



HAL
open science

Audience Perception of the Media, Corruption and Accountability of Public Officials in Imo State Nigeria

Ifeyinwa Nsude, Williams Etumnu Emeka

► **To cite this version:**

Ifeyinwa Nsude, Williams Etumnu Emeka. Audience Perception of the Media, Corruption and Accountability of Public Officials in Imo State Nigeria. Barigbon Gbara Nsereka, Harcourt Whyte Dike, & Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu. Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria, 7, pp.41-61, 2023, 978-978-928-642-3. hal-04371718

HAL Id: hal-04371718

<https://hal.science/hal-04371718v1>

Submitted on 8 Jan 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

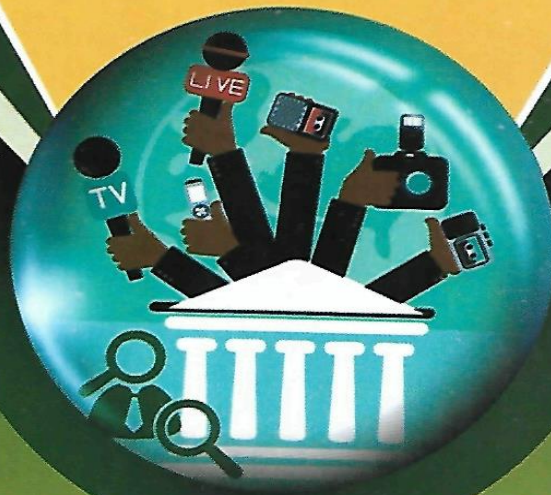
L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - ShareAlike 4.0 International License

ACSPN
BOOK SERIES 7

Media, Governance and Accountability in **Nigeria**



Edited by

Barigbon Gbara Nsereka
Harcourt Whyte Dike
Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu

Foreword by

Dare Babarinsa

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

Published by
Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited
Jericho Road
P.M.B.5164
Ibadan
Nigeria.

ACSPN Book Series 7:
The ACSPN Book Series is exclusive to the
Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria.

Copyright ACSPN 2023

ACSPN Book Series 1:
Taking Stock: Nigerian Media and National Challenges,
edited by Oluyinka Esan

ACSPN Book Series 2:
Digital Media, New Order? Emergent Practices
in the Nigerian Media Environment,
edited by Victor Ayedun-Aluma

ACSPN Book Series 3:
Media Reflections on Governance in Nigeria, edited by Umaru Pate

ACSPN Book Series 4:
Fake News and Hate Speech
Narratives of Political Instability,
edited by Nosa Owens-Ibie, Majority Oji, & Joyce Ogwezi

ACSPN Book Series 5:
Media Freedom, National Interest and Governance
edited by Lai Oso, Rotimi W. Olatunji, Dele Odunlami, & Kola Adesina

ACSPN Book Series 6:
Communicating Identities: Media and Inclusive Democracies
edited by Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika, Solomon Abiodun Oyeleye,
Titilayo Osuagwu, & Abdulmutallib Abubakar

ACSPN Book Series 7;
Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria
edited by Barigbon Gbara Nsereka, Harcourt Whyte Dike,
& Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu
ACSPN BOOK SERIES EDITOR Oluyinka Esan

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any form or any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

ISBN: 978-978-928-642-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vi	
About the Authors	vii	
Acknowledgements	ix	
Foreword.....	xii	
<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Title/Contributors</u>	<u>Pages</u>
Chapter One	Governance, Media and Accountability: An Introduction Barigbon Gbara Nsereka	1
Chapter Two	Artificial Intelligence for Accountable Broadcast Journalism in Nigeria – Joseph Wilson, PhD Chidinma Onwubere, PhD	16
Chapter Three	Audience Perception of the Media, Corruption and Accountability of Public Officers in Imo State Nigeria - Ifeyinwa Nsude, PhD Williams, Emeka Etumnu	41
Chapter Four	Twitter and Accountability in Governance: Analysis of Tweets on the ENDSARS Protest - Umefien Dakoru Epepe Izunna Okpala	62
Chapter Five	Journalists' Perceptions of Nigeria's Media Influence in Entrenching Good Governance and Accountability - Okoji, Chukwudinma Taiwo, PhD Azeez, Lukman Adesina, PhD Oloyede, David Binta Okoji, Morenikeji Chukwufumnaya	103
Chapter Six	The Media And Accountability in Nigerian Judicial Sector -Fredrick Wilson Jude Melea Moses	131

