area of the study. A sample size of 400 was selected and the researcher’s adopted probability sampling. Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire used to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into two, section A and section B. The section A seeks to elicit information regarding the respondents’ bio-data, and the B section asked questions bordering on the research questions and objectives.

Thus, these researchers adopted structured or a close- ended questionnaire. It was chosen because it is a data collection tool mostly suited for descriptive surveys like this. This research instrument adopted was validated by three experts in communication.

RESULTS

The method of data analysis used in this research was frequency tables and simple percentages. A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire was administered and returned.

Table 1: *Respondents Demographic Characteristics*

Response/category	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	213	53%
Female	187	47%
Total	400	100%
Age		
18-20 years	79	20%
21-25 years	94	23%
26-30 years	99	25%
31-35 years	128	32%
Total	400	100%
Education		
O/L and FS LC	161	40%
OND/NCE	102	26%
HND/BSc	123	31%
MSC/PhD	14	3%
Total	400	100%
Marital Statues		
Single	221	55%
Married	131	26%
Divorced	25	31%
Widow/widower	23	6%
Total	400	100%

Table 1 on the demographic characteristics of the respondents show that 53% (n=213) of them were male while 47% (n=187) were female. Male respondents were more than female respondents because males seemed to have more interest in internet business.



The age characteristics of the respondents indicates that about 20% of them (n= 79) were between the ages of 18 – 20 years. Those whose age bracket ranged from 21-25 years were about 23% (n= 94); the age bracket between 26 -30 years were about 25% (n= 99) while the age bracket between 31- 35 were about 32% (n= 128). The age brackets 31-35 were more in number.

Educational attainment of the respondents shows that majority of them were ordinary level / First school leaving certificate holders and HND/BA/BSC holders (n=161 or 40%, and n=123 or 31% respectively). However, OND/NCE holders account for 31% (n= 123), while MSc and PhD holders were about 3% (n= 14).

Marital status of the respondents shows that 55% (n= 221) of them were single, 33% (n= 131) were married, 6% (n= 15 and n= 23) were divorced and widow/widowers respectively. The singles were the majority because they seem to be more among the youth.

Occupational distribution of the respondents shows that majority of them were students and public servants (n= 163 or 41% and 151 or 37% respectively). However, business men / women accounted for 23% (n= 83) while artisans/technicians constitute 1% (n= 3)

Table 2: *Respondents Exposure to Internet*

Exposure to Internet	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Once a day	144	36%
About three times a day	73	18%
Once in a week	166	42%
I do not expose myself at all	17	4%
Total	400	100%

Data in table 2 indicate that 144 respondents representing 36% expose themselves to Internet once every day; 73 (18%) respondents are exposed to it about three times every day, 166 (42%) respondents are exposed to internet once every week, while 17 (4%) respondents did not expose themselves to the internet. As a result, 383 respondents who are exposed to internet were used subsequently for the study.

Table 3: *Respondents' Exposure to Internet Advertisements*

Exposure to internet advertisement	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Once in a day	120	32%
About three times a day	105	27%
Once a week	151	39%
I do not expose myself at all	7	2%
Total	383	100%

In the table 3 above, out of 383 respondents that expose themselves to internet advertisements, 120 representing 31% exposed themselves to internet advertisements every day; 105 (27%) expose themselves to internet advertisements about three times a day. Also, 151 (39%) expose themselves to the internet advertisements once every week; while 7 (2%) did not expose themselves to internet advertisements. People who were expose one in a week were in the majority.

Table 4: *Devices Respondents use in accessing Internet Advertisements*



The device often used in accessing the internet advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Laptop	83	22%
Android/mobile phone	136	36%
Palmtop	70	19%
Desktop computers	87	23%
Total	376	100%

Table 4 above indicates that out of 376 respondents who exposed themselves to internet advertisements. About 83 respondents representing 22% used laptop computers in accessing advertisements on the internet; 136 (36%) used android/mobile phones. Also 70 (19%) respondents used palmtop; while 87 (23%) used desktop computers to access the internet for advertisements. Respondents who used android/mobile phone to access the advertisement are in the majority.

Table 5: *Types of Internet advertisements respondents were exposed to*

Type of Internet advertisement exposed to	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Audio/Visual	92	24%
Texts	99	26%
Pictures/Images	98	26%
Graphics animations/cartoons	87	24%
Total	376	100%

In the table 5 above, out of 376 respondents that participated in the study, 92 representing 24% were either exposed to audio or video advertisements on Internet; 99 (26%) respondents are expose to texts advertisement on Internet; 98 (26%) respondents were expose to internet pictures and images advertisements; while 87 (24%) respondents were expose to internet graphics and cartoons advertisements. Respondents who were exposed to texts and pictures/images tied together.

Table 6: *Internet Platforms Respondents were exposed to advertisements*

Internet platforms I mostly view Advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Facebook	66	18%
YouTube	58	15%
Twitter	53	14%
Instagram	29	8%
WhatsApp	102	27%
Websites	31	8%
Blogs	37	10%
Total	376	100%

Data in table 6 above indicate the internet platforms youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to advertisements most. They are as follow; Facebook had a record of 66 respondents representing 18%, YouTube 58 (15%) respondents, Twitter 53 (14%) respondents, Instagram 29 (8%) respondents, WhatsApp 102 (27%) respondents, Websites 31



(8%) respondents, and blogs 37 (10%) respondents. The respondents used Whatsapp platform more than any other platform.

Table 7: Reasons Youth in Awka Metropolis access Internet Advertisements

Reasons to access internet advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Information	81	22%
Education	98	26%
Entertainment	87	23%
Social interaction	110	29%
Total	376	100%

Data in the table 7 above, reveal that out of 376 respondents (100%) that participated in the study, 81 representing 22% access internet advertisements for information, 98 (26%) respondents access it for education; 87 (23%) respondents for entertainment, and 110 (29%) respondents access it for social interaction. Respondents for social interaction are in the majority.

Table 8: Youth in Awka Metropolis Utilisation of Internet Advertisements

Utilization of internet advertisements for	Frequency	Percentages (%)
To know of new products in the markets	91	24%
To know how to use some products	97	26%
To buy some products	96	26%
To share some products or ideas with family and friends	92	24%
Total	376	100%

Data in table 8 above showed 91 (24%) of respondents utilize internet advertisements to ascertain new products in the markets. It helps 97 (26%) of respondents to understand how to use some products; helps 96 (26%) of respondents to buy some products. Also, it helps 92 (24%) of respondents to share some products/marketing ideas with family and friends.

Table 9: Internet Advertisements Influence and Utilization of Advertised Products

Internet advertisements and utilization of internet advertised products	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Attracting me to buy or venture into a trade or services	101	27%
Increased my rate of buying or subscribing to products/services	118	31%
Decreased my rate of buying or subscribing to products or services	48	13%
Made me an expert or addict	109	29%



to products or services		
Total	376	100%

Data in table 9 above indicate how advertised products on the internet influenced the respondents' rate of utilization of advertised products. About 101 (27%) were attracted to buy or venture into a trade or services. Also 118 (31%) respondents had their buying and subscribing to products or services increased. It decrease the rate of buying or subscribing to products or services of 48 (13%) respondents; and it made 109 (29%) respondent experts or addicted to products and services.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study revealed that many respondents exposed themselves to internet advertisements. Thus 120 (30%) exposed themselves to it once in a day; 105 (27%) respondents about three times a day and 151 (39%) respondents once in a week. The outcome is in line with Erinn, Onuri and Omoniyi (2016) whose descriptive survey research on Attitude of Social Media Users to Internet Advertising shows youth's exposure in the majority. Also Holmberg (2011) in observational and explorative study discovered Children's exposure to online advertising.

On the devices used by the youth to access internet advertising 83 (22%) respondents used laptop, 136 (36%) respondents used android/mobile phone, 70 (19%) respondents used palmtop and 87 (23%) respondents used desktop computers. It indicates that youths in Awka metropolis used android/mobile phones most in accessing the internet advertisements. It corroborates the findings of Edegoh, Anunike and Nwagbara (2015) whose survey research work, Patterns of online media exposure among young people in Anambra State shows that majority of the respondents accessed the web through cell phone/handset.

On the social media platforms the youths were exposed to internet advertisements. The finding indicate that WhatsApp has 102 (27%) respondents; Facebook, 66 (18%) respondents; Youtube, 58 (15%) respondents among others. Findings from the study is that WhatsApp group chats took the lead. It differs from Gupta, Lam, Pettigrew and Tait (2018) whose cross-sectional (online survey) revealed that, association between exposure to social media alcohol marketing and youth alcohol use behaviours in India and Australia uncovered that the internet platforms where youths expose themselves to advertisements mostly are on YouTube. Similarly, in Asa (2013), Children and advertising on social media websites, conducted in the United Kingdom, 90% of respondents reported exposure to advertisements on Facebook. The reasons for the dissimilarities are locations and time of research. This study was conducted in Nigeria in 2018; the others were done in Australia and United Kingdom in 2018 and 2013 respectively.

Another finding of this study showed that the main gratification that made Awka Youths to expose themselves to the internet advertisements was social interaction. The need for information has 81 (22%) respondents, education has 98 (26%); entertainment has 87 (23%) respondents and social interaction 110 (29%) respondents. It supports Wu and Li (2017) in a study of effects of mass media exposure and social network site involvement on risk perception of and precautionary behaviour toward the Haze issue in China. They discovered that youths exposed themselves to online platforms and advertisements to communicate with other users (social interaction) more than any other need.



Also, another finding of this study in Table 8 is that Awka residents utilize internet advertisements mostly for direction on how to use the product. This finding is in line with Musa (2016) whose survey research, “How Kano State residents utilize Internet advertisements” discovered that the majority use internet advertisements to discover new and existing products in the market; this is followed by those that were taught how to use some products.

Another findings is the internet advertisements influenced youths in Awka metropolis by attracting them to buy or venture into trade or services (101 respondents representing 27%); This agrees with the finding of Acharya, Khanal, Singh, Adhikari, and Gautam (2015), who discovered that the more the youths are aware of something, the more they patronise or get involved in it.

CONCLUSION

The study therefore, concludes that Awka Youths are not only exposed to internet advertisements but also utilized them through buying and subscribing to the products and services advertised.

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAKE NEWS ON CORONA VIRUS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

Social media is the 21st-century media that has given every user an equal opportunity to publish news without passing through any form of gatekeeping, editorial, or professional scrutiny. This means that it has become a natural home for the spread of fake news even on the recent coronavirus with its consequent health implications. The authors deployed available materials and literature to discuss the burning issues surrounding fake news as misleading information on social media, especially how social media has become a natural home for fake news on coronavirus. More so, this paper reviewed the literature on the effects of fake news on coronavirus and then motivations for sharing fake news online as a way to provide a start-off point for an understanding of why social media misinformation on Corona virus has spread. The authors concluded by presenting a gap in literature, in addition to a research agenda for studies on the spread of health-related disinformation in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social Media, Fake news, Corona Virus, Social Media, Misinformation

INTRODUCTION

Sharing and commenting on trending news on social networks, without taking time to verify its authenticity, have become habits synonymous with the news engagement patterns of social media users. Originators of misinformation on different social media platforms often do this to drive conversations, alter perceptions, and also draw followership for their ideology. The motivations for peddling misinformation can also be monetary gains, or even to influence expectations about the state of the world like in the case of Pentagon's Military Analysts Program (Barstow, 2008; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015; Foerster, 2017).

Social media is the 21st-century media that enable interactivity from person to many. Its introduction gave equal opportunity for everyone to be a citizen journalist. However, this affordance comes with its pros and cons in the dissemination of information. Facts and unverified information are transmitted at the same time to millions of social media users.

Due to the proliferation and widespread use of social media platforms, traditional journalism faces a challenge with regard to who reports the scoop. In any case, research has shown that social media has been used to disseminate all sorts of unverified information with unprecedented speed, while the traditional journalist scampers for facts (Gelfert, 2018). As Ireton and Posetti (2018) argue, digital media has lowered the barrier to entering the information market place and that the sharing of articles on social media platforms such as Facebook displaces many of the traditional markers of traditional journalism (including visual markers as professional layout, an official masthead, comprehensive coverage, etc.).



Undoubtedly, the recent COVID-19 pandemic seems to have deepened the discourse around health-related fake news, further raising concerns about its implications to public health. Referring to how fake news propagated online has worsened the pandemic, Director-General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated that the world was not just fighting a pandemic, but also an “infodemic”, the global epidemic of deliberate dissemination of false information or misinformation which could involve various forms of reconfiguration, where existing and often true information is twisted, recontextualised, or reworked, or labelled as true or as being something other than they are, especially online (Mesquita, Oliveira, Seixas & Paes, 2020; Wardle, 2017).

This paper reviews the literature on fake news on Corona virus with particular emphasis on the disinformation that linked Corona virus with 5G network and the assertions that some notable philanthropists have supported the distribution of infected face masks for use in Africa. It also reviews available literature on the effects of fake news on Corona virus, in addition to motivations for engagement with fake news to provide a start-off to an understanding of why misinformation on Corona virus has spread rapidly, and to set a research agenda for related Nigerian studies.

CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19): AN OVERVIEW

Corona virus or COVID-19 is the infectious disease which is caused by the most recently discovered Corona virus originating from Wuhan in China. This virus was reported to the WHO Country office in China on 31st December 2019. However, the outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January 2020. Subsequently, on 11th February 2020, the World Health Organization announced a name for the new Corona virus disease (COVID-19). Following the outbreak, the World Health Organization reported that it took to work 24/7 to analyze data, provide advice, coordinate with partners, help countries prepare, increase supplies, and manage expert networks.

According to the World Health Organization reports on COVID-19, most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild or moderate respiratory illness and recover without special treatment. Besides, people who are older, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes and cancer are most likely to develop severe illness. More so, since there is currently no specific vaccines for COVID-19 (though there are on-going clinical trials to evaluate potential therapies for the virus), the organization states that the best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the virus with regard to its symptoms, how it spreads and protective measures. As protection against infection, regular washing of hands, the use of alcohol-based sanitizers. Furthermore, people have been advised to avoid touching their faces and to practice respiratory etiquette (for example, coughing into a flexed elbow) to prevent transmission through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose whenever an infected person coughs or sneezes (WHO, 2020). Some of these existing reliable information coming from the world’s apex health body is what in the views of Wardle (2017) have been twisted, recontextualised, or reworked online.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS HOME FOR FAKE NEWS ON CORONA VIRUS

With the social media, local issues can gain global prominence through online campaigns. As online tools, they offer a plethora of global platforms for the dissemination of information and opinion and also facilitate social interactions between individuals and organizations (Botha & Mills, 2012). In the current Corona virus (COVID-19) scenario, social media platforms are disseminating all sorts of information globally. While the World Health



Organization (WHO) and several health organizations are regularly posting and updating awareness and guidelines across a plethora of online platforms (WHO, 2020), disinformation on the disease has also been disseminated on these platforms. Sharing of misleading information is not new, and has regrettably accelerated the spread of medical misinformation in today's digital world (Perakslis & Califf, 2019). For the spread of disinformation on Corona virus in particular, most stories on social media have been identified as fake news by the regulatory agencies (BBC, 2020).

Indeed, social media has become a platform for the dissemination of rumours and deliberate misinformation, and many are using social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, and YouTube, and to create a state of panic and confusion as false misleading, or false medical advice can travel around the world before anyone has a chance to correct it (Charlton, 2020). Currently, the world is challenged by an unprecedented crisis of public understanding, and such social media platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, are at the center of it.

Interestingly, the dissemination of misinformation on social media can either be intentional or accidental and can spread quickly as anybody can say almost anything to anyone, with billions of individuals online daily. The spread has become heightened with multiple digital sources without editorial rules which can easily be trusted or taken seriously by social media users (Armstrong & Naylor, 2019). These platforms can be used to facilitate as well as multiply Covid-19- related misinformation, and unfortunately, misleading posts have become popular than the ones that disseminate accurate and relevant public health information about diseases (Sharma et al., 2017). The nature of social media makes for easy sharing of information, and unlike traditional news outlets, there is no filter, no fact-checking, and often a lot of bias.

Notably, most fake news on Corona virus have centred on various conspiracy theories, resulting in a plethora of incorrect ways of looking at the situation. There are unfounded views that the virus is a biological weapon, created either by the United States (to destroy China) or China (to destroy American) in order to take over world power from America and initiate a new world order. There are also views that COVID-19 is the likely by-product of Chinese foods, like bat soups among other foods, More so, messages on unverified home remedies like the use of Vitamin C, turmeric, cow urine, etc., to mention a few, have all been disseminated on social media.

However, in today's scenario, social media can also be responsibly and effectively utilized to disseminate regular, consistent and reliable information to achieve clarity and awareness to eliminate confusion and panic. As the fastest way to share news, social media provide access to Covid-19 news, create awareness on the virus and also draw attention to related misinformation coming in from individual states and different parts of the world to everyone who can gain from the information provided. Government officials and public leaders who are dealing with the global health crisis daily have provided accurate, scientific information regularly in combating misinformation and rumour. More so, WHO and other relevant public health organizations have utilized the social media as a platform for prompt dissemination of information about the outbreak to the public to control panic created by the misinformation being circulated in the social media.

