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21 African Communication Research VOL 8, No 1 December, 2019 SAUT

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21

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University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Oyo State

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African Communication Research

Table of Contents

Volume 8, No. 1 **December, 2019**

Editorial iii

Press Ownership and Nigeria's Democracy
Victor Jatula
University of Utah 1

Boundaries on investigative news reporting in Tanzania: The case of the media services act.
By Thomas Masanja
St. Augustine University of Tanzania 25

Commodification of Religion: A rhetorical analysis of charismatic programs in Kenya.
Karanja Patrick Muturi
Egerton University
Dr. Josephine Khaemba
Egerton University
Gachipua Sammy Gakezo
University of Nairobi 52

An Increase in the Incidence of Breast Cancer: Has the media done enough in Nigeria?
Susan Olayinka Ogundoyin
Bowen University, Iwo
Olakayole Olaolu Ogundoyin
University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Oyo State 78

Newspaper Coverage of Maternal and Child Healthcare Issues in Nigeria.
Raheemat Adeniran
Lagos State University

Olujimi Kayode
Lagos State University
Lai Oso
Lagos State University 94

Agricultural Extension Officers as Unsung Heroes of Climate Change Communication to Farmers in South-Western Nigeria
Obasanjo Joseph Oyedele
University of Ibadan 123

Towards Effective Anti-Student Crises Internal Communication: Sidekick PRO and Communication Strategy Loopholes at the University of Dar es Salaam.
Dietrich Kaijanangoma
University of Dar es Salaam 139

Editorial

After a silence of quite some time, brought about by a change of the coordinating team and a restructuring process, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), is pleased to publish another exciting issue of African Communication Research (ACR). The exercise of bringing ACR back into circulation did not just happen. It involved the tireless efforts and significant support from a great many individuals and institutions who deserve our appreciation. As such, ACR acknowledges the anonymous reviewers who recommended the articles for publication and the Chief Editor of this issue, Carolyn Cummings-Osmond, along with her Trainee Assistant Editor, Emily Smith, who undertook the challenging task of preparing the peer-reviewed articles. Two universities deserve credit for making this issue possible: St. Augustine University of Tanzania, the institution that oversees the publication of ACR, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKNZ) who provided generous support in helping to get the journal out to the world so that others can benefit from it

The present issue has seven research-based articles directing our attention to three main debates, namely: media professionalism and democracy; media responsibility to society; and corporate communication. The first theme begins with Victor Jatula's contribution, which attacks media ownership in Africa for dwindling democratic practices in the continent. It is widely understood that reports on media ownership are plentiful. Likewise, contentions that media ownership and democracy are incompatible have consumed a considerable amount of ink. Jatula's contribution serves as a reminder of the debates through a lengthy depiction of the incidents evidencing the unlikely co-existence of media ownership and democracy in Nigeria. Using focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, Jatula indicates how owners of newspapers exert political influence on the way

news is selected, framed and reported to the extent of complicating Nigeria's regional political rivalry and consolidating democracy. In a very similar spirit, Thomas Masanja also draws our attention to how democratic principles are an expensive price to pay in Tanzania, in the face of the existing media laws. The research draws on several studies that report media practices and the presence of the laws which are enacted to ensure better operations, which in fact seem to arrive at the same conclusion: that media laws are a stumbling block to investigative journalism. Masanja concludes that there is an increasing pollution in the democratic environment in Tanzania. By highlighting how the Media Service Act (2016) limits the parameters of media practices, Masanja's scholarship illuminates how journalists strive to strike a balance between their practice and adherence to the existing media laws.

An article from Karanja Muturi and two further articles from multiple contributors Susan Ogundoyin and Olakayole Ogundoyin, as well as Raheemat Adeniran, Olujimi Kayode and Lai Oso seem to take a rather opposite trajectory through their implicit suggestion that media requires a control of some sort. Pointing to the fact that media coverage of religious practices in Africa and beyond has been the subject of intense academic debate, and specifically the observed increase in 'televangelism', Karanja Muturi's study illustrates how charismatic preachers use the gospel as a 'mediated spirituality' for capitalistic exchange in Kenya. In a separate but equally important study linked to the media, Susan Ogundoyin together with Olakayole Ogundoyin are skeptical of the media contribution in raising awareness about breast cancer treatment and prevention. Drawing from the answers of over 200 participants obtained purposively, the authors demonstrate the inadequacies of the media in making the masses aware of breast cancer, and associate this shortfall with the discouraging outcome of breast cancer prevention in Nigeria, thus calling for a rapid media response to the subject matter.

Campaigns urging the media to assume a more proactive role on health issues, are abundant, particularly those that require it to advocate for public health and responsibly alert the public about health risks. The journal article contributed by the research team comprised of Raheemat Adeniran, Olujimi Kayode and Lai Oso requests that the media in Nigeria inform the masses of maternal and child health care issues and point out that these issues are critical to the development of any nation. Perhaps a pertinent approach to the question of media inadequacy in informing the masses of various issues of importance, is suitably elucidated by Obasanjo Joseph Oyedele's work, which offers an alternative means of communication to farmers in Nigeria. In a departure from the increasing need for information about climate change to farmers in rural Africa, especially after some time of the apparent neglect of this group, the author discovers the significance of agricultural extension officers in communicating climate change to farmers in South-Western Nigeria. In so doing, his study creates a better understanding of the issues, and encourages improved use of climate-friendly farming strategies.

Dietrich Kaijanangoma's scholarship rounds off this issue of ACR by departing from the mass communication debates and instead offering an intriguing corporate communication discussion by exposing the negligence in deploying public relations practices via internal communication strategies in universities. The lack of comprehensive internal communication strategies in Tanzanian universities can result in a love-hate relationship and lead to a crisis situation between universities and their students, thus disrupting academic activities and possibly even destroying property. Kaijanangoma's work, then, urges university managers to take note of the significant role public relations functions can play in controlling student crises situations and establishing favorable relationships. This contribution, together with the other six in this publication, are powerful initiatives cementing the

discourse heralding effective communication as a panacea to the world's uncertainties.

Albert Tibaijuka, ACR Coordinating Editor

Press Ownership and Nigeria's Democracy

By Victor Jatula

Abstract

This paper examines the effect on democracy of press ownership in the context of Nigeria. Scholars have used a framework of reference drawn from Marxist political economy to reduce patterns of media ownership in Nigeria to class interests. This study investigates if and how newspaper proprietors shape their news organizations and it explores the implications of their influence on Nigeria's political process. Evidence from focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews indicate that owners of newspapers exert political influence on the way news is selected, framed and reported to the extent that news reportage not only complicates Nigeria's regional political rivalry and consolidating democracy; it also hinders efforts at modernisation. This paper will seek to elucidate these issues and make recommendations concerning the maintenance of a democratic press. It suggests that the press needs to offer a more professional, robust and comprehensive worldview for public interest.

Keyword: Nigeria, politics, democracy, media ownership, press freedom

Author biographical note
Victor Jatula is a lecturer in communication (journalism sequence) at the University of Utah (Asia Campus) in South Korea. Specifically, he teaches news and feature writing, digital journalism and public speaking. His research focuses on political communication and the role of the press in democratic societies with a particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. His current research focuses on political culture in post-colonial societies and its impact on democracy.

Introduction

In post-colonial African states with a history of military rule, ethnic division and a relatively young democracy; a free and independent press is regarded as quintessential to the political process. The assumption is that a free press will empower citizens to make informed political decisions, function as a marketplace of ideas, and serve as watchdogs to political office holders; thus, ensuring that elected politicians and public institutions are open, transparent and accountable (Graber, 2003). It is believed that the press protects freedom of speech, fundamental human rights, universal civility and rule of law - vital essential components of a just and egalitarian society (Sen, 1999).

The potential of the press to transform the political process in Africa has historically been constrained by legal, political, regional and ethnic forces. In countries like Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo and Sudan, the stifling of the press contributed to civil unrest and ethnic conflicts that dislocated large portions of their societies. In non-democratic, single-party states with little tolerance for an independent press, restrictive media laws, arrest and detention of journalists and subtle forms of censorship, have limited the social and political openness that a free and critical press facilitates (Ogola, 2015).

In Nigeria, press ownership patterns as well as the influence proprietors exert on their publications, have come under close scrutiny. Two decades after the end of military rule, ownership patterns of national newspapers have raised fundamental questions as to why various political parties and politicians affiliate with or venture into newspaper ownership and/or control. Adesoji and Hahn (2011) have also questioned why new titles continue to emerge and why newspaper proprietors in Nigeria retain ownership when it is economically risky and often financially difficult. Do newspapers owned by certain individuals disproportionately benefit certain political, regional and economic interests? Are privately-owned newspapers (as suggested by Increase Coker in 1979) sophisticated political instruments used by their

owners to serve personal causes, promote certain agendas and defend specific positions? What effect, if any, do newspaper proprietors have and how does their influence impact Nigeria's political process?

These questions are tackled here through an analysis of the historical construction of Nigeria's media and a small-scale research project examining the link between ownership, media content and ideological reportage of political news in seven news organizations across Nigeria. Additionally, the study closely investigates the implication, if any, of news on the democratic process. The overarching goal of the study is to provide insight into the institutional structure and functioning of the news media in Nigeria as well as to illuminate the complex, multi-layered relationships between proprietors, news content and public opinion.

Theory and Literature Review

Media and power

Globally, the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few, well-resourced individuals has raised concerns over the future of politics in both established and new democracies. McChesney (2007) has warned that in the United States of America and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, corporate interests and the elite class, through favorable state policy, advertising influence and ownership of the media, largely shape the framework within which the media operates. This, they claim, is good for the minority political class but detrimental for the rest of society. Similar concerns were raised about the influence of ownership on editorial content. This is premised on the assumption that too much media power in too few hands is bad for democracy. Concentrated ownership, according to Chomsky (1989) often conflicts with the diversity of content required for participatory democracy. Powerful media owners can prevent markets from self-adjusting and reallocating resources to newcomers in the industry. This impediment to new entrants poses a threat to the free-market ideology on one hand,

while on the other, it can harm the dissemination of news ideas. Proprietorial monopoly, through ownership, decreases diversity and plurality. The absence of competition can potentially decrease input in news gathering, in editorial diversity and can weaken journalistic quality and media efficiency (Graber, 2003).

McQuail (2005 argued that although the concentration of media ownership is necessitated by commercial, neo-liberal, technological and organizational factors, it can also lead to an emergence of a market-driven media system that is loyal to sponsors, advertisers and governments (McChesney, 2000). Moreover, it can lead to control by an elite who are predisposed to using their resources to further their hegemonic interests. McChesney (1999) argued that concentrated media monopolies are beneficiaries of the current economic structure and because of this, they seek its preservation. In 1989, Noam Chomsky observed that corporate-owned news and communication media are largely revenue-driven. Therefore, the way in which news is reported and framed is structured to further corporate interests. Using the "Propaganda Model", Chomsky and Herman (2010) argued that concentrated media ownership in the United States of America has resulted in a decline of competition. The absence of competing opinions and voices has limited the quantity and quality of news content available in the public domain. This in turn depletes public participation in politics. When ownership concentration exists within the media, significant monopoly power arises that is likely to restrict the effectiveness of political and social debate in the public sphere. McChesney (1999) and Bagdikan (2000) estimate that a few massive, vertically integrated media corporations dominate and control America's air waves. These corporations not only exert significant leverage on what the public are offered but are also not accountable to financial public scrutiny (Graber, 2003). Concentrated media ownership, especially by profit-driven corporations can constitute a threat to public interest (Graham, 2007).

Nigeria's newspaper press

In Nigeria, ownership structures that link the control of several titles in a single company are rare. Most major national newspapers are family-owned such as the *Nigerian Tribune* (the Awolowo family), the *Guardian* (Ibru family), the *Champion* (Iwuanyanwu family), *Punch* (Aboderin family) and *This Day* (Nduka Obiagbena). However, Nigeria's newspaper owners do share certain common commercial and political interests that suggest a restraint on what Chomsky (1998) referred to as the "market-place of ideas".

The context in which Nigerian newspapers emerged as well as their formative characterization was influenced by Christianity and Western education. The first newspaper - *Iwe Irohin*, established in 1865 by the Revd. Henry Townsend of the Anglican Missionary in Abeokuta, Western Nigeria was principally for proselytization (Oduntan, 2005). The introduction of mission schools in general and the spread of literacy in particular, provided the necessary fillip for newspaper readership to increase. In Southern Nigeria, newspapers quickly became the main conduit of information dissemination and ownership was concentrated in private hands (Aro, 2011).

Colonialism and the rise of Nigerian nationalism also influenced the press. As observed by Omu (1978), dissatisfaction with colonial rule and racial inequality led to the establishment of a radical Nigerian press. The foremost newspapers for Nigerians by Nigerians were mainly political in content with increasing popular appeal. Repressive colonial laws and conflicting interests between Nigerian traders and British interests, set the stage for the emergence of a political press that engaged radicalism, confrontation and nationalism as instruments of redress. Within five decades (between 1880 and 1930), the press had outgrown its missionary and literary roots and had been transformed into an indigenous, vibrant newspaper press owned by Nigerians and largely based in Lagos. Their focus was politics, specifically in demanding

reform from colonial authorities and raising the political consciousness of Lagos residents (Omu, 1978).

The introduction of local elections in Lagos and moderate political representation in Calabar in 1922 (Clifford Constitution) further cemented the role of newspapers in politics (Ogbondah, 1992). The most prominent newspaper of the era was the *Lagos Daily News.* Owned and edited by Herbert Macaulay, the paper together with Macaulay's radical political party - the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) - became a formidable force in the politics of Western Nigeria. The NNDP won consecutive elections to the Lagos Town Council between 1923 and 1933 (Eribo and Ebot, 2000). Thereafter, newspaper ownership by politicians and political parties, particularly in Southern Nigeria became an essential feature supplement. Dailies such as the *West African Pilot* (1936), the *Nigerian Tribune* (1948) and the *Southern Defender* (1951) were established as important propaganda organs of affiliate political parties. These papers, with the exception of the *Daily Times* newspaper, were critical of colonialism and were instrumental in drumming up political support for their owners. Constitutional reforms in 1946, 1951 and 1954 led to broader political representation and a shift towards regionalism. The three regions (East, West and North) that emerged during decolonization all owned newspapers: the *West African Pilot* – East, the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Sketch* – West and *Gaskia Ta Fibo*- North (Edeani, 1985).

At independence in 1960, newspaper ownership remained concentrated in private hands and in regional governments. In recognition of the expanding influence of the press, the Federal Government in 1961 acquired its first newspaper by incorporating the Nigerian National Press, publishers of the *Morning Post* and the *Sunday Post* (Ogbondah, 1992). The Federal Government also acquired controlling shares at the *Daily Times* - a successful, yet politically-detached national daily. However, the military intervention since 1966

changed the dynamics of press ownership. The unresolved constitutional crisis and questions around resource-control led to the Nigerian-Biafra Civil War from 1967-70 (Daramola, 2017). As a consequence, regions were balkanised into states in 1967. This had implications for federal and regional newspaper ownership to the extent that by the early 1990s, all government newspapers had ceased publication. Although privately-owned newspapers continued to operate, the most direct and decisive effect of military rule was media suppression through decrees, prosecutions, censorship and proscription. In 1999, democracy was restored in Nigeria after a long and sustained struggle by the press and civil society. What, therefore, is the effect on democracy of press ownership in the context of Nigeria?

Methodology

To gather data for this study, Focus Group Discussions (FDG) were conducted in Nigeria. As recommended by Krueger and Casey (2000), each group involved participants who were not total strangers, possessed certain similar characteristics and were willing to share their perspectives (convergent or divergent) in a focus group setting. The questions were predetermined, open-ended and structured to further the research goal. The same questions, in addition to follow-up questions were posed to each group but responses differed. Below is a summary breakdown of participants.

Table 1: A breakdown of data captured during FGD

Groups	Participants	Vocation	Gender	Age group	Location	Ethnicity
One	6	Journalists	4M/2F	35-45	Lagos	Yoruba/Ibo
Two	6	Civil servants	4M/2F	40-50	Abuja	Hausa
Three	6	University students	3M/3F	20-25	Abuja	Mixed
Four	6	Self-employed	5M/1F	35-45	Lagos	Yoruba/Ibo
Five	6	Job seekers	2M/4F	23-33	Lagos	Mixed

Source: FGD participants

Altogether, five FGD were conducted with journalists, civil servants, university students, self-employed and job seekers in order to gather data from a wide range of Nigerians. Table 1 summarizes the vocation, age group, gender, location and ethnic origins of participants. FGDs involving Group One, Four and Five were held in Lagos (Nigeria's former capital) and discussions with Group Two and Three were held in Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory). This ensured that the views of Nigeria's major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo) were represented. Discussants were selected in different ways. Groups One (journalists), Four (self-employed) and Five (job seekers) were invited individually to participate in the discussion. In Groups Two (Ministry of Information civil servants) and Three (university students), participants were contacted collectively and persuaded to participate in group discussions. The complexity involved in assembling participants included time scheduling issues and discussants' anxiety. These challenges however, did not negatively impact the outcome of the focus group discussions. The composition of each group proved useful for research.

The use of the news game, developed by the Glasgow Media Group, was employed, albeit with limited results. Newspaper cuttings were shown to participants to generate useful commentaries. While most discussants were willing to comment on news content; they were

reluctant to write alternative content as required by the news game. Nevertheless, newspaper cuttings (from newspapers listed in Table 2) elicited broad and useful responses from participants. The open-ended nature of the questions essentially allowed follow-up questions, either to clarify issues or probe participants when required. Newspaper cuttings used for the news game were selected within a six-month period (January to June) in the three presidential elections years in 2007, 2011 and 2015. The justification for the six-month period is underpinned by the presidential election timetable that pitches Nigeria's general election in April of each election year. The news game therefore focused on newspaper content in the first four months running up to elections and the immediate two months after the election. The six-month period allowed for the contextualization of news content before, during and after elections.