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

Chapter Seven	Social Media for Citizen Participation in Governance and Peace in Nigeria -Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu, PhD	146
Chapter Eight	Investigative Journalism, Insecurity, Violent Conflicts and the Search for Peace in Volatile Communities in Nigeria - Marie C. Obasi, PhD	169
Chapter Nine	Implications of using Twitter in Coordinating Activist Campaigns and Peaceful Protests Against Bad Governance in Nigeria: A Study on #EndSARS and #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria - Edikan Nseobong Ukpong Vera Oluchi Anukam	191
Chapter Ten	Failure of Democracy in Africa: Towards a New Course for Good Governance and Economic Prosperity - Michael O. Ukonu, PhD Victor C. Asadu, PhD Marcel M. Mbamalu, PhD Chidimma P. Ukonu	210
Chapter Eleven	Curbing Fake News in Oil-Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria through Public Relations Approaches - Chinedu Christian, Odoemelam, PhD Wilson Seiyefa Clifford	230
Chapter Twelve	Peace and Governance in Nigeria: A New Look through Media Prism - Barigbon Gbara Nsereka	267

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter Three

table 1: Sociodemographic data

Table 2: Age of respondents

Table 3: Educational attainment

Table 4: Respondents' perceptions on the extent the media is holding public officers accountable

Table 5: Respondents' perceptions on the role of media in promoting accountability of public officers in respect to corruption

Table 6: Respondents' perceptions on whether the media's efforts in promoting accountability have really had an impact in terms of corruption

Chapter Four

Fig. 1: Word cloud representation of popular keywords from the search 83

Fig. 2: Scatter plot on similarities between polarity and developed dictionary 85

Fig. 3: Sentiments derived from the Twitter search on EndSARS 86

Fig. 4: Retweet count based on sentiments 86

Fig. 5: Time series analysis 87

Chapter Nine

Table 1: Use of Twitter to coordinate activist campaign and peaceful protest against bad governance in Nigeria 201

Table 2: Effectiveness of Twitter in globally amplifying the voice of activist campaigns and peaceful protest against bad governance in Nigeria 203

table 3: Citizens perceptions of government's responses to activist campaigns and peaceful protests against bad governance in Nigeria 204

Chapter Twelve

Table 1: Differences between the functions of government and management 271

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Professor Ifeyinwa Nsude, Department of Mass Communication,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

Williams Emeka Etumnu, Department of Mass Communication,
Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

Umefien Dakoru Epepe, Department of Communication Studies,
National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

Izunna Okpala, Department of Communication Studies, National
Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria

Chukwudinma Taiwo Okoji, Department of Mass Communication,
The Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria

Professor Lukman Adesina Azeez, Department of Mass Communication,
University of Ilorin

David Binta Oloyede, Department of Mass Communication,
The Federal Polytechnic, Offa

Morenikeji Chukwufumnaya Okoji, The Federal Polytechnic, Offa
Professor Joe Wilson, Department of Mass Communication,
University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

Chidinma Henrietta Onwubere, PhD, Department of Mass Communication,
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Chinedu Christian Odoemelam, PhD, Department of Mass Communication,
Igbinedion University, Okada

Wilson Seiyefa Clifford, Department of Mass Communication,
Igbinedion University, Okada

Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu, PhD, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Marie C. Obasi, PhD, Department of Linguistic and Communication Studies,
Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA)

Edikan Nseobong Ukpog, Department of Mass Communication,
Imo State University, Owerri

Vera Oluchi Anukam, Department of Mass Communication,
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Nigeria

Professor Michael O. Ukonu, PhD Department of Mass Communication,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Victor C. Asadu, PhD, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Marcel Mbamalu, M. PhD, Editor-in-Chief, Prime Business Africa
Chidimma P. Ukonu, Department of Business Education, University of
Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the product of the call for chapters in September, 2021, by the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN), on the theme, "Media and Citizen Participation in Governance for Accountability and Peace in Society". Like a tree that owes its outlook to the collection of green leaves spread on several jutting branches, this book owes its rich contents to the lush ideas and scholarly ingenuity of noble contributors. It was brewed like a fine wine under the critical and objective lenses of intellectuals who deserve a pat, this time not on the back, but on the head.

We offer our unreserved gratitude to the leadership of the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN), symbolised by brains who are adjudged nature's gift to the academic firmament of Nigeria: the Vice-Chancellor of Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State and President of ACSPN, a journalism and media studies icon, Professor Umaru Pate; and the Vice Chancellor of Caleb University, Imota, Lagos and General Secretary of ACSPN who is described as a writing machine, Professor Nosa Owens-Ibie. Together with a crop of other communication scholars and professionals who constitute ACSPN's Board of Trustees and whose professional calibre is in short supply in the Nigerian society, the duo of the President and the General Secretary of the Association today hold the compass that controls the course of mass communication growth and development in the country. Among other things, their influence provided the steel for the completion of this work. We hail them.

On a particular note, we must state that the ever-accommodating scholarly shoulders of the ACSPN's General Secretary lent an elevated footing to the work of the editors, giving them cloudless and expansive views, which were condensed to shape and reshape the publication.

As usual, the National Secretariat, operated by the likes of the ringing name, Ifedolapo Ademosu was on hand to give focus, colour, character, guidance and direction to the publishing activity and the publication proper. We are indebted to you, please.