Unfortunately, governments or health bodies may not always be able to respond with accurate and timely information due to various reasons. Sometimes, the evidence needed to support



statements and arguments, and the standards concerned with how and why people are socially responsible for what they say is ignored. Due to the abundance of information in the digital age, it becomes difficult for people to identify truthful and trustworthy sources from false or misleading ones, and the inability of concerned authorities and experts to handle the situation has made them lose their legitimacy among the public. Therefore, social media users continue to rely on discredited misinformation (Rich & Zaragoza, 2016).

On their part, social media websites are trying to curtail the activities of the originators of misinformation. Tools to effectively prevent the spreading of false news are utilized by the ICT giants, who are skilled in censorship. Initially, social media companies did not pay a lot of attention to checking content published on their platforms. However, over the years, they have designed a set of efficient automated and human-driven processes to edit, promote or filter published content, as these platforms have become primary sources of information for a large number of the user (Yaraghi, 2019). To dispel harmful misconceptions, developers of various social media, like WeChat, are using fact-checking platforms. More so, western social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have also made efforts to ensure the amplification of right and trustable sources. People are now more unlikely to be exposed to unfounded assertions when they search for the word 'Corona virus' on these social media platforms. However, the volume of content on social media could make it impossible to edit every aspect of the content, just like in the traditional media. With no perfect set-up or filtering algorithm, many originators of disinformation now capitalize on the trending Corona virus situation.

The impact of fake news on social media platforms, during an outbreak, can be said to be more profound. Therefore, to control emerging pandemics, there is need for unique health communication and education plans by public health agencies to meet the information needs of the public regarding possible risks and preventive measures, while eliminating dramatization and exaggeration of risk (Strekalova, 2016). Social media can be useful in this regard as it can facilitate the structural, psychological, and resource empowerment processes in communities in ways that can help them achieve shared identification, group participation, and collective control (Leong, Pan, Rackham, & Kaewkitipong, 2015). Generally, combating the spread of misinformation on Corona virus requires research that will help to understand the origin and the range of misinformation. This will facilitate well-coordinated plans that will help disrupt sources of this information in a way that can reduce its dissemination.

OF 5G CORONA VIRUS AND INFECTED FACE MASKS

Recently, the cause of Corona virus was linked to the fifth- generation of internet (5G) which is the next generation of mobile broadband technology (Oyewale, 2015) that will eventually replace, or at least augment the 4G LTE connection. With 5G, internet users will experience exponentially faster download and upload speeds. The time it takes devices to communicate with wireless networks will also decrease drastically with the use of 5G. Unlike LTE, 5G operates on three different spectrum bands which can dramatically improve efficiency in everyday internet use. It can, for example, support user download speeds of 100Mbps and uploads speeds of 50Mbps and support the connection of 1 million devices per square kilometre in a way that can power the Internet of Things (IoT) (Dahiya, 2017).

Some 5G conspiracy theorists argue that the newly developed network generates radio frequency radiation that can damage DNA and lead to cancer and premature ageing. They also contend that the network can disrupt cell metabolism, and potentially lead to other



diseases through the generation of stress proteins, and Corona virus in particular by weakening the immune system. In fact, a notable Nigerian Bishop took to social media in a protest against the installation of 5G network in Nigeria. Though it had not been proven that 5G network is responsible for Corona virus pandemic, originators of fake news disseminated stories online that suggest that 5G network has a direct causal link with Corona virus (Adelakun, 2020).

With the increased panic associated with the pandemic, there were also assertions that some notable philanthropists have supported the distribution of infected face masks for use in African. This news trended in videos, pictures, and audio voice messages on Whatsapp and Facebook. However, it was evident that these messages were in fact fake news.

MOTIVATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH FAKE NEWS

The motivations for fake news production and dissemination have been a focus of research, and emanating literature is reviewed in this paper for an understanding of why individuals would want to engage with fake news on Corona virus as found on social media. Notably, there seems to be an academic consensus that, generally, the main motivations behind fake news production are commercial, political, or ideological (Hirst, 2017). On the one hand, the commercial motivations refer to the creation and dissemination of misinformation to increase the readership of a news website and consequently get more advertising revenues (Allcott & Gentzko, 2016). For instance, in the 2016 US elections, fake news was created by teenagers in a town in Macedonia just for economic incentives. They stated that publishing pro-Trump content helped them generate more advertising revenue (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

On the other hand, the other motivation can be referred to as ideological, based on the manipulation and defamation of individuals to damage their public image. In this case, the objective of the originators of misinformation is to empower the individuals they favour through false information that can change public opinion. One vivid example of this phenomenon was experienced in July 2016 when the website *wtoe5news.com* published an article alleging that Pope Francis supported Donald Trump's presidential candidacy (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The news was shared on Facebook more than one million times and many people perceived it as true. More so, in a study conducted by Chadwick and Vaccari (2019), labour supporters and those adhering to left-wing ideological beliefs were more likely to share inaccurate news. Similarly, Petersen, Osmundsen and Arcenaux (2018) also argue that the motivations behind sharing false rumour online can be partisan – to mobilize against a political opponent – or as a way to challenge the whole political system and mobilize receivers of the disinformation against a particular political setting. Drawing on data from a study conducted in the US and Denmark, Petersen and his colleagues found the latter to be the overriding psychological motivation underpinning the sharing of false news.

More so, some other scholars have found that the social identity of the audience can be a factor that can influence their sharing of information on social media generally. Bigman et al. (2019), for instance, found that race influences how young social media users select exposure to social media news. Black students in their study reported 'both seeing and posting more content about race on social media'. In addition, findings from their study showed that an orientation towards civic participation or purpose can be a motivation for sharing information on social media. Britons in particular, as shown in their study, stated that they shared information online to express their feelings; inform others, and find out other people's opinions.



Furthermore, Duffy, Tandoc and Ling (2019) found that individuals shared news online to cope with uncertainty, build relationships, and enhance themselves. Sharing news, according to Duffy et al. (2019), is seen as an effort toward contributing to social cohesion. According to the scholars, users doing so are motivated by the emotional impact the news is seen to have, as well as the relevance it might have for the receiver, and the sender's intention to provide advice or warning. Therefore, the trend of sharing 'fake news', according to Duffy et al. (2019) is regarded as a sign of trust between the sender and recipient. For them, what is shared is more than just news or information; it is also a signifier of trust and mutuality.

The motivation to inform others corroborates the findings of Chakrabarti et al. (2018) who seem to be some of the few researchers that have explored audiences' interaction with "fake news" in the African context. Their study explores three reasons that can help explain the sharing of "fake news" in Kenya and Nigeria. First, as findings from their study showed, there is the desire to be "in the know" socially, so sharing disinformation becomes a form of social currency. Second, as the findings from their study also showed, there is a sense of civic duty that might lead users of social media to share warnings of an imminent crisis or disaster. For the scholars, even if the information might turn out to be false, the harm caused by not informing others may be perceived as outweighing that of informing them. Third, there is the sense that information is just democratic and therefore needs to be shared (Chakrabarti et al. 2018).

Interestingly, another study on the spread of 'fake news' in the African context, (Wasserman & Morales, 2019) established a link between lack of trust in the news media and the sharing of disinformation. It was found in the study that there is a significant relationship between high levels of perceived exposure to misinformation and low levels of media trust. This corresponds with similar findings elsewhere (Chadwick & Vaccari, 2019 in the British context) that suggest that the widespread sharing of false news may signify a growing cynicism about the accuracy of news in general.

Interestingly also, the consumption of fake news has been attributed to a general distrust and cynicism about the credibility of the news ecosystem as a whole (Wagner & Boczkowski, 2019). According to the authors, the fake news debate echoes against a backdrop of low trust in public institutions. This, according to them, is arguably one of the reasons the term has strongly resonated with many people who have used it to criticize individuals in authority, especially politicians who tell lies.

More so, in the African context, other cultural influences like the long-standing importance of informal sources of information such as gossip, rumour, and satire (Nyamnjoh, 2005) can be said to play a further role in the likelihood of social media users to share fake news. In addition, apart from cultural influences such as the long-standing importance attached to informal sources of information such as gossip, rumour and satire which has aided the spread of fake news, the long history of an untrustworthy news media often owned or captured by the state or social elites, has given rise to strong alternative channels of news and information on which fake news may thrive in the African context (Wasserman & Morales 2019).

EFFECTS OF FAKE NEWS ON CORONA VIRUS

Research has also focused on the effects of fake news on Corona virus. Unarguably, the effect of fake news on Corona virus lies in the fact that there are social media users who believe it. Unfortunately, there is evidence that 70% of the global population globally believe



that the cause of Corona virus disease was the introduction of 5G networks and this means that fake news in a broader term sounds truthful until it is debunked.

Research findings show that misinformation on COVID-19 has promoted misperceptions among people in a way that causes panic and poses serious health issues. The deliberate spread of online health-related misinformation on COVID-19 was, for example, responsible for the methanol poisoning recorded in Iran (an Islamic country with strict restrictions on alcohol consumption) in March 2020, where 2100 Iranians ingested alcohol after exposure to social media messages that suggested they could prevent being infected by the virus by so doing. About 900 of the alcohol-poisoned patients were admitted into the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) out of which 296 died (Soltaninejad, 2020).

Worse still, social media users' vulnerability to false information increases as they increasingly rely on social media as a source of news. A Pew survey showed that 62% of American adults get news from social media sites such as Facebook (Gottfried & Shearer 2017), which played an essential role in the spread of fake news on the Corona virus pandemic.

GAP IN LITERATURE

Findings from the reviewed literature show that social media has become natural home for fake news on Corona virus and that its spread has negative effects on public health. However, there seems to be a paucity of research on the effects of social media fake news on Corona virus among social media users in Nigeria, in addition to the reasons why they would engage with such news.

More so, generally, there seems to be a paucity of research that deconstructs how social media audience receive fake news since communication is one thing and reception is another. In addition, there seems to be a paucity of findings on how demographic and social factors could influence the spread and motivation for engagement with social media fake news on Corona virus, and by extension, health-related fake news. Therefore, this paper proposes a research agenda for studies on the spread of social media fake news in Nigeria based on these gaps in literature.

CONCLUSION

Although social media has increased the visibility of citizen journalists (Hermida, 2010), it has also led to the increased visibility and impact of both true and false information (Mendoza, Poblete & Castillo, 2010). In response to health-related crisis, governments and health organizations more often than not make use of social media as opposed to traditional media (Kim & Liu, 2012). Unfortunately, despite the efforts made by these bodies to direct the public towards reliable sources for verified information and updates, health-related misinformation has thrived on social media.

In the new media age of inter-connectedness, misinformation related to the Covid-19 pandemic has spread to millions of people globally, and unfortunately, misinformation seems to spread much faster than operators of social media platforms can contain or control. Though some contents are explaining the actual situation, they are countered by a large number of false information or misinformation that misguides the public who are unaware of the real situation. Worse still, people often find it difficult to differentiate the truth from the misinformation on social media, and being the most common, quickest, and easiest way of



accessing information sources, they increasingly rely on it for information (Ruohan & Suh, 2015).

However, social media can also offer the best platforms to disseminate information if users of different social network sites transmit information from credible sources. For the dissemination of false information and fake news to be nipped in the bud, social media users need to refrain from disseminating inaccurate information and endeavour to verify and check the credibility of data to reduce the spread of health-related misinformation.

Based on the reviewed literature and identified gap, we propose a research agenda for studies on the spread of health-related disinformation in Nigeria. Researchers should first determine what Nigerian audience tag as fake news and their consumption patterns in view of the high ascendancy of fake news on COVID-19. They should also explore what motivates them to consume this news. More so, it is necessary to deconstruct how audience in Nigeria receive fake news on COVID-19 and other health issues since communication is one thing and reception is another. In addition, there is a need to explore the demographic and social/cultural factors that influence engagement with fake news on COVID-19 and other health issues.

Furthermore, since available findings on audience engagement with fake news on social media have been mostly derived from quantitative methods like survey, Nigerian studies can benefit from such qualitative methods as participant observation and scroll back method (Robards & Lincoln 2017) for in-depth findings on how social media users engage with fake news on COVID-19 and other related health issues. It is expected that findings from this study would guide the designing and dissemination of tailored or targeted health information to ensure effectiveness.

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PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS NEWS SOURCES AMONG RESIDENTS OF SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study explored the perception of South-East residents regarding social media usage as news sources. The perception theory and the Technology Acceptance Model provided explanations for the study. The survey research method was used for the investigation while the questionnaire helped as the data collection instrument. Residents of South-East Nigeria constituted the population of the study from where 400 sample size was drawn using the Creative Research Systems online sample size calculator. The multi-stage sampling technique was used while tables and simple percentages were deployed to present and analyse the collected data. Based on the analysis of data, findings among others showed that residents of South-East Nigeria do not perceive the social media platforms as credible sources of news. Accordingly, the researcher recommends that proper checks should be done to ascertain the authenticity of the news got via social media.

Keywords: Social media, Perception, News sources, Media usage

INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace and others are now used in producing and sharing information. Experts and other users of social media have come to refer to twitter as a medium for breaking news in such way that is close to omnipresent CCTV which helps for collective intelligence. Many breaking news are distributed on Twitter faster than other type of media. Bigger media such "Cable News Network", "New York Times", "Time" get to a lot of people via Twitter. In addition, the journalists as well as media columnists are highly popular; they have lots of people who follow them for the critical purpose of reading their reports. The Turkish Statistical Institute asserts that, access to social network sites and online news have significantly become two of cardinal reasons which propel people to go online (TUIK Data, 2004-2011, p.10). No evidence in this research particularly focused on uses and gratifications by Turkish users, some other research evidence unveils Twitter in particular to be utilised more for information needs than for gratifying the social needs of the people. While most journalists and columnists are followed by one fourth of Turkish users, it was evident that some are much more popular than even their media organisations (Sozeri, 2011, p.73).

Traditionally, when we talk about the meaning of news, we are referring to information about events taking place at the moment or something that took place recently. The emergence of new technologies including the social networks now makes it possible for news to become more current enabling the audience to be virtually transported to the location of the event. The emergence of Goggle, Twitter, Facebook, as well as other social networking platforms are as well redefining the face of journalism. It is now realistic to build customized news report from all the newsworthy information and articles read in probably in the morning to the many readers' social networks. A practical example is that Digg's web sites make available contents which have been carefully selected by lots of other users from prominent



news sources in line with the votes of Digg's members to give highlights. This is significantly changing the notion of professional journalist as a competent gatekeeper; hence, changes in the notion of traditional news values spark debate (Talabi, 2011).

Before the era of the internet, conventional media like television, radio and newspapers were the primary sources of news. Such scenario is changing as news websites, lots of which are hosted by the big media organisations, are currently competing sources of news. Other news sources on the Internet, like websites which also features user-generated content (UGC), blogs, social networking sites as well as wikis have as well come to prominence. Just as the conventional media, the social media platforms provide different types of news. Examples of news reports on the social media are protests, security, governance, etc which are posted by users. More so, there are commentaries on entertainment as well as news stories captured by the conventional media elsewhere. This formed the basis for citizen journalism which has gained prominence including blogs and social media that analyse and debate issues as well as stories transmitted via the conventional media. Those kinds of commentaries and debates generally make stories come alive longer than what was published by the original publishers. A number of researchers and experts assert that this is growing to become a very important function of citizen journalism (Chari, 2013, p.113) cited in (Okoro, Diri & Odii, 2013).

Nigeria is witnessing massive spread of social media across the six geopolitical zones of the country. Reports however reveal that Facebook is the most prevalent in Nigeria. Nigerians use Facebook more than other social media (Agbo, 2016). This is redefining the way and manner news is transmitted to the audience. This is based on the premise that media consumption pattern is changing.

Nigeria is not an exception in social media use for journalism practice. In recognition of capacity and usefulness of social media in the gathering and dissemination of information, journalists and media organisation have started utilising the platforms for the business of news gathering and transmission. They also use the platforms to verify facts, break news and receive audience feedback. Very prominent in this regard are broadcast stations such as Channels Television, African Independent Television (AIT), Premium Times Newspaper, Sahara Reporters and Wazobia FM.

Journalists and other media operators claim that the rapid adoption of the social media for media business is essentially sequel to the changing media exposure and consumption patterns of the audience. The rapidity and ubiquity of the social media in Nigeria is no doubt compelling media operators to accord much attention to such platforms. Digital Media Initiative (2017, p.17) asserts that "a lot of media audiences are now utilising the social media platforms for the consumption of media contents".

As the audience utilise social media platforms for the purpose of getting news across to the audience, perceptions of the platforms as news sources seem to differ from one audience to the other. Some audience seem to have favourable perception while others perceive unfavourably stating that the platforms are good for the reception of news. It is therefore very fundamental to assert here that audience perception of a media platform is very critical to the importance they attach to news from such medium. Perception could lead to rejection of the medium, rejection of the messages from such media and even de-marketing of such medium.



STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The emergence of the social media platforms has redefined the way media audience access news. These platforms have brought a new dimension to audience reception of news. They (the platforms) have continued to expand the sources or channels from where news is transmitted to the audience.