Table 2: Newspaper ownership and political affiliation

Title	**Publication location**	**Owner**	**Ethnicity of owner**	**Political affiliation**
Leadership	Abuja	Sam Nda-Isaiah	Hausa, North	PDP
Daily Trust	Abuja	Kabiru Yusuf	Hausa, North	PDP
Tribune	Ibadan	The Awolowo family	Yoruba, South West	APC
Guardian	Lagos	The Ibru family	Delta, South-South	PDP
Vanguard	Lagos	Sam Amuka	Benin, South-South	APC
ThisDay	Lagos	Nduka Obiagbena	Igbo, South-East	PDP
Punch	Lagos	Aboderin family	Yoruba, South West	APC
Nation	Lagos	Bola Tinubu	Yoruba, South West	APC
Champion	Lagos	Iwuanyanwu family	Igbo, South East	PDP
Sun	Lagos	Kalu Uzor Orji	Igbo, South East	APC

Source: Content Analysis Data

The success of the 1969 Chapel Hill study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) formed the basis for selecting presidential election years for this study. The anticipation that newspapers seek to educate the electorate, influence voting decisions and provide a platform for political parties interested in swinging electoral outcomes in election years through political propaganda, campaigning and advertising, was justified by the quantity of data generated. The three election years 2007, 2011 and 2015 were significant, not only by the amount of political and electoral content in newspapers, but also for an equally important reason. The presidential election in 2007 was the first time in Nigeria's political history that a successful election will hold for the third consecutive time. This seemingly significant milestone and an indication of democratic consolidation was, however, marred by allegations of corruption and vote rigging. The 2007 presidential election was unanimously adjudged by both local and international observers as corrupt and unfair (Obi, 2008). Thus, there was renewed interest from the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC) and the Federal Government to ensure that the 2011 presidential election was credible, free and fair (Ibrahim, 2007). This same attitude prevailed during the 2015 general election.

The study also gathered data using semi-structured interviews with news editors (2), senior political correspondents (2), journalists (4), academics (2), media critics (2) and members of the public (6) to capture broad commentaries required to investigate the research objectives set out in the introduction. In total, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Lagos (10) and Abuja (8), respectively. Equal representation of the participants in terms of gender, age and the ethnic backgrounds of the respondents was prioritized. A total of 10 males and eight females participated. Similarly, 10 participants were recruited from the South and eight from the North.

To ensure validity, a key criterion was that each participant understood the research questions and consented to participate in the study. The questions were open-ended and semi-structured. The topics covered, centered around whether media owners use their titles as leverage for increased political influence and the extent to which media owners scrutinize and micro-manage their organization. Non-verbal communication and the body language of participants was fully observed in interviews. These promoted further enquiries or meant that a question was rephrased and re-framed to elicit further commentaries from respondents. In some cases, questions were repeated to ensure that participants' responses were accurately captured.

Commentaries from SSI and FGD are sometimes used interchangeably in the findings section.

Findings and analysis

Nigerian newspaper proprietors and control

In privately-owned Nigerian newspapers, it is difficult to get to the truth of the proprietorial influence on news content due to a culture of corporate confidentiality and non-disclosure. Owners and editors have reasons to remain guarded on this issue. Proprietors who indirectly oversee the daily running of their titles (such as the *Guardian* and the *Tribune* newspapers), in assuring press freedom, do not want the public to think they interfere with what is published. Editors, in asserting their independence, claimed impartiality and objectivity. In owner/editor newspapers such as *This Day*, claims of professionalism were equally strong. These assertions notwithstanding, the study found evidence to suggest that media ownership in Nigeria is substantially motivated by political influence, particularly to sway public opinion and win elections on behalf of affiliate political parties.

The financial gains motive is relevant but not sufficient to explain why new titles continue to emerge and old ones endure. Dwindling advertising revenue, declining circulation figures and Nigeria's poor-

performing economy are major disincentives (ADVAN, 2015). A Lagos-based newspaper editor confirmed that:

the news industry is struggling: salaries are significantly small. Salaries in Champion, This Day and new Nigerian newspapers are often unpaid for months. Revenue is generally dwindling. Owners keep their paper afloat for non-financial purposes.

During the news game, most journalists observed that traditional methods of revenue generation are no longer effective. One observed that the major reason why journalists are close to politicians and political parties is to secure much-needed political advertising contracts. He added that: "...people rarely buy newspapers. The result is that news organizations must find alternatives in politicians." Other participants also pointed to the high cost of newsprint and "unsustainable" associated production costs, which have led some newspapers (*Next* and *Premium Times*) to become online-only publications. A significant amount of interview participants noted that most Nigerian newspapers now combine a growing online presence with aggressive marketing and advertising strategies.

The political gains motive has its roots in history. Nationalist and post-independence leaders all owned newspapers. This trend has not only increased since 1999 but has expanded, especially in Southern Nigeria. New newspapers include: *Business Day* (2005), *Hallmark* (2000), *Independent* (2001), *Nation* (2006), *Osun Defender* (2003), *New Telegraph* (2014), *Mirror* (2006), *Next* (2004), *Sun* (2001) and *Compass* (2008). And in Abuja, *Blueprint* (2011), *Premium Times* (2011) and *Leadership* (2004). While no newspaper of note is owned by a political party, most new titles are linked to owners with interests in politics and are part of a conglomerate of sorts with horizontal and vertical linkages within and across industries. These titles are owned by politicians - former governors of Lagos, Osun, Ogun, Delta states. Although Nigerian newspapers are financially often quite precarious, the political dividends that accumulate from their publications are probably more

important and rewarding than the economic benefits. An interview participant noted that: "...politicians who own newspapers do so for obvious political reasons- to win elections and thereafter accrue economic gains."

How media owners influence content

The structure inherent in the management of selected Nigerian newspapers offer some insight into how owners influence news content. In addition to strategic decision-making oversight, Nigerian newspaper owners have a more direct ideological and political influence, as they seek to impose their values and priorities on journalists. They ensure that news coverage reflects how they see the world, how they want their readers to perceive the world and how and whether they think it should change. Their economic motive is to accrue benefits, through state-sponsored advertising as they advance the interest of certain political parties. The conflation of proprietor and editorial roles contributes to the perception that newspapers are propaganda outlets.

To influence news content, the management configuration in all seven newspapers (*This Day, Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, Guardian, Trust and Leadership*) indicate large concentrations of power in the office of owner/editor (and in other cases, editors).

Editorial/Proprietorial structure in a newspaper



Figure 1: Description of editorial structure in a typical Nigerian newspaper organization

As indicated in Figure 1, owners oversee all aspects of their organization. According to an Abuja-based reporter, this power structure allows owners to wield control, micro-manage reporters, hand-pick news headlines and promote their political, personal and corporate interests. A former *This Day* reporter remarked that:

It is naive to believe owners will not interfere with media content. They censor information potentially damaging to companies within their conglomerate, and some third parties which do business with them.

He added that:

My former boss was very hands on. He sits as the chairman of the editorial board and nothing gets past him. While this may work well in certain matters, it also restricted certain freedoms.

Strands of proprietorial influence

The study found four strands of influence. Although the weight of this influence varied from one organization to another, the overarching objective of owners is common: control. The first is at the point of entry. Newspaper owners from the outset are deliberate in selecting or appointing an editorial team that will implement the owner's agenda. Proprietorial control is exercised at the point of appointment, particularly in the case of senior journalists, correspondents and editors. This filtering process ensures that only

'like-minds' are recruited. As noted by an anonymous senior correspondent with a Lagos-based newspaper: "my entry interview was attended by the owners as well as the editor and the former left no one in doubt who controlled operations and directed affairs." Another journalist added that promotions into senior positions are also determined by owners.

The second strand of proprietorial influence is that Nigerian newspaper owners determine the roles and business models of their organizations. While this seems the norm in all enterprises, its implication in the news business is that allocation of resources, influences which news stories are covered and how they are framed. It is therefore possible and sometimes the case, that some aspects of the news gathering venture are better resourced than others. In the context of critical journalism, not all organizations are willing to invest in detailed, long and expensive investigations such as those carried out by Nick Davies (*Guardian* newspaper reporter) on the now defunct *News of the World*. Similarly, not all owners are willing to jeopardize their economic benefits by investigating their sponsors and advertisers. A senior reporter from Lagos observed that journalists "are pieces of a puzzle and if you fail to act accordingly and as directed, you will be replaced." Another reporter added that editor's preference and not always the story, sets the pace for what is investigated and reported.

The third form of control is that managing editors know what their proprietors think about economics and politics (though they would not publicly admit it), and act accordingly. Even without explicit instructions, senior journalists and editors simply sense - through the tacit social cues and agreed-upon patterns that often structure newsrooms - that their time and attention would simply be better spent elsewhere, not on issues that are implicitly understood to be out of alignment with their proprietor's agenda. A reporter based in Lagos commented that:

It is a rule of thumb that reporters intrinsically understand the house rule of the organization they work in and are able to pick non-verbal communication from the top. As a reporter, I not only understand the house rule, I am also guided by what my editors are interested in.

This influence is often wrapped up as directives from supervising editors. An Abuja reporter observed that:
It is a matter of setting the tone, of ensuring that editors and their subordinates know what is required of them. Compliance and job security are connected at many levels to the extent that the latter feeds on the former.

The final strand is through direct control of editors and reporters. This includes directives on the prominence of reportage, the angle of coverage and depth and repetition. An anonymous interview participant based in Lagos commented that the proprietor of the newspaper he worked for was a "control freak" and "very hands-on." He added that: He went through a long period of using his papers as personal publicity sheets. He saw every leading article and determined front-page news. He intimidated junior staff and regularly interfered in editorial matters, ordering the paper to run negative articles about so-called 'enemies' and exercised control on major issues, such as which party to back in a general election or which policy issues to oppose. A Lagos-based editor commented that newspaper owners know what they want and how to get what they want. According to him:

Owners know their niche market and understand their readers. This involves saying some things to satisfy some interest, which may dissatisfy others. You can't blame editors who approve certain articles for publication because if they don't, they will be sacked and replaced.

Beyond proprietors

It is believed that proprietors and the organizations they own are conditioned by social forces that are beyond their control. FGD participants in Group Four (self-employed) observed that business

owners in general and media proprietors in particular, play an important role in driving their organizations. The majority of the participants agreed that without owners, most newspapers would no longer be in business, particularly in the context of Nigeria. According to one discussant: “In Nigeria, it is too simplistic to expect owners to take a back seat and hand over their investments to editors or managers." Another participant added that: "The business terrain here is quite different from Europe and America. In Lagos, owners need to be involved in order to steer their companies to success.*”* Their arguments rest on the view that medium-scale media organizations with fluctuating advertising revenues and relatively small circulation figures are not only vulnerable but also exposed to commercial pressures. This necessitates owners to exert control. As indicated by a participant, the “proprietor in a former newspaper outlet in Abuja had to curry government's favor in order to secure an important state advertising contract that kept the newspaper afloat”.

Cut-throat competition along the Lagos/Ibadan newspaper axis also requires proprietors to play decisive roles in their companies. A Lagos-based reporter commented that: "In Lagos alone, there are over 13 national newspapers. This concentration makes it hard, if not impossible to be hands-off." The effect of market forces as against professionalism and editorial independence, situates media owners *"*between the devil and the Red Sea" observed a discussant. It is hard to find a balance between these two extremes. The ideological-political press that championed the course of Nigeria's independence and resisted military dictatorship, post-independence may have given way to a commercial-industrial press with forward and backward linkages to politics, public opinion and economic success. According to Oso (2012) in contemporary Nigeria, financial imperatives have become the defining character of the media. The link between profit and news organizations is mainly driven by social forces and proprietorial priorities.

Press ownership and its implication for Nigeria's democracy

Democracy works best when reporters are free from proprietorial constraints, when the system allows for the free flow of ideas and when the public have access to accurate, diverse and detailed information from a variety of opinions on important political, economic and social issues. In its current form, most media proprietors of Nigeria's national newspapers have allowed their titles to be used for personal and political propaganda. A large section of participants agreed that just as the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper was used as the mouthpiece of its late founder - Obafemi Awolowo and continues to defend the particular interests of south westerners and political parties within the region; other newspapers - *Vanguard, Punch, Champion, This Day, Nation…*with links to particular ethnic groups and political parties, are also partisan in their reportage. This often leads to politicized reporting and biased media coverage of issues. As indicated by a former reporter, "rather than report impartially, journalists are expected to toe the line of their proprietors without question. Non-conforming-reporters are systematically made redundant."

Proprietorial control in the Nigerian press is counterproductive on many other fronts. On exposing corruption, vital resources are diverted from critical journalism that investigates serious abuses of power, resource misappropriation and gross violations of human and fundamental rights. This is especially so when the interests of proprietors and their business associates are in conflict with, and prioritized over public interest. Some participants also argued that media owners hesitate to fund critical journalism due, in part, to cost. A participant noted that "…the pursuit of commercial success and profit, not a lack of resources or will, is the main reason why most news organizations shy away for serious reporting." The findings indicated that Nigeria's democracy may not deliver its dividend if corruption remains largely unchecked and unexposed by the watchdog. "What the press relies on are court proceedings, information from anti-corruption

agencies and press releases from the State House*"* added a participant who claimed that these may not be enough. Proprietorial control is also unhealthy for regional and ethnic relations in Nigeria - a country sharply divided along geographical and religious lines. Most owners seek to win political support for affiliate political parties- parties that often represent regional interests. What is more, most newspapers are used by their proprietors to whip up ethnic sentiments and/or appeal to their readers. As a consequence, most national newspapers have served narrow ethnic or proprietorial interests. This is most apparent during presidential election campaigns, when newspapers, in a bid to win support for affiliate political parties become biased, partisan and sensational. While all Nigerian newspapers claim to adhere to strict professional codes of journalistic conduct (neutrality, objectivity and balance); in reality, owners exploit the regional competition for state power to further narrow interests.

Conclusion

Power relations prevalent in the Nigerian press concentrates control of managerial and editorial decision-making in the hands of proprietors, most of whom have complex political and business interests to the extent that they disproportionately influence news gathering, selection and framing to serve predetermined ends. They use direct proprietorial control to micromanage journalists, exert strategic editorial pressure to channel organizational resources in favourable directions, recruit compliant journalists into senior positions, and support entry-point selection to appoint journalists who agree with their agenda. Media owners have used their dual role as proprietors (and in a few cases), editors, to influence news content and by extension, the opinion of their readers. The evidence suggests that new newspaper titles continue to emerge, even when they are economically unprofitable, because of the proprietors' desire to exert political influence. The quest for increasing soft power amidst ethnic and regional competition for state offices has allowed politicians, in alliance with proprietors, to

dominate a section of the Nigerian press and limit critical reporting and press freedom. The modern press is industrial and multidimensional and as such, requires substantial economic resources. However, it is noteworthy that the press differs from other businesses that exist for commercial ends. The media in general and the press in particular, in Nigeria should serve as the conscience of society by effectively performing their watchdog role with minimal proprietorial influence.

Recommendations

This paper recommends specific state support for online news platforms in Nigeria to enhance public and small-scale news organizations to participate in information gathering, reportage and dissemination. The concept of citizen journalism and the use of social networking sites can further broaden the scope and capacity of civil society to function as active watchdogs. Online news can potentially increase the quantity of information available in the public domain. It is hoped that as the public become increasingly aware of political actors, political actions and the political process, a culture of transparency, accountability and inclusive decision-making will endure. State support for online news should potentially cover three critical areas: first, investing in digital mass literacy; second, investing in infrastructural development through public-private partnership; and finally, incentivizing high-tech start-up news companies. The State can potentially drive down connection charges as they partner with internet service providers, introduce tax breaks and legislate policies that will increase access to online news, particularly outside urban areas. Critics have observed that online news is beset with questions of credibility, authenticity and source verification; yet, online news has become a credible compliment to mainstream media. The relative ease and speed with which content is created, uploaded and shared would benefit the polity. These shifts can culminate in a model of press that transcends commercial and owners' interests.

Limitations of the study

A few limitations must be acknowledged. The fieldwork was mainly done in Lagos and Abuja. As indicated in the methodology section, participants were purposely selected. They may not fully represent a comprehensive cross-section of Nigeria's population. However, these challenges did not limit the reliability and validity of the study. Further research in the area of the press/politics nexus should include an evaluation of online news and social media in democratizing information- gathering and dissemination. It might examine how online news, especially by non-mainstream media, shapes public perception and politics in Nigeria.

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Boundaries on investigative news reporting in Tanzania: The case of the media services act.

By Thomas Masanja

Abstract

Tanzania is currently striving to improve its economy via the policy of industrialization. To make the policy realistic, meaningful participation of the citizenry is important. The citizen should, therefore, be informed about what is happening on the ground

towards industrialization in the country. The media is important for this purpose and it has a duty and a social responsibility to inform the people of the truth of what is transpiring. This article highlights that while the intention of the media is to inform the public about real events with as much accuracy and truth as is possible, it is also bound by law to acknowledge some of the limitations (established in law) to freedom of expression. The article further aims to highlight internationally established standards and best practices linked to legitimate limitations of media operations. A review of the Media Services Act (MSA) 2016 is examined to determine how much it imposes limitations on investigative journalists in Tanzania and how the MSA effects established standards of legitimate reporting. Findings indicate that the Act criminalizes journalistic activities at the expense of journalists and the public. Likewise, the research revealed that crimes - as established by the MSA - seem to be wide and discretionary in their application, to the extent that they sometimes create self-censorship by the media and that this self-censorship is at the expense of the public and of democratic principles. It is therefore recommended that such provisions of the Act are reconsidered so as to suit contemporary political, cultural and legal environments provided by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

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Keywords: Freedom of expression, press freedom, limitation to freedom of expression, legitimacy of limitations to freedom of the press, mischief

Introduction

The people's right to be informed about important matters of public concern is provided, in part, by the media through press freedom and the right to freedom of expression. Such freedoms are guaranteed by international human rights legal instruments and domestic legal frameworks. The right to freedom of expression encompasses press freedom and, therefore, the right of the media to seek, collect and disseminate information. However, press freedom in Tanzania is not as absolute as this. Instead, there is the possibility that it can be restricted by the enforcement of established laws.

The Media Services Act (No 12 of 2016), hereinafter the MSA, is a relatively new law in the statute books of Tanzania. It was enacted by the parliament of Tanzania on November 16, 2016, and came into force on December 31, 2016, and its regulations, known as Media Services Regulations, were adopted on February 3, 2017 (GN No. 18). The MSA 2016 repeals the former Newspapers Act No. 3 of 1976, which had a long history associated with the British colonial government and was first adopted in 1928. The Act was amended in 1968 and again in 1976, by the independence government, to suit prevailing situations of the time. The MSA provides limitations to the right to freedom of expression in Tanzania because it has the capacity to criminalize certain types of journalistic activities. A key question to ask about the legitimacy of such 'criminalization' of journalistic activities, is whether or not such a process therefore also limits the right of freedom of expression and of the press in conducting investigative journalism.