The humble, easy-going but firm and hot-headed scholar, Professor Joe Wilson, who initially functioned as our lead editor, is a marvellous team man. He has the covetable ability to excavate value from a morass of unappealing intellectual material. However, when his bones were breaking under the pressure of other assignments clamouring for his attention, he did not hesitate to appeal for a mental Save Our Soul (SOS) in order to survive the times. Prof., we appreciate you.

To all the contributors of the works embodied in this Volume (Book 7) of ACSPN's Book Series, our gratitude knows no bounds. We hope that your lamentations on the sorry state of Nigeria whose landscape is littered with the debris of greed, corruption, politico-economic unaccountability and indiscipline, insecurity, banditry, electoral fraud and scores of other vices, are not in vain. But whether here or there, once again, thanks a bunch for your contributions.

Every stage of the production of this book had individuals who offered their expertise that culminated in the refinement of the final copy. For taking his scarce time to go through and brighten the face of this book, we are greatly grateful to the writer of the foreword, Mr Dare Babarinsa.

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

Working on this project was as painstaking as it was rewarding. It afforded us the exciting opportunity to appreciate perspectival diversity and cross-pollination of ideas. Through this work, we seem to have left an imprint on the seaboard of scholarship. For this reason, as editors, we hereby act the role of the proverbial Agama lizard by nodding our heads and saying, "we have tried", at least in giving the publication this complexion. If our best is not good enough, we take responsibility for our deficiencies, but we thank ourselves all the same.

Lastly, but most importantly, we owe God in whom all things consist, eternal praise, and do him obeisance for the strength, ability, and wisdom to tackle our assignment.

Barigbon Gbara Nsereka

HarcourtWhyte Dike

Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu

FOREWORD

I cherish the honour of being asked to write the foreword for this important book, *Media Governance and Accountability in Nigeria*, edited by Barigbon Nserika, Harcourt Whyte, and Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu. This is a great work from those who know the Nigerian media space, especially the dynamic interventions of the new media, and why we need to be armed with knowledge to confront the challenges that we are encountering at close quarters. I am happy that my friend, Professor Bayo Fayoyin, with whom I shared three exhilarating and life-changing years at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, between 1978 and 1981, is now part of the great effort to bring a proper marriage between the theories and practices of mass communication.

This book is the seventh in the series produced by Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria, ACSPN. The association has set out to provide a common vehicle for interrogating the Nigerian media space in the age of the internet, using Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, and other platforms and options that are interfering with the old science of mass communications. Therefore, the media practitioners and scholars of today have to be on their toes to ensure their relevance and professional standing. The Information Age is finally with us with information streaming to us from all directions. We have to take caution and be alert so that we would not be swept off our feet by the deluge like it happened during the biblical days of Noah.

Mass communication has always attracted eclectic interest, bringing into its arena varied disciplines. Therefore, it is not unusual to find anthropologists, political scientists, historians, sociologists, philosophers, and others joining a robust discussion about the media. The editors of this book have been able to attract core media scholars and practitioners to contribute to the roles and expectations of the media in the Nigerian space. It is instructive that we have contributions from a wide spectrum of scholars from federal and state universities, government-owned polytechnics, one private university, two specialised institutions, and one contributor on the field, Marcel Mbamah, the Editor-in-Chief of Prime Business Africa. Two of the contributors are from the privately-owned Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State. The scholars are Wilson Seiyefa Clifford and Chinedu Christian Odoemelam.

In the past, Mass Communication studies was restricted to only few institutions, notably the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), which was founded by the government of the former Eastern Region. It is noteworthy that the first premier of the defunct eastern Region was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, a first-class journalist, founder and first Editor-in-Chief of the defunct West African Pilot. For several years, UNN was the only institution offering mass media studies until the eve of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, when the Institute of Mass Communication was opened at the University of Lagos to accommodate displaced students from UNN who became academic refugees at the outbreak of hostilities.

This book parades an impressive array of scholars from the universities, polytechnics and other institutions. It is not surprising that the contributors dwell on issues that are contemporaneous challenges facing modern practitioners of the mass media, especially broadcast. Every chapter calls for attention and gives new insights. I do not want to fall into the temptation of reviewing this book, but I must confess that I have learnt a lot from each of the chapters. I enjoy the insights provided by Joseph Wilson and Chidinma Onwubere in chapter two on artificial intelligence for accountable broadcast journalism in Nigeria. We now know that it is not just our reporters that could bring the news; we have to reckon with the new Brave Age of AI.