As earlier stated, perceptions of the platforms as news sources seem to differ from one audience to the other. Some audience seem to have favourable perception while others perceive unfavourably stating that the platforms are good for the reception of news. It is therefore very fundamental to assert here that audience perception of a media platform is very critical to the importance they attach to news from such medium. Perception could lead to rejection of the medium, rejection of the messages from such media and even de-marketing of such medium.

Sequel to the need to provide current empirical data in this area of knowledge, this study was carried out. The researcher therefore investigated the perception of social media as news sources among residents of South-East Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main aim of this study had to do with an investigation of the perception of social media as news sources among residents of South-East Nigeria. However, the researcher specifically sought to:

1. Find out the frequency at which residents of South-East Nigeria use the social media as news sources.
2. Ascertain the perception of South-East residents regarding the use of social media as news sources.
3. Find out South-East residents' perception on the use of social media for breaking news
4. Ascertain South-East residents' perception of social media usage for audience feedback.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Sequel to the study objectives, the following research questions were handled in the study

1. What is the frequency at which residents of South-East Nigeria use the social media as sources of news?
2. How do residents of South-East Nigeria perceive the utilisation of social media as news sources?
3. What is the perception of South-East residents on the use of social media for breaking news?
4. How do South-East residents perceive social media usage for audience feedback?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study serves as valuable literature for future researchers in this area of knowledge. This implies that those who would want to engage in further studies in this area of knowledge will find this study very helpful especially in the area of literature review.

Media organisations and individuals who use the social media to transmit news shall benefit from this study because it will show how the platforms are perceived as news sources among the audience.



Also, tertiary and research institutions shall find this study relevant in the teaching and learning of online journalism.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the study focused on South-East Nigeria, the residents of the five states in the geopolitical zone constituted the scope of the study. The study was however, restricted to only those who use the social media as news sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of news conception, gathering, production, and dissemination or consumption is now redefined based on the emergence of new communication technologies. Previous studies on how new media technologies are impacting journalism practice seemed to have focused essentially on the reconfiguration of news production, dissemination and consumption as occasioned by technologies to help media practitioners in the gathering of news all over the world and send to their news rooms as much with relative ease as possible. Others show how the internet helps media practitioners to gain unlimited access to critical and relevant information on any cardinal subject, and how email newsgroups enable practitioners to "... gain access into the collective brain, wit and wisdom of so many knowledgeable professional journalists as well as non-journalists" (Berger, 1997, p.124) cited in (Chari, 2013, p.113). The new technologies have brought new world of opportunities to the practice of journalism as well as the modes of producing news. Additionally, the project called the citizen journalism projects, "pro-am" (professional-amateur) actors and crowd sourcing are now veritable sources of information for many independent media alternatively the conventional media (Croteau & Hoynes 2006) cited in (Sozeri, 2011).

This rapid rate at which people now attach importance to social media is not a thing of surprise at all especially when one considers the the fact that editors of mainstream media outlets are seriously talking to their reporters to start using blogs as information sources. In 2013 for instance, Peter Horrocks, who was serving as the Director of the BBC World Service, urged the news reporters in the service to utilise social media as a "primary source" through which they could source for information. While social media platforms are now significantly useful as a source of information to information seekers, scholars assert that the platforms may not really replace more conventional information sources. This is because a tweet does not have the capacity to replace a face-to-face engagement with a relevant person or CEO. Of course, the face-to-face engagement will always be more impactful on the angle of a story. However, surveys carried out by Gunn and MacDonald (2011, p.59) reveal that posts on sites such as Facebook as well as LinkedIn, blogs, and tweets do arouseinitial interest in a story. It also adds clarity as well as something new to developing stories. Consequently, journalists in mainstream media do rely on them for news worthy information.

The emergence of the social media platforms has significantly redefined the way media professionals carry out their duties. It is therefore not a thing of surprise to notice that 40% of U.S. journalists indicated that the social media platforms are good and helpful to their work. The relevance of the platforms to media practitioners is based on the fact that one-third (34.6%) of U.S. practitioners spent between 30 to 60 minutes every day making use of the social networking sites. The study also shows that more than half (53.8%) of all U.S. media practitioners often make use of microblogs like Twitter for the gathering of information and the reportage/coverage of stories. Other social media platforms were deployed much less often, including blogs operated by other practitioners (used by 23.6%), crowd sourcing sites



like Wikipedia (22.2%), audio-visual sites like YouTube (20.2%), as well as professional sites like LinkedIn (10.6%). It was also revealed that practitioners were least likely to deploy citizen blogs in the performance of their duties (7.1%). U.S. media practitioners use social media platforms in the reportage of events for several other purposes.

The most frequent purpose for the utilisation of the social media platforms was to check for breaking news (78.5%) and to know what similar news outfits are doing (73.1%). Social media platforms are deployed also by U.S. media practitioners for the identification of story ideas (59.8%), for interaction with audiences (59.7%), for finding more information (56.2%), and for finding news sources (54.1%). Social media platforms are least often utilised for verifying information (24.7%), for meeting or coming in contact with new people in the field (21.9%), or for the interview of news sources (20%) (Willnat & Weaver, 2014, p.18-19).

Talabi (2011) did a study on “The Internet and Journalism Practice in Nigeria”. The purpose of the paper was to appraise the impact of internet on journalism practice in Nigeria with the aim of bringing to limelight the factors that underline the poor usage of new communication technology in the Nigerian journalism profession. The study also explored the power of current modern technology as well as how such technology is redefining conventional journalism practice. The researcher used library research to get secondary data which were very helpful for the study. The study found that a new media ecosystem is emerging. This is a situation where online communities engage in discussions as well as the extension of the stories created by the conventional media. The study also found that the online communities engage in participatory journalism, grassroots reporting, annotative reporting, commentary as well as fact-checking which the conventional media rely on and develop as pool of news tips, sources as well as usage as story ideas (Talabi, 2011).

Findings from the study carried out by Olorede and Oyewole, (2013) showed that internet facilities are provided in the newsrooms of broadcast stations in Nigeria As shown in the responses of 222 respondents which represent 74% of the sample and that the audiences have favourable perception of social media usage as news sources.

Paulussen and Harder carried out a study entitled “Social Media References in Newspapers: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as Sources in Newspaper Journalism.” The study was an exploratory one providing an initial insight on how the social media platforms are utilised as news sources in Belgian newspaper journalism. Data from the study showed that in the two selected Flemish quality newspapers, De Standaard and De Morgen, there were references to social media which have become commonplace. As such, these findings lend credence to assumptions that for lots of today’s newspaper journalists, monitoring the social media platforms has grown to become a part of their everyday newsgathering routines. It is interesting to however note that this does not in anyway mean that social media platforms dominate the newspaper content as an information source. Articles that cite the social media platforms as news sources seem to be on the low side. Both Flemish quality newspapers on an average per day publish just five articles which refer to Facebook, Twitter and/or YouTube, as (part of) subject or as a source, or both. In 7 out of 10 articles published, the social media sites function as a source of information. It also shows that Facebook and Twitter are more prominent/popular as information source in the newspapers than YouTube (Paulussen & Harder, 2014).

Sozeri (2011) found in a study that Twitter has been considered good and credible alternative news/information source to corporate news journalism or conventional media. The



contributions of followers such as comments, questions and criticism as well as the opportunity to reach enormous information sources of information have enriched the social media capacity to serve as news sources. It was also found that many journalists' motivations to use twitter for journalism practice is to diversify their sources of information, confirm information as well as follow different critical issues and agenda across the globe (Sozeri, 2011, p.87).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Perception theory and the Technology Acceptance Model were used to explain the study.

Perception Theory

Bovee, Thill, Dovel and Wood (1995) described perception as the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message. Hence, perception involves the process of exposure, attention and interpretation. In other words, for perception to take place there must be exposure to stimuli with certain level of attention paid to the stimuli and finally the stimuli are interpreted by the audience (Ezinwa, 2015).

Perception theory helps to explain the process by which individual selects, organizes and evaluates stimuli from the environment to provide meaningful experiences for him or her. This means that people focus on certain features of their environment to the exclusion of others. The audience automatically chooses which information to notice and this kind of selection is dependent on varied filter of perception that is premised on the initial experiences of the consumer (Smith, 2011). The theory provides explanation on why a particular message is perceived differently by the audience. This implies that the way a particular audience views a given message may differ from the perception of the message by another audience. This theory relates with this current study on the basis that it is a perception study. It looked at how the audience perceive the utilisation of social media as sources of news.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was developed by Fred Davis and Richard Bagozzi in 1989. It is an information system theory which explains how users come to accept and use a technology. TAM postulates that the acceptance and use of a particular technology by an individual depends on how the individual perceives that technology to be useful to him. Factors such as Perceived Usefulness (PU), which include relative advantage, attached prestige and cost effectiveness, and Perceived-Ease-of-Use (PEOU), are significant in user's choice of acceptance of technology (Olorede and Oyewole, 2013, p.4).

Giving his views on the postulations of TAM, Bagozzi (2007, p.248) cited in Olorede and Oyewole, (2013, p.4) explains that people could be reluctant to accept new technologies because of the technologies' complexity and element of uncertainty which exist in the minds of decision makers with respect to the successful adoption of the technology. Therefore, the reluctance to accept new technologies because of the technologies' complexity and element of uncertainty which exist in the minds of decision makers with respect to the successful adoption of the technology may inform how the audiences perceive social media usage as news sources.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the survey research method to carry out study and used the questionnaire as data collection instrument. A projected population of 21,602,533 residents of South-East



Nigeria constituted the population of the study. A sample of 400 was drawn from the population using the Taro Yamane's formula. The multi stage sampling technique was used to select the States, LGAs, communities and individuals whose perceptions were ascertained regarding the subject of investigation.

In line with the above, the stages of sampling technique used for this study are presented below:

Stage one: Since the study focused on the five states that constituted the South-East zone of Nigeria, all the states in geopolitical zone were first of all selected. The states are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. These five states were therefore categorized as five clusters.

Stage two: Here, the researcher purposively selected four local government areas in each of the five states. This was based on two crucial factors which are high media concentration and internet penetration. Therefore, in Abia State, Umuahia-North, Umuahia-South, Aba-North, and Aba-South, LGAs were chosen; in Anambra State, Awka-North, Awka-South, Onitsha-North and Onitsha-South LGAs were selected; LGAs that were selected in Ebonyi State are Abakaliki, Afikpo-North, Afikpo-South, and Ebonyi. In Enugu State, Enugu-North, Enugu-South and Enugu-East and Nsukka LGAs were selected; while in Imo State, Owerri-North, Owerri-South, Owerri-Municipal, and Okigwe LGAs were selected for the study.

Stage three: In the local government areas are wards. To give all the wards equal chances of been selected, simple random sampling technique was employed to select the number of wards that were studied in the chosen local government areas. Selected wards in Umuahia-North are Afugiri, Umuhu, Isingwu, Ndume, Umuahia II, and Ibeku-East I; selected wards in Umuahia-South are Nsirimo, Amakama, Ubakala "B", Ohiaocha, and Amiaukwu II; selected wards in Aba-North are Uratta, Ogor I, Industrial Area, Umuogor, Ariaria Market, and Osusu II; selected wards in Aba-South are Asa, Eziukwu, Enyiamama, Igwebuikwe, Ekeoha, and Ngw. Wards that were selected in Awka-North are Isu-Aniocha, Ugbenu, Achalla III, Ebenebe II, Urum, Amanuke, and Ugbene; Awka-South are Okpuno, Nise II, Nibo III, Mbaukwu, Awka V, Awka I, Umuawulu, Agu-Oka, Amawbia III, and Ezinato Isiagu; Onitsha-North are Woluwo Layout, Inland Town II, Trans Nkisi, Inland Town V, Water Central II, Ogbe Umuonicha, and Inland Town VIII; chosen wards in Onitsha-South are Odoakpu VIII, Fegge II, Bridge Head I, Fegge V, Odoakpu V, Odoakpu, Bridge Head III, and Odoakpu II.

In Abakaliki LGA, the following wards were selected Edda, Ndiagu, Izzi Unuhu, Abakpa, Okpoitumo Ndiegu, Amagu Unuhu, and Azumini/Azugwu Layout; Afikpo-North are Unwana-Afikpo I, Amata-Akpoha, Ohaisu-Afikpo 'B', Itim-Afikpo, Popere-Amasiri, and Nkpoghoru Afikpo; Afikpo-South are Nguzu Edda, Amiri Ekoli, Eburnwana, Oso-Eda, and Owutu-Edda; selected wards in Ebonyi are Onuenyim, Agalegu, Egwu Dinagu, Mbeke, Ndiebo, and Enyibichiri II; selected wards in Enugu-North are Asata Township, GRA, China Town, Ogui Township, New Haven, and Independence Layout; Enugu-South are Maryland, Uwani -East, Ugwuaji, Akwuke, Amechi, and Awkunanaw; Enugu-East are Amorji, Abakpa II, Trans -Ekulu, Ugwugo-Nike, Mbuluiyiukwu, and Umuenwene; Nsukka are Ihe, Ibeku, Ede-Ukwu, Eha-Uno, Akalite, Nnu, Alor-Uno, Obukpa, Akpa/Ozzi, and Obimo/Ikwoka;



In Owerri-North, selected wards were Naze, Obibiezena, Orji, Emmi, Egbo, and Ihitte Oha; Owerri-West are Obinze, Nekede, Okuku, Eziobodo, and Ihiagwa; Owerri-Municipal are Ikenegbu, Azuzi IV, Aladinma II, New Owerri I, G.R.A. and Azuzi I; Okigwe are Umulolo, Amuro, Okigwe II, Ihube, and Ezinachi

Stage four: The individuals who responded to the questionnaire were randomly selected to ensure they had equal chances of selection.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The collected data were collated, presented and analysed using tables and simple percentages. After the administration of the questionnaire, 391 copies were properly filled and returned while 7 copies were not returned. The researcher therefore analysed the returned 391 copies for the study.

Table 1: Frequency at which residents of social media use social media as sources of news

How frequent do you use the social media as news sources?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Regularly	8	2.2 . 5	2.2 . 5	2.2 . 5
Occasionally	297	76 . 0	76 . 0	98 . 5
Don't use as news sources	0	0	0	
Not sure	6	1 . 5	1 . 5	100 . 0
Total	391	100 . 0	100 . 0	

Table one above shows that majority of the respondents (297) representing 76.0% occasionally use the social media as news sources.

Table 2: Perception of the use of social media as news sources

How do you perceive the use of social media as news sources?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Credible	11	3.0 . 4	3.0 . 4	3.0 . 4
Not credible	264	67 . 5	67 . 5	98 . 0
Don't use as news sources	0	0	0	
Can't say	8	2 . 0	2 . 0	100 . 0
Total	391	100 . 0	100 . 0	

Table two above shows that most of the respondents (264) representing 67.5% perceive social media as news sources without credibility.

Table 3: Perception of social media usage for breaking of news

What is your perception on social media usage for breaking of news	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Effective	11	2.9 . 2	2.9 . 2	2.9 . 2
Valid Not Effective	27	6.9 . 3	6.9 . 3	9.8 . 5
Not sure	6	1 . 5	1 . 5	100 . 0



T o t a l | 3 9 1 | 1 0 0 . 0 | 1 0 0 . 0 |

Table three above shows that most of the respondents (271) representing 69.3% perceive social media usage for breaking of news as ineffective.

Table 4: Perception of social media usage for Audience Feedback

What is your perception of social media usage for audience feedback?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Efficient	109	27.9	27.9	27.9
Valid Not Efficient	278	71.1	71.1	99.0
Valid Can't say	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	391	100.0	100.0	

Table four above shows that most of the respondents (278) representing 71.9% perceive social media usage for audience feedback as ineffective.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The revelations of the study were discussed with reference to related empirical literature.

Research Question One: What is the frequency at which South-East of Nigeria use the social media as sources of news?

This research question was put forward to establish the frequency at which residents of South-East Nigeria use social media as news sources. To answer this research question, data collected and presented on table 1 above were utilised. Table one above shows the frequency at which the respondents use the social media as news sources. Data on the table indicate that 88 respondents constituting 22.5% regularly use the social media as news sources, 297 respondents representing 76.0% occasionally use the social media as news sources, no respondent indicate the “don’t use as news sources” option while 6 respondents constituting 1.5% indicated that they were not sure of the frequency at which they use the social media as sources of news. This shows that significant number of respondents occasionally use the platforms as sources of news. Giving credence to this finding, Newman (2015) found in his study that Accra residents regularly use the social media for various purposes but not regular when it comes to accessing news via the platforms.

Research Question Two: How do residents of South-East Nigeria perceive the utilisation of social media as news sources?

This research question was posed by the researcher to ascertain how residents of South-East Nigeria perceive the use social media platforms as news sources. Table two above shows how the respondents perceive the use of social media as news sources. Data on the table show that 119 respondents constituting 30.4% perceive the social media as credible news sources, 264 respondents representing 67.5% perceive social media as not credible sources of news, no respondent indicate the “don’t use as news sources” option while 8 respondents constituting 2.0% indicated that they can’t exactly say how they perceive the use social media as news sources. The indication is that a lot of those who responded perceive social media as not credible news sources of news. This finding is in line with Tellen (2015) who found that citizens of Pretoria do not perceive social media as credible news sources.