An examination of the MSA documentation reveals that the Act retains a number of provisions in the repealed Newspapers Act. The new Act retains the offences of sedition, the publication of false news and the importation of prohibited materials (sections 51, 52, 53, 54 and 59). Those who engage in these activities can be convicted for being in violation of the Act. As well as retaining some of the provisions from

the Newspapers Act, the new Act introduces new offences and these new offences criminalize journalistic activities through the application of section 50 of the Act. This paper argues that the criminalization of journalistic activities is a restriction to the right to freedom of expression and of the press, and this criminalization raises serious questions about journalistic freedom.

It is the intention of this article, therefore, to elucidate that criminalization of journalistic activities limits the right to freedom of the press and the right to freedom of expression. A review of the above-mentioned sections of the MSA, as well as, a legal analysis of its sections, is included here to establish the extent the sections of the MSA that are legitimate limitations to the right to freedom of expression and of the press in Tanzania.

HIS: As previously mentioned, the MSA is relatively new and as such has not been used much to prosecute or restrict since its inception. However, there are fears that the MSA has the *potential* to result in an imposition of total control over media houses and journalists in Tanzania. Concerns are based on the fact that the MSA establishes offences which are broad in their interpretation and therefore discretionary application can be used by those who want to restrict the media and those who work in the media. If individuals are found responsible for violating the Act, they run the risk of being incarcerated or issued with fines or both. Likewise, under the MSA, media houses could be at risk of a total ban or suspension from publication and circulation of newspapers (FIDH and LHRC, 2017).

Guarantee and extent of the right of freedom of expression and of the press

The right to freedom of expression involves and is applied by the freedom of the media to disseminate information to citizens (Compulsory Membership in an Association Prescribed by Law Case, 1985). Where the freedom does not have specific constitutional

guarantee, it is considered to be within the right to freedom of expression.

The right to freedom of expression in enshrined in law as a guarantee at international level through the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which establishes a legally binding standard of the right to freedom of expression under article 19. This article follows the standard established by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 which is a non-binding international legal instrument on human rights (Robertson et al, 1996: 27 - 28).

The right to freedom of expression is composed of two dimensions: the right to one's own opinions, thoughts and ideas on one side and the right to seek, receive and impart information on the other (I/A Comm. HR, 2010:10, Almedo Bustos v Chile, 2001 para 5). The right to opinions, thoughts and ideas is absolute and the legal boundaries or limitations to the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas is also recognized (I/A Comm. HR, 2010). However, legal boundaries to the right to freedom of expression should observe established standards under ICCPR. The treaty requires restrictions to the right to freedom of expression to fall within a three – part test to a limitation to a right to freedom of expression. The test requires a limitation to be provided for by the law, which is intended to protect the rights and reputations of others, national security, public order, public health and public morality. Likewise, a law restricting the right to freedom of expression should either be there to protect the nation and the public, or to ensure that the right to freedom of expression takes primacy (see Mekong v Cameroon, 1996 and UN Human Rights Committee, 2011) and it should be necessary in a democratic society.

In the African human rights system, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed through Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, 1982, hereinafter the Charter. The Charter follows the above position as provided by ICCPR (The Charter, articles 60 and 61). Thus, it was concluded by the Human and Peoples Rights

Commission in Constitutional Rights Project and Civil Liberties Organisation v Nigeria that interpretation of restrictions to the right to freedom of expression should observe international human rights standards. Likewise, the Commission in Liesbeth Zegveld and Mussie Ephrem v Eritrea added that it is a well settled principle of the African Commission that any laws restricting freedom of expression must conform to international human rights norms and standards relating to freedom of expression and should not jeopardise the right itself (see also Mrisho, D, Masanja, T and Negutse, A. D, 2018: 48)

Specifically, on freedom of expression and restrictions thereof, the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa in its Principle II paragraph 2 provides that any restrictions on freedom of expression shall be provided for by law, serve a legitimate purpose and be necessary in a democratic society. Unless these grounds are squarely observed by a provision of law, the law will be an illegitimate limitation to the right to freedom of expression and of the press.

The Tanzanian position

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977

In Tanzania, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed by article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977. Article 18 follows international standards on the right to freedom of expression following the Fourteen Constitutional Amendments, 2005 (Act No. 1). The said amendments removed constitutional requirements that the right to freedom of expression could only be exercised "without prejudice to the laws of the land". This was an internal subjection of a right guaranteed by the basic law of the land to other subordinate laws.

Restriction to the right to freedom of expression, as a legal boundary to investigative journalism in Tanzania is through a general derogation clause provided in Article 30 of the constitution. The article allows restriction to the guaranteed rights in the constitution to be established by the laws which intend to protect the rights and reputation

of others, national security, public health and morals and, interests of the state.

However, it should be noted that Tanzania as a state party to ICCPR and the African Charter is obliged to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is made possible at the domestic level. This is according to article 2(1) of ICCPR and article 2 of the African Charter. Thus, Tanzania, like other countries which are state parties to the above international legal instruments, are required to take executive, legislative and judicial measures to promote and protect respect for the right to freedom of expression. So, the constitution and other laws established under it, should not abridge the right to freedom of expression unnecessarily and without abiding by international legal standards.

Boundaries to investigative journalism as established by the MSA 2016

The MSA has been enacted to regulate media operations and activities in Tanzania. Sections 8 and 9 of the MSA require print media to register before they can commence operating and journalists to be enrolled in training programs to obtain licenses to practice, through an accreditation process (section 19, 20 and 21). Registration and accreditation contain conditions which should be observed by registered media houses and individual accredited journalists. These conditions are for regulatory purposes and if they are violated, the individual concerned will face disciplinary action.

For this purpose, the MSA further establishes media regulatory mechanisms by the Ministry of Information, Culture, Artists and Sports. Sections 4, 5, 15 and 16 establish the Department of Information Services which is vested with powers to register print media and to take disciplinary action when a registered media house fails to observe the obligations of the license holder. The MSA also establishes the Journalists Accreditation Board which has the power to deal with the accreditation of journalists and to take disciplinary action in cases where

it has been proved that an accredited journalist has violated accreditation obligations (sections 11, 12, 13 and 19(5)). Journalists and media houses who violate the code of ethics and the code of conduct are subjected to the Independent Media Council for investigation (sections 24, 26, 27 and 28).

What invites discussion at this level are the offences which are outlined in the new MSA legislation. Offences constitute a type of behavior that is prohibited by the community and if the violation is committed, the accused will face a penalty. A penalty for such violations can either be a term in prison, a fine or both. The intention of associating a violation of a prohibited behavior with the threat of penalty is to discourage such behavior in the society. In other words, it is offensive.

Offences under the MSA

Before continuing with a discussion about the offences under the MSA, it should be pointed out that any person who is found guilty, faces a fine of not less than five million Tanzanian shillings, and not more than 20 million Tanzanian shillings. If the conviction results in a prison term, it cannot be less than three (3) years and not more than five (5) years. However, the court can decide to issue both penalties to a person who is found guilty of the violations. The guilty party may therefore be required to pay a fine and serve a period of time in prison. Some of the offences stated in MSA 2016 guidelines are outlined and discussed in the sections that follow.

The offence of malicious use of media services

This offence is derived from section 50(1) of the MSA. The section prohibits the publication of certain information as *actus reus*. Thereafter, the section states that the publication of such information must be with knowledge, or bad motive or intention, as *mens rea*. Information which is deemed criminal is that information which is published and causes a threat to the interests of defense, public safety, public order, public health and morality, *and* that which threatens the

economic interests of the country. The section applies to both true and false information and to true and false statements. Section 3 of the MSA defines *media services* to include *all* services which are provided through the media.

Further, the section makes criminal, information where publication takes place with the knowledge and ill intention of its creator. It is immaterial that the publication does not result in threats to the interests of defense, public safety, public order or morality or the economic interests of the country. All that is needed for the material to be deemed offensive is the publication of condemned information. In other situations, in the provision, a publication can also result in the commission of an offence where the information or statement involved causes injury to the reputation, rights and freedom of others. Whether the published information is true or not, is disregarded.

Provisions of sections 19, 20 and 21 of the MSA when read together with part IV of the Media Services Regulation Act 2017, require any individual who wants to become a journalist to get enrolled and obtain accreditation. Which means that any individual wanting to practice journalistic activities should have a license for that purpose. Based on this requirement section 50(2) (b) of the MSA, it an offence for a person to practice journalism without accreditation.

Sections 8 and 9 of the MSA when read together with part III of the Media Services Regulations require that before any print media comes into operation or circulation, it should be registered and obtain a license. Thus, according to section 50(1) (a) of the MSA any persons who run a media outlet without being registered and without a license for that purpose commit an offence. For the purposes of clarification, print media - according to section 3 of MSA- includes, but is not limited to newspapers, journals, magazines and newsletters.

The MSA imports the offence of sedition from the defunct Newspapers Act through sections 52 and 53. According to section 53(1) it is an offence of sedition where one utters, publishes, sells, offer to

sell, import, or distribute seditious words or information. Even possession of materials or information which is considered seditious, is an offence. This offence is made up of possession, uttering, publishing, selling, offering to sell, import or distribute seditious information as *actus reus*. The other part of the offence requires proof of seditious intention as the *mens rea* required.

Seditious intention according to section 52 (1) of the MSA is measured through a statement which causes contempt of the government, contempt of the administration of justice, inciting disaffection by the people of their government or administration of justice, or causing feelings of ill-will of whatever nature, amongst the population. The said intention can be proved by just showing that the natural consequences of the words used or the act committed by the accused, is seditious.

Section 54(1) of the MSA criminalizes the dissemination of information, which is considered to be not true. However, for such information to amount to the said offence it should have a consequence of causing threat, fear or alarm to the public. The letters of the provisions imply that publishing false news which has no tendency of making the public feel insecure is justifiable. However, its ambiguity is where the information published does not fall within the requirements of section 54(1) of the MSA. Then such publication may be captured by the provisions of section 50(1) of the MSA.

In the first place, analysis of the offences described above is undertaken by subjecting them to international legal standards and agreed practices on limitations to the right to freedom of expression and of the press. Second, analysis of the provisions of the MSA establishing the offences is subjected to the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania as the mother law of the land. As it is mentioned herein above international standards which are laid down by treaties will bind all state parties to it. This means that state parties will be obligated to adhere to established standards. Failure to observe such standards as provided by

a treaty will attract enforcement as to established mechanisms in that treaty. Likewise, at the domestic level the constitution of the country will provide the general principles of the laws of the country. All other legislation passed after it requires that they should follow constitutional provisions. Failure to do so will render such legislation unconstitutional and therefore invalid. An analysis of the provisions in the MSA in establishing offences to journalistic activities, can be subjected to the following questions:

Are the sections establishing the offences, actual law?

Principles 16 and 17 of the Siracusa Principles on the Interpretation of Limitation and Derogation Clauses of the Provisions in ICCPR (UN Doc, 1984) require any limitation to human rights and freedom to be prescribed for by a law. Such a law should be clear and accessible and should not be arbitrary and unreasonable. In other words, any limitations on the right to freedom of expression should be clear about the mischief protected as implied from the purpose and the object of a provision at hand. A 'mischief' in this context is defined as the object or intention of establishing an offence. A limitation that does not fall within these requirements will not pass a test of legitimacy of a restriction to the right to freedom of expression and of the press. The grounds being the provision will not be a proper law.

Thus, according to the European Court on Human Rights decision in the *Sunday Times v UK* (1979), a provision of law will be a proper law if it allows the subjects to exactly foresee the consequences of contravention of that law. The same position is further echoed by the UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 34, where it is recommended that for a law limiting the right to freedom of expression to be legitimate, it should be formulated with sufficient precision to enable an individual to regulate his or her conduct accordingly, and it must be made accessible to the public.

The purposes of the Act - that the, - regulation of media services to ensure professionalism in the media sector in Tanzania – makes it

difficult to say that section50(1) is clearly consonant to this purpose. The section lacks clarity and is therefore open to a wide range of interpretations. This results in ambiguity about what mischief is protected. It is therefore difficult for journalists to understand from the outset if what they are writing will be a violation of the law. And it is because the section is so open to interpretation, that it might result in arbitrary and discretionary application by law enforcers (UN Special Rapporteur, 2013 and Altug' Ackam v Turkey, 2012). The same can be argued in relation to the legitimacy of section 54(1) which establishes the offence of the publication of false news.

The provisions are considered ambiguous, wide and arbitrarily discretionary, because of the words that are used in this context. Words such as *'threatens'* can be variously interpreted, thus making the context of the offence ambiguous. The same applies to phrases such as *fabricated information, knowledge of falsity, reasonable ground to believe it is true, economic interest, fraudulent intent* and *likely to cause fear and alarm* used to create offences under the sections. The same can be said of section 54(1) of the MSA which criminalizes the publication of false news. The section is not clear and therefore can be misused by the authorities. The section suggests that for the offence to be committed, the published information should cause fear and alarm to the public. What constitutes fear and what constitutes alarm is open to interpretation and discussion.

A further point to note about the section is the fact that section 50 of the MSA functions as a catch-all for a range of things. Going through the section, the section is not so specific as to what is exactly prohibited. This may lead to a conclusion that the object thereof is to limit the dissemination of information. This is because the section criminalizes the publication of both true and false information. So, while sections 50(1)(a),(b)(d) and (e) criminalize the publication of false information, section 50(c) criminalizes publication of information that is accurate and true.

Mischief (to reiterate the definition provided in a previous section of this paper), is the object or intention of establishing an offence. Any limitation on the right to freedom of expression and of the press should be for the purposes and grounds as set forth by article 19(3) of ICCPR. The article requires the object and intention of any restrictions on the rights and freedom, to be either to protect the public from lawless situations or against public morality and health, or protection of the rights and reputations of others. According to Mekong's case (supra) the list is exhaustive and no other reason can be used to justify a limitation clause.

The Siracusa Principles provides for interpretive principles of those mischiefs provided by article 19(3) of ICCPR above. On the interpretation of a limitation based on the rights and freedoms of others or the rights and reputation of others, the Principles provide that:

The scope of the rights and freedoms of others that may act as a limitation upon rights in the Covenant extends beyond the rights and freedoms recognized in the Covenant. So, it is required that, a limitation to a human right based upon the reputation of others shall not be used to protect the state and its officials from public opinion or criticism (see Principle I(B)(viii) (35) – (37)).

According to the UN HRC General Comment No. 34, the scope of *rights* as considered above also includes rights which are not guaranteed by ICCPR, provided that such rights are fundamental for human existence (Svetic v Belarus, 2000 and Faurrison v France, 1993).

In exercising the right to freedom of expression, no injury should be caused to individuals' reputations and there should not be an invasion of privacy. While on one hand, defamation can be described as injury to the reputation as caused by publication of false news; on the other, invasion of privacy involves the publication of information about the private life of an individual which causes embarrassment to him/her. However, defamation and invasion of privacy offences should be considered in the context of civil law, rather than criminal law because

in civil law, the victim will be entitled to compensation for the injury caused.

Under the MSA 2016, the right to freedom of expression can also be restricted in order to protect national security and public order. Principles 29 and 30 of the Siracusa Principles require national security to be invoked as a purpose of a limitation only when the right to freedom of expression makes a threat to national safety. The threat should be to state's territorial or national integrity or political independence against force or threat of force. So, where the ground of national security is used in a mere threat to the existence of the government, or the threat of law and order, this will not be proper. Further, legitimate national security interests, will be recognised if the purpose and effect of the restriction is to protect a country's existence or its territorial integrity against the use or threat of force, or its capacity to respond to the use of threat of force; internal or external (Johannesburg Principles, 2009: 2).

Further, principle 6(a)-(c) of the Johannesburg Principles enumerates statements which may threaten national security. Specifically, the Principles provide that an expression can be punished only if the government can demonstrate that: the expression is intended to incite imminent violence or it is likely to incite such violence and where there is a direct and immediate connection between the expression and the likelihood or occurrence of such violence (Mrisho, D. Masanja, T and Negutse A. D, 2018: 56 -57).

Moreover, the Siracusa Principles require that limitations, including those pertaining to national security, should not be vague, wide, arbitrary or discretionary to prevent possible abuse by law enforcers (Principle 7 and 8. See also Onyango- Obo and Another v The Attorney General of Uganda, 2002). Specifically, the Siracusa Principles provide that:

[N]ational security cannot be used, as a pretext for imposing vague or arbitrary limitations and may only be invoked where exists adequate safeguard and effective remedies against abuse.

According to Principle 22 of the Siracusa Principles, public order should reflect the sum of rules that ensure the functioning of society, and a set of fundamental principles on which society is founded, including respect for human rights. Principle 24 further requires those responsible for the maintenance of public order to be "subject to controls in the exercise of their power through parliament, courts or other competent independent bodies" (see Meir Kahane & Ors v Board of Directors of the Broadcasting Authority, 1987, Free Press Namibia Pty Ltd v Cabinet for the Interim Government of South West Africa, 1987, Chaplinsky v New Hampshire, (1994) and Cohen v California, (1971)).

Public morals are fundamental values of the community. Public morals can be applied as a pretext to the right to freedom of expression where it is established, according to Principle 27 of the Siracusa Principles, that the limitation in question is essential to the maintenance of respect for the fundamental values of the community. However, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has put into place, parameters for invoking public morals in limiting the right to freedom of expression. Specifically, the comment goes as follows:

[T]he concepts of morals derives from many social, philosophical and religious traditions; consequently, limitations... for the purpose of protecting morals must be based on principles not deriving exclusively from a single tradition (General Comment No 22).

Furthermore, according to Principle 25 of the Siracusa Principles, where the purpose of the limitation is based on public health, it will envisage measures to be taken by the states to encounter a serious threat to the health of the population or individual members of the population. Those measures, *inter alia*, should aim at preventing endemic and pandemic diseases. However, Principle 26 requires due regard to be given to the international health regulation of the World Health Organization.

It is therefore required that in the application of the sections already discussed, (which create offences under the MSA), reflection on the proper meaning and extent of national security, public order, public morals and public health and the right and reputation of others as interpretative principles, needs to take place. Anything short of this, challenges the legitimacy of the sections.

Are the sections necessary?