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

Apart from Igbinedion University, scholars from five public universities also contributed to this book. These are the Universities of Ilorin, Maiduguri, PortHarcourt; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). We have contributions from the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, and Imo State University, Owerri. There are contributions from academics from the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, in Kwara State, and the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Imo State. Marie C. Obasi writes from the Catholic Institute of West Africa, CIWA, and both Umefien Dakoru Epepe and Izunna Okpala are from the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba, Abia State. The arrays of scholars from these various institutions make this book very rich

We thank the authors for bringing into focus new interventions in the world of the media. Twenty years ago, who would have thought of AI or Twitter? Now they are issues and institutions that cannot be ignored. We have to accept the irrefutable truth that the media space would forever be dynamic, and those new players would continue to enter the arena. I thank Edikan Nseobong Ukpong and Vera Oluchi Anukam for examining the implication of using Twitter in coordinating activist and peaceful protest against bad government in Nigeria in chapter nine. I enjoyed the submission of Barigbon Gbara Nsereka on peace and governance in Nigeria: a new look through media prism.

Edmund Burke, the British statesman and philosopher, contributing to a debate in the British Parliament in 1787, had described the press as "the fourth estate of the realm". Since then, modern thinkers, media leaders and practitioners have accepted the press as one of the four pillars of the state, along with the legislature, executive and the judiciary. Under the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the press has responsibilities, obligations, but no power; yet the influence of the press remains pervasive. However, this influence is being abetted and undermined by the new dynamics, especially the online phenomena and the emergence of citizen journalism, which is changing the definition of the media.

The phenomenon of the citizen journalism with the rising profiles of bloggers, social media influencers, and online media practitioners are issues that would dominate debates and intellectual elucidations in the nearest future. This has given rise to the misnomer of power without responsibility, and the new pandemic of rumour. I am happy that Chinedu Christian Odoemelam and Wilson Seifiya Clifford examined this phenomenon in their seminar essay in chapter eleven titled: Curbing Fake News in Oil-Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria through Public Relations Approaches. We all need to pay attention to the corrosive power of fake news and how this can affect the entire media industry which thrives and relies on believability.

This is a great work that would enrich its readers and the media. I have no doubt that each reader would appreciate its deep insight and profound prognosis in this thoroughly readable book. I thank our contributors for the rich prose and accessible elucidation which they employ to make the book readable and enjoyable. This is a milestone work and I salute the brains behind such a profound intellectual intervention. There is no gainsaying that it has my highest recommendations.

Dare Babarinsa
Chairman, Gaskia Media Ltd, Lagos.
February 11,2023

CHAPTER THREE

Audience Perception of the Media, Corruption and Accountability of Public Officials in Imo State Nigeria

Ifeyinwa Nsude, &

Etumnu Emeka Williams

Abstract

This study investigated the role of the media in ensuring the accountability of public officials in Imo State from the audience's perspective. The media dependency theory served as the theoretical foundation of this study and the survey method was employed as the research design. The population of this study comprised 5,408,756 residents in Imo State. Using the online sample size calculator, 384 was derived as the sample. The multistage sampling technique was adopted and the questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The findings showed that respondents had the perception that the extent the media is holding public officials accountable is low. Also, it was revealed that the respondents are of the view that the media do not play enough role in promoting accountability of public officials in respect of corruption as it claimed. It was concluded that the respondents perceived that the extent the media holds public officials accountable in terms of corruption is low; as such they perceived that the media role in holding public officials accountable is not enough despite the efforts by the media to hold them accountable especially as it has to do with corruption. By implication, they felt that corruption will go unabated if the media is not intensifying effort in holding these public officials at all times accountable.' The researchers recommended that the media should intensify its efforts or the extent of its reportage to ensure that the public officials render accounts of their stewardship to the masses. The media needs to step up its role of holding public officials accountable in terms of corruption through its investigations and reports so as to change the perception of the people and make them believe that the media can be trusted in holding public officials accountable.

Keywords: *Accountability, Media, Public Official, Government, Governance, Corruption.*

Introduction

There is no doubt that one of the major challenges facing the world today is corruption. Unarguably, no country is totally free from it (Chimakonam, 2011). Corruption has long been one of the most significant obstacles to development, and it has been a constant issue in African discussions. Many countries around the world, particularly underdeveloped countries, have been affected (Ibraheem, Umar & Ajoke, 2013). In Nigeria today, coming out of a public office

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

stupendously wealthy, even if impoverished before entering office, has become the rule rather than the exception, all because of the prevalence of corruption in public offices (Oyebode, 2017). No wonder, according to Transparency International (2020), the corruption ranking of Nigeria increased to 149 in 2020 from 146 out of 179 countries. This statistic is worrisome, and if the menace is not checked, corruption in public offices will continue, development will be greatly affected, and the image of Nigeria will still be portrayed negatively.

Good governance has moved to the fore as a fundamental prerequisite for social, economic, and political growth in today's world of governance, but better governance remains a source of concern and a serious challenge for most countries, including Nigeria, due to corruption (Hoiit, 2007; Gisserlquit, 2012; Dunu, 2013). Good governance is a critical platform for progress in any community. Where there is a strong government, the citizens' well-being is a top focus. On the other hand, bad governance (the polar opposite of good governance) is undeniably a major source of stagnation, regression, and discontent (Agbo& Chukwuma,2017).