Research Question Three: How do residents of South-East Nigeria perceive the use of social media for breaking news?

This research question was raised to find out how residents of South-East Nigeria perceive social media usage for breaking of news. The data presented on table three above were used to address this research question. From the table, 114 respondents constituting 29.2% indicated effective, 271 respondents representing 69.3% indicated not effective while 6 respondents constituting 1.5% could not tell if its effective or not. It can be said from the above that most of the more of those who responded perceive social media usage for breaking of news as not effective. In a related study, Talabi (2017) found that Oyo residents do not see social media as effective in breaking news to them based on the perception that social media platforms are flooded with fake news.

Research Question Four: How do South-East residents perceive social media for audience feedback?

The essence of this research question was to ascertain how residents of South-East Nigeria perceive social media usage for audience feedback. Data as presented on table four above were used to answer this research question. From the table, 109 respondents constituting 27.9% indicated efficient, 278 respondents constituting 71.1% indicated not efficient while 4 respondents representing 1.0% could not say if it is efficient or not efficient. It can be drawn from the above that significant number among those who responded perceives social media usage for audience feedback as not efficient. Accordingly, Olorede and Oyewole (2013) indicated that Osun State residents perceive social media as ineffective for audience feedback.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The outcomes of data analysis reveal that:

- Residents of South-East Nigeria occasionally use social media as news sources
- Residents of South-East Nigeria do not perceive social media as credible news sources.
- South-East residents do not perceive social media as not effective in receiving breaking news
- Residents of South-East Nigeria do not perceive social media as inefficient in sending feedback to the media.

CONCLUSION

Following the revelations made by the study, the researcher therefore concludes that social media platforms are not seen as worthy sources where the audience can seriously rely for news. This implies that the platforms have credibility problem which has heralded the negative perception among the respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the revelations of the study, the researcher made the following findings:

1. The audience should always double check the information they get from social media sources to ensure they have the correct information.
2. Factual and verifiable reports should be disseminated via the social media to gain audience confidence.



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SOCIAL MEDIA AND BRIDGING OF COVID-19 INFORMATION GAP AMONG STUDENTS OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, OKO

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Abstract

This is a survey study. The researcher uses a sample of 112 students to x-ray the impact of new media in dissemination information on COVID-19 pandemic. The study submits that WhatsApp, Facebook and Opera news are rendering front line media services. Based on this, therefore, the paper reveals that new media have been potent at the awareness level. The paper also notes some differentials (gap) among the students in terms of level of awareness of COVID-19 pandemic terminology. This aspect of the result is hypothetically explained in the level of new media dependency, literacy level and income. The paper reinforces the role of the media in national development. The paper consequently recommends that governments and change agents take advantage of the possibilities inherent in the new media in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Words: Mainstream media, Social media, Knowledge gap, Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Given the tremendous rise in user count of social media—especially Facebook and WhatsApp—in Nigeria, there has been a substantial change in the management of health, political, religious and social information in the country. To some extent, the communication equation in terms of freedom of information and power to reach the public has changed in favour of the public. More people are now able to share information freely and faster. This scenario was unthinkable before the year 2000. On this basis, communication and political discourses have changed in line with evolving media technological landscape.

The Internet is a precursor to this ongoing media change. In fact, the Internet has accelerated digital convergence with a range of players: Newspapers, magazines, radio, television, film, books. This convergence has led to the evolution of *mixed media*. Given the foregoing, it is important to understand the way the audience use Social Network Sites (SNS) in comparison with mainstream media.

NEWS ALSO BREAKS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA!

To many, news mainly breaks from social media. Many Nigerians first get fresh stories from social media. On May 12, 2017, soldiers mutinied in Ivory Coast demanding unpaid bonuses—singularity, conflict, violence and tragedy! May 22, 2017, a suicide bomber claimed the lives of 22 people including an eight-year-old girl in an explosion at the Ariana Grande pop concert in Manchester. The Islamic State terror group has claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing— conflict, violence and terror! In 2017, news broke that Chukwuma Onuekwusi, Channels Television’s State House Correspondent, is dead. The veteran



journalist died in the early hours of Tuesday, May 23– prominence and tragedy! (Uwakwe, 2017a).

Donald Trump, Republican, was inaugurated 45th President of America January 20, 2017, succeeding Barack Obama, Democrat– change! After 100 days in office, President Trump has signed 34 executive orders, with far-reaching effects on Americans' lives and world politics. *Friday, May 12, 2017, former President of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, gave out his daughter, the last child and 2nd from his late wife Mariam Babangida, by name Halimat Babangida to the Sarkin Sudan Gombe, Alhaji Auwal Lawal Abdullahi in marriage–prominence!* Twenty six private jets as well as police and air force aircrafts landed in Minna on Friday, May 12, 2017 for the wedding. Aeroplanes brought the various dignitaries that attended the wedding of Babangida's daughter. The police also provided air surveillance and security while a cache of security agencies gave watch. Nigerians shared their private video clips on the spectacular event (Uwakwe, 2017a). *All these were highly circulated in social media.*

On Thursday, August 30, 2018, President of Senate, Abubakar Bukola Saraki, declared his presidential ambition under the platform of opposition Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. Senator Saraki made his ambition public at a dialogue with youth and young aspirants held at Sheraton Hotel under the auspices of the “Not Too Young to Run” movement and in the presence of the PDP National Chairman, Prince Uche Secondus in Abuja. This made instant news and was promptly shared by Nigerians in social media. During the Second Republic, the State media might choose to keep the news away from the public.

On July 13, 2015, information on the sacking of Service Chiefs in Nigeria was relayed through subscribing cell phones in Nigeria via the Guardian daily mobile news which costs thirty naira weekly. The information delivered through MTN platform: “President Buhari has sacked the Head of Army, Navy and Air force” (credited to <http://wwnrguardiannews.com>). This information was later retransmitted through social media. All the foregoing events were freely transmitted in social media and are an indication of the trend in information dissemination.

June 12, 2020, President Buhari addressed the nation and touched on COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after the broadcast, many Nigerians began sharing the speech on social media. It enabled many Nigerians who usually do not have regular access to electricity to get informed online. In the United States, President Trump regularly tweets to Americans on COVID-19 and other world issues. Ahead of TV or radio broadcast, news on the disqualification of incumbent Governor Obaseki of Edo State also spread rapidly. The foregoing accounts are indicative of the power of social media.

THE ISSUE

March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) alerted the world on a novel coronavirus. The WHO continues to closely monitor the spread of the virus, said Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom, during the announcement. “We are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction,” he said. “We have called every day for countries to take urgent and aggressive action.” By this time, there had been large outbreaks of the virus in Italy, South Korea, and the United States. The WHO classified the novel Coronavirus as a global public health emergency on January 30, 2020. On March 11, 2020, Tedros stated that “we have made an assessment that COVID-19 can be characterised as pandemic” (Wetsman, March 11, 2020).



The mass media have always played important roles in promoting modernisation and development to people as well as articulating the views of the common man. Progressively, decades of technological milestones have dramatically changed the way news is produced and consumed (Uwakwe, 2017a). Media ecology is changing aggressively and the Internet is the prime agitator. But we were alerted by Dominick (2009) who saw them come together!

In Nigeria, with a cell phone of less than 10,000 naira or less, and active Internet network data bundle, you can sign in to the Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and similar social media. Even though these low-quality phones cannot be used anywhere in Europe and America, these affordable handsets have created opportunities for media access and rise in Internet use in Nigeria. In any case, irrespective of poor per capita income, media dependence in favour of the new media is on the rise. Several factors account for this phenomenon.

If your data bundle is adequate and the network is friendly, you can remain online as a king and navigate 24/7! As an online king, you can hunt and peddle information as you wish. And this ability may include bullying a political opponent or spread disinformation. This is media revolution. On the above basis, communication and political discourses have to change in line with media technological changes and new communication ecosystem. In part, this inevitable discussion on how people use social media prompted this work. In general, the work attempts to find out the roles of the social media in the management of COVID-19 information, and by so doing point out knowledge gap on COVID-19 pandemic based on social media.

Based on the foregoing, the following objectives and research questions are put forward.

Objectives

- i. To determine the extent to which people rely on different media for information on COVID-19.
- ii. To determine the extent to which people rely on social media as sources of information on COVID-19.
- iii. To determine the extent to which people use information on social media.
- iv. To determine the extent people are conversant with the pandemic terminology through social media.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do people rely on different media for information on COVID-19?
2. To what extent do people rely on social media as sources of information on COVID-19?
3. To what extent do people use information on social media?
4. To what extent are people conversant with the pandemic terminology through social media?

LITERATURE REVIEW

At a time in Nigeria, few privileged urban dwellers had access to broadcast services. At that time, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) diffusion radio-wired radio system



brought information to the city people. Information was mainly on colonial and government activities as well as world developments. Opinion leaders and the like information mongers were to retransmit such information to the less information privileged. In those days, it was obvious that only a few had access to immediate political and social information. During this era, information circulation was slow, especially among rural people.

Today, a public event such as Democracy Day, or Governor Obiano's state broadcast could reach a very large population instantly. The power to reach large audiences is now enjoyed by many citizens. We now talk about citizen journalism and we live in an "electronic republic!"

In Nigeria, broadcasting began in Lagos first as wired system in 1933 as Radio Distribution System when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched the first regulatory short wave programme service. This service was launched under the watch of the Department of Post and Telegraph (P&T). Under this programme, radio signals were connected to speakers and making it possible for the public to hear the BBC foreign radio service in designated locations of subscribers. The service was a reception and relay base for the BBC. The service relayed the voices of the British administrators such as Winston Churchill and Bernard Shaw but also featured news and public affairs programmes. "The re-transmitted programmes encouraged the British administrators by informing them about events in Britain. It also gave the colonized people a view of the imperial authority of Britain" (Owuamalam, 2008, p.10).

On December 1, 1935, the Radio Distribution System was changed to Radio Diffusion System. The aim was to spread the activities of the British colonial government and her allies and was used to spread the World War 11 information and propaganda. With a new name, Radio Distribution System took off with stations at Ikeja and the other in the Glover Memorial Hall. Diffusion subscribers paid for the listening boxes. In time, stations were opened in Ibadan (1939), Kano (1944) and later in Enugu, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Opinion leaders and the like information mongers were to retransmit such information to the less information privileged. In those days, it was obvious that only a few had access to immediate political and social information. Thus it is obvious that desire to reach the public as fast as possible has been in the front burners of colonial administration till date.

In April 1951, The RDS changed to Nigeria Broadcasting Service and radio stations were established in Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu and Ibadan. The stations were broadcasting on both short and medium waves, which till today is a government monopolised waves. The NBS Act was enacted in 1956. However, by another Act of Parliament, this service was later reorganised into Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation on April 1, 1957.

We see that from the beginning, broadcasting arrived under the control of the government, serving mainly as a medium of propaganda and for controlling the information. All these have changed.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES HERALD CHANGES

Media ecology is changing forcefully across the globe, and the Internet is the prime change agent (Uwakwe, 2018). Generally, technology has caused massive changes and traditional or mainstream journalists know this revolution. Today, professionals explain the new media landscape in various terms! You may have heard of the e-editorial board! You may have



heard of *global Public Square* meaning world capacity to share ideas communally and faster. You may also hear of virtual citizenship –capacity of digitally compliant fellows to enjoy worldwide interaction and neighbourhood. Any mass communication specialist operating without basic knowledge of the electronic world and new media is doing so at a great disadvantage. Media practitioners now talk about “digital natives” and “digital immigrants”, etc.

The Internet has been busy redefining the old process and irreversibly doing a revolution. In fact, it has put a question mark on what used to be the traditional features of the mass media and examples abound. Think of the changes: First, an individual can communicate with a large audience – one to many model process – which traditionally is the function of an organization or a corporation. Second, the traditionally delayed feedback has become immediate on the Internet. Third, this Internet induced redefinition of the elements of the mass communication process is refocusing attention on issues such as freedom of “expression, privacy, responsibility, and democracy” (Baran, 2002, p. 83).

You may have heard of “open source journalism,” or “citizen journalism,” which describes a process by which citizens, the ordinary, acting as amateur journalists without pay, submit information to Web sites such as YouTube and Facebook. You too can upload your information, and within minutes, could be shared worldwide

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting words in the mouths of billions of people worldwide. Ventilator, BiPap, face coverings, homemade masks, PPE are words quickly becoming part of our daily terminology as the disease COVID-19, which has now killed more than 74,000 people around the globe, continues to spread (Dolcourt, April 8, 2020).

Currently, there are over 7 million confirmed cases worldwide. As of June 12, 2020, Nigeria has about 15,181 confirmed cases, 399 deaths but also recorded 4,891 discharged patients. Arising from this, educating yourself on the science and the social responses will help you understand the situation and help explain it to others (Dolcourt, April 8, 2020) and perhaps help in better management of the pandemic.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Due to rapid changes in the media landscape, more extensive theoretical studies are needed to understand the dynamics of digital communication (Ezepue, 2019, pp.1-15). In any case, two theories—Media Ecology and Knowledge Gap help shape the work.

Knowledge Gap Theory

Back in the summer of 1970, three researchers published an article called "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge". These researchers, P. J. Tichenor, G. A. Donohue, and C. N. Olien, proposed something known as the knowledge gap hypothesis (Artem, 2018). The knowledge Gap theory is the notion that individuals with a higher socio-economic status absorb information presented by mass media at a faster rate than those with a lower socio-economic status. This leads to an increased gap in knowledge between these two segments of society as a result (Artem, 2018). It posits that as more and more information is made available to a people, more socially privileged groups will acquire more information at a faster rate than less privileged groups so that the relative gap between them will increase (Cecilie, 2019). In simple words, as the access to mass media increases those particular



segments of population inevitably gain information faster and hence the wide gap increases with the lower economic status of the population (n.a.).

Media Ecology Theory: Media ecology argues that media act as extensions of the human senses in each era, and communication technology is the primary cause of social change (Hakanen, 2007). The theory, therefore, is concerned with the study of media, technology, and communication and how they affect human environments (West & Turner 2014). The theoretical concepts were proposed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 (McLuhan, 1964).

METHODOLOGY

The research approach is the quantitative research design and adopts the survey method. This is because the survey method can measure belief, idea, opinion, attitude, and behaviour. This method has also the ability to allow for descriptive and inferential analysis and interpretation.

Population of Study

The population comprises current students of Mass Communication, Federal Polytechnic, Oko Anambra State, Nigeria officially put by registry unit at 320.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample of 120 respondents was purposely drawn for the study. The decision was guided by the need to include students who have access to the Internet as they have the characteristics for the study. At the point of retrieving the questionnaire, 8 students were unreachable. Therefore, a sample of 112 was used for the study.

Instrument of Data Collection

The researcher made use of a questionnaire.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally retrieved the by online returns. Where online returns were difficult, the researcher used the telephone interview with the questionnaire as a guide.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected by the researcher was presented in tables and analysed in percentages.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: *Access to Online Media*

	Response	Percentage
Yes	112	93.3
No	8	6.6
Total	120	100

Based on the above and in line with the objectives of the study, 112 respondents were adopted as a more useful sample. The table is also indicative of the rise of Internet access in Nigeria and a signpost to the online penetration among students. Over 100 million Nigerians are now connected to the internet, with 250,000 new subscribers logging on in the last quarter of 2019, according to data from the Nigerian Communications Commission (Russon, February 20, 2020).



Table 2: *Major Source of information*

ITEM	Response	Percentage
TV	10	8.9
Radio	12	10.7
Newspaper	8	7.14
Magazines	Nil	Nil
Interpersonal	11	9.8
Internet-related sources	71	63.3
Total	112	100

Table 3: *Comparative sources of online information*

ITEM	Frequency	Percentage
WhatsApp	43	38.39
Facebook	25	22.32
Twitter	2	1.78
Yahoo/Google News	3	2.67
Opera News	22	19.64
Personal Blogs	7	6.25
Internet-based mainstream media (TV/Radio/newspaper on net)	10	8.92
Total	112	100

Tables 2 and 3 above shed light on the objective of the study. A recent survey of 819 individuals and 48 retailers and phone sellers from seven Nigerian states that overall, respondents were interested in owning a phone and having mobile internet (Wang, March 4, 2020). WhatsApp accounts for the greatest source of information from social media. This is an indication that the site is popular among students and, perhaps, many Nigerians.

This is followed by Facebook and Opera news. The paper highlights the current strength of Opera as a source of news. This is consistent with earlier industry study which shows that respondents have a specific perception of Internet content that is very different from that of the developed world. For example, using Opera, a major web browser app, is seen as synonymous with “browsing the internet.” This leads to the unintended consequence of users not discovering the browser app that comes with their mobile device if the app icon does not look similar to the Opera icon (Wang, March 4, 2020). In any case, some studies suggest that when Nigerians go online (predominantly with their mobile phones) they spend much of their time on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so on).