In order for a limitation to the right of freedom of expression to be legitimate, protection of the public interest is necessary. Where a certain type of publication of a statement may affect the general public interest, the authorities will be empowered to enact laws to protect the public. Although 'public interest' is a rather vague phrase, 'public interest', according to the National Union of Journalists of Britain (NUJ) and the Scottish Information Commission, reflects something of a serious benefit to the general public as compared to merely something of individual interest.

A law is necessary, when applied to clauses which restrict the freedom of expression, where it amounts to something which cannot be escaped or disregarded and it is therefore something which is desirable or reasonable. A limitation is when it can be shown that the enactment of a law is needed so as to respond to a pressing public or social need. A pressing social and public need can be proved, for instance, where it is demonstrated that allowing dissemination of a particular type of information would have adverse consequences that are legitimate fears of, and by, the public and when that fear can be openly and reasonably predicted to occur. That is, when circumstances force restrictions on the right to the free expression that serves public interests.

However, circumstances concerning the passage of the legislation under consideration, its objects thereof, and the mischief intended to be protected, should be taken into consideration in determining whether there existed, or still exists a pressing public or social need for such a limitation. In R. Rangarajan v Jagjivan Ram and

Another (1989), the Supreme Court of India emphasised the need to show that a limitation is necessary based on the proof of a pressing public or social need.

The same consideration is evident in the European Human Rights system. Thus, in considering whether or not a limitation is "necessary in a democratic society" the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Dischand and Others v Austria, observed that the test of "necessary in a democratic society" requires the court to determine whether the "inference" complained of corresponded to a "pressing social need". In Handyside's case (supra) it was further added that to prove that a limitation is "necessary in democratic society" it should equally be established that the reason given to justify the restriction is relevant and sufficient.

Apart from the requirement that a limitation should be towards a pressing public or social need, it is a requirement for the limitation to be proportionate to the aim and object that made the state adopt such a limitation. Proportionality of a restriction clause, as indicated in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Kimel v Argentina (2008, para 53), means that a restriction should interfere as little as possible with the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression and therefore it should not make the right to freedom of expression nugatory. Further, the UN Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 27 emphatically reiterated that:

[T]he principle of proportionality has to be respected not only in the law that frames the restrictions but also by the administrative and judicial authorities in applying the law (see also UN HRC General Comment No. 34 and Marques v Angola, 2002).

The committee commented (in Gauthier v Canada*)* that the denial of a press card to report parliamentary sessions, on the grounds of the effective operation of parliament and the public order, did not pass the test of necessary and proportionate.

In Tanzania the requirement for the restriction to be proportionate to the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, was reiterated by the Court of Appeal of Tanzania. The court observed that:
[A] law that provides derogation should be lawful in that it should not be arbitrary, and it should be proportional in that the limitation should not be more than reasonably necessary (Mbushuu alias Dominic Mnyoroje v Republic (1994).

It is a contradiction in terms to criminalize journalistic activities that are necessary for the reportage of factual situations and it can be difficult to show that there is a public or social need behind the adoption of the sections. This point was emphasized when media stakeholders and others created an outcry to the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT, 2017), the Legal and Human Rights Centre (FIDH and LHRC, 2017) and the Union of Tanzania Press Club (UTPC and Mwana Halisi Publishers v A.G, 2017) about their treatment in law. They all questioned the adaptation of the Act and the provision thereof, particularly in relation to the right to freedom of expression as guaranteed by the constitution.

Much can be said about the banning of a Tanzanian weekly newspaper: *Mawio* for a two-year period, using information in section 50(1) of the Act (MCT, THRDC and UTPC, 2017). A statement issued by the Tanzanian Minister for Information about the newspaper's ban, argued that the newspaper had violated section 50(1)(a)-(e) of the Act by publishing information which depicted the ill-intention of the publisher. This was after the newspaper had published front-page photographs of former Tanzanian presidents, linking them to misconduct in the mining sector as revealed by two presidential commissions tasked with investigating national revenue misappropriations from 1998.

Furthermore, for a restriction to be necessary, it should impair the right to freedom of expression and of the media, as little as possible. A limitation to the right to freedom of expression, should the *exception*,

not the rule, and freedom of expression should take primacy. In interpreting the derogation clauses of the rights and freedoms in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Court of Appeal of Tanzania thus cautioned that:

… the provisions touching fundamental rights have to be interpreted in a broader and liberal manner, thereby jealously protecting and developing the dimensions of those rights and ensuring that our people enjoy their rights …. Restrictions to fundamental rights must therefore be strictly construed (AG v Lesinoi Ndeinai and Others, 1980)

Proportionality of a provision is further measured through the penalty involved where an individual is found guilty of the offence established. Where sanctions are so hefty compared with the severity of the prohibited act or omission, the provision will lack proportionality. Sections of the MSA provide scope for much discussion about their proportionality. This is because they provide that where individuals are found guilty of the offences under the provisions, they will be sentenced to a fine of 3 million Tanzania shillings (minimum) and twenty million Tanzania shillings (maximum) or a minimum of three years in prison and a maximum of five years in prison. As a consequence, journalists will not risk publishing information if they are not sure whether or not that information will result in a conviction under the MSA. The resulting practice of self-censorship will deny the public of their right to be informed about the facts of situations uncovered by investigative journalists.

The impact of the sections of the MSA

Legal deficiencies

As shown in the previous sections, situations which create offences against the media have some legal deficiencies where the sections are subjected to the requirements of a legitimate restriction to the right to freedom of expression under ICCPR the treaty which Tanzania is a state party and therefore obligated to observe. Likewise, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania requires restrictions

to the rights and freedoms as enshrined therein to be exceptions only to the rights and freedoms. This means rights and freedoms in the constitution should be supreme.

Therefore, if it is agreed that the provisions of the sections on the malicious use of media services, sedition and publication of false news are vague and open to interpretation and as such, encourage discretionary and arbitrary application and are consequently not 'real' laws but are instead designed to restrict the right to freedom of expression in Tanzania. As the sections target public safety, public order, public morality, public health and economic interests as precursors of the provision, unless these grounds are given proper and restrictive interpretation, the right to freedom of expression and of the press can be rendered an empty shell (see Julius Ishengoma and Francis Ndyanabo v Attorney General, 1995).

The same applies to the question of whether the sections are really necessary. The question then, therefore, is this: Is there an alternative way to regulate media professionals without criminalizing their journalistic endeavors? It is argued that if the regulation of the media to ensure professionalism, is the purpose of the MSA could it be better served by disciplinary action than by criminal prosecution. Careful analysis of the sections indicates that the mischiefs, which are intended to be cured by the MSA, are simply acts of professional misconduct and not criminal activities.

Effects of the application of the professional code of ethics

Offences, established by the MSA are also condemned by the professional code of journalistic ethics. For example, publishing false information with the intention or knowledge or negligently or through fabrication, is unethical under the professional code of ethics. The same applies to publishing an unbalanced story, publishing a defamatory statement and invading someone's privacy. Thus, regulatory entities, established by the Act, such as the Department of Information Services,

the Journalists Accreditation Board and the Independent Media Council are better placed to deal with matters of professional misconduct.

Denial of the right to freedom of expression

Criminalizing the dissemination of information, will, in the end, negate the right to freedom of expression. Commissions of a crime always attract established penalties which result in a fines or imprisonment or both. And when hefty fines and/or a period of imprisonment is a possible consequence, the media is likely to refrain from publishing information that might be in the public interest, because the boundaries of what is and is not criminal, are not clearly defined.

Therefore, if the media practices self-censorship and withholds very important information from the public or hides the truth, they have denied people's individual rights to freedom of expression. The end result can be summarized in the words of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights:

[F]reedom of expression is the basic human rights vital to an individual's personal development his political consciousness and participation in conduct of public affairs of his country (Constitutional Rights and Civil Liberties Organization v Nigeria (supra)).

Denial of people's sovereignty

The denial of the right to freedom of expression will have an impact on the democratic culture of Tanzania because in a democracy, the sovereignty resides with the people. Democratically elected government officials are in office because the people have elected them; therefore, they are answerable to the people. The government should endeavor to create better conditions in the country for its citizenry. It follows then, that the citizenry should have all the powers at their disposal to question the government, wherever they notice that the government is not acting in their best interests (Tumwine-Mukubwa, 2007: 49). The sovereignty of the people principle is recognized by Article 8 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Lack of good governance and the rule of law

Moreover, having laws which are wide and arbitrary can affect the requirements of good governance and the rule of law. In this situation, such a law can be applied by undemocratic leaders at the expense of the public. Such leaders can, for instance, use public safety, public order and the reputation and rights of others as grounds to protect the misconduct of the government. The government will, likewise, lack transparency and therefore, accountability.

Conclusion

The Media Services Act (MSA) received mixed reviews by stakeholders. This is because from the outset, the purpose of the Act was promoted as an attempt to encourage media professionalism in the country. The criminalization of the core duty of the media to impart information and ideas will not, and cannot, improve professionalism but will instead, place unnecessary restrictions on the function of the media and this will be at the expense of the citizenry, who are the beneficiaries of accurate information.

Tanzania's political culture and economic policies have been changing since the country gained its independence. The country has evolved from a state party political culture to multiparty politics. Likewise, following Structural Adjustment Policies in the 1980s, Tanzania has moved away from *ujamaa na kujitegemea* to the liberal democratic policies of market liberalization. These new approaches encourage freedom of speech, not the opposite. Making certain types of speeches a crime is inappropriate and one could say, a crime in itself.

The constitution is the basic law of the land. Since 2005, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania has adhered to the internationally agreed standards and practices which guarantee and extend the right to freedom of expression. So, the introduction of provisions in law which unnecessarily abridge freedom of speech, means a return to the past rather than a move into the future. The expectation of citizens is that the authorities will enact laws that build

on human rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the constitution and not otherwise.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions and conclusions of the evidence presented in this study, it is recommended that sections 50(1) and 54(1) of the Media Services Act be reconsidered so that the sections are clearly reflected in the journalists' code of ethics and code of conduct. This will discourage self-censorship, which is detrimental to citizens because it inhibits the freedom of expression and of the press. The regulatory bodies as established by the Act or the Media Council of Tanzania should be the ones to deal with media misconduct in relation to the codes.

Reconsideration of the section should bring in other laws. That is, protection of national safety should be based on the protection of sovereignty and should deal with the publication of information which will affect territorial integrity and political independence of the state. Other laws such as the National Security Act, 1970, which provides for classified information, and the Access to Information Act, 2015, which provides for prohibited information, can be used instead.

However, what is absolutely necessary is that the use of such laws instead of section 50(1) and sections on sedition should be strict so as to meet the requirement that the rights and freedoms should be primary (See *A.G v Lesinoi Ndeinai and Others* supra).

Reconsideration of section 50(1) should also make defamation and invasion of privacy, civil wrongs rather than crimes. Further, defamatory statements and invasion of privacy should not be connected to statements that can be proved to be true. Using defamation and invasion of privacy claims as crimes, inhibits freedom of expression and of the press. Thus, Principle 4 of the Principles on Freedom of Expression and Protection of Reputation emphasizes that criminal defamation laws should be prohibited and civil defamation should be established instead.

For future considerations, enactment of any law by the parliament should be in response to the societal needs and not political ambitions. Laws which are adopted in order to suit political needs will always face criticism even before the law is tested before the courts of law. As discussed above, limitations as established by MSA, for instance, seem to be very difficult to observe while exercising the right to freedom of the press. However, the media has to observe such limitations until the law is amended or repealed.

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Commodification of Religion: A rhetorical analysis of charismatic programs in Kenya.

By Karanja Patrick Muturi

Abstract

The commodification of religion can be linked to televangelism, a growing phenomenon in Kenya that is marked by the number and popularity of charismatic preachers, who utilize the medium of television to preach the gospel to the masses. This interplay between media and religion has meant that some elements of religion that were conventionally acknowledged for their social value, are now commodified as 'mediated spirituality' for capitalistic exchange. This paper discusses the place of human afflictions in the commodification of religion through televangelism in the context of charismatic programmers in Kenya. Data was derived from television programs transmitted on Kenyan local television channels. The researcher utilized Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory by adopting the pentadic construct to examine the speaker's motive in structuring audience perception to influence behavior, and thereby elicit certain desired responses. The results showed that televangelists are keen to identify some dominant human afflictions as exigencies for message themes in their

sermons. The study established that the resolution of these afflictions is implicitly designed to persuade viewers to engage materially with the preacher by contributing money in exchange for the spiritual service rendered. The study concludes that there is a deliberate rhetorical use of human afflictions (notably sickness, poverty and demonic oppression) by preachers, to elicit material responses and commodify the spiritual experience through the medium of television. The findings portend a basis for the formulation of religious broadcast conventions to curb possible exploitation of viewers and streamline production and mediation of religious content. Also, the findings are useful for media research in conducting an audience analysis for religious broadcast consumers, to further test general perceptions of material exchange for religious programs.

Key words: commodification, afflictions, charismatic, televangelism, mediated spirituality

Introduction

The relationship between media and religion has increasingly evolved into an important site for academic research in recent years, as media technologies continue to pervade virtually every social institution in contemporary society. Research has shown that in the 21st century, religions are largely shaped by their interaction with the mass media in profound ways (Hoover, 2012), to the extent that most religious functions are performed in and through the media and they conform to Meyrowitz's media metaphors on the mediatization of society (Hjarvard, 2006).

This interplay between media and religion has, however, provided opportunities through which some elements of religion that were conventionally acknowledged for their social value, are now commodified as 'mediated spirituality' through a capitalistic exchange of the spiritual service and experiences, to accomplish incidental material benefits for individual preachers. The place of human afflictions in the commodification of religion is a scarcely explored area. This paper delves into the rhetorics of message construction, exploring the use of human afflictions as tools for commodifying

religion. The paper explicates how diverse human conditions of social, psychological and physical disposition are implicitly, and sometimes explicitly appropriated for capitalistic exchange through television programs.

Televangelism is a concept derived from "television" and "evangelism" with reference to the phenomenon of a conventional type of Christian evangelist who uses the medium of television to preach the gospel to the masses (James & Shoesmith, 2008). Televangelism is rooted in the Pentecostal movement where preachers who subscribe to 'charismatic theology' preach the gospel by affirming the power of faith in God through a demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In Kenya, as in most predominately Christian countries, television is a popular medium of evangelism where televangelists occupy the airwaves in a bid to reach broad audiences with their gospel messages. The growth of televangelism is premised in the preachers' recognition of television's ability to surmount both cultural and geographical barriers in spreading the "Good News" (Mokaya, 2015). Through a telecast, a typical preacher connects to a wide and narrow audience simultaneously, within the same airtime slot, effectively eliminating both temporal and spatial constraints with ease. Consequently, the need to stage crusades in towns continues to be in decline because of this mass media capability.

Research in prosperity beliefs has been largely qualitative, but Koch (2009) used statistical analysis to establish whether material wealth is a sign of God's blessings. Though the scale had reasonable internal reliability, it was not certain whether the process of items developed, adequately captured prosperity beliefs (Mitchell et al., 2014). The 'needs' gospel (afflictions) and the promises mediated to the audience, is what defines charismatic televangelism in Kenya; where the notion of reciprocation for the expected blessing is a major theme in most televangelist messages.

The team of researchers, using Max Weber's work ethic model, proposed that the beliefs about honoring God (which is central to the

commodification of the sacred) may be a reciprocal response to past benefits. They argued:

> If the person has been the recipient of a gift or benefit, an appropriate response is to be thankful. In turn, gratitude promotes reciprocal beneficial behavior, even at some cost to the person who is grateful (Mitchell et al., 2014, p.134).

Honoring God represents a belief that is generally accepted by a range of religious traditions. The specific strategies and conditions through which this kind of engagement thrives, remains vague. The current study has attempted to unravel these processes in establishing the commodification of religion through televangelism.

Charismatic theology is viewed as integral to commodifying religion, usually because of its attribute of the manifestation of supernatural power: the premise upon which human afflictions are addressed. Charismatic preachers are particularly keen to appropriate the gifts of the Holy Spirit to alleviate various human afflictions through prayer, deliverance and prophecy. These gifts come in handy in relieving believers of depressive conditions such as disease and poverty, an asset that is arguably not embraced by the non-charismatic preachers.

In their work in Nigeria, Chukwuma and Uhembe (2014), identified a conscious effort of televangelism to rule the airwaves through a deliberate attempt to create a window display of various spiritual products. Healing, miracles, breakthroughs and curse-breaking form the bulk of these products. The political economy paradigm however, did not account for how such a litany of spiritual products is transformed into commodities of the 'spiritual experience' in the religious marketplace, and how such products are appropriated for value exchange in locating the spiritual commodification of the sacred.

Conceptualizing religious commodification

Marx defines a commodity as something that organizes both material-like and social relations in a capitalistic society. He further describes a commodity as the basic unit of social relations in capitalism (Graham, 2007), that is used for value exchange. These definitions

encompass religion as a social institution where religious practices operate on the premise of social relations with religious commodities forming important ingredients which propel that social process. Kitiarsa (2008) observed that the concept of religious commodification was a rising methodological orientation that focused on how religion and market forces could be linked by the process of commodification and the consumption of specific objects. However, the challenge has been how to best theorize this process through embedded ethnographic data. Einstein (2008) identified the commodification of religion in *faith branding*, as a concept reflected in packaging religion as a product for purchase, mainly using sacred objects and religious artifacts. Einstein also situated televangelists as representatives of faith brands and pointed out that religious products and services are part of a cohesive marketing plan, designed to create products that resonate with today's consumer-conscious religious shopper.

In essence, the media of communication as a market force has significantly availed viable platforms for the expression of religious ideas and validation of religion as an important social institution in contemporary society. Conversely, some of those avenues have been utilized by different preachers to subtly exploit audiences in making the 'spiritual experience' appear as a product for sale. More recently, music videos, live performances and audio taped messages have shaped the material culture of the religious consumer. Gospel music videos and audio absorb a significant share of airtime on the airwaves in many media stations and target a substantial audience base that resonates with Christian religious themes. The transmission of these programs results in huge revenues for media stations and loyalties for individual content creators.

This commodity character of religion is located within a capitalistic context of media production, which, in the case of this paper, is the media infrastructure and in particular, television. Thomas (2009) posited that "neo-Pentecostal theologies validate the seamless flow of media and non-media products between the pulpit, the home and the market, thus contributing to the strengthening of the local-global Christian economy" (Thomas, 2009, p.60). As such, the way a 'spiritual experience' is commodified at mediation is worthy of the attention of

media and religion scholars today, and televangelism is one such avenue of commodification in the present media-saturated environment. The paper locates dominant human afflictions as ingredients of religious commodification through the rhetorical prowess of some leading televangelists in Kenya.