One of the major factors of bad governance is corruption. Corruption is essentially at the heart of bad governance. Corruption is claimed to be Nigeria's largest and most profitable 'industry'. The threat of corruption has become so entrenched in the country that it is now nearly the standard (Agbo& Chukwuma, 2017). As a result of the lack of transparency in government administration and the presence of corruption in public service, citizens lose faith in the system and withdraw from civic responsibilities (Freedom House, 2019). For instance, there has been an alleged case of corruption against the administration of former governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha. Premium Times in 2022 reported that the anti-graft agency had in January filed a 17-countcharge against Mr Okorocha over allegations that he conspired with others, including an ARC politician and five companies, to steal N2.9 billion from public coffers, linstances like this, if the media does not report it so as to bring it to the public, may likely be swept underthe carpet.

In this context, the media has a critical role to play in holding public officials accountable by exposing corruption and initiating legal, political, and criminal action against it (Schauseil, 2019). The media has a critical role in democratisation, government quality, economic development, and anti-corruption efforts (Morris, 2008; Fardigh, 2013; Besley& Prat, 2006; Brunetti &Weder, 2003). In terms of anti-corruption, the media plays an important role in disseminating information about governmental, administrative, and business processes across society, allowing citizens to hold those in power accountable. By uncovering, exposing, informing, and teaching about the harmful consequences of corruption on society at large, the media can significantly increase the political risk of people being exposed for their corrupt actions and raise critical civil society awareness (Mendes, 2013).The reason is that if the media is not on the toes of these public officials in terms of holding them accountable, a lot of things will go wrong, and in the long run, the masses wi II be the ones suffering it. That is why the people need to charge the media to continue holding public officials accountable.

There is a link between media freedom, pluralism, and corruption levels, according to empirical evidence (Weder& Brunetti, 2003). An independent and vigilant media is a critical external control channel with a unique power to expose government and corporate misconduct. Independent journalists in competitive and plural media markets have a strong motivation to investigate and disclose stories of private and public sector corruption, which inhibits the theft of public funds; by increasing the risk of being caught and penalised. As a result, the media helps to ensure that the political system is transparent and accountable (Freedom House, 2018; Fardigh, 2013). Transparency is an important factor to consider when assessing the condition of democracy around the world, and a free press is essential (Freedom House, 2019). Despite the efforts of the media in holding public officials accountable in terms of corruption, what is the audience's perspective on the extent of the media in holding public officials accountable in respect to corruption in Imo State? What is the perception of Imo State residents on the role of the media in promoting accountability of public officials in respect to corruption?

Therefore, this paper investigates the audience's perception of the media, corruption, and accountability of public officials in Imo State Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Public officials are constitutionally expected to be accountable to the public. However, it has been observed that in Imo State there are obvious failures or underperformance in keeping to these responsibilities as there are still cases of corruption among these public officials. Yet, the media in Imo State that have the social and constitutional responsibility to hold these officials accountable have continued to claim that they are unfailingly playing that responsibility of holding officials accountable. There is no doubt that the media is playing this role in its various reports; however, it is observable that residents of Imo State, who are the media audience and are active participants in the media process and depend on the media on this issue have their perspective or perception about the media claim of holding government officials accountable, hence this study examines residents' perceptions about the extent to which the media is holding government officials accountable in Imo state. This is based on the media dependency theory, where the audience relies on the media to fulfil or satisfy a variety of needs, including holding public officials accountable, particularly as it concerns corruption.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the audience's perception of the extent of media holding public officials accountable in respect to corruption in Imo State?
2. What is the perception of Imo State residents of the role of media in promoting the accountability of public officials in respect to corruption?

Review of Literature

Media Role in Holding Government Accountable

By monitoring government performance on a daily basis or uncovering specific transgressions that may put pressure on decision-makers to act, the media can serve as a watchdog against corruption. By maintaining ongoing surveillance over persons and institutions, the media can name and shame public officials who use their power to hide instances of corruption or keep silent when well-founded evidence of corruption is presented to them (Schauseil, 2019). One of the most important mechanisms of accountability is the media. As a result, the Nigerian media has constitutional obligation to hold the government accountable. The cornerstone of accountability is information access. It is only when the public has access to relevant and sufficient information, will they be able to hold those in power accountable for their acts and inactions (Olaiya, et al., 2013). The media, as the primary source of information, owes a fundamental duty to the people to give them accurate and timely information, as there is no accountability without information (Dunu, 2013).

The media is widely recognised as the most important tool (or distributing information to the general public. Access to information for the media and, as a result, the public is ensured by free and independent media. Government policies and activities can be explained in this way: What has to be done? How and why it needs to be done? Who is engaged? By what standard are decisions made? In this way, government acts and inactions are revealed to the general public's gaze (Jibo, 2003; Olaiya et al., 2013).