Table 4: *How people use online information on the pandemic*

	Response	Percentage
share to individuals	51	45.53
Share to groups	33	29.46
Keep privately	5	4.46
Discuss with people	17	15.17
Take no action	6	5.35
	112	100



From the table, users retransmit information to friends and relatives and they also discuss developments verbally. This accounts for why information on the Internet spreads rapidly. Agbanu (2013, p. 95) states that “people are no longer passive receivers of information, but active partners in most communication processes.” The New York Times Customer Insight Group partnered with Latitude Research to conduct a three-phase study to understand why people share online—which included interviews, a sharing panel, and a survey of 2,500 medium-to-heavy online sharers (Eleventy Marketing Group, October. 6, 2015). The study has some findings based on “The Psychology of Sharing” study that gives a glimpse at what could inspire or motivate someone to share a link, deal, video or picture online.

The study further breaks it down into different motivations. It comes down to four primary drivers:

For YOU

To help, entertain or enlighten someone else.

For I

To say something about who you are and what you stand for.

For WE

To build or maintain a relationship with a person or group.

For THEM

To help, support or draw attention to something you care about (Eleventy Marketing Group, 2015).

Table 5: Awareness of Basic COVID-19 Terminology

ITEM	Yes	No
Index case	43 (38.39%)	69 (61.60%)
Pandemic	90 (80.35%)	22 (19.64%)
SARS-CoV-2	46 (41.07%)	66 (58.92%)
COVID-19	92 (82.14%)	20 (17.85%)
Coronavirus	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)
Flatten the curve	10 (8.92%)	102 (91.07%)
Mitigation	16 (14.28%)	96 (85.71%)
Social distancing	88 (78.57%)	24 (21.42%)
Self isolation/ quarantine	70 (62.5%)	42 (37.5%)
Isolation Centre	87 (77.67%)	25 (22.32%)



Community spread	66 (58.92%)	46 (41.07%)
Positive cases	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)
Active cases	110 (98.21%)	2 (1.78%)
Testing	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)
Nose Mask	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)
Sanitiser	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)
Hand wash	112 (100%)	Nil (0%)

The above table describes the level of awareness of issues relating to the pandemic. Of importance is the fact that all respondents are aware of the pandemic. They are also aware of some key issues about the pandemic such as hand wash, sanitizer and nose mask. There are some differentials (gap) among the students in terms of level of awareness of COVID-19 pandemic. This is hypothetically explained in the level of new media dependency, literacy level and income.

This aspect of the work also relates to Dependency theory of the media. Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur proposed the “Dependency theory” in 1976 and scholars agree the theory was expanded from the Uses and Gratifications theory. The Dependency theory (also called media system dependency theory or simply dependency theory) holds that the mass media’s influence varies based on how much people need or use particular media (Bentley, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that public responsiveness to government and non-government initiatives remains critical to world development drive. Consequently, using social media to propagate development initiatives such as improved health has been the practice the world over. This practice remains crucial in the fight against COVID-19. The theories used in the paper were appropriate and have buttressed the work. We can conclude:

- More and more people are getting access to online services
- Not every person has access to online media.
- Opera browser is a significant source of online information.
- WhatsApp and Facebook remain attractive to many online users.
- Many people are aware of coronavirus and fewer number are aware of COVID-19.
- Coronavirus, Facemask, sanitizer appear to be a house-hold name.
- There are some differentials (gap) among the students in terms level of awareness of COVID-19 pandemic. This is hypothetically explained in the level of new media dependency, literacy level and income.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. Workshops and seminars for professional journalists are necessary for sensitisation on online journalism and user-generated contents. This is expected to help guard against fake news associated with online media.



2. The curriculum in mass communication related departments should be enriched to accommodate critical areas of new media and online journalism. This will include teachings in media literacy.
3. Secondary school curriculum should incorporate salient areas of new media to deal with issues in user-generated contents.
4. Religion has been described as the opium of the masses. Consequently, religious practitioners should be considered partners in any attempt to fight a war against COVID-19.
5. National crusade focusing on restraints in sharing unverified information and fake news is important. This will help reduce the incidents and consequences of fake news and fake medical advisory on COVID-19. In some instances, people were asked to take salt, drink chloroquine without dosage, take excessive Vitamin C, etc.
6. In line with the study, it has become pertinent that governments and change agents take advantage of the possibilities inherent in the new media in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.
7. Development of acceptable online news ethical values at national and international levels cannot be over-emphasised in any new media literature.

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PRESS COVERAGE OF ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SELECTED NATIONAL DAILIES

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Abstract

Ethnic interest groups constitute influential actors in Nigeria's sphere of political engagement and public discourse generally. These groups, like other social actors, largely rely on mass media to be seen and heard, and the way media report them tends to shape public perception and engagement with the groups. Therefore, this paper examined press coverage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. Situated within the framework of agenda setting and framing theories, the study was designed as a content analysis. Four national dailies –Daily Sun, Vanguard, The Nation and Daily Trust – were purposively selected between May 29, 2015 and May 29, 2017, while 432 editions (108 issues for each paper) were selected. Findings showed that newspapers gave frequent and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. Reports on the groups revolved mainly around advocacy and antagonistic communication from the groups. The reports were slanted to favour ethnic groups of the respective owners. The study concluded that the continued visibility enjoyed by ethnicity-related issues in the sphere of public discourse in Nigeria may be partly explained by the frequent and prominent coverage given to them by newspapers, and that newspapers' slanting of their reports in favour of ethnicity of their owners underscores their role in reinforcing ethnic consciousness and divisiveness in Nigeria as found by several previous studies. The study recommended, among others, more efforts by the press towards objectivity and non-sensationalism in their reportage of ethnicity.

Keywords: Press, Coverage, Ethnicity, Ethnic interest groups, Newspaper

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic politics has become a defining phenomenon in Nigeria's nationhood (Adetoye, 2016). An important actor in this ethnic politics has been ethnic interest groups which are non-state bodies that project interest of respective ethnic groups they represent. Historically, the activities of these groups had begun long before the independence of Nigeria in 1960. In fact, their rise and growth in prominence can be attributed to the rise of ethnic consciousness in the country, as the amalgamation of 1914 foisted the co-existence under one political roof of peoples of widely differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Eric, 2016).

As it turned out, that British-imposed unification has left in its trail a long-running tale of tensions, frictions and bloody clashes that have become a recurring decimal in the Nigeria's political journey (Edewor, Aluko & Folarin, 2014), with the civil war of 1967 – 1970 arguably being the climax so far. Consequently, from the outset, Nigeria became burdened by ethnic divisiveness which immediately inscribed its mark on every aspect of the life of the emerging nation. Hence, the early socio-political institutions, including political parties and the press, became infected with the pervading ferment of ethnicity (Daramola, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). The nation became inscribed with what Umejesi (2012) describes as "grievance dynamics" manifesting as "contestation for sovereignty" between the state and previously independent local (ethnic) communities (p.47).

Beginning from 1953, there have been tens of ethnic crises in Nigeria resulting in uncountable deaths and property destruction (Sagay, 2009; Ndujihe, 2011). Incidentally,



given the interlocking of religion and ethnicity in the country, especially in the context of the north-south divide, many of these crises have also come with some religious undertone.

Thus, ethnicity has emerged a very powerful force shaping the socio-political landscape of Nigeria. It is an important factor in the structuring of the country starting from its initial regional set-up to the current state arrangement (Vande, 2012; Kasali, 2013; Adetoye, 2016). Similarly, several policies of the country including notably the federal character principle and revenue sharing system have been influenced wholly or partly by ethnicity (Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). In fact, the footprint of ethnicity remains visible in virtually all facets of national life.

Ethnic interest groups arguably constitute the major voice of ethnicity in Nigeria. These interest groups essentially have their ultimate objective as to project and fight for the interest of the respective ethnic segment they seek to represent. These groups, whose presence has been felt since the pre-independence era (Nnoli, 1978), now serve as the key corporate voice of ethnicity and ethnic groups in the country. Some of them such as ACF, Ohanaeze, Afenifere and Ibibio People's Union are more conservative and conformist, while others such as MASSOB, MOSOP, IPOB and OPC are more radical and tend towards self-determination. These bodies are informal entities in that they have no formal place in the politico-legal set-up of the country. Unlike other political groupings (such as state and local governments), their existence and activities are *permitted* and not *commanded* by law. However, they have become quite influential in political discourse and engagement in the country (Kukah, 2012). Notably, ethnic interest groups are an important actor in the unity-versus-division politics in Nigeria, as their claims and actions often have implications for national cohesion and peace (Ayatse&Akuva, 2013).

Consequently, understanding the ethnic interest groups is important for appreciating the dynamics of ethnicity and ethnic politics in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1978). In the same vein, understanding how the media represent these groups will be important for appreciating how ethnicity is generally represented in the media. These ethnic interest groups operate and communicate within a very vast geographic and cultural space known as Nigeria; and so, like other political actors and interests, they require mass media to be able to assert a presence within this huge space. It is what media report about the groups that members of the public tend to know about them. Therefore, media reportage becomes critical to how society relates with these groups and how their activities impact society. More importantly, such coverage contributes critically in shaping ethnic discourse and ethnic relations in the country. Against this backdrop, this paper studied press coverage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria with focus on selected national daily newspapers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Nigeria, ethnicity has been identified as a major problem. It has been blamed for all sorts of counter-developmental tendencies in the country including strife, violence, nepotism and corruption (Ayatse&Akuva, 2013). In fact, Ayatse and Akuva (2013) claim that ethnicity "has been discovered to have been responsible for most of the political, administrative, economic, social and cultural maladies in Nigeria" (p.178). Hence, ethnic interest groups, who champion ethnic claims, maintain an uneasy presence in the polity – as their activities often bear the potential for inciting tensions and conflicts (Ayatse&Akuva, 2013). With the media thrown into the middle of these tensions and disputes, they arguably walk a tight ethical rope as their professionalism is brought under pressure.



Studies on press reportage of ethnicity (such as Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Ngwu, Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Nwafor, 2015) point to biases on the basis of the ethnicity of owners. This would suggest that newspapers, as against objectively engaging ethnicity, are also implicated in ethnic politics.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate press coverage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria with focus on selected national daily newspapers. More precisely, the following objectives are targeted:

- i. To find out how frequently newspapers reported ethnic interest groups in Nigeria;
- ii. To find out how much prominence newspapers accorded these interest groups;
- iii. To identify issues and events the newspapers reported of the groups;
- iv. To ascertain the slants of newspaper reports on the ethnic interest groups; and
- v. To establish the likely influence of owner's ethnicity on newspaper coverage of the groups.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In view of the above objectives, the following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. How frequently did newspapers report ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?
2. How much prominence did newspapers accord these interest groups?
3. What issues and events did newspapers report of the groups?
4. What were the slants of newspaper reports on the ethnic interest groups?
5. What was the likely influence of owner's ethnicity on newspaper coverage of the groups?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Studies on media and ethnicity in the country have predominantly focused on specific ethnicity-related issues and events (Medubi, 2002; Anim, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Ngwu, Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Sule, 2015). This study however focused on the overall activities of all ethnic interest groups in the country in order to have a more holistic picture. This approach was significant given that these groups have been described as the major organised voices of ethnicity in the country (Nnoli, 1978); hence their activities and communications offer a vital understanding of ethnic relations and discourses in Nigeria. By focusing on their reportage, therefore, this study arguably added some depth to the extant empirical literature in the area of ethnicity and media.

Newspapers (and perhaps other forms of mass media such as TV and radio) in Nigeria could benefit from this study by way of gaining some form of feedback on their performance in reporting ethnic interest groups and ethnicity in general. In other words, these newspaper houses could find the data to be generated by the research useful for self-assessment and possible improvement in their reportage of ethnicity.

Similarly, the government and other stakeholders in Nigeria's sphere of political relations could find the data to be generated by this research useful for enhancing ethnic cohesion and national unity. Since the mass media play a dominant role in how ethnic consciousness and ethnic relations are generated and shaped (Brooks & Hébert, 2006), understanding how newspapers in Nigeria represent ethnicity could offer some useful insight to government and other stakeholders towards better management of ethnic relations in the country. This



improved management is required at this time the nation is experiencing an upsurge in the activities of secessionist groups such as MASSOB and IPOB.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focused on press reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. While this subject encompasses a lot of issues, this study concerned itself with only five variables as reflected in the objectives of the study i.e. frequency, prominence, issues, slant and possible influence of owners' ethnicity on coverage.

Also, the study restricted itself to only national dailies being that they constitute the mainstream in the nation's newspaper industry (Eze, 2017). Further, data collection was confined to only four newspapers; however, they were selected in such a way that they would represent the ethnic spread of ownership and readership of newspapers in Nigeria. Similarly, the study was delimited to a two-year period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualising Ethnicity

Like other forms of social identity, ethnicity is not easily definable. But basically, ethnic identity is ascribed to persons based on their membership of a certain form of collective known as ethnic group. Defining ethnic groups, Ukiwo (2005) opines that they are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always founded "on claims or myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory." Although these factors need not necessarily be present before a group is identified as an ethnic group, the basic thing is that such a group is attributed with a common identity that differentiates it from others. Therefore, ethnicity is a very complex and fluid form of identity generated via interpenetration of all or some of the following variables: history, race, language, culture, religion and geography (Nnoli, 1978). In Africa, nonetheless, language has been identified as the most common variable in ascribing ethnicity (Ademola, 2009).

However, ethnicity does not isolate itself; it reaches out and interlocks with other identity forms including political, economic, social, religious, class and other shades of identity. This makes ethnic identity fluid as people can cross ethnic boundaries. Frank Salamone (as cited in Kukah, 1993) avers that ethnic "boundaries are permeable, and people, sometimes singly and sometimes in groups, cross them. They do so in general, either to maximise their opportunities or to minimise or neutralise their threats" (p.1 – 2). This fluidity of ethnicity has been particularly advanced by the critical school including in particular postmodernism and Marxism (Nnoli, 1978; Waters, 2009; Omoniyi, 2014).

After New Guinea and Indonesia, Nigeria ranks as the most ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the world (Blench & Dendo, 2003). Apparently, no agreement has been reached as to the exact number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, popular views have put this at between 250 and over 300 (Blench & Dendo, 2003; Ayatse & Akuva, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). The nation is a multi-ethnic entity where three major ethnic groups – Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, and tens of smaller groups have had to coexist under one political roof.

Undoubtedly, ethnicity has been a recurring component of power relations in Nigeria (Ekeanyanwu, 2007; Ademola, 2009; Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009; Ayatse & Akuva, 2013; Ekeanyanwu, 2013). In fact, it has been widely noted as one of the most powerful forces that have shaped the country's history, for good or for bad (Blench & Dendo, 2003; Ukiwo, 2005;



Ajayi & Owumi, 2013). Ebegbulem (2011) argues that the influence of ethnicity has been pervasive, having a major impact on Nigeria's political and economic growth, influencing selection of leaders, siting of industries and other developmental projects; it brews inter-ethnic hostility and violence and generally undermines national unity and socio-economic wellbeing. Ethnicity exerts visible influence on the process of policy formulation and institution development in Nigeria (Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009).

Ethnic Interest Groups

An important actor in ethnic relations in Nigeria is the ethnic interest groups. These groups have as their main objective the pursuit of the interest of their respective ethnic groups. The rise of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era with the Ibibio State Union, founded in 1927, reportedly being the first to come into existence. Today, the organization bears the name, Ibibio People's Union. The Igbo State Union was another ethnic interest group that came up in those early days (Orizu, 1994). The EgbéOmọOdùduwà, which was a Yoruba interest group, was founded in 1945 while a Hausa group, Jam'iyyar *MutanenArewa*, came subsequently (Nnoli, 1978).

However, the ethnic interest groups that still exist today came much later than these pioneer bodies. The OhanaezeNdigbo was founded in 1976 to represent Igbo interest (OhanaezeNdi - Igbo, Enugu State Chapter, 2015). The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) came in 2001 (ArewaConsultative Forum, 2016) to represent the interest of northern ethnic groups, while both O'odua People's Congress, OPC (founded in 1994) and Afenifere are Yoruba interest groups (O'odua People's Congress, 2015). Within the context of the Niger Delta struggles, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) founded in 1990 and the Ijaw Youth Council founded in 1998 were some of the high profile interest groups (Ojoma, 2015).

Worthy of note also is that ethnic interest groups sometimes are organized around other interests such as profession, education or gender. Groups organized around education include students' groups like National Union of Ikwere Students, National Union of Urhobo Students, National Association of Igbo Students, Yoruba Students Association, Hausa Student Association of Nigeria, National Association of Ijaw Female Students, National Union of Isoko Students, and Igala Students' Association, among others. Those organized along gender include women's groups like Ikwere Women Progressive Union, Ijaw Women's Association, and Association of Bini Women of Honour, among others (Ojoma, 2015).

While ethnic interest groups generally promote interests of their respective ethnic groups, ideology and method sometimes differ from one group to another. Some of the groups could be considered more conservative while others could be considered more radical by virtue of their more drastic demand such as self-determination. Among the former groups would include ACF, Afenifere and Ohanaeze while MASSOB, OPC and MOSOP could easily fall into the latter category.