Theoretical context

The study employed Kenneth Burke's rhetorical framework to analyze both the linguistic and visual elements used in televangelism and to establish the occurrence of commodification through the use of rhetorical devices in the programs analyzed. The visual and verbal representations were analyzed concurrently, by using Kenneth Burke's principle of the dramatistic pentad, to establish how they achieved persuasion. The model proved useful in examining what rhetorical strategies were deployed in religious expressions such as preaching, prayer and prophecy, the dominant features of televangelism in structuring audience perceptions. Burke (1969) introduced the dramatistic pentad as a tool for analyzing how speakers persuade audience members to accept their view of reality (Tracy, 2013), and thus influence their behavior.

Burke's dramatistic pentad is a set of basic terms through which people most commonly discuss human motives and actions (Griffin, 2012). The pentad contains five elements of human drama, namely, the *act*, *scene*, *agent*, *agency* and *purpose* (Burke,1969). The *act* refers to what was done; the *scene*, to the context of the act, setting or background; the *agent*, to who performed the act; the *agency*, to the means through which the act is performed, and the *purpose*, to the speaker's stated or implied goal of the act.

From Burke's perspective, the establishment of the motive of communication could be obtained by a "ratio analysis", which is a paring of the pentadic elements (Kuyers, 2016) to evaluate the privileged term. To perform the analysis, the critic identified the terms or concepts that represented the five elements in the program (text), and then paired two different elements to examine their mutual influence and determine how the communicator privileged one aspect of the message over the other to achieve a persuasive goal.

Methodology

The researcher employed an explanatory/interpretive research design for the qualitative study. Purposive sampling was used for data collection by applying given parameters of interest to arrive at the sample frame, with television programs as the target population. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method in which the subjects selected are judged as being representative of the population in the market (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The technique selects units that only reflect the identified attributes, so time is saved by eliminating unnecessary volumes of data. It has a low chance of external validity but maximum variation from among three different channels was deemed to have adequately accounted for the credibility and objectivity of data.

The researcher created the sample by recording episodes of different televangelists hosted by the following local television channels: KBC, KTN, and AVIATION TV, which satisfied regular religious broadcast schedules on a weekly basis; that is to say, that at a specific time and day of the week, the charismatic program was routinely transmitted on the identified channel of interest.

Sampling of units was criteria-based and programs were selected because they possessed the following features that were descriptive of central themes: a) charismatic nature (b) Holy Spirit doctrine (c) financial appeals (d) demonstration of miracles and exorcism (e) live audience.

A total of six charismatic programs were recorded during their transmission from the identified channels. Data was then transcribed and coded into excerpts made up of verbal and visual representations for analysis. To identify human afflictions for question 1, the author picked a sample unit and examined the use of words, phrases and images to derive the theme formed around a dominant concept. Where the dominant concept emphasized by the rhetor as driving idea for the theme of the message, that concept formed the affliction depended upon by the rhetor in projecting a preferred reality for the program and as such, precipitated the commodification of the spiritual experience and service.

To establish the rhetorical strategies used in the programs in response to question 2, the author applied Kenneth Burke's rhetorical framework and used the afflictions as anchors for examining patterns and attributes of commodification in the programs.

The theory provides factors for analysis in the form of a dramatistic pentad. Each of the five elements of the pentad was characterized with a corresponding term in the excerpts to draw a terministic relationship between the terms to form a pentadic set. Using a 'ratios analysis' the author could determine how one characterized term influenced the other within the set, in projecting a preferred view of the subject by the rhetor. This pattern was replicated for every pentadic set formed, and helped to establish the rhetor's motive for the communication in the entire program by making inferences.

Data analysis and discussion

Human afflictions are captured in this discussion as conditions of need present among audiences that form exigencies for the rhetorical situation. The afflictions most used by preachers to interact with audiences in the programs were identified through inductive data analysis, by selectively coding text into units of meaning (Thomas, 2006) to derive dominant concepts from the verbal and visual representations captured from the programs. The author coded the statements and phrases along with the freeze-framed video clips that represented the spiritual and/or physical condition which defined the theme of the message. Afflictions in this context, are equated with conceptual terms found in the excerpts that define a spiritual or economic condition, or a social or cultural need such as poverty, and whose resolution calls for appropriation of the spiritual gifts (charismatic) through prayers, prophecy (or otherwise), by the televangelist.

Table 1: **Identified afflictions per program**

Program	**Affliction**	**Channel**
Kuna Nuru Gizani (Light in Darkness)	Fear of death	KBC
Jesus Teaching Ministry	Demonic oppression	AVIATION TV

The Word will Set You Free	Disease	KBC
Neno Evangelism	Poverty	KBC

Poverty

According to Pradip Thomas (in Servaes, 2008), poverty is a lack of resources that people need to develop themselves. The absence of these resources, such as money, food, proper housing and clothing, represents depressive social and economic conditions for those affected. Poverty is a major subject in the themes of mediated charismatic sermons in Kenya, where many preachers promise remedies to problems by invoking religious rituals, such as prayers and prophecy. In this section of the paper, the author analyzed the excerpt to determine whether the rhetor identifies the subject as an important ingredient for his message.

In Excerpt 1, the rhetor identifies a God-given promise taken from a passage in the Bible and directs it to those in need and who might also be experiencing material shortages. He suggests that the way to be free from a lack of the things you need and become blessed, is to give alms to the needy. This indirectly challenges the person experiencing the lack, to *act* by way of giving, in order to get blessed. The rhetor emphasizes poverty as the affliction that might have been caused by demonic oppression and how God is able to deliver the oppressed by making them rich and by giving them money. The idea is reinforced visually when the rhetor is seen giving cash to a lady he has just delivered from a demonic oppression, which was supposedly the cause of her poverty. *Poverty*, then, represents an affliction that has been ostensibly cured by appropriating the spiritual gift of prophecy and deliverance, which involves the exchange of money and thereby commodifies the experience.

Excerpt 1

Theme	**Affliction**	**Verbal representation**	**Visual representation**

Getting your blessing	Demonic oppression Poverty	Isaiah 58:10-11: if *you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon*…once you give to the needy, that's when God begins to bless you. **Lady:** "I have experienced many problems after my husband divorced me. I have suffered poverty and humiliation; have left only Ksh.3500 in the house" **Pastor**: "I destroy every witchcraft power in your life in Jesus name."	 The rhetor gives money to a needy congregant who has been delivered of demonic oppression. "Go do some business with this money."

(The Gospel will Set You Free –KBC)

Diseases

Disease is a dominant concept in televangelism and is used to commodify religion. According to medical sociology, disease is an adverse physical state consisting of physiological dysfunction within an individual (Cockerham, 1992). The World Health Organization defines disease as an abnormal pathological state that affects parts of an individual. Diseases frequently cause suffering and unleash a search for the meaning or cause of the afflictive experience. Religion can provide the afflicted with relief and the opportunity to find meaning in the disease through religious rituals, such as prayers and prophecies, as can be found in charismatic programs.

In excerpt 2 the author analyzed a program for the existence of the concept of disease, which the rhetor (preacher) appropriates in the

program as an exigency for message construction to commodify religion by advancing possible remedies for diverse diseases.

Excerpt 2 depicts the testimony of a mother with a sick child who was allegedly healed through the prayers of the rhetor during a previous deliverance service. She narrates her experience to a live church audience. The testimony represents the evidence of the rhetor's ability to administer healing and the effectiveness of the anointing oil to facilitate the healing. This example shows that *disease* represents one of the main ingredients of the construction of the message in the program and it forms the affliction that connects the rhetor to his audiences by commodifying the spiritual experience and promising a cure for diseases that are identified in similar scenarios.

Excerpt 2

Theme	**Affliction**	**Verbal representation**	**Visual representation**
God is a healer	Disease	My name is XY from place D. The problem with this child has been that after sleeping in the night, he wakes up in the morning with burns all over his body. When the apostle prayed for him and I applied the anointing oil, the child got well and now he is completely healed.	 Mother of the healed child testifies as she holds the baby.

(Jesus Healing Ministries –AVIATION TV)

Fear of death

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines death as the 'end of the life of a person or animal' (Pearson, 2003) and this 'fear of death' forms a major subject in charismatic television programs because it can be linked to Romans 6:23: "wages of sin is death". Therefore, the 'fear of death' represents a possible exigency for a rhetorical situation in which televangelists can craft their message themes. The author analyzed Excerpt 3 for the existence of the concept

of death, where it constitutes the reason for the message construction in the program.

In Excerpt 3, the rhetor interprets Luke 7:15 (Bible text) to enable him to construct his theme on the 'fear of death' as an affliction. From the account, he presupposes that his audience is composed of people who are afflicted with the fear of death and he therefore creates analogies between the events in the scripture and real-life experiences. The visual depiction of the word 'death' and the accident scene, reinforces the possibility that death could happen to someone in the viewing audience. In Excerpt 3, the 'fear of death' emerges as a major concept that influences the message construction by the rhetor and, becomes an exigency for the rhetorical situation to commodify the spiritual experience. And it does this by advancing a possible solution to the affliction.

Excerpt 3

Theme	Affliction	Verbal representation	Visual representation
I will not die	Fear of Death	I want us to look at the Bible in Luke chapter 7 verse 15, "And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak and Jesus delivered him to his mother". The spirit of death had invaded that family but Jesus broke it. Who among you has the spirit of death began to reign? God has sent me to pray with you and declare that the power of death cannot rule over you. People are getting their lives terminated through road accidents haphazardly.	 The word death eclipsed against a sky-blue background, depicts the idea of the unknown.  The accident scene that represents the agency for death.

(There is Light in the Darkness –KBC)

Human afflictions as ingredients of religious commodification

Themes and concepts that emerged from the analytical processes discussed in the previous sections, suggest that televangelists in charismatic programs use common socio-cultural and economic conditions that affect humans, to strategically connect with the daily experiences of viewers. These conditions (Armstrong, 2006 p.424) are the exigencies for the rhetorical situation that facilitates the audience/preacher interaction and the commodification of the spiritual service and experience. When afflictive conditions such as sickness, poverty and demonic oppression are present, the preacher finds a basis for providing the much-needed information and encouragement to the audience. Although propagation of the gospel is presented as the overt purpose for the programs, Biblical texts are used as a major source of analogy to implicitly inspire the audience to engage with the preacher because he presents an experiential parity between characters in the Bible and people in the target audience. Such a process creates a credibility for the preacher that is mostly uncontested. The afflictions highlighted in the analyzed excerpts constitute scenes that demand pastoral and spiritual interventions, and hence a currency for value exchange in commodifying religion.

Data analysis results for the current study suggest that, for charismatic television programs, some dominant human afflictions in society present a rhetorical situation for televangelists to develop content for television mediation. The set of afflictions used by the televangelists are the human conditions variously found in ordinary socio-cultural settings, and therefore plausible appeals to an audience that is seeking relief. Chukwuma & Uhembe (2014) corroborated this revelation because they located a conscious effort in televangelism to rule the airwaves through a deliberate attempt to create a window display for various spiritual products. For most charismatic programs on Kenyan television, different diseases, poverty, demonic oppression and diverse life-threatening scenarios form major concepts upon which televangelists define the exigencies for extra mundane interventions on the afflicted audience members. Galgalo (2014) observed that there is a tendency to package the name of God and sell it to the highest bidder in

exchange for miracles and blessings. This is against the principles of religious orthodoxy because it is offensive to commercialize spiritual gifts.

This study demonstrates that most of the television programs featured some dominant human afflictions as the basis for rhetorical situations in warranting the production of charismatic programs in Kenya. The set of afflictions used by televangelists are those human conditions that are most common in ordinary socio-cultural settings and therefore, the most plausible to appeal to audiences. These life-threatening conditions define the major concepts upon which charismatic preachers construct themes which portend extraordinary interventions for the afflicted in the audience.

These interventions become the exclusive province of the televangelist, by way of exercising his/her spiritual authority in the form of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy and exorcism. The afflictions are a function of the rhetorical strategies used by the preacher, and their remedy constitutes an implicit reciprocal process of material exchange between the preacher and the recipient, for the spiritual service and benefit obtained.

Commodifying diseases

In this section, the researcher analyzed excerpts for commodification where the affliction of disease is a function of the rhetorical strategy to commodify the spiritual experience and hence commodify religion. Excerpt 2 (Re-represented) depicts the testimony of a mother with a sick child who supposedly got healed through the prayers of the rhetor during a previous deliverance service. The mother narrates her experience to a live church audience. Her testimony represents the evidence of the rhetor's ability to administer healing and the effectiveness of the anointing oil in facilitating the healing. In the excerpt, *disease* defines the message theme for the program and the main idea that the rhetor presents to commodify the spiritual experience by way of promising a remedy for the affliction.

Excerpt 2 (Re-represented): Apostle Peter Manyuru –AVIATION TV, Sunday, January 15, 2017

Theme	Affliction	Verbal Representation	Visual Representation
God is a Healer	Disease	(after prayers of healing by the preacher…) "My name is Esther from Lumaganda. The problem with this child has been that after sleeping in the night, he wakes up in the morning with burns all over his body. When the apostle prayed for him and I applied the anointing oil, the child got well and now he is completely healed."	 Mother of the healed child testifies as she holds the baby.

(Jesus Healing Ministries –AVIATION TV)

The researcher extracted some of the terms in the excerpt, and matched them to the elements of the pentad to form a pentadic set. Using the set, each element is paired with the act in a 'ratio analysis' to examine how one term is privileged over another and to help to infer the motive of the rhetor for the program.

Act: Testimony of the child's mother

Agent: Mother of healed child

Agency: Prayers

Scene: Church service, during testimonies on divine healing

Purpose: To earn the rhetor credence for the ability to heal diseases

Act-Scene: the testimony is the result of the child having been healed of some disease in a previous church service through ministration of the anointing oil by the preacher, for which the mother had sought intervention.

Act-Agent: the beneficiary of the spiritual experience testifies about the healing obtained through the preacher's prayers.

Act-Agency: the testimony is about the healing of her sick child who had been healed through prayers offered by the rhetor, in a previous healing service.

Act-Purpose: the testimony inadvertently accords credit to the preacher and privileges his ability to minister healing to the afflicted. This alerts a potential viewer to the preacher's healing abilities and raises confidence levels that benefit the rhetor, resulting in people seeking healing from him.

The image represents the Agent-Purpose ratio, with the mother holding the already healed child. This depiction emphasizes the evidence of the rhetor's healing abilities, thus building credibility among the existing and potential audiences with regard to the miracle of healing.

This examination reveals how the testimony of the mother with the child was occasioned by the condition of her ailing child, which made her seek the rhetor's services. After obtaining positive results through prayers, including the use of anointing oil, the testimony formed an important part of the message for the rhetor because he demonstrates his abilities to heal diseases which afflict real and potential audiences/viewers. Through display, the beneficiary of the miracle rhetorically speaks to the preacher's ability to perform miracles and can serve as a tool for attracting people with similar problems to seek solutions. Therefore, it is a commodity for appeal. The effect of the testimonial is that it attracts more people to the church, particularly because miracles are a rarity in Kenya and people with a problem would love to experience such healing powers. The increase in the number of followers has translated into financial strength for the preacher through the religious ritual of offerings and for the television station, where viewership ratings result in more advertising revenue

Commodifying the Fear of Death

Excerpt 3 (Re-represented) depicts methods used by the rhetor to make financial appeals to the audience, with clear suggestions (words and images) as to how that appeal would be accomplished to ostensibly dispel the fear of death for the commodification of religion.

Excerpt 3 (Re-represented) Pastor Pius Muiru –KBC, Sunday, November 13, 2016

Theme	Affliction	Verbal Representation	Visual Representation
I will not die	Fear of Death	I want us to look at the Bible in Luke chapter 7 verse 15, "And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak and Jesus delivered him to his mother." The spirit of death had invaded that family but Jesus broke it. Who among you has the spirit of death began to reign? God has sent me to pray with you and declare that the power of death cannot rule over you. People are getting their lives terminated through road accidents haphazardly. (at the end of the sermon on fear of death) Today I give you a challenge to give God a special offering for the purpose of opposing death in your family. I expect everybody to give from Ksh. 300, 500, 1000 to 3000 as a prophetic seed to cancel death.	 The word death eclipsed against the sky-blue color fills the screen to signify the unknown.  Accident scene, suggesting a possible means through which death comes.   

(There is Light in the Darkness –KBC)

The researcher constructed a pentadic set characterizing the terms used by the rhetor with the pentadic elements for analysis as follows:

Act: Giving offerings

Agent: Preacher
Agency: M-PESA account, PayPal Visa cards
Scene: A congregation in fear of death
Purpose: Give offerings as a way of avoiding death

Act-Scene: the rhetor presupposes an audience afflicted with the fear of death as, ordinarily, no one likes to die. Amidst such fear, he incites offerings from them as a way to escape an imminent death that could strike them and their household.

Act-Agent: through speech and image depiction the rhetor implores the viewer to give a special offering to God in order to avert possible death.

Act-Agency: this giving is actualized through the channels of monetary transaction, provided as part of the program (PayPal and M-PESA accounts) and are displayed on the screen. The verbal appeal is visually reinforced by images of the channels, and a suggested figure of Ksh 3000, designed to incite a specific response.

Act-Purpose: having projected the viewer's family as a potential death scene, the need to escape death motivates the viewer to give money, ostensibly to cancel imminent death as proclaimed by the rhetor, and the money goes to the preacher.

In this ratio analysis, the preacher associates deliverance from death with a special offering given by those afflicted and as such, suggests a reciprocal act for the prayers and prophecy he provides to the would-be victims of death. By taking advantage of the general fear of death for ordinary humans, the rhetor verbally and visually draws a path for resolution of the problem by provoking an act of giving in exchange for prayers and prophecy against death. When aligned with every other element, the rhetor provides a clear path for the recommended behavior (Act), to be actualized and to culminate into pre-empting death. He attaches monetary value to the expected relief and commodifies the remedy for the affliction in the process, because those who are in fear of death are bound to give in order to be relieved of an imminent death.