Additionally, a successful government necessitates accountability. Governmental institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society organisations, must be transparent and accountable to the public. Accountability also involves how these individuals and institutions handle public funds, as well as to whether they are fair and perform in all aspects according to agreed-upon rules, contracts, and standards, as well as accurate and timely reporting on performance results in relation to mandated roles and/or plans (Jobarteh, 2002). One of the advantages of accountability is that it virtually eliminates the possibility of political corruption by limiting state power abuse (Onwumah, 2013).

Dunu (2013) did a study on the role of the media in good governance in Nigeria, and it was discovered that Nigerian journalists, particularly the public media, frequently over-censor themselves for fear of retaliation. As a result, there is genuine inexactitude. Information is frequently incomplete or intentionally downplayed, and some details are omitted. The media plays an important role in good government, yet its efforts are insufficient. According to a study conducted by Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) on the media and its role in establishing a transparent and accountable government, the Nigerian media can play a more influential role in the push for transparent and accountable government provided professional standards are followed. The media, in particular, must demonstrate a greater dedication to the profession's

universal principles, as well as a strong attachment to the sacredness of facts. Important issues, such as openness and accountability in government is jeopardised as both the print and electronic media in Nigeria disregard the facts by partaking in bribe-taking in the process. Agbo and Chukwuma (2017) conducted research on the impact of new media on the press, watchdog role in Nigeria. Investigative journalism was discovered to be one of the most common methods used by the press to impose this critical watchdog duty. The new media has fundamentally improved the execution of the press' watchdog function, according to investigative journalism, which gives a highly powerful platform for the press to untangle what is known as "facts behind the facts", particularly in governance. This was based on the fact that the press today uses new media to give depth and perspective to events and topic coverage. The new media now give citizens, as well as the journalists, a larger platform to hold government officials accountable.

Omoera (2010) did a study on the media's importance in emerging democracies. The study's methodology is based on historical and analytical methodologies. The media is discovered to be a necessary agent of development in any nation, given its vital role to governance as a watchdog and partner in advancement with other arms of government. The Nigerian government, on the other hand, should repeal all regulations that have stifled the Nigerian media's ability to function properly.

Oyebode (2017) conducted a discourse analysis study on media and corruption in Nigeria. Findings revealed that corruption is pervasive and festering in Nigerian public space, and that the Nigerian media is relatively weak, (ailing to provide consistent coverage of or conduct serious investigations into corrupt practices. In its reporting, the media also fails to take long-term practical actions to eradicate this societal evil. Some members of the Nigerian press and electronic media are also involved in corrupt practices.

Okoro and Oyebuchi (2020) did a study on residents' perceptions of the effectiveness of a media campaign in Nigeria to promote whistle blowing. The study employed mixed-method approach. The findings revealed that the policy withered over time due to a lack of media coverage and insufficient implementation by the authorities. Lastly, the media should pay special attention to the policy in order to inform the public about its benefits and the importance of strategically combating corruption. In their study on whistle blowing, Onuora and Uzoka (2018) discovered that sluggish legal processes, the political character of corruption and a lack of integrity, among other things, all inhibit greater engagement.

Theoretical Foundation

This study was underpinned by the media dependency theory. Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur proposed this theory in 1976. The media dependency theory sees the viewer as an active participant in the communication process. According to Sandra and Melvin, the dependency theory is based on an ecological model. They see a system that comprises both the media and the

audiences where the audiences depend on the media for their needs. The bigger mass media, which includes radio, print, television, and the internet, come together to form the larger mass media. People rely on the media for more information because they need more information, especially concerning the activities of public officials (Syallow, 2015).

The main idea of the media dependency theory is that audiences depend on media information to meet their needs and goals. People want to know what is happening in the government and their best chance of knowing is by depending on the information the media gives out. In times of social instability that can be caused by corrupt officers, the media becomes a focal point for getting information to guide them in making future decisions (Asemah et al., 2017).

This theory is relevant due to the fact that people want to know what is happening within the government circle, especially as it concerns their integrity in office. This theory explains why, in such a situation, people depend on the media to satisfy their information needs about any particular public officials or government activities.

Methodology

The paper adopted the survey research design which entails sampling of opinions from respondents. The population of the study consists of respondents in Imo State. The population, according to National Bureau of Statistics (2017), is 5, 408, 756. The sample size of 384 at 95% confidence level was used based on the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator. The multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques were deployed to select respondents. The researchers divided Imo State into three (3) senatorial districts or clusters. The three clusters were further divided into 27 sub clusters. Simple random sampling technique was used to select local government areas from each of the senatorial districts.