Media and Ethnicity in Nigeria

Literature has implicated the media in the rise of ethnic consciousness in Nigeria (Kukah, 1993; Taiwo, 2007; Daramola, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). In his fairly detailed historical analysis, Daramola (2013) shows that Nigerian newspapers have from the outset been tied to the apron string of their owners, hence becoming partisan and tribal as necessitated by the respective political and ethnic affiliations of these owners. Some of the earliest newspapers established in the country as well as the broadcast stations that came later assumed ethnic colouration as politicians who established them employed them in pursuit of regional interests (Nwafor,



2015). Two of these early newspapers, *West African Pilot* and *Daily Service*, owned by Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe and Ernest Sessei Ikoli respectively, had reportedly been in a feud which at times assumed ethnic colouration.

This feud, according to Omu (as cited in Daramola, 2013), contributed to “the regionalisation of nationalism and crystallisation of inter-group tension and animosity which characterized political developments for a long time” (p.41). Daramola (2013) contends that the ethnic cleavages evident in newspaper content in Nigeria are so obvious that one cannot but easily decipher them. Taiwo (2007) specifically accuses the Nigerian media of sensationalism in reporting ethnicity which sees them unduly focusing on conflicts in their coverage of ethnicity-related issues. This charge incidentally has been confirmed by empirical studies (Njoroge, Kimani & Kikech, 2011; Doki, n.d.).

Studies on newspaper reportage on key national issues in the country have also shown that many of the reports tend to take sides on ethnic, political, regional or religious issues. Salawu (2007), Omenughha and Ukwueze (2011), Ngwu *et al.* (2013), Nwafor (2015) and Sule (2015) found that media coverage of ethnic issues was less than objectives as each establishment tended to slant its report in favour of a given ethnic group. Ownership has also been found as factor, as reports seemed to have been slanted to favour the owner’s ethnic group (Salawu, 2007; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Sule, 2015).

While the studies cited above are on media reportage of ethnicity-related issues, none of them focused specifically on coverage of ethnic interest groups, which being the only organised corporate ethnic players in the Nigeria’s socio-political sphere (Ojoma, 2015), arguably present an ideal case for assessing media representation of ethnicity in the country. Stated differently, these studies were restricted to specific ethnic issues with none focusing holistically on the activities of ethnic interest groups. This constituted the research gap necessitating this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The agenda setting theory helps to view Nigerian newspapers as being able to project issues in society, including as related to ethnic interest groups. The theory posits that media, through regular and prominent coverage, elevate issues to the level of public agenda. In other words, media determine how much visible an issue becomes in the domain of public discourse; it sets public agenda (McQuail, 2010; Baran, 2010). Hence, while media may not tell us what to think, they certainly tell us what to think about. Stated differently, the theory is not about media persuading us, but about media suggesting to us what to think about and talk about. This is what is known as priming; the process whereby media makes a news event or issue more visible than others. Thus, Nigerian newspapers, through their manner of coverage, may elevate issues related to ethnic interest groups to the status of public agenda.

Also relevant to newspaper coverage of ethnic interest groups is the framing theory which explains the process whereby an originator of communication builds into their message the perspectives which they want audience to read the message from. The basis of the theory is that any given issue, event or development can be viewed and understood from varying perspectives. Stated differently, every phenomenon can be seen through different frames of meaning depending on who is seeing and the circumstances of the seeing (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Chong & Druckman, 2007b). Hence, framing has been described as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman, 2007a, p.104). It is “a way of giving some



overall interpretation to isolated items of fact” (p.380). A frame is developed “through selection, emphasis, and exclusion.” A given frame makes people to direct their attention on certain messages while failing to see the other” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p.428). In other words, a frame determines what is perceived and what is not perceived, what is understood and what is not understood, what is felt and what is not felt (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

Media gatekeepers in selecting and packaging news inevitably engage in framing. As all other members of society, they are not immune to social judgments and biases. Thus, McQuail (2010) contends that it “is almost unavoidable for journalists to” engage in framing “and in so doing to depart from pure ‘objectivity’ and to introduce some (unintended) bias” (p.380). Consequently, framing has been described as “an essential feature of news” (Tuchman as cited in Scheufele, 1999, p.106).

Within the context of this study, the framing theory helps to put in perspective the role of the gatekeepers in influencing the judgments and feelings of the audience by virtue of what they highlight and what they fail to highlight in their reportage of ethnic interest groups. Thus, the process of news production in regard to these groups could be understood from the perspective of the thought, judgment and emotion the gatekeepers intended to provoke in readers.

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed as a content analysis. The study population was all national dailies published in Nigeria from May 29 2015 to May 29 2017 which was the first two years of the President MuhammaduBuhari administration. This period was chosen given its significance within the context of recent ethnic contestations in Nigeria. The period followed a presidential and other elections mired in ethnic tensions in March and April 2015 (Batta, Batta & Mboho, 2015), and these ethnic tensions lingered under the administration as the government continued to be accused of ethnic bias by some interests in the country (Ojoma, 2015). Ethnically charged issues such as attacks by Fulani herdsmen, agitations by secessionist groups like IPOB, MASSOB and Niger Delta groups, and arrest and detention of the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu and leader of the Shiite Islamic Movement Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, among others, were all news stories with ethnic overtone in this period (Ojoma, 2015; Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016). Within this period, a total of 22 national dailies were found to be publishing in Nigeria, and each would have presumably published 732 issues in the two-year period of the study which gives a total of 16, 104 issues.

The sample size for the study was 432 newspaper editions. This size was chosen based on Basden and Wright’s (1997) recommendation that selecting one edition per week would be appropriate for a newspaper study extending up to a period of six months – and this study extended to a two-year period. Hence, for each of the four newspapers used here, 108 editions were selected (one from each of the 108 weeks that ran between May 29 2015 and May 29 2017). These, on the whole, amounted to 432 editions.

This sample selection was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved selecting newspaper titles, wherein the researcher looked out for two major characteristics; first, the market strength of a title, and second, the ethnic background of the owner. Hence, the researcher purposively selected *Daily Trust*, *The Sun*, *The Nation*, and *Vanguard*. The second stage of the sampling involved choosing particular editions of the four newspaper titles. Here, the researcher’s aim was to ensure that every day of the week (excluding Saturday and Sunday) was duly represented.



The weekend editions were excluded being that their content and style are more in the nature of magazine than newspaper. In other words, they don't usually represent the typical newspaper tradition in terms of content and style (Bellhouse, 2005). In ensuring that all days of the week were evenly represented, the researcher was guided by the recommendation by Basden and Wright (1997) that selection of editions should occur in a regular interval that would ensure that successive days are chosen every other week. Thus, the researcher began by picking the first day that occurred within the first week of the study – Friday, May 29, 2015. Then, moving to the second week, he chose Monday edition (June 1), the third week, the Tuesday edition (June 9), the fourth week, Wednesday June 17 and so on. This process continued up to the last week of May 2017 where the Tuesday edition (May 23) was selected. On the whole, 108 editions for each of the four newspapers and 432 editions for the entire four become the sample

The units of analysis were news, features, editorials, pictorials and cartoons. A coding sheet was used as the data collection instrument. The researcher was assisted by coders, who were first trained and an inter-coder reliability test conducted using Kappa formula as put forward by Cohen (as cited in Lombard, 2010). The test result stood at 0.96 which amounted to 96% reliability. Data was quantitatively analysed using simple percentages.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

RQ1: How frequently did newspapers report ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?

Frequency was measured by examining the number of times reports on ethnic interest groups were published in the newspapers. Data generated in that regard are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Frequency of Coverage*

	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Total
Editions with reports on ethnic interest groups	75% N = 81	52.8% N = 57	47.2% N = 51	89.8% N = 97	66.2% N = 286
Editions without reports on ethnic interest groups	25% N = 27	47.2% N = 51	52.8% N = 57	10.2% N = 11	33.8% N = 146
Total	100% N = 108	100% N = 108	100% N = 108	100% N = 108	100% N = 432

Table 1 shows that on the whole, 66.2% of the newspaper editions had reports on ethnic interest groups while 33.8% came with no such reports. Apart from *Daily Trust*, all of the newspapers had such reports in majority of their issues published within the period under study. Nevertheless, the number of *Daily Trust* editions with such reports was only slightly below majority. The foregoing indicates that ethnic interest groups were a regular news subject in the newspapers, at least within this period, suggesting that these groups and their activities are viewed as important and critical to the nation by the newspaper gatekeepers. This tends to reinforce the belief expressed by writers like Daramola (2013) and Nwafor (2015) that ethnicity has over the years constituted an important and recurring news subject in the Nigerian media.

RQ2: How much prominence did newspapers accord these interest groups?



Prominence was measured by examining the placement, page rating and headline size of reports published on ethnic interest groups in the newspapers. Data generated in that regard are as presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Placement

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Front page	21.4% N = 60	24.8% N = 37	8.6% N = 12	14.3% N = 26	18% N = 135
Centre page	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	2.1% N = 3	0% N = 0	0.4% N = 3
Back page	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0
Editorial page	0.7% N = 2	0.7% N = 1	0.7% N = 1	0.5% N = 1	0.7% N = 5
Others	77.9% N = 218	74.5% N = 111	88.6% N = 124	85.2% N = 155	81% N = 608
Total	100% N = 280	100% N = 149	100% N = 140	100% N = 182	100% N = 751

Table 2 shows that overall, 18% of the reports were placed on the front page, 0.4% appeared on centre page, 0% was on the back page, 0.7% appeared on the editorial page, while 81% appeared on other pages. The overwhelming dominance of other pages over front, centre, back and editorial pages (across the four newspapers) is natural because they constitute most of the newspaper space, and so most reports find themselves there. However, for ethnic interest groups to get up to 18% front page placement is remarkable considering the number of subjects and issues competing for that single but most treasured page in every edition. The centre page almost did not get any material given that only *Daily Trust* publishes report in that page; others use that mostly for advertisements. Then, the back page, being mainly for opinion columns in the newspapers, had no reports placed on it. For the editorial page, its content is already fixed i.e. editorials, editorial cartoons and letters to the editor. In all, it could be stated that the pattern of placement, to whatever extent, suggests that newspapers placed some value on the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups; they found them worthy of prominent placement.

Table 3: Page Rating (Excluding Features, Pictures and Editorials)

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Page lead	50.5% N = 106	21.6% N = 25	11.6% N = 32	60% N = 96	40.1% N = 240
Non page lead	49.5% N = 104	78.4% N = 91	88.4% N = 99	40% N = 64	59.9% N = 358
Total	100% N = 210	100% N = 116	100% N = 112	100% N = 160	100% N = 598

Table 3 shows that overall, 40.1% of the reports were published as page lead reports as against 59.9% that came as non-page lead reports. Ethnic interest groups could be said to have got an impressive share of the page lead reports considering that many other subjects also compete for that status, and there can be only one lead report in each page. Remarkable,



Daily Sun and *Vanguard* respectively published 50.5% and 60% of their reports as page leads.

Table 4: *Headline Size (Excluding Pictures, Editorials and Cartoons)*

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Large	60.5% N = 133	43.5% N = 54	23.5% N = 28	66.1% N = 109	51.6% N = 324
Medium	8.6% N = 19	8.9% N = 11	0% N = 0	22.4% N = 19	7.8% N = 49
Small	30.9% N = 68	47.6% N = 59	76.5% N = 91	22.4% N = 37	40.6% N = 255
Total	100% N = 220	100% N = 124	100% N = 119	100% N = 165	100% N = 628

Table 4 shows the sizes of the headlines of the reports. This was measured by the number of columns across which a headline was spread i.e. “large” (five to six columns), “medium” (three to four columns) or “small” (one to two columns). Overall, 51.6% of the reports came with large headlines, 7.8% came with medium headlines, while 40.6% came with small headlines. Almost a similar pattern is reflected in all but one of the individual newspapers. Looking at the data holistically, it could be stated that the newspapers gave large headlines to a good number of the reports which is a pointer to the extent of value attached to ethnic interest groups by the papers.

On the whole, the foregoing data indicate that the newspapers gave prominence to the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups in terms of pattern of placement (Table 2), page rating (Table 3), and headline size (Table 4). Such treatment shows prominent coverage of the groups.

RQ3: What issues and events did newspapers report of the ethnic interest groups?

Issues and events reported were measured by examining the subject matter of reports published by the newspapers on the groups. Data generated in that regard are as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: *Issues Reported of Ethnic Interest Groups*

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Advocacy	29.6% N = 83	35.6% N = 53	40.7% N = 57	25.3% N = 46	31.8% N = 239
Antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group	31.4% N = 88	20.1% N = 30	17.9% N = 25	25.8% N = 47	25.3% N = 190
Antagonistic communication by government	3.6% N = 10	2% N = 3	1.4% N = 2	4.4% N = 8	3.1% N = 23
Demonstrations/riots/clashes	4.6% N = 13	6% N = 9	7.1% N = 10	2.7% N = 5	4.9% N = 37
Internal divisions	0% N = 0	9.4% N = 14	2.1% N = 3	2.2% N = 4	2.8% N = 21
Arrest/trial of members	18.2%	12.8%	5.7%	19.2%	15%



	N = 51	N = 19	N = 8	N = 35	N = 113
Ceremonies	7.9%	14.1%	3.6%	5.5%	7.7%
	N = 22	N = 21	N = 5	N = 10	N = 58
Others	4.6%	0%	21.4%	14.8%	9.3%
	N = 13	N = 0	N = 30	N = 27	N = 70
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N = 280	N = 149	N = 140	N = 182	N = 751

Table 5 indicates that 31.8% of the reports on ethnic interest groups were on advocacy, 25.3% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 3.1% on antagonistic communication by government, 4.9% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 2.8% on internal divisions, 15% on arrest/trial of members, 7.7% on ceremonies, while 9.3% was on other issues. Thus, the newspapers largely reported the ethnic interest groups in terms of the advocacy they make; the ideas they promote and what they want done.

This suggests that they tend to view them as important voices in the national discourse whose opinions and suggestions on the nation should be heard. Similarly, antagonistic communication by these groups was frequently reported as well; this sort of communication is usually in the form of aggressive demands, warnings and accusations by the groups. It is often dramatic and sensational and so makes the typical sort of audience-pulling news that interests the press (Jenkins, 1981; Hieber, 1998; Akin, 2005). Also, the relative dominance of arrest/trial of members among the issues reported of the groups may be understood also by paying attention to the typically dramatic nature of such occurrence which became a common experience of more radical groups like MASSOB and IPOB.

RQ4: What were the slants of newspaper reports on the ethnic interest groups?

Slant was measured by examining the direction of reports in the papers in terms of how favourable it appeared to the respective ethnic interest groups. Data generated in that regard are as presented in Table 6.

Table 6: *Slant*

	Newspaper				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Favourable to an Hausa-Fulani interest group	7.1% N = 20	3.4% N = 5	45% N = 63	2.2% N = 4	12.3% N = 92
Favourable to an Igbo interest group	51.8% N = 145	12% N = 18	15.6% N = 22	45.1% N = 82	35.6% N = 267
Favourable to a Yoruba interest group	17.9% N = 50	30.9% N = 46	10.7% N = 15	3.8% N = 7	15.7% N = 118
Favourable to a minority interest group	13.2% N = 37	9.4% N = 14	5.7% N = 8	27.5% N = 50	14.5% N = 109
No Clear Slant	10% N = 28	44.3% N = 66	22.9% N = 32	21.4% N = 39	22% N = 165
Total	100% N = 280	100% N = 149	100% N = 140	100% N = 182	100% N = 751



Table 6 shows that on the whole (across the four newspapers), 12.3% of the reports were favourable to Hausa-Fulani ethnic interest groups, 35.6% to an Igbo interest group, 15.7% favoured Yoruba groups, 14.5% favoured minority groups, while 22% came with no clear slant. Interestingly, it can be observed that the news slants largely followed the ethnicity of the proprietors of the newspapers; each of the papers tended to give more positive slant to the ethnic group where the owner(s) come from. However, the exception was *Vanguard* which gave the most positive slants to Igbo interest groups while minority groups (where the proprietor belongs) came second. This same pattern was also seen of *Vanguard* in the amount of reports published of the ethnic interest groups (Table 2).

RQ5: What was the likely influence of owner's ethnicity on newspaper coverage of the groups?

To measure the likely influence of owners' ethnicity, ethnic background was correlated with the pattern of the reportage. This is as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Zero Order Correlation Matrix (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Owners' ethnicity	1	-.025	-.235**	-.257**	.332**	.176**
2. Placement		1	.259**	.310**	.072*	-.006
3. Page rating			1	.774**	.066	-.016
4. Headline size				1	.025	-.041
5. Ethnic group reported					1	.327**
6. Slant						1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows that owners' ethnicity correlates negatively with page rating ($r = -.235$) and headline size ($r = -.257$), and positively with ethnic group reported ($r = .332$), and slant ($r = .176$). This indicates that a likelihood of association between ethnic backgrounds of the respective newspaper proprietors and how they report the ethnic interest groups exist. Instructively, influence of owners' ethnicity in reporting ethnic issues in Nigeria has been observed in previous studies including Sule (2015), Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011), and Ngwuet *al.* (2013).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding by this study showed that the newspapers gave frequent and prominent coverage to the ethnic interest groups is an indication that the papers viewed these groups as deserving of being kept on the public agenda. Frequent and prominent coverage is the most critical element in the agenda setting process, as subjects accorded such treatment by the media are likely to emerge as part of the public agenda (Daramola, 2003; Baran, 2010). This finding may have been lent credence by the assertion of Sule (2015) that ethnic interest groups and ethnicity-related issues are dominant in the sphere of public discussion and debate in Nigeria. In this light, one could state that these subjects have gained their prominent status due to the manner in which the newspapers, and perhaps, other mass media, have treated them. However, this is after allowance must have been made for other intervening variables that might influence the agenda setting process.