Most televangelists in Kenya use a range of visual and linguistic devices to craft messages that project a preferred view of how to deal with the identified affliction. More often than not, that view seeks to incite material substance behavior in the form of offerings, to implicitly represent a reciprocation of the spiritual benefit conferred. Kenya is about 80% Christian (Mokaya, 2015), so televangelists are keen to use passages from scripture as a rhetorical device, by making comparisons between the afflictions of those in the audience with those in the Bible.

These observations reinforce Armstrong's view, that modern televangelism has reshaped the religious marketplace by skillfully packaging solutions that appeal to a wide range of social and economic problems which affect people, including complex human conditions such as anxiety-related diseases and a lack of means (Armstrong, 2006). The research in this study has demonstrated how a range of human afflictive conditions can become monetized in the process of mediating religious content by contrast to conventional religious orthodoxy.

The mass media ecological influences on the commodification of religion

A critical observation of faith-based programming on Kenyan television channels revealed that Christian programs transcend to commercial stations largely during weekends, as opposed to the faith channels, where weekly programming is dominated by Christian- based programs. There are full-time, faith-based channels, which include Family TV, SAYARE, MBCI, Hope TV and Aviation TV (among others), who dedicate space to Christian gospel teachings, religious films, gospel music and prime time news bulletins.

This array of television channels, available for mediation of religious content, is a fair representation of a vibrant mass media ecology in which diverse religious ideas, including charismatics, can thrive. However, message themes are key to the crafting of programs that might appeal to both the audience and the media channel of their residence. For charismatics, human afflictions form the exigency for the rhetorical situation which warrants the production of television programs in Kenya.

Television mediation in Kenya has grown exponentially, from 17 channels in 2013 to 220 by 2015 (Maina, 2016). The highest leap in growth was registered in 2014 with the advent of digital broadcast protocol, which witnessed an influx of community and faith-based channels that took advantage of the migration, to facilitate propagation of the gospel. Examples include MBCI by the Kingdom Seekers Fellowship in Nakuru and Hope TV for Christ is the Answer Ministries. Radio and television are the media most preferred by the total population; with radio absorbing 64% of the share and television, 30% of the share (Maina, 2016).

The way human afflictions are blended with mass media techniques in an attempt to achieve the rhetorical aim of the program, reveals how the televisual codes of communication advance a preferred view of a situation through meaning-making, and obtaining desired responses from both live and detached audiences for the content creator. The McLuhan media ecology perspective, posits that media should be understood ecologically and advances the view that media environments comprising technology, techniques and modes of communication can influence human perceptions and understanding of their symbolic environment in profound ways (West & Turner, 2010). Following this line of reasoning, the choice that televangelists make to conduct business by appropriating the afflictions, matches the McLuhan perspective, even as mass media- driven constructions of reality are influenced by the biases of the medium used.

The author observes that, the choice of television as a medium for religious mediation, means that televangelists can effectively appropriate their visual/linguistic techniques to obtain the desired results from the afflicted viewers, without the audiences necessarily making a decision to subscribe to the church or the faith in question. Indeed, premised upon Gerbner's cultural indicators perspective, the exposure to these programs has the effect of introducing a new cultural reality to the viewer in relation to the faith preached (Morgan et.al, 2009). Thus, based on the interactions just mentioned, the tele-church inadvertently acquires more members who translate into both numerical and material strength for the church, as reflected in the rhetor's intention to take advantage of such a following through the display on their

programs of telephone contacts for counseling purposes, and bank accounts to channel offerings.

In commodifying the audience, televangelists aid media institutions by constructing an audience that can also be useful to the market in terms of viewership ratings and advertisements. The home audience is exposed to the experiences of a televised church, which serves as an inspiration to covet similar experiences. In essence, the televised audience is indirectly objectified, commodified and sold to the home audiences through media stations' accrued profits and material responses for the preacher. The live audience, with whom the preacher engages directly, is useful to the viewer because he authenticates the services offered, particularly through those that are linked to deliverance, and the healing of diseases. Therefore, the live audience rhetorically translates into a commodity that is sold to the home audience by depicting such activities as miracles and testimonies.

The mediation of experiences has the potential to motivate the detached home audience to engage with the preacher to provide remedies for their possible afflictions. So, as the church in Kenya executes its functions through the media, these mass-media dynamics will undoubtedly continue to shape the way religion is commodified as mediated spirituality, through television and other media.

To a large extent the activities conducted by charismatic televangelists serves to build a profile for the preacher and establishes trust and credibility, which become avenues to manipulate the audience, and the afflictions are the currency of the interaction. Mass media platforms – and, in particular - the choice of television for charismatic mediation, incorporate home audiences into a church service, and through the display of mobile contacts and bank accounts, persuades them to give money for prayers and other purposes. When this occurs, there is a material exchange between the preacher and the home viewer, which results in the commodification of religion.

The Character of televangelism in Kenya

The religious broadcast landscape in Kenya, indicates that televangelism is characterized by the presence of influential charismatic

preachers who often propagate unconventional theological ideas such as miraculous healing and seed sowing practices to connect to audiences. For many pastors, this is a lucrative enterprise where they have access to huge proceeds to fund their personal and ministerial needs. This trend has prompted concerns from the general public and the government because preachers are perceived to be exploiting the commitment of their followers by enriching themselves through unethical practices facilitated by media platforms, such as television (Zeina, 2014).

The electronic church has evidently gained ground in Kenya, as many churches now have a Web presence in addition to their televised sermons. The exponents of charismatic theology i.e. the belief in the manifestation of spiritual gifts such as the Deliverance church's Bishop Mark Kariuki, Pius Muiru of the Maximum Miracle Center and Wilfred Lai of Mombasa among others, have settled on television as an effective evangelistic tool to reach wide audiences across the country. Their respective programs aired mainly on KBC and other religious channels (SAYARE TV and GBS) are a common feature in the Kenyan religious media landscape today. This scenario has been accentuated by the digital broadcast protocol that effectively expanded the media broadcast regime, warranting a variety of religious programming in the country, through the opening of new faith- based channels.

Scholars have attributed the success of televangelism to the fact that televangelists appeal to the viewers' worst fears about the world, which help to create a worldview that is full of anxiety, fear and distrust. This perspective is imbued with a message-framing philosophy advanced by the televangelists, where financial contribution is attached to the provision of information and encouragement that is necessary to cope with a perceived world that is evil, threatening and immoral (Armstrong, 2006). Armstrong's perspective seems to be highly characteristic of most of the televangelists who operate on Kenyan television channels today, where financial appeals and miracles form the most definitive features of their sermons.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this paper, it is plausible to say that, production and mediation of religious content can be implicitly

motivated by the commercial interests of individual actors. The use of media technology to advance religious ideas, has proven to be a profitable endeavor for players in the religious space such as televangelists and broadcasters, who use live audiences to create a preferred view of reality that is articulated in mediated programs. This paper submits that such live audiences usually translate into a currency for exchange by having their televised experiences used to influence a heterogeneous audience, by closing the perceptual division and by becoming part of the program from wherever they may be (Griffin, 2012). In this regard, it is actually the use of such mass media avenues that facilitate the exchange of ideas and commodify the services as part of the process.

Mediated spirituality is a modern-day phenomenon, where mass media systems are effectively utilized by religious producers to reach audiences and engage them in diverse ways at a personal level without any form of scrutiny by religious conventions. The need to attend a live church service has continued to diminish and this has promoted personal religiosities that are aided by the media. This invasion of private space to mediate spiritual content has - as demonstrated by the current discussion - also created avenues for exploitation of audiences by some unfettered and unscrupulous preachers within the Christian fraternity. Therefore, the media, through televangelism, cannot be separated from the question of religious commodification by charismatic preachers in Kenya, when it comes to the notion of 'mediated spirituality'.

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An Increase in the Incidence of Breast Cancer: Has the media done enough in Nigeria?

By Susan Olayinka Ogundoyin, & Olakayole Olaolu Ogundoyin

Abstract

Breast cancer is a major source of public health concern globally. It is one of the major causes of deaths among women, resulting in over 458,000 annual deaths. Breast cancer awareness provides knowledge that helps in early detection and prompt treatment in order to reduce the high morbidity and mortality rates associated with the disease. The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons for the continual increase in morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer, despite media awareness campaigns. The study is based on the Health Belief Model (HBM). Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 220 respondents. Two hundred women responded to the questionnaire, and nine media practitioners, six doctors and five breast cancer patients were interviewed. The data were analyzed using frequency distribution and simple percentages. Findings revealed that the awareness created by the media was inadequate and this may have contributed to the poor outcome of breast cancer prevention. There was no relationship between the breast cancer media awareness campaigns and the attitude of the women carrying out media instructions, because of the lack of information about the severity of the disease. The increase in the morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer can be attributed to inadequate information and the poor attitudes towards their health displayed by the women.

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Key words: awareness, breast cancer, media, poor attitude, women.

Breast cancer is a major source of public health concern all over the world. It is one of the major causes of deaths among women globally with over 458,000 annual deaths and about 4.4 million women living with the disease (Bray, McCarron, and Parkin, 2004; Dumitrescu & Cotarla 2004). In Nigeria, about 10,000 cancer deaths are recorded annually while 250,000 new cases are recorded yearly (WHO, 2013). A single hospital incidence in one of the main teaching hospitals in Nigeria revealed an average annual incidence of 158 over a period of five years with a progressive increase in incidence from 103 patients to 181 patients per year from 2011 to 2015 (Medical Statistics Unit, UCH, 2016).

Breast cancer has been reported to claim over one million lives annually most particularly in industrialized nations (Adetifa and Ojikutu, 2009). The World Health Organization (2006, cited by Adetifa and Ojikutu, 2009) claims that breast cancer has the highest rates in the Netherlands, Canada, France, the United States of America, Italy, Australia and Germany while in Northern Africa and Eastern Asia death rates of 76 out of 100,000 females would occur in 2020.

The life-time risks of breast cancer have almost tripled in the last 50 years with one in 20 women having it in 1960 and one in every seven women having it in 1980. Many factors have been identified which are considered to be of high significance, including genetics, lifestyle, dietary choices, the consumption of alcohol, obesity, lack of exercise, consuming food high in saturated fats, eating refined carbohydrates and red meat (especially when processed), a low fiber diet, having the first

child after the age of 30 – 35 years (Igbene, 2018) and environmental factors such as radiation, herbicides, xenoestrogen, pesticides, exposure to smoke, and dense breast tissue hormonal displacement (Uwandu, 2017). In addition, the early onset of menstrual periods before the age of 12 years old or reaching menopause after the age 55 years old have both been associated with risks of developing breast cancer, as has birth control pills (Fasoranti, 2018). However, the lack of early detection and inadequate diagnosis in underdeveloped countries may have resulted in the low survival rates of breast cancer patients (Nwanerri, Osuala, Okpala, Emesowum & Iheanacho, 2017).

Oluwatosin (2012) observed that the late presentation of breast cancer is the result of poor exposure of women to adequate knowledge of the disease. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa also revealed inadequate knowledge about the disease and the delay in women's interpretations of bodily changes (Tetteh and Faulkner, 2016; Moodley, Cairncross, Naiker, Momberg, 2016).

The mass media is an effective platform for disseminating health information to the general public mostly about cancers and other health-related issues. It is seen to discharge its roles in disseminating health information through campaign messages which help members of the public to modify or change their behavior towards their health.

Breast cancer awareness can be described as the efforts made to enlighten or educate the public on the prevention, symptoms and signs of breast cancer, how to conduct self-breast examinations and what the treatment of the disease entails. It provides adequate knowledge that helps in early detection of breast cancer and prompt treatment in order to reduce the high morbidity and mortality rates that are associated with the disease. Media messages are designed by health communicators to promote a particular behavior (usually positive) particularly when the society's health is under threat. Messages are created to raise awareness of prevention, treatment, survival and ultimately to produce behavioral change.

The campaign messages for breast cancer are intended to reach target audiences by capitalizing on the advantages and peculiarities of

each of the various mass media channels (television, radio, newspaper, internet, etc.) to create the desired awareness. In Nigeria, the strategies for creating awareness and prevention of breast cancer have been borne by governmental and non-governmental organizations. The breast cancer awareness campaigners in Nigeria are composed of: the mass media, the Federal Ministries of Health and Information (and some other parastatals of the government at all levels), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Education-Based Organizations (EBOs), parents, teachers and other sundry bodies. These organizations are involved in breast cancer awareness and support by providing education to the public and funding for research and treatment of the disease. Organizations use various ways to create and sustain their campaigns, which are often through pamphlets, handbills, posters, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, radio jingles, television shows, talk-show programs, etc.

Most campaigns are delivered by community health workers and via radio communication because of its wide reach. Other means adopted are door-to-door campaigns, musical road side shows (Campbell, et al. 2007) and dramas. These efforts are put in place to ensure the adequate circulation of information about the disease to vast numbers of people, including literates and illiterates.

New media is a veritable source of information globally, making information and advice about breast cancer and other diseases easily accessible. Awareness of breast cancer is much improved by new media because it possesses the advantages of portability and affordability that are similar to radio; however, a disadvantage is that new media messages are limited in use because they tend to be accessed by educated people.

A small set of research studies has investigated women's relative exposure to breast cancer messages at one point or the other in their lifetimes. The studies have revealed that in Nigeria, knowledge, attitudes and practices about cancer of the breast have been relatively low (Okobia, Bunker, Okonofua & Osime, 2006; Osime, Okojie, Aigbekaen and Aigbekaen, 2008; Azubuike & Okwuokei, 2013).

In creating further awareness of breast cancer, a breast cancer awareness month was established in October in Nigeria and it is marked every year to increase attention and support for the awareness, early detection, treatment and palliative care of breast cancer (WHO, 2016). As part of the on-going awareness program, the World Health Organization promotes comprehensive breast cancer programs as part of national cancer control plans by placing more emphasis on early detection strategies which include efforts to encourage women to pay closer attention to the early signs and symptoms of breast cancer. Women are also encouraged to participate and observe screening by clinical breast examinations in demonstration areas (WHO, 2016). Part of the media's responsibility is to draw attention to the awareness activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations, who aim to reach the public and to encourage them to consume their media content.

The frequent media awareness campaigns about breast cancer might lead to assumptions that there has been an appreciable behavioral change towards the disease; however, many patients still present late to the hospital after the breast cancer has reached the advanced stages and as a result, little or no benefit can be derived from therapy (Okobia et al. 2006). It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the factors responsible for the continual increase in morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer, despite the media efforts to change behaviors through awareness campaigns.

This study is based on the Health Belief Model (HBM), which includes the variables of susceptibility, severity, benefits costs, cues to action and self-efficacy. The model assumes that individuals will take preventive actions when they are susceptible to the disease and acknowledge that the consequences of failing to do so will be severe. It is believed that taking preventive actions will be beneficial in reducing the threat of the disease after being exposed to media awareness campaigns. What is more, the campaigns' perceived benefits of prevention will be sufficient to overcome barriers, such as cost or the inconvenience of undertaking the actions (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). The model presupposes that with proper awareness, an individual is able to assess the seriousness of the condition and its potential consequences

and these factors prompt action. Self-efficacy, advocated by the HMB model, assumes that individuals will self-assess and successfully adopt the advocated behavior by engaging in breast self-examination (BSE) and responding to cues to action, and by taking the necessary actions when there are indications of the signs and symptoms of breast cancer. The HBM model has proven fruitful in understanding the performance of breast self-examination in young women (Umeh and Jones, 2010). Low perceived barriers, low perceived severity and high perceived benefits are predictive of (BSE) performance. By contrast, high perceived severity, high perceived risks, low perceived benefits and low perceived susceptibility are predictive of non-compliance.

The study was conducted in the Ibadan Metropolis area of Nigeria. The target population for the study was women, who have at one time or the other, heard about breast cancer. The sampling technique adopted for the study was the purposive sampling technique because the study dealt with women who have heard about breast cancer messages, women who were undergoing treatment for breast cancer and doctors who were taking care of these patients. A total of 220 respondents comprising 200 women, nine practitioners from the print and electronic media, six doctors and five breast cancer patients were studied. Two hundred women responded to a self-administered questionnaire, whereas nine media practitioners, six doctors and five breast cancer patients were interviewed using an in-depth interview guide. The self-administered questionnaire consisted of questions on media awareness and breast cancer outcomes, the attitudes of women towards breast cancer, the relationship between media content and attitudes of women towards breast cancer and suggestions for making media campaigns more effective. Of the nine media practitioners, three program directors each from the radio and television stations (electronic media) and three editors from the print media were interviewed to suggest ways of improving media awareness of breast cancer. Ethical approval was obtained from the joint University of Ibadan/University College Hospital (UI/UCH) ethical review committee. Both qualitative and quantitative data analytical techniques were adopted. For qualitative data, the responses from the interview were transcribed and analyzed,

whereas frequency distribution and simple percentages were adopted for analysis of the quantitative data.

The responses of the 200 women to the self-administered questionnaire revealed that about 88% of respondents believed that there had been a creation of media awareness on breast cancer to a great extent, 72.5% of respondents believed that there was not enough media awareness and 54.5% of the respondents thought that the media awareness had helped a lot in reducing the morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer (Table 1).
Thirty per cent (60) of the respondents were of the opinion that media awareness is inadequate and 60% (120) of them believed that the nonchalant attitude of women could be the major factor responsible for the increase in the mortality rates of breast cancer (Table 2).

About 74.5% of the respondents checked their breasts, out of which half of them 37.5% checked their breasts regularly. However, 12% (24) of the women surveyed did not do anything or were afraid of checking their breasts (Table 3). Various suggestions were made by the respondents towards reducing the morbidity and mortality rates associated with breast cancer and these ranged from demonstrations of BSE during health talks on breast cancer by 68% (155) of the respondents, grass roots mobilization 52.6% (120), door to door campaigns 41.7% (95) and conducting health seminars in local languages by 39.5% (90). Only 29.4% (67) of the respondents suggested the use of social media. (Table 4). They recommended that more strategies to combat the disease be implemented by making use of activities that are of paramount importance or interest to the members of the public, such as, campaign rallies in religious houses and market places 73.7% (168) and free concerts and shows 43.9% (100) to improve the reach of the health education campaigns (Table 4).