In stage one, the senatorial districts were grouped accordingly as Imo West Senatorial District (Orlu Zone); Imo North Senatorial District (Okigwe Zone) and Imo East Senatorial District (Owerri zone). In stage two, from each of the senatorial districts, three LGAs were purposively selected. From Imo West; Ideato South Orsu, and Njaba were selected. From Imo East; Aboh Mbaise, Owerri North, and Ikeduru were selected. From Imo North; Okigwe, Onuimo, and Isiala Mbano were selected. In stage three, from these LGAs, two communities were randomly selected as follows: from Aboh Mbaise, Enyogugu and Mbutu were selected. From Owerri North, Orji and Egbu were selected. Ikeduru Atta and Ngugo were selected. Dikenafai and Isiekenesi were selected from Orsu/Hitte-Nansa and Ebenator; Njaba- Okwudor and Nkume; Okigwe-Aro-Okigwe and Umuokpara; Onuimo- Okohia and Okwelle and Isiala Mbano- Umuelemai and Umuduru communities. In stage four, from each of the selected communities, 24 residents were proportionately selected to form the respondents of the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The results of the distributed questionnaire were presented in tables using simple frequency and percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section focuses on data presentation and analysis. From the 384 copies of questionnaire administered to respondents, 367 copies (96%) were found usable in this study; meanwhile, 17 copies (4%) were not valid for the study. Therefore, analysis was done based on the valid copies of questionnaire returned.

Sociodemographic Data

Data Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Table 1:

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	210	57%
Female	157	43%
Total	367	100

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-20	85	23%
25-30	129	35%
40 - above	153	42%
Total	367	100

Table 3: Educational Attainment

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary Education	25	7%
Secondary	106	29%
Tertiary	218	59%
Non-formal	18	5%
Others	-	-
Total	367	100

The sociodemographic data revealed that there were more male (57%) than female (43%) respondents; and that majority of the respondents studied were within the age limit of 40 and above (42%). The data further revealed that (59%) of respondents had tertiary education.

Table 4: Respondents' Perception on the Extent the Media is Holding Public Officials Accountable

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Large extent	66	18
Moderate	123	33
Low extent	170	46
Can't say	8	2
Total	367	100

Analysis of data from the above *Table 4* revealed that 46% of the respondents are of the perception that media is holding public officials accountable to a low extent. This confirmed that the extent the media is holding a public official accountable is low.

Table 5: Respondents' Perception on the Role of Media in Promoting Accountability of Public Officials with Respect to Corruption

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed to the claim that the media play a role in promoting accountability of public officials with respect to corruption	47	13
Disagree to the claim that the media play a role in promoting accountability of public officials with respect to corruption	208	57
Neutral	112	30
Total	367	100

Analysis of data from *Table 5* revealed that 57% of the respondents were of the perception that the media do not play enough roles in promoting accountability of public officials with respect to corruption as they claimed. This implies that the media do not play enough roles in promoting accountability of public officials with respect to corruption as they claimed.

Table 6: Respondents' Perception on whether the Media's Efforts in Promoting Accountability have really had an Impact in Terms of Corruption

Frequency		Percentage (%)
Yes	53	14
No	208	57
Not sure	106	29
Total	367	100

Analysis of data from Table 6 revealed that 57% of the respondents are of the view that the media's efforts in promotion accountability have not really had an impact in terms of corruption.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that 46% of respondents were of the perception that the extent the media is holding public officials accountable is low. However, in as much as the media is doing their best in holding public officials accountable in terms of corruption, the respondents perceive that it is still low. This is in tandem with that of Oyeboade (2017), who revealed that corruption is pervasive and festering in Nigerian public spaces, and that the Nigerian media is relatively weak, failing to offer regular coverage of corrupt practices, or to conduct significant investigations. Also in line is a research by Okoro and Onyebuchi (2020), who discovered that whistle-blowing policy died gradually, and that this was driven by limited media coverage and unsatisfactory performance by authorities. The implication of the findings is that the more the media is relatively reporting issues of corruption and accountability, the more the issues will linger. In such circumstances, people would want to know what is really happening in the public space, and this resonates well with the media dependency theory, where people depend on the media to satisfy their information needs, which, in this case, would want to know more about a public official's level of accountability.

Also, analysis of the findings revealed that 57% of the respondents are of the view that they do not believe the media play enough roles in promoting accountability of public officials with respect to corruption as they claimed. The media is not responsibly carrying out its role in promoting accountability in governance, and that the media's efforts to promote accountability have not really had an impact. This could be the reason the issue of corruption among public officials is still pervasive. These findings are in agreement with that of Okoro and Oyeboade (2020). Their findings revealed that the media should devote more attention to the policy in order to educate the public about its benefits and the need to combat corruption strategically. Also in line is the Omoera (2010) study that revealed that the media are indispensable agents of development in any nation. However, there are regulations that have stifled the Nigerian media's ability to function properly. According to the media dependency theory, people are dependent on

the media to get information about public officials. However, the media is not doing enough to promote accountability, as perceived by the respondents.