The third finding would also advance the argument that the press views ethnic interest groups as significant voices that ought to be heard, as the papers largely reported them in terms of the advocacy they make, the ideas they promote and the demands they make. The finding also showed frequent reportage of antagonistic communication of these groups by way of their aggressive demands, warnings and accusations; a pattern that validates the belief that the press often gives dramatic and sensational treatment to divisive subjects like ethnicity as a way of exciting audience interest (Jenkins, 1981; Hieber, 1998; Akin, 2005).

Similarly, results equally indicate that the respective newspapers slanted their coverage in favour of particular ethnic interest groups and that this slanting corresponded with the ethnicity of the respective owners. This suggests that the coverage is reflective of the beliefs, biases and prejudices upheld about ethnicity in Nigeria. Interestingly, influence of ethnic ideology on reportage in the country has been investigated by several previous studies including Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011), Medubi (2012), Ngwu *et al.* (2013), Salawu (2013), Nwafor (2015) and Sule (2015) – with the results generally showing that this influence is real and strong. Studies such as Ekeanyanwu (2007), Ngwu *et al.* (2013) and (2013) Sule (2015) were also interested in the role of ownership in this influence, and just like the present study, the ethnicity of the owner was found to be significant.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it may be concluded that the continued visibility enjoyed by ethnicity-related issues in the sphere of public discourse in Nigeria may be partly explained by the frequent and prominent coverage which this study found newspapers to be giving to ethnic interest groups. Such coverage, according to the agenda setting theory, is critical for elevating an issue to the level of public agenda. Furthermore, the fact that the newspapers slanted their reports in favour of ethnicity of their owners underscores media's role in reinforcing ethnic consciousness and divisiveness in Nigeria as found by several previous studies (Salawu, 2007; Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Nwafor, 2015; Sule, 2015). So, in effect, findings of this study validate results of previous studies to the effect that media coverage of ethnicity has been largely biased, with the ethnicity of the owner influencing the slant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Newspaper houses in Nigeria should work towards improving objectivity in their representation of ethnic interest groups through adopting deliberate editorial policies aimed at giving even amounts of coverage to different ethnic interests as well as reporting them fairly irrespective of whatever interest a newspaper house might have.
2. Given how sensitive and emotive ethnicity-related issues have proven in Nigeria and other places (Umejesi, 2012), there is need for periodic internal review of performances of Nigerian newspapers. This could be done under the auspices of bodies like the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and Nigerian Press Council, among others. The aim will be to continually appraise how much practitioners have been faithful to the established norms of practice in terms of equal representation and objectivity. Such peer review mechanism could help individual journalists and newspaper houses to continuously improve their performance without threat to press freedom.
3. A repeat of this study using other newspapers different from those employed in this study may be necessary. For instance, based on ethnic backgrounds of owners (which



informed the researcher's choice of newspapers), *The Punch* could be substituted for *The Nation*, *The Authority* for *Daily Sun*, *New Nigerian* for *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* for *Vanguard*. Study of these other newspapers may help in further validating the generalisations made in the present study.

4. In the same vein, other media forms such as radio and television should also be subjected to this sort of study. This is important given that various media forms have their various unique characteristics and dynamics. For instance, television, given its greater capacity to graphically depict and glamorise events, has injected much dramatisation to political events (Lewis, 2005) such as represented by ethnic relations in Nigeria.

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REVOLUTIONARY UNDERPINNINGS IN POETRY: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF OSUNDARE'S *THE EYE OF THE EARTH*

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Abstract

Language, whether written or spoken, is used for different purposes by man. The textual function of language makes it possible for writers especially poets to lend their voice to local, national and international matters of interest through written poetry. In most cases, poetry functions more than being just a mirror to the society; it has the implicit intent of causing a change, thus, it is underpinned with criticisms that could incite revolution in readers which could upturn the status quo. The intention is to awaken readers to the reality and to critically engage their mind in order to make a rethink so as to see the 'evil' behind the 'good' in the society. The data for analysis were purposively selected from Osundare's poetry collection *The Eye of the Earth*. Stylistics was deployed as the theoretical framework to analyse the selected data while, Blending Theory was deployed to unearth the meaning-making process in the analysed data. From the analysis, different stylistic devices used such as simile, rhetorical question, metaphor, parallelism etc. reveal societal ills and condemn apathy in readers with the aim of inciting revolution towards having an egalitarian society. The study found out that new meaning is created through blending of concepts from different input spaces. A general and common ground is derived from the input spaces which are used to derive new meaning. This linguistic dexterity is intended by the poet to project his message to readers in a subtle way. The study concluded that Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* contains implicit revolutionary nuances aimed at motivating readers to rise against the injustices in the society towards achieving an egalitarian society. Also, the poet decries man's injurious activities to nature and opts for preservation of natural endowments thus, the aim of this study is achieved which is to unearth the revolutionary nuances embedded in the selected and analysed data. Apart from its contribution to existing literature especially in communication, this study presents a methodology and a theoretical framework that is helpful in the appreciation of literary writings.

Keywords: Blending, mapping, style, stylistics, revolution, masses, leaders, stylistic devices, input spaces

INTRODUCTION

Poetry serves as a mirror to the society as poets use it to portray various activities of the society. Language as a potent tool to poets lends itself to creative manipulations as an exploration of the linguistic plurality to capture the changing dynamics of the society and diverse linguistic needs of the speaker in different contexts. Since language could easily lend itself to creative manipulations, it could be seen as a tool that could be used to condition people's thoughts. From the colonial era, poetry has often served as a means to reveal societal ills in a bid to correct them. There have been calls to pay attention to the emerging challenge of the depletion of the ozone layer and the environment in order to address issues of environmental degradation and global warming. Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* could be



seen as response to those calls as its focus lies in the call for preservation of nature's endowments. *The Eye of the Earth* is a collection of poems. It is divided into three sections: "Back to Earth", "Rainsongs" and "Homecall". It presents various themes ranging from the unhealthy activities of man on the earth to the presentation of the earth as a repository of wealth for man's judicious use. It portrays Osundare's perception of the earth in relation to man's activities and the effects on the environment. Nature is the crux of this collection as it hinges on the celebration of the rich cultural traditions of his people and emphasizes their reverence for nature. The collection addresses issues of environmental degradation and desertification. By exploring the theme of environmental degradation and the theme of socio-political injustices, Osundare portrays various societal ills through the deployment of both stylistic devices to achieve his aim effectively. This study concludes that revolutionary poets do more than informing readers about the various happenings in the society; through their poems, by carefully deploying both stylistic devices, they unearth societal ills aimed towards challenging the people to rise up and fight for their freedom. This study reveals that the poets as writers are also 'righters' who seek to correct societal ills, injustices and other social vices using poetry.

Deploying stylistics and blending theory to unearth the revolutionary nuances inherent in Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* is very rewarding as it portrays the meaning-making process through blends using stylistic devices. This meaning-making process helps to uncover hidden revolutionary nuances inherent which are targeted towards readers in order incite revolutionary with the aim of attaining an egalitarian society and a healthy environment.

THE HISTORICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF AFRICAN POETRY

Poetry as an art form has undergone several phases of evolution from pre-colonial to colonial and then to post-colonial eras in most African countries. There existed a thin line between poets and musicians as poets composed and rendered poetry in musical form. Poets rendered their works at funerals, marriage ceremonies and other ceremonial avenues where they could give their renditions, with themes focused on praising virtues and condemning vices in society. Themes of liberation, independence and negritude began to permeate African literature in the late colonial period when Africa began to seek independence from the colonialists. African poets (as well as playwrights and novelists) began to write condemning slavery and colonialism and advocating for self-rule. African literature at that time was protest in nature. It came as a reaction to various forms of injustices meted out on Africans by the colonial masters and later, post-colonial African masters. African poets preoccupied themselves with themes such as: the clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self-reliance and between Africanity and humanity. Other themes in this period include social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights and roles of women.

These themes explored by the writers are a reflection of what is happening in the society. Hence, it is obvious that literature does not develop in a vacuum. It is the political, economic, social and cultural events of a society that shape its literature. Indeed, it will be right to say that for any literary work to be relevant, it is necessary that it bears relevance, explicitly or implicitly, to the social milieu in which it is set (Kehinde Ayo, 2005). The various historical and developmental stages of African poetry (written) reflect the historical realities of such era; the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial and poets largely drew their themes from these eras.



STYLISTICS

Stylistics is a word which has its origin from “Style”. From the layman’s point of view, style is the general way of doing something thus, we could refer to a person’s style of writing, walking, sitting, dressing etc. Leech (1969) describes style as “the way in which an act is spoken, written or performed”. Stylistics can be defined as the study of language usage in different contexts either linguistic or situational. Lawal (2003), posits that stylistics is concerned with the analysis and description of linguistic features of texts in relations to their meanings. It is aimed at analyzing language habits with the purpose of identifying those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social contexts. According to Simpson (2004), “to do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use”. Literary stylistics is more concerned with providing ‘the basis for fuller understanding, appreciation and interpretation of avowedly literary and author-centred texts (Carter and Simpson, 1989). Literary stylistics helps to explore the stylistic devices used by an author to present his message. It focuses on how textuality is achieved by writers through the various literary and stylistic devices. In literary stylistics, the devices that can constitute style include figurative devices and rhetorical tropes such as simile, metaphor, rhyme and rhythm, hyperbole, personification, point of view and narrative technique, etc. Style in literature involves the investigation into the ways that an author uses words through the deployment of literary elements and devices. Issues to consider include choice of words, sentence structure and arrangement, imagery, figurative language, etc.

The approaches to style include the following:

- (a) Style as choice from variant forms: The crux of this approach is that a language user makes certain choices from variant forms (an array of possible elements) and combines them to convey a particular situation. In other words, speaker selects from lexical possibilities that the language permits in order to express themselves. These choices are determined by the context of situation of the speech event. According to Osundare (2003), style as choice stands out as the most author-oriented because it transcends the arrays of physicalities of the language used to the various dynamics and imperatives that style offers. Going further, Osundare (2003) explains that the selection of lexical items and grammatical elements are chosen by the pre-verbal choice and form. He distinguishes between pre-verbal and verbal choices which cover the psychological and cultural choices and the actual use of the choices made with the pre-verbal choices greatly determining the use of the verbal choices.
- (b) Style as deviation from the norm: This approach is both a rule governed behaviour and accumulation norms. Osundare’s (2003:18) schema for style as difference bifurcates into variation and deviation. Variation could be code-oriented, subject-oriented or author-oriented while deviation could be extro or intro normic which branches to intra-authorial and inter-authorial. Osundare (2003) explains that code-oriented variation could be lexical, syntactic, or rhetorical. Subject oriented variation covers the different fields of human activities such as law, medicine, construction, engineering, teaching, ICT, carpentry, etc. which vary with different manifestations of peculiarity based on each profession. Author oriented variation on the other hand, centres on the peculiarity of individual author. In simpler language, this approach to the study of style deviates from the standard graphological, phonological, lexicon-semantic, morphological, syntactic and discourse rules language.
- (c) Style as idiosyncratic and constant form: This approach states that every individual uses language in a unique way different from others. This approach is tantamount to the sociolinguistic concept of “idiolect” which deals with the peculiarity of language use of every individual. In the opinion of Osundare (2003:29), “This perspective gives style some



attribute of a habit, a trait, a linguistic behavior that, through settled practice, has become the hallmark of a language user or a domain of linguistic experience.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Here, the theoretical frameworks on which this study is based are presented.

The Concept of Marxism

The German philosopher, Karl Marx propounded Marxism. According to Asika (2014), Marxism is the economic and political theory originated by the German political philosopher Karl Marx that actions and human institutions are economically determined, that the class struggle is the basic agency of historical change, and that capitalism will ultimately be superseded by communism. Karl Marx believes that in production, there is the exploitation of the lower class group by the privileged class (bourgeoisie). It therefore tries to uncover these exploitations with the aim of encouraging a revolt by the exploited class against the exploiters, the masses against the bourgeoisie, the poor against the rich, etc.

Class struggle is the crux of Marxism. It aims at bringing to the fore, the unfair and exploitative conditions with the aim of concentrating the wealth of the society in the hands of its producers. Marxist writings are revolutionary in nature and are written with the aim of raising a consciousness of exploitation, inequality and injustices of those in privileged positions in the society. Marxists are preoccupied with injustices in the society and how to create a change in the status quo so as to create a balance especially in the distribution of society's wealth. Ngugi (cited in Asika, 2014) commenting says: "...It can either evidence a consciousness that seems to consciousness congruent with the interests of the oppressed class which is engaged in the struggle to change the social status quo." (472)

Marxism x-rays the structure of the society to unravel areas of imbalances between the rich leaders versus the poor masses, the upper class versus the lower class, the bourgeois class versus the proletariat (the poor peasant masses), producers of labour versus workers etc. in order to address these imbalances. This is done in various areas of the society; economic, political, and social. Marxism achieves its aim through literature by using writings (poetry, drama, and novel) to scrutinize the different strata of the society in order to create awareness in the masses and the oppressed in the society about the injustices in the society and how they need to throw off the yoke from off their shoulders by opposing and overturning the political, social and economic strata of the society so that there will be equality regardless of one's social, political or economic stance.

Blending Theory

This theory is also known as conceptual blending theory or conceptual integration. Though a new theory, it draws from existing theories and models. Its main proponents according to Abrams (1999) are Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002) with contributions from other scholars like Coulson (2001, 2006), Coulson and Oakley (2000), Grady (2005), Grady, Oakley and Coulson (1999) and Sweetser (2000) among others. It is a theory derived from blending Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Mental Spaces theory (MS) but has now developed into a fully-fledged theory independent of both theories. It blends the notion of spaces from mental Spaces Theory and the notion of mapping between spaces from Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Norgaard et al (2010:60) attempted to define it as 'an understanding of concept A in terms of concept B; it is the understanding of some conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain' which is realized at the cognitive level rather than the sentence or word level. This theory in order to construct meaning through the blend



comprises two (or more) input spaces, the generic space and the blend. The input spaces are the various areas that the blend is derived from which are according to Coulson (2006:190 cited in Abrams, 1999) typically structured by information from discrete cognitive domains.

The generic space is the interface among the various input spaces; it contains some components common to all the inputs while the blend which is the end point is created as a new and independent space which derives a new meaning generated from the generic space which is also generated from the input spaces. According to Norgaard et al (2010) blending theory has become a theoretical proposition firmly embraced by practitioners of stylistics, which is not surprising considering the particularly creative nature of literary discourse and its inclusion of novel blends. The researcher chose this theory to analyze Niyi Osundare's poetry collection *The Eye of the Earth* because in concurrence with the position of Norgaard et al above, the theory affords the researcher the opportunity to investigate the literary and stylistic creativity of the author.

Marxism as presented above is a theory that investigates society's socio-political and ethno-religious aspects in order to bring to uncover areas of oppression, injustices and inequalities meted out on especially society's less-privileged and downtrodden especially by those in authority. This theory is significant to this research as it enabled the researcher to explore the "The Eye of the Earth" by Osundare to bring to the fore the revolutionary forces inherent in them. More so, in order to look at the language and style of the author, the researcher adopted literary stylistics as an approach in order to look at the language of the poet and to bring out the stylistic (figurative and literary) devices used in order to unravel nuances of oppression and injustice in the society. The data analysed were purposively selected from the poetry collection.

ANALYSIS OF OSUNDARE'S *THE EYE OF THE EARTH*

Simile

Simile compares two people or things directly. It is a comparison between two distinctly different things which is explicitly indicated by the word "like" or "as". M.H Abrams (2005). This is the indirect comparison of two objects, people, animals etc. by placing them in contrast to each other.

Simile in *The Eye of the Earth*

- (1) I have seen
 "...laboring mouths famish like desert basins." (*What the Earth Said*, line 19-20)
- (2) I have seen foremen soulless like their whistling whip. (*What the Earth Said*, line 15-16)
- (3) I have seen
 Lives snuffed out like candles in the storm. (*What the Earth Said*, line 27-28)

Osundare in the above datum makes use of simile through the use of 'like'. The author through simile compares the situation of 'mouths' (a synecdoche for persons/people) to that of the desert. Here, the situation of people referred to in the above is likened to that of desert basins. Through this simile, Osundare creates a blend which is a new meaning. The input spaces would be 'mouths' (people) and 'desert basins'. A cognitive attribute of 'desert basins' is used to comprehend the domain of 'people' thus, giving rise to a novel meaning called the blend derived by mapping attributes of 'desert basins' unto laboring 'mouths' which refers to people. 'dryness' and 'abandonment' as attributes of "desert basins" are mapped unto those working class (laboring) people which means that the masses who work



are left with very little to live on. Meaning that, the masses that constitute the working class live in penury. In datum 2, the input spaces are foremen' and "(whistling) whip" to generate a blend by mapping attribute of 'whip' to foremen. The blend created is that just as the 'whip' through whistling sound continues to go up and down the back of the recipient, so do foremen continuously torment the masses in their hostage.