The majority (88%) of the respondents believed that breast cancer media awareness campaigns have resulted in the reduction in the morbidity and mortality rates associated with the disease, which suggests that there has been significant awareness created by the media in order to sensitize women to the dangers of breast cancer and to show them how it can be ultimately prevented. However, awareness is not

enough to bring about change because even though the women believed the media messages are working, the doctors participating in the study, suggested otherwise. Of the patients interviewed, 50% of them believed that media awareness has not been enough to reduce the number of breast cancer patients and the management of outcomes because they did not actually know what to look for and how to effectively carry out the breast self-examinations. All six of the doctors interviewed, believed that the awareness created by the media is not enough. They advocated for more awareness at an intense level so that information received would prompt the women into action, and to make breast self-care part of their daily routine. In addition, the doctors believed that the awareness has not helped to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer.

An unpublished study of the role of radio in the creation of awareness of breast cancer, found that breast cancer messages are on some electronic media, but the sessions of each of these breast cancer campaigns are considered too short to effectively sensitize women (Osemeke, 2011). Women are easily exposed to messages through their media preferences with respect to electronic media. Audience literacy levels, their socio-economic status and their socio-psychological disposition are some of the factors responsible for their electronic media preferences. Media preferences of health messages on radio are more common than on television (Okobia et al, 2006). However, when health messages broadcast on radio are combined with other mass media in developing countries, they tend to be more effective (Russell, Monahan, Wagle & Champion, 2007) because radio transcends boundaries, illiteracy, and economic meltdown as it is in Nigeria (Anyaegbudike, 2005).

Although, 30% of the respondents were of the opinion that media awareness is inadequate, about 60% believed that the nonchalant attitude of women could be the major factor responsible for the increase in the mortality rates of breast cancer. The implication of this is that women have poor attitudes about their health and about the early detection of breast cancer. Therefore, adequate encouragement needs to be given to women to develop a positive attitude towards breast cancer, both by the media and women's significant others. Such a strategy will

motivate women to examine themselves and to go for routine screening for breast cancer, which will result in early detection and reduce the attendant morbidity and mortality rates of the disease.

The responses from the interviews also confirmed the findings above. All of the breast cancer patients confirmed that it is as a result of a nonchalant attitude of women towards prevention and the early detection of breast cancer that makes the morbidity and mortality rates of the disease so high. Two patients believed that inadequate media awereness may be a contributing factor and the doctors believed that the reasons responsible for the very high morbidity and mortality rates of breast cancer can be attributed to inadequate media awareness, individual nonchalant attitudes, not getting enough support from family members, financial constraints and fear of the unknown. Thus, the outcome of the management of breast cancer may not improve unless attention is paid to all of these factors. The doctors also pointed out that much of the responsibility lies with the women themselves because they need to be vigilant about performing breast self-examinations. Breast cancer awareness is expected to positively influence the attitude of women towards their health, as awareness improves early detection of the disease by educating women about how to carry out BSE and go for routine screening tests like mammograms (Anderson, 2008; Bray, MacCarron & Parkin 2004; Thomas et al., 2002). However, a situation where the messages are short in duration and are not frequent or are limited to the print media (only accessible to educated women) may not achieve the desired result of positively influencing attitudes (Okeke, 2018).

The inadequate or lack of a sustained set of media campaigns to generate sufficient repetitive awareness of breast cancer may explain the behavioral attitude of the women. Therefore, no amount of sustained media campaigning will stimulate them to develop positive attitudes towards their health. In response to what action is being carried out after viewing, reading or hearing media messages, two of the breast cancer patients claimed that they always check their breasts regularly, whereas three patients claimed they seldom check their breasts. The doctors, however, believed that some women often carry out media instructions, although some of them check their breasts for some time and then stop,

the majority do not check their breasts at all. This has meant that the early detection of breast cancer is in decline even though awareness has been created. In other words, there is no relationship between media content and performance by women because some women who adhered to the media instructions, and stopped after a while and the majority disregarded the instruction.

Various suggestions were made by the respondents about how to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates associated with breast cancer. These suggestions included demonstrations of BSE during health talks on breast cancer, grass roots mobilization, door-to-door campaigns, conducting health seminars in local languages and the use of social media. The implication is that for effective coverage during breast cancer awareness campaigns, efforts should be concentrated more on the media channels that are most accessible and affordable to the members of the public, if the desired reduction in the incidence and mortality associated with breast cancer are to be reduced to the barest minimum. They also suggested more strategies to combat the menace of breast cancer by making use of activities that are of paramount importance or interest to the members of the public, such as mounting campaign rallies in religious houses and market places, as well as, free concerts and shows to improve the reach of the health education campaigns. The suggestions made by media practitioners were similar to the suggestions made by the women surveyed, which emphasizes the importance of the need to reach as many women as possible in breast cancer awareness campaigning, if the prevalence of breast cancer is to be effectively reduced.

In the opinion of the doctors, awareness creation should not be limited to the media or government alone; everybody must be involved in the campaign. In other words, awareness creation of breast cancer should be a collective responsibility where the husband is seen to encourage his wife to go for a mammogram and regular medical check-ups or to carry out breast self-examinations and have breast biopsies. The doctors believed that when a woman gets the support of her husband, she will detect the cancer very early and will be encouraged to take better care of her health. She'll engage in behaviors that are contrary to the behaviors of many women who present their health issue

too late and when medical intervention will not help them. In other words, late diagnosis could be avoided if women have sufficient family support. Another possible solution suggested by the doctors, was for the government to intervene by making it compulsory for every woman to undergo periodic breast screening. Other suggestions included the use of programs on electronic media designed to address specific areas of breast cancer such as breast cancer screening, early detection through BSE and actions that can be taken if a woman suspects she might have a problem. The timing of the campaigns and awareness programs is important, because they need to be aired as primetime programs. In the case of print media, efforts should be made to ensure that critical information is presented in an understandable format that will enhance proper and adequate comprehension of the messages. For example, a lucid presentation of BSE will improve the attitude of women towards breast cancer. The use of alternative information channels in the form of new media and community media can also improve awareness (Okorie, 2013).

The findings of this study validate the Health Belief Model in which, it is only through adequate information about the vulnerability of having breast cancer and how devastating its consequences can be (seriousness of the disease), that women will be conscious about their health and engage in the recommended behaviors. The study established that despite media campaigns about breast cancer, most women do not perform the recommended action and the findings have shown that media awareness of breast cancer is not enough, hence the poor participation in the desired behavior which is increasing breast cancer cases and mortality rates. The study suggests that prevention can only be achieved if increased media awareness forms part of the major policy trust of the government at the grass roots level, which will enable women to be more alert about their health. Family support was also seen to be vital since family members can be a source of encouragement for women to modify their behavior by responding positively to the health education campaigns.

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Table 1: Respondents' responses on the adequacy of breast cancer awareness by the media

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The creation of awareness by the media is to a great extent	Yes	176	88.0
	No	24	12.0
The awareness created is enough	Yes	55	27.5
	No	145	72.5
Awareness has helped a lot in reducing the rate of breast cancer patients	Yes	109	54.5
	No	91	45.5

Table 2: Factors responsible for the increase incidence of breast cancer

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate media awareness	60	30.0
Individual nonchalant attitude	120	60.0
Not getting enough cooperation from the significant others around	15	7.5
All of the above	5	2.5

Table 3: Attitude of women to messages against breast cancer by the media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I do not do anything	24	12.0
I check my breasts sometimes and stop	74	37.0
I check my breasts regularly	75	37.5
I am always afraid	24	12.0
I have not heard any messages	3	1.5

Table 4: Respondents' suggestions for a more effective media campaign on breast cancer

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What can be done to make	Demonstration of BSE	155	68.0
breast cancer awareness media during health talks campaigns more effective?	Creating no bra days	47	20.6
	Seminars in local languages	90	39.5
	Door to door campaigns	95	41.7
	Grass roots and rural mobilization	120	52.6
	Use of social media	67	29.4
	Creating rallies with dancing and drumming	45	19.7
	Hospital users must abide by instructions	89	39.0
Awareness has helped a lot in reducing the rate of breast cancer patients	Yes	109	54.5
Media strategies	Financial support for victims	82	36.0
to help reduce the continual increase in breast cancer patients	Campaign rallies by religious in market place	168	73.7
	More campaigns on social media	56	24.6
	More distribution of door to door flyers	87	38.2
	Free concerts and show rallies	100	43.9
	More campaigns in local languages	89	39.0

BSE - Breast self-examination

Newspaper Coverage of Maternal and Child Healthcare Issues in Nigeria.

By Raheemat Adeniran, Olujimi Kayode & Lai Oso

Abstract

Maternal and Child Healthcare (MCH) is critical to the development of any nation prompting its inclusion in the erstwhile Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Improving MCH often requires collaborative efforts of varied stakeholders, including the press. This study thus examines newspaper coverage of MCH-related issues in Nigeria to gauge the contribution of the press towards promoting improved MCH. Premised on development media theory, the study adopts the content analysis method to analyze four purposively sampled newspapers over a twelve-month period. The study finds that the majority of published MCH issues lacked the required depth to adequately drive development of MCH in Nigeria. The paper thus calls for better coverage of MCH and other health-related issues with the relevant context necessary to drive development of healthcare in the country.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Child Health, Maternal Health, Newspapers, MDGs, SDGs

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Introduction

The health needs of women and children are paramount to the sustenance of a stable and progressive society, and remain a key indicator of a country's development level. Countries around the world have shown renewed interest in stopping avoidable deaths of women and children. The commitment of the nations of the world was articulated in goals designed to improve maternal and child health care in the erstwhile United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and subsequent retention in the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Specifically, Goal 4 and Goal 5 of the MDGs address the issue of maternal and child healthcare (MCH). To achieve Goal 4 of reducing child mortality, countries around the world were expected to "reduce by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate". There was remarkable progress over the MDG years even though the set target was unmet by the end of the 2015 deadline. According to the United Nations 2015 MDG report, the global under-five mortality rate declined by more than half between 1990 and 2015, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births. All identified regions recorded a decrease of at least 50 per cent, except Oceania, which recorded only 31 per cent during the 25-year target period. Despite the general decline across most regions, wide disparity persisted between the child mortality rate of developed countries and of developing countries. For instance, "children in sub-Saharan Africa were more than 15 times more likely to die before the age of five than children in developed regions"

(WHO, 2014). Also, "about half of under-five deaths occurred in only five countries: China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Nigeria and Pakistan" with India (21%) and Nigeria (13%) together accounting for more than a third of all under-five deaths (WHO, 2014).

Two distinct targets were set for Goal 5 to improve maternal health. Countries were expected to "reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio" and "achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health". Despite progress made over the MDGs years, the goals were unmet in several countries around the world. Globally, the maternal mortality rate dropped by 45 per cent between 1990 and 2013 from 380 maternal deaths per 100,000 births to 210, with the worst hit regions of Southern Asian and sub-Saharan Africa making significantly higher progress than the world average (United Nations, 2015). Despite this progress, hundreds of women, mostly in developing countries, continue to die during pregnancy or from childbirth-related complications on a daily basis. Most of these deaths were in the developing regions, where the maternal mortality ratio is about 14 times higher than in the developed regions" (United Nations, 2015). The sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia regions were most affected with the two regions accounting for 86 per cent of the estimated 289,000 maternal deaths recorded in 2013 alone.

With the expiration of the 2015 deadline, there were concerns of possible neglect or a relaxation of a commitment towards these needs by countries yet to meet the specific targets. In order to sustain and improve upon efforts being made beyond 2015, the United Nations, in its 2015 General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to drive development for another 15 years with renewed commitment towards improving the conditions of people around the world. Maternal and child healthcare successfully made the list of the newly adopted goals.

The United Nations (n.d.) notes that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

seek to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and respond to new challenges…The (set) goals and targets integrate economic, social and environmental aspects, and recognize their inter-linkages in achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions

The 17 specific goals of the SDG are multifaceted, addressing diverse fields of human endeavours, to promote sustainable development within the society. Individual countries were encouraged to set their own targets based on their prevailing national circumstances.

Africa remains a major contributor to global maternal and child mortalities. Nigeria, as the most populous nation in the region, is a leading contributor, with the dominant share of total mortalities in the region. The state of maternal and child healthcare (MCH) in the country is particularly worrisome and should be of major concern to all stakeholders. The situation of mothers giving birth in Nigeria is critical with many lives being lost in the process of fulfilling their natural reproductive functions within the society. Maternal mortality rate (MMR) is rather high at 576/100,000 live births, with one in 30 women at risk, based on the *Nigeria Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2013* estimates (National Population Commission & IFC International, 2014). The NDHS 2018 report, containing updated data, is expected to be released in 2019.

Available data suggests that 9.2 million pregnancies occur annually in Nigeria, 40,000 of which result in maternal deaths, making the country the second largest contributor to global maternal mortalities after India with 109 daily maternal deaths (Wekesah & Izugbara, 2017). Another estimate by Save the Children (2016) suggests that 58,000 maternal deaths might have occurred in Nigeria in 2015. Apart from the mortalities, several others suffer one form of morbidity or other, such as Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF). Wekesah and Izugbara (2017) report that for every maternal death recorded in the country, 30 to 50 others suffer lifelong morbidities.

Nigeria is also a major contributor to under-five and neonatal mortality, being among 10 countries with the highest under-five and neonatal mortality (Save the Children, 2016). Save the Children, in its 14th annual State of the World's Mothers, 2013 report, notes that nearly three million babies die within the first month of life, most from preventable causes. More than a third of these babies die on their first day of life, making the birth day the riskiest day for newborns and mothers almost everywhere. Nigeria has the second highest burden with nearly 90,000 (89,700) first-day deaths, accounting for nine per cent of the global total. Newborn deaths in Nigeria amount to 254,100; more than one-third of the 755,700 under-five deaths occurring in the country annually (Save the Children, 2013). The high percentage of newborn deaths among the under-fives reflects the importance of enhanced MCH around the time of delivery, up until 24 hours thereafter. Save the Children decries the slow pace in reducing neonatal and maternal deaths globally, noting that the situation "highlights a continued neglect of 24-hour care before, during and immediately after birth, and the poor-quality care experienced by many of the poorest and most disadvantaged populations" (2016, p. v).

Sub-Saharan Africa may continue to be a flashpoint for under-five deaths for years to come if current efforts are not sustained and even accelerated. This is particularly so with the regions' potential for an increase in live births and the under-five population over the decades to come. "This means that the number of under-five deaths will increase unless progress in reducing the under-five mortality rate is enough to outpace population growth" (MDG Report, 2015). The MDG report notes that focusing on newborns is critical to further accelerating progress in child survival. Almost half of all under-five deaths occur within the neonatal period and progress has been slow in curbing the trend.

The mass media can help to improve MCH. It is essential to explore its potential to reach a large audience and disseminate vital life-

saving messages required to empower the public to be proactive when the need arises. The mass media could play an advocacy role, track progress towards improving MCH and meet relevant SDG targets. The media could set an agenda to attain these goals by advocating for appropriate policy formulation, and drawing public attention and that of relevant authorities, to the worrisome state of healthcare and tracking developments in MCH across the country. The media in many developing countries around the world are indeed vested in the role of nation building and are expected to act as development agents; contrary to expectations in developed countries where the media are expected to play the watchdog role while being objective in their reports (Dare, 2000). Hence, the strategic use of the media in promoting developmental goals such as improved healthcare cannot be overemphasized.

Studies (e.g. Dare, 2000; De Jesus, 2013) have found that the mass media are effective tools for disseminating health messages, though they often require integration with other forms of communication media to achieve the desired attitudinal change. The continuous focus on an issue in the mass media promotes a media agenda-setting function. It raises the issue to some level of importance, with the possibility of drawing attention of all stakeholders which could lead to a concerted effort towards attaining the desired developmental goal. Premised on the development media theory, this study examines the extent to which mainstream newspapers in the country cover MCH-related issues. It examines coverage of MCH issues through the level of attention, focus, and prominence accorded such issues in Nigerian newspapers over a 12-month sample period from July 2015 to June 2016.

Theoretical Framework

The development media theory provides the theoretical context for this study. McQuail's (1983, p. 95) 'enumerated principles of the development media' theory has been criticized by scholars (e.g. Folarin,

2005; Musa, 1997) for various inaccuracies – which has hindered its adoption by journalists. Folarin, (2005, pp 47-48) thus modified each principle as follows:

1.The media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy (or in line with national ideology), without prejudice to their traditional functions of information, education, and entertainment of the public.

2.The Media should accept and help to carry out the special development tasks of national integration, socio-economic modernization, Literacy promotion, and cultural creativity.

3.(a) the "National" media should give priority to the national macro-culture in so far as this can be abstracted by the national milieu, then to regional cultures, all in descending order of priority.

(b) "Regional" media are, of course, normally expected to accord priority to regional cultures (and languages), while

(c) "Local" media give priority to local culture(s) and language(s).

4.Media should carefully identify and give due attention in their foreign news to links with other countries with similar socio-cultural orientations and/or political and economic aspirations.

5.In order to safeguard the ideals of press freedom, journalists and other media workers should, at all times, faithfully fulfil their obligations and sternly defend their rights in the course of their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

6.The state with its systems has a duty to see to it that media or journalists presumed to have contravened any national law(s) in the course of their information gathering and dissemination tasks, can conveniently face prosecution, expecting a fair and speedy trial.

The development media theory modified by Folarin (2005) recognises the critical role of the press in promoting set development goals. Hence, its adoption for this study provides a framework to gauge the role of the media in promoting set goals on MCH in Nigeria. Its applicability to this study is, however, based on four of the principles–

tenets 1, 3, 4, and 5 – considered relevant for evaluation. The study thus examined how newspapers fared in promoting the development of MCH in the country, by evaluating their adherence to the modified postulations of the development media theory.

Research Questions

1.What is the main focus of MCH-related issues reported in Nigerian newspapers?
2.What level of prominence is accorded to MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers?
3.What are the dominant forms of coverage for MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers?
4.What region of the country dominates coverage of MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers?