Conclusion

The media have been saddled with the great responsibility of holding public officials accountable for their actions and inactions. However, from the findings, the respondents perceive that the extent media hold public officials accountable in terms of corruption is low, that is to say, they perceive that the role of the media in holding them (public officials) accountable is not enough despite the efforts made by the media especially as it has to do with corruption. By implication, the people may feel that corruption will go unabated if the media is not intensifying efforts in holding these public officials at all time accountable, especially on cases that have to do with corruption.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby put forward:

1. The media is the window through which members of the public see what is happening in the society. So, they should intensify their efforts or the extent of their reportage to ensure that the public officials render accounts of their stewardship to the masses.
2. The media need to step up in their role of holding public officials accountable in terms of corruption through their investigations and reports, so as to change the perception of the people and make them believe that the media can be trusted in holding public officials accountable for their actions, especially when it relates to corruption.

References

- Agbo, B.O., & Chukwuma, O. (2017). Influence of the new media on the watchdog role of the press in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal* 13(2), 126-140.
- Asemah, E.S., & Nwammuo, A.M., Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O. (2017). Theories and models of communication. Jos: University Press.
- Besley, T., & Prat, A. (2006). Handcuffs for the grabbing hand? Media capture and government accountability. *American Economic Review*, 96(3), 20-36.
- Brunetti, A., & Weder, B. (2003). A free press is bad news for corruption. *Journal of Public Economics*, 87(7), 1801-1824.
- Chimakonam, O.J. (2011). *Corruption in Nigeria: Ethical and biblical perspectives*. University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Dunu, I. (2013). Good governance in Nigeria: What role for the media. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(32), 178-197.
- Fardigh, M.A. (2013). What's the use of a free media? The role of media in curbing corruption and promoting quality of government. *Unpublished PhD Dissertation*
https://supea.ub.su.se/bitstream/handle/2077/34302/supea_2077_34302_1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowedly

- Gisselquist, R.M. (2012). Good governance as a concept, and why this matters for development policy. UNU-WIDER working paper No. 2012/30. Retrieved from <http://doc-08-94-docsviewer.googleusercontent.com>.
- Hout, W. (2007). The politics of aid selectivity: Good governance criteria in World Bank, US and Dutch Development Assistance. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ibraheem, N.K., Umar, G., & Ajoke, A.F. (2013). Corruption and economic development: Evidence from Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 3,46-56.
- Jibo, M. & Okoosi-Simbine, A.T. (2003). The Nigerian media: An Assessment of its role in achieving transparent and accountable government in the fourth republic. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 12(2), 180-195.
- Jobarteh, M. (2002). Role of media in promoting good governance and accountability. Paper presented at the World Press Freedom Day symposium on 3 May 2012 TANGO Conference Hall.
- Khan, M.E., Anker, M., & Patel, B.C. (2016). The use of focus group in social and behavioural research: Some methodological issues. Retrieved from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmed/1949882
- Mendes, M. (2013). Overview of corruption in the media in developing countries, Transparency International U4 Expert Answer
- Norris, P. (2008). The role of the free press in promoting democratisation, good governance, and human development. In M. Harvey (Ed.). *Media matters: Perspectives on advancing governance & development*.
- Internews Europe/Global Forum for Media Development, pp. 66-75.
- Okoro, L.N., & Onyebuchi, A.C. (2020). Evaluation of southeast residents' perception of the effectiveness of media campaign on the whistle blowing policy of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration in Nigeria. *IDIA Journal of Mass Communication*, 5(2), 325-350.
- Olaiya, T.A., Apeloko, D. O., & Ayeni, O. O. (2013). Factors in mass media, third-term agenda and governance in Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 10,48-63.
- Omoera, O.S. (2010). The import of the media in an emerging democracy: An evaluation of the Nigerian situation. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(1), 33-38.
- Onuora, J. K. J., & Uzoka, P. U. (2018). Whistle blowing and corruption in the public sector. *Journal of Accounting and Financial Management*, 4(6)
- Onwumah, I. (2013). Mainstreaming culture into Nigeria's anti-corruption campaign. *Nationalities, identities and terrorism: The Nigerian experience*, (pp. 329-341). Ibadan: John Archers (Publisher) Limited in collaboration with The Society for Peace Studies and Practice, Oyo State.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018). The role of the media and investigative journalism in combating corruption. Paris. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/corruption/the-role-of-media-and-investigative-journalism-in-combating-corruption.htm>

Media, Governance and Accountability in Nigeria

- Oyebode, M.O. (2017). Weak-kneed media and festering corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 8(2), 34-49.
- Schauseil, W. (2019). Media and anti-corruption. Transparency International & U4 Anti-corruption Resource Centre. Retrieved from <https://www.u4.no/publications/media-and-corruption>
- Syallow, M. (2015). Media dependency theory in use. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/9834996/Media_Dependency_Theory_in_Use
- Transparency International (2020). Corruption ranking. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/corruption-rank> on 11th August, 2021.