Also, in datum 3, an attribute from the input space (candles) is mapped onto the input space; lives (people) to create a blend to mean that as 'suddenly' and without thought' as light goes out of candles in the storm, so does death come on the masses suddenly and the killers do this without hesitation. This means that the lives of the masses mean nothing to the 'killers' and can be suddenly taken anytime. Using simile to create blends as analysed above, the author is able to project his message of revolutionary instincts by portraying the horrendous ordeal of the masses; poverty, torment and death (datum 1, 2, and 3 respectively) in the hands of privileged few in the position of power in the society. Through this, Osunadre decries the inhuman treatment being incessantly meted out to the poor masses by few people in the position of power.

Parallel Construction/Parallelism

Parallelism is the use of similar words or structures in successive lines. Parallelism according to Okunowo, Y. (2012) "is a linguistic phenomenon, which explains the relationship that may be understood between units of linguistic structures, which are constructed parallel to each other or related in some other ways." Also, Myers and Simms (1989:223) define parallelism as "a rhetorical device of grammar in which words, phrases, clauses or ideas of equivalent value share a similar grammatical structure to create an inherent comparison among them.

Parallel Construction/Parallelism in *The Eye of the Earth*

- (4) (for) earth is where we stand
Earth is where we strive. (*The Rocks Rose to Meet Me*, St.5 line 3, 4)
- (5) ...this earth is:
Ours to work not to waste
Ours to man not to maim (*Ours to Plough, Not to Plunder*, St.6 line 2,3)
- (6) I have seen
Labouring mouths famish like desert basins
I have seen
Factory lords roll in slothful excess
I have seen
Backs creak on heartless machines
I have seen
Lungs powered with asbestos death
I have seen
Lives snuffed out like candles in the storm.
("What The Earth Said")

In datum 4, the parallel construction "earth is where we..." does not only give the poem rhythm but also communicates the author's message of the valuableness of the earth to mankind due to its multiple uses. By using the input spaces "stand" and "strive", a blend is created that earth serves multiple uses to mankind hence, the need to preserve it. Through parallelism, Osundare reminds us of the importance of the earth and advices us against unwholesome practices on it. This stance of the author is clearly understood in another



parallel construction in datum 5, ‘ours to... not to...’ clearly decrying, through the input spaces ‘work (not waste)’ and ‘man (not maim)’, the unwholesome practices of ‘wasting’ and ‘maiming’ the earth we are to work and man.

Parallelism in datum 6 lies in the repetition and sameness of structures enhanced by the graphological arrangement of the subject-verb “I have seen”. This parallelism using repetition and structural equivalence helps to provide the poem a certain rhythm which helps the poet to build up the mood of sadness through the various inhuman treatment meted out on the poor masses as listed in the poem. The input spaces are ‘the laboring mouths (masses)’ and their ‘lords or foremen’. Through these input spaces, Osundare creates a blend through parallelism that the poor masses who are used to do various arduous works under very horrendous treatments by the same lords they work for in addition, continue to wallow in penury while the lords have in excess. The horrendous treatment of the poor masses continues to increase and sometimes leads to death; this is evident in the parallelistic crescendo of the horrendous treatment of the masses culminating at death.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech used to animate inanimate objects. According to Wales (2001:294), personification is “a figure of speech or trope in which an inanimate object, animate non-human, or abstract quality is given human attributes. It involves the transfer of attributes of living things to non-living things. It involves giving life to non-living things so that they are meant to act like living things.

Personification in *The Eye of the Earth*

- (7) uncountable seeds lie sleeping
 in the wombs of the earth. (*Harvestcall*, St.8 line 1)
- (8) Lynched
 The lakes
 Slaughtered
 The seas
 Mauled
 The mountains (*Our Earth Will Not Die*, line 1-6)

In datum 7 above, the human attributes ‘sleeping’ and ‘wombs’ are attributed to ‘seeds’ and ‘earth’ respectively to bring alive the unharnessed (sleeping) earth’s myriads of resources that are buried (wombed) in the earth. The input spaces are ‘seeds (lie sleeping)’ and ‘(wombs of the) earth’ which create the blend that the earth houses so much that is left unharnessed by the people who are complaining of insufficiency. This means that if we put our fingers to work, there will be no lack in the land. Through personification as shown above, Osundare condemns the laziness of the people which has led to scarcity in the land whilst the earth houses so much. This is aimed at reminding the people of the abundant earth’s resources and to motivate them to shun laziness and harness these resources for man’s benefit.

Through personification in datum 8 above, objects are given human attributes thus, we picture the ‘lakes’, ‘seas’ and ‘mountains’ as though they are human beings who have been ‘lynched’, ‘slaughtered’ and ‘mauled’. The input spaces ‘lakes’, ‘seas’ and ‘mountains’ preceded by ‘lynched’, ‘slaughtered’ and ‘mauled’ represent earth’s natural resources used together with the verbs ‘lynched’, ‘slaughtered’ and ‘mauled’ create the blend that earth’s natural resources suffer from unwholesome activities by man. Through this, Osundare condemns all unwholesome practices by man against natural resources and calls for a change for man to protect the earth’s resources not destroy them; use them not misuse them.



Osundare gives human qualities to inanimate objects in order to have the maximal appeal since it is to be read by human beings. He believes that it is bound to have more effect if objects are given human attributes which the people are familiar with. Personification proves very impactful especially in a revolutionary writing as this which intends to not only inform the people but to also get them to act towards change.

(9) I have seen/heard. (*What the Earth Said*, St.1 line 1, 4, St. 3 line 1,3, 4 line 1,3 St. 5 line 1, 3 St. 6 line 1, 5)

In datum 9 above, the earth is given the human attributes of “seeing” and “hearing” by the author. This is done to make the earth feel as a human all the abuse and misuse it is being put into by having the painful experience of seeing and hearing them. The use of this personification is to tell how devastating man’s activities are to the earth that even the earth which is inanimate could “see” and “hear” them. Through this, the author seeks to not only highlight these abusive acts and misuse the earth is put into but also condemns them and appeals to the people to protect the earth and its myriads of endowed natural resources rather than destroy it.

REPETITION

This is to reiterate what is earlier stated for certain reasons and to achieve certain effects. Usually, a word, phrase, sentence etc that has been used is repeated by the writer intentionally to achieve a purpose. It is an emphasis necessary to fix the attention of the reader on the key-word of the utterance.

Repetition in *The Eye of the Earth*

(10) Where are they? (*Harvestcall*, St.8 line 1,5,8,11,14)

In datum 10 above, through repetition and rhetorical question, Osundare emphasizes the blessedness of the land endowed with myriads of resources and fertility of the soil and further questions the disappearance of these things from the land. Through this, rhetorically asking the people is a pointer that the people know the whereabouts or are the cause of the disappearance of those natural endowments.

(11) They (too) are the earth. (*They Too are the Earth*, St.1line 1, 4, St. 2 line 1, 4, St. 3 line 1, 4, St. 4 line 1, 4)

In datum 11 above, through repetition, the author emphasizes his message. The input spaces are “they” and “earth”. An attribute of “earth” (“dust” from which everybody was made regardless of colour, age, education, riches, etc.) is mapped unto “they” a particular group of people. Through this repetition, the author emphasizes that everybody is equal being all made from dust. This creates the blend that nobody should be looked down on because of one material possession or the other as ultimately, everybody is equal and has the same fate of life and death. The author, through this repetition explores the theme of inequality in the land and further condemns it. This is intended to make the so-called rich and powerful people who oppress others to stop and think on the sameness of fate of everybody and stop oppressing the masses.

(12) I have seen/heard. (*What the Earth Said*, St.1 line 1,4, St. 3 line 1,3, 4 line 1,3 St. 5 line 1,3 St. 6 line 1, 5)

In datum 12 above, through the use of the repetition “I have seen/heard”, the author personifies the earth so as to be able to “see” and “hear” the numerous abusive acts and misuse it is being put to by the people. For the earth which is inanimate to “see” and “hear”, the author stylistically communicates how devastating these acts are to the earth and calls for a change to rather protect the earth and enjoy its plethora of resources.



ALLITERATION

Alliteration as a phonetic and stylistic device provides melody and rhythm to an utterance. “Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonants in two or more words” (Wales, 2001).The essence of this device lies in the repetition of similar sounds, in particular consonant sounds, in close succession, particularly at the beginning of successive words:

Alliteration in *The Eye of the Earth*

- (13) ... under snakeskin shoes and Mercedes tyres.(*They too are the Earth*, St.1 line 5)
- (14) ...of gold dreams and blood banks. (*They too are the Earth*, St.3 line 5)
- (15) ...toilwards in dreary dawns. (*What the Earth Said*, St.1 line 3)
- (16) Foreheads foraged by grit and grime. (*What the Earth Said*, St. 2 line 4)
- (17) foremen soulless like their whistling whips. (*What the Earth Said*, St.4 line 2)

Alliterations are used in the poems to give them a kind of melodic effect through the repetition of initial consonant of successive lines. For example, the repetition of the voiced labio-velar sound /w/in the initial position of the successive words gives a kind of rhythm and melodic effect to the poem (datum 17)

INTERROGATION/RHETORICAL QUESTION

Rhetorical questions are asked for emphasis or to achieve certain effect thus, no response is required. A rhetorical question according to M.H Abrams (2000:315) is a sentence in the grammatical form of a question which is not asked in order to request information or to invite a reply, but to achieve a greater expressive force than a direct assertion. This is a situation whereby questions especially rhetorical questions constitute style. These questions are more than just questions and they bear the poets’ message to readers. The following are identified and analysed:

- (18) Where are they? (“Harvestcall”, St.6 line 1,5,8,11,14)

In datum 18 above, through rhetorical question, Osundare tells of the blessedness of the land endowed with myriads of resources and fertility of the soil and further questions the disappearance of these things from the land. By rhetorically asking the people is a pointer that the people know the whereabouts. Through this rhetorical question, the author not only questions the disappearance but indirectly blames the people for the disappearance which must have been through various activities of the people which they carry out on the land. Apart from informing readers about this disappearance, the author condemns the activities of the people which have led to the disappearance. The preceding and following lines suggest that what is referred to as “they” are the fruitful farm products ubiquitously displayed in the village as harvest time approaches which no longer exists or have greatly reduced which has caused the author great concern.

- (19) with our earth so warm
how can our hearth be so cold? (“Harvestcall” St.9 line 6,7)

In datum 19 above, the author questions the misuse of the earth’s resources. This draws attention to an anomaly that the author perceives; how the earth is so blessed to yield sufficiently to benefit man but how yet, they wallow in hunger and lack. This rhetorical question also shows the author criticism of the people who by implication have either misused the earth’s resources or out of laziness not used them at all which has resulted to hunger and lack in the land. The author decries abuse, misuse and underuse of earth’s resources and sees lack as self-made.



METAPHOR

Metaphor is the opposite of simile; while simile indirectly compares people or objects, metaphor on the other hand directly compares them. Metaphor describes a ‘carry over.’ When words are used with metaphoric senses, one field or domain of reference is carried over or mapped onto another on the basis of some perceived similarity between the two fields (Wales 2001:250). It is the transference of some quality from one object to another. Metaphor makes comparison just as simile, but unlike simile, metaphor is a direct comparison without the use of “as” or “like”.

- (20) Our earth is an unopened grainhouse.
A bustling barn in some far, uncharted jungle
A distant gem in a rough unhappy dust (*Ours to Plough, Not to Plunder*, St.5 line 1)

In datum 20 above, the ‘earth’ is metaphorically “an unopened grainhouse”, “a bustling barn” and “a distant gem”. The input spaces are “earth” and “grainhouse”, “barn” and “gem”. Mapping an attribute of “grainhouse” (harbours food), “barn” (store) and “gem” (preciousness) creates the blend that the precious earth stores abundance of food for man’s uses. This underscores the usefulness of the earth; the abundant useful natural resources the earth is endowed with. The author uses this to open the eyes of the masses to the earth’s rich endowment if only man will work it. Through this, Osundare unearths the richness of the earth and further encourages the masses to maximize this richness by working the earth. Thus, idleness is discouraged and that lack is only a manifestation of laziness.

ANTITHESIS/ANTONYMY

Antonymy is the expression of opposite words and when the oppositeness is expressed in the entire constructions or ideas, it is called antithesis. Antonymy according to Wales (2001) refers to contrasts in meaning or opposition in meaning. Antithesis is the use of structures that have sharp contrast. This is done by a writer to achieve certain effects which synonyms might not actually express i.e. by using that, he is able to pass his message effectively to the readers. The following have been analysed:

- (21) I have seen
...native *executhieves* hold fort for alien wolves. (*“What the Earth Said”*, line 18)

In datum 21 above, the antonyms “native” and “alien” are used. The input spaces are “native *executhieves*” and “alien wolve”. An attribute of ‘native *executhieves*’ (corrupt leaders) is mapped unto “alien wolves” to create the blend that exploitation of the country’s resources which has penuried the masses is a collaborative work between the corrupt leaders and foreigners of their kind; their involvement gives the foreigners the impetus and opportunity to carry out their nefarious and exploitative enterprise. Through this, Osundare takes a swipe at the corrupt leaders who are supposed to care for the masses but oppress them and even give room to foreigners for more exploitation and plundering of the nation’s resources. This is to awaken the people’s consciousness of the exploitation of the nation’s resources by their leaders and to act towards achieving a change.

- (22) with our earth so warm
how can our hearth be so cold? (*“Harvestcall”* St.9 line 6,7)

In datum 22, the antonyms “warm” and “cold” are used. The input spaces are “warm earth” and “cold hearth”. The author through contrast highlights an abnormality in our “hearth” which does not correspond with what the “earth” holds. The input spaces are a “warm earth” and a “cold hearth” which create a blend of an abnormal situation where the people live in lack whilst the earth holds so much for their use. Osundare informs that the people’s plights



are man-made and self-induced because all they will need is available but only needs ‘the waking finger of the seasoned tapper’ to enjoy these benefits

- (23) Only a membrane very thin
Separate your sheepish grin
From your wolfish insides. (“Tell them, Mandela”)

In datum 23 above, the opposites “sheepish” and “wolfish” are used to communicate some message. The opposites “sheepish grin (appearance)” and “wolfish insides (reality)” are also the input spaces from which the author maps out some attributes to the people being referred to. From the input space “sheepish”, the author maps out an attribute of “innocence” and from the input space “wolfish”, the author maps out an attribute of “danger” to the people referred to. The two opposites refer to the same set of people to bring to the fore their double-sidedness. Through the input spaces, the author creates the blend that reveals the dangerousness of the inside of the people (referred to) even though they appear innocent and friendly. Through this, the author explores the theme of pretense and deceit where the people (referred to) are outwardly friendly but inwardly wicked and are deceiving the people by pretending to be who they are not. The author, through this condemns pretense and preaches sincerity where everybody will be known for who he is.

From the analysis, it is shown that writers carefully choose stylistic devices that help to convey their message to readers. This is seen in stylistic devices such as personification, parallel construction, metaphor, simile, rhetorical question etc. These devices used by Osundare constitute a means of drawing the attention of Nigerians and outsiders to the various vices; injustices, corruption, greed, self-aggrandisement, etc. being perpetuated in the society. Beyond unearthing these societal ills, the poet through the deployment of these stylistic devices seeks to cause a change that will bring about a sane society where everybody is treated fairly regardless of their ethnic, political, religious and economic status. The aim is towards an egalitarian society where there is even distribution of the nation’s natural resources and wealth and everybody is equal before the law; a place where the earth’s various resource are used judiciously. Sometimes, people are aware that they have societal problems but may not know the source of those problems or take upon themselves to find out and may be reluctant towards rising to the occasion and fighting their way out of the problems especially when they are caused by their self-chosen leaders who use their privileged positions and authority to oppress them. Thus, ultimately, these societal ills are revealed to incite revolution to cause a change.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to show that Osundare through the use of some stylistic devices whose inherent meanings could be unearthed through the blending approach, seeks to condemn apathy and incite readers to rise up against societal ills and injustices meted out to them especially by those in positions of authority. It has also been shown that within the literary stylistics scope, Osundare’s *The Eye of the Earth* is replete with literary stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, parallel constructions, personification, repetition, alliteration, interrogation/rhetorical question and antonymy/antithesis which aided the meaning-making process and the projection of his message to readers. Specifically, it is revealed that *The Eye of the Earth* is targeted towards having an egalitarian society and a healthy environment. It is noteworthy that while an attempt was made in this study to class



Osundare as an ace stylistician, keen attention was paid to the impact of his poetry collection on the readers and by extension, the society.

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