Method

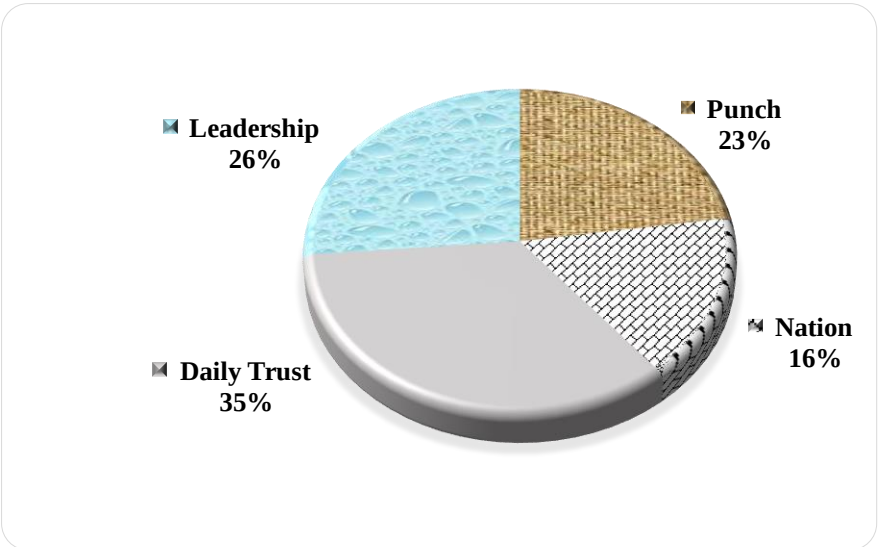
This study adopts the content analysis research method often used to "describe communication content" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 150) and "enumerate the details of communication – their content, their function, their form or structure" (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 238). The content analysis was conducted on print editions of four purposively sampled national newspapers in Nigeria – *Punch, The Nation, Daily Trust* and *Leadership* – published over a twelve-month period from July 2015 to June 2016. The newspapers were sampled for their wide circulation and geographical location. *Punch* and *The Nation* are published in Lagos, Nigeria's Southwest region and were sampled to represent newspapers published in the south where MCH indices are relatively better. *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* both published in Abuja, Nigeria's capital and North Central region, were sampled to represent newspapers published in the north with very poor MCH indices. A total of 366 editions were sampled from each of the sampled newspapers. All 366 editions each of *Punch, The Nation,* and *Daily Trust* were located

and analyzed in the study, however, 34 editions were missing for the *Leadership* leaving 332 editions available for analysis. The total of 1,430 newspaper editions were subsequently examined for published MCH-related items, which formed the units of analyses, resulting in analysis of 1,235 items published on varied MCH-related issues. A coding scheme was developed as a research instrument with eight content categories/variables to elicit data for the study. Krippendorff's alpha (KALPHA) was used to calculate inter-coder reliability for each of the variables measured (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007), resulting in varied KALPHA values ranging from .725 to 1.00. The resultant KALPHA values for each of the variables examined were satisfactory to the researchers on the basis of perceived complexities in identifying specific options for each variable.

Data Analysis

The results from this study present the percentage distribution of observed occurrences from each of the content categories examined in the study. The data are presented for each of the sampled newspapers, as well as the total from the 1,235 newspaper items analyzed in the study.

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of analyzed MCH-related items



Source: Field data, 2017

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the analyzed MCH-related items published in the sampled newspapers. The location of the newspapers appears to have influenced the frequency of coverage as the Abuja-based newspapers covered the issues more than their Lagos counterparts. The *Daily Trust*, an Abuja-based newspaper has the highest percentage (35%, n=427) of analyzed items in the study. It more than doubles related items published in one of the Lagos-based newspapers, *The Nation*, which published the least amount of content during the study period (16%, n=203). About 40 per cent (39%, n=483) of the total analyzed MCH-related items were published by the southern (Lagos) based newspapers while the northern (Abuja) based newspapers have over 60 per cent (61%, n=752) share of the total.

Table 1: Datelines of analyzed MCH-related newspaper items

Dateline of Stories	Newspapers (Percentage)				TOTAL
	Punch	**Nation**	**Daily Trust**	**Leadership**	
Not Specified/ Not Applicable	40.7	21.7	12.9	20.8	22.7
North Central	4.6	8.9	27.9	21.8	17.9
Beyond Africa	18.9	8.4	18.5	19.4	17.2
Southwest	22.5	36.9	5.9	6.5	14.9
Northwest	2.9	6.9	18.5	15.4	12.2
Across Nigeria	2.5	5.9	4.2	6.5	4.7
Northeast	1.8	3.4	6.3	3.1	4.0
South-south	1.4	5.4	1.6	3.1	2.6
Southeast	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.4
Africa	1.8	0.0	1.9	1.2	1.4
Total (n)	**100% (280)**	**100% (203)**	**100% (427)**	**100% (325)**	**100% (1235)**

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 1 shows the datelines of the MCH-related items published by the sampled newspapers. Dateline was missing in the highest percentage of published MCH-related items and could not be determined from available information in-text. About one-fifth (22.7%, n=281) of the analyzed 1,235 content were without identifiable datelines. *Punch* is a major contributor as roughly two in five of its published 280 items (40.7%, n=114) were without datelines.

The North Central region had the highest coverage with about 18 per cent (17.9%, n=221), closely followed by regions beyond Africa (17.2%, n=212). Two of the sampled newspapers, the *Daily Trust* and *Leadership*, with highest coverage of the MCH-related issues over the sample period, are published in Abuja, situated within the North Central region. The southwest, where the other two sampled newspapers are published, also had a fair coverage with almost 15 per cent (14.9%, n=184). Apparently, both the Abuja-based newspapers and Lagos-based newspapers concentrated their coverage of MCH-related issues

within their immediate geographical regions. Other African countries had the least coverage with less than two per cent (1.4%, n=17).

Apart from focusing on their immediate regions in covering MCH-related issues, further analysis of some of the stories shows a tendency to present issues in ways that best attract the attention of readers within the immediate regions of the newspapers. An example was a story on the flag-off of a family planning campaign by a non-governmental organization involving selected celebrities in the Nigerian entertainment industry as ambassadors. The story was titled "NURHI[1] canvasses modern family planning" in *Punch*. The *Daily Trust*, however, titled its own version of the story "Ali Nuhu, Tiwa Savage, others campaign for family planning".

The *Daily Trust* thus reflected its northern appeal, by choosing to emphasize the role of Ali Nuhu in the story headline. Ali Nuhu, the first ambassador leading the headline, was absent at the event, yet his involvement was played up in the story probably due to his popularity in the north. Ali Nuhu is noted as a leading actor in Hausa movies which are dominant in the northern region of the country. Despite the catchy headline, the first paragraph of the story did not include Nuhu. The *Daily Trust* could have titled the story thus, 'Paul Okoye, Tiwa Savage, others campaign for family planning' since the duo artistes composed and produced a song for family planning and were selected as national ambassadors. Nuhu and others were selected as regional ambassadors for their respective regions where they most hold sway.

Table 2: MCH-related issues covered in analyzed items

[1]The Nigerian Urban Reproductive Health Initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Maternal & Child Health Issue	Newspapers (Percentage)				TOTAL
	Punch	Nation	D. Trust	Leadership	
Maternal & Child Mortality	10.6	11.0	11.1	15.5	12.1
Child Morbidity	12.5	11.0	11.9	11.8	11.9
Pregnancy/ Antenatal	8.4	9.4	10.6	12.5	10.4
Perinatal Care/ Delivery / Birth	10.6	15.2	8.9	7.2	9.9
Maternal Morbidity	11.0	10.5	8.7	8.9	9.6
Immunisation	7.0	1.0	9.9	11.8	8.3
Child Nutrition	4.0	5.8	9.4	8.6	7.3
Birth Defects	4.4	9.4	6.8	3.7	5.7
Family Planning / Contraception	5.9	3.7	5.0	4.6	4.9
Post-natal Care	4.8	7.9	3.5	2.0	4.1
Breast feeding	6.5	4.7	2.7	2.6	3.9
Pre-conception	4.0	2.6	3.5	3.9	3.6
Child Care	5.5	2.1	3.2	2.6	3.4
Abortion	2.2	2.6	1.7	2.0	2.0
PMTCT	0.0	1.6	1.0	1.0	0.9
Maternal Nutrition	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8
Stillbirths	1.5	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.6
Others	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4
Other IYCF Practices	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.2
Total (n)	**100% (273)**	**100% (191)**	**100% (404)**	**100% (304)**	**100% (1172)**

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 2 shows specific MCH issues covered in the items analyzed across the four sampled newspapers. Issues focusing on maternal and child mortality were the most reported accounting for about one in eight (12.1%, n= 142). This was closely followed by child morbidity, and pregnancy which were the second and third most

reported issues. Among the least reported issues were Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practices (0.2%, n= 2), Stillbirths (0.6%, n=7), Maternal Nutrition (0.8%, n=9), and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (0.9%, n=10); each of which accounted for less than one per cent of the total items analyzed in the study.

All the sampled newspapers focused on similar issues and also neglected similar ones in their coverage of MCH issues over the sample period; though with slight variations. In *Punch*, the most covered issues were on child morbidity accounting for one in eight (12.5%, n=34) coverage, maternal morbidity with 11 per cent (n=30) coverage, and maternal and child mortality, together with issues surrounding delivery or giving birth each accounting for 10.6 per cent (n=29) of the newspaper's total (n=273). Issues on delivery which was third in *Punch*, was the most reported issue in *The Nation* (15.2%, n=29); while child morbidity, which leads in *Punch*, was its second most reported issue along with maternal and child mortality with each accounting for 11 per cent coverage (n=21) in the newspaper. Child morbidity, and maternal and child mortality also leads the *Daily Trust*'s coverage (n=404) with each accounting for about one-eighth of its coverage. The third highest reported issue in the *Daily Trust* was pregnancy (10.6%, n=43). In the *Leadership* (n=304), maternal and child mortality led the pack with over 15 per cent coverage (15.5%, n= 47), while pregnancy was the second most reported issue (12.5%, n= 38). Issues on immunization, and child morbidity were third with about 12 per cent (11.8%, n=36) coverage.

Across the sampled newspapers, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practices, and maternal nutrition were among the three least reported issues. *Punch* and *The Nation* did not publish any stories on IYCF practices while the *Daily Trust* and the *Leadership* each published one item over the sample period. Maternal nutrition-related stories were published thrice in the *Daily Trust* while they were published twice in other newspapers. Stillbirth-related stories were not

published in *The Nation* or *Leadership*. A rather surprising outcome was in *The Nation* which recorded immunization as its third least-reported issue with only one per cent coverage (n=2) even though the issue received substantial coverage in each of the other newspapers (*Punch*, 7%; *Daily Trust*, 9.9%; and *Leadership* 11.8%).

Table 3: Themes of analyzed MCH-related items

Themes of Stories	Newspapers (Percentage)				TOTAL
	Punch	Nation	D. Trust	Leadership	
Prevention / Best Practices	25.3	25.9	21.8	31.0	25.7
Risk / Poor Practices	17.5	8.5	16.6	17.7	15.7
Treatment / Solution	16.0	16.9	17.5	11.4	15.5
Statistics / Trend	4.5	4.2	9.7	5.7	6.6
Breakthrough / Achievements	4.8	4.8	6.9	7.9	6.4
MCH Rights, Policy & Law	4.5	10.6	5.7	5.7	6.2
Research Findings	6.7	1.1	6.6	5.7	5.5
Philanthropy	4.7	14.3	3.1	4.2	5.5
Cause	7.1	6.8	3.6	5.4	5.4
Funding / Investment	3.0	2.1	5.9	3.8	4.1
Malpractice	2.6	2.6	1.2	0.9	1.7
Symptoms / Detection	3.3	1.1	1.2	0.3	1.4
Others	0.0	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
Total (n)	**100% (269)**	**100% (189)**	**100% (422)**	**100% (316)**	**100% (1196)**

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 3 shows the theme or focus of the MCH-related items analyzed in the study. The table shows that one in four (25.7%, n=307) of the 1,196 analyzed items with valid entries, focused on prevention or

best practices mostly intended to prevent negative outcomes in varying aspects of MCH care. This was followed by issues linked to associated risks to MCH care, or poor practices that could lead to negative outcomes (15.7%, n=189), and those proffering treatments or solutions to identified challenging areas of MCH care (15.5%, n=185). The least reported theme was on symptoms, describing items focused solely on identifying specific MCH conditions. Symptoms and malpractice-related items each recorded less than two per cent coverage.

There exists a common trend in the themes of coverage across the sampled newspapers, with slight variations. All of the four sampled newspapers had prevention items as their most reported themes, ranging from 20 to over 30 per cent of the total coverage of each newspaper. Items on risks and treatments or solutions varied as the second and third reported themes across three of the sampled newspapers. *The Nation* was, however, different with treatment items accounting for about 17 per cent (16.9%, n=32) and philanthropy items involving appeals and donations accounting for over 14 per cent (14.3%, n=27) of the newspaper's total (n=189) coverage.

Symptoms and malpractice items were among the least covered themes across the four sampled newspapers. *The Nation* also shared items on research findings as its least reported theme, together with symptoms items. *Punch*, *The Nation*, and *Leadership* had items on funding and investments in MCH care among its least reported themes with three per cent (n=8), 2.1 per cent (n=4) and 3.8 per cent (n=12) coverage respectively of each newspaper's total. The *Daily Trust* had philanthropy items among its least reported stories contrary to the theme's high coverage in *The Nation*.

MCH issues rarely gained prominence during the period of study. The majority of the MCH-related items published by the sampled newspapers were published in the 'other' inside pages, as well as dedicated health pages of the newspapers. Only a minute percentage (2.8%, n=34) made the front pages of the newspapers. The least

placement was recorded for the back pages as only *Leadership* published two articles on its back page. Incidentally, all the sampled newspapers devoted their back pages mainly to writings by notable columnists, in addition to other items such as sports stories, cartoons, pictures, etc. None of the columns or other items however featured MCH-related issues over the sampled period except in the *Leadership*, where two of its guest columnists each wrote once on the increasing number of deaths among malnourished IDP children, following an alarm raised by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). All sampled newspapers, except *Punch*, published most of their MCH-related items in general inside pages, even though they all have established health sections. *Punch*, however, published three in five (59.7%, n=167) of its 280 MCH-related items in its health sections.

Data for the newspaper contents analyzed in the study are also cross-tabulated with their respective placements to examine the distribution of the analyzed items in specific pages of the sampled newspapers.

Table 4: Placement distribution of forms of analyzed MCH-related items

Newspaper Item	Page Placement of Stories (Percentage)					TOTAL
	Front	**Health**	**Editorial**	**Other Pages**	**Back**	
News	73.5	42.2	0	75.1	0	60.4

Features	26.5	34.2	0	17.9	0	24.2
Opinion / Column	0	9.9	22.8	5.0	100	7.3
Advice Column	0	11.1	0	0	0	4.5
Editorial	0	0	72.7	0	0	1.3
Others	0	2.6	0	0.3	0	1.2
Audience Feedback	0	0	0	1.6	0	0.9
Cartoon	0	0	4.5	0.1	0	0.2
Total (n)	**100.0% (34)**	**100% (495)**	**100% (22)**	**100% (682)**	**100% (2)**	**100% (1235)**

Table 4 shows the placement of the analyzed items in the sampled newspapers. News and features on MCH-related items were published only on the front, dedicated health pages and other inside pages of the sampled newspapers, with news stories dominating across board. About three out of five (73.5%, n=25) of the analysed 34 front-page stories were straight news, with others being features (26.5 %, n=9). Straight news stories accounted for roughly two out of five items (42.2%, n=209) of the 495 items analyzed in the dedicated health pages, with features occurring in about one-third (34.1%, n=169). Three-quarters of the 682 items analyzed on other inside pages were straight news (75.1%, n=512) while features accounted for less than one-fifth (17.9%, n=122). The health pages also featured opinion and column articles, and all the advice columns analysed in the study. Editorials and opinions dominated items analyzed in the editorial pages, in addition to one cartoon, which represented less than five per cent (4.5%). Other analyzed items in the other inside pages included opinions and column (5%, n=34), a cartoon, audience feedback (1.6%, n=11), among others (0.3%, n=2). Only column articles were analyzed from the back page of one of the sampled newspapers.

Apart from the items included for analysis in the study, photographs relating to MCH issues were sometimes published in

isolation without accompanying any story. Some of the published photographs appeared on the front pages of the newspapers. The cover pictures centered on media frenzied human interest stories (e.g. Ese Oruru[2] after her release from her alleged abductors) and personality stories e.g. Bill Gates and Aliko Dangote's meeting President Buhari and other government officials; or their visit to an environmental surveillance site in Nigeria; both part of their efforts towards combating maternal and child mortality. Other categories of photographs on the cover and inside pages included disease outbreaks e.g. pregnant women awaiting screening for the Zika virus at a health facility in Brazil and an infected baby, MCH interventions e.g. captured moments of excitement of a mother whose baby was being screened for malnutrition at an IDP camp, pregnant women carrying maternity kits presented to them by a government agency, and the administration of vaccines to children, etc. *Punch* newspaper appeared to have published more MCH-related photographs on its front page than any of the other sampled newspapers. *The Nation* had none published on its front page.

Table 5: Intent and tone of analyzed MCH-related items

	Tone of Stories			
Intent of Stories	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Neutral/ Mixed**	**TOTAL**
Information	69.7	76.6	22.1	58.1
Advocacy	17.1	12.0	29.0	19.1
Education	8.8	3.0	37.1	15.2

[2]Ese Oruru, 14, was allegedly abducted months earlier from her home town in Bayelsa and taken on a 1,020km journey to Kano. A media campaign led to her release but she was already five-months pregnant.

Information & Advocacy	2.7	4.8	5.2	4.0
Education & Advocacy	0.5	0.0	4.9	1.6
Information & Education	0.7	2.4	0.9	1.2
Entertainment	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.3
Sensational	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.3
Information, Education & Advocacy	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total (n)	**100% (554)**	**100% (333)**	**100% (348)**	**100% (1235)**

The study also identified the perceived function of each of the analyzed items. The perceived intent of the stories was cross-tabulated with the tone of coverage, to examine the distribution of varied tones in disseminating the intended messages with specific functions. The study found that the majority of the items focused on providing information and on positive projection of the issues.

Discussion

RQ1: Focus of MCH-related issues reported in Nigerian newspapers

The study found that newspapers focused on MCH outcomes – mortalities, morbidities, pregnancies and births. There was less emphasis on the underlying issues of nutrition, abortion and family planning, which often influence positive or negative outcomes in MCH. The sampled newspapers focused on providing information about positive developments and best practices in the sectors, over stories advocating improvement or educating the public on best practices to enhance positive outcomes in MCH. Issues related to prevention activities to reduce negative outcomes in MCH dominated coverage, and were mostly presented positively. The dominance of positive and

preventive information-based contents may be attributed to the greater dependence on planned activities around MCH in coverage of related issues.

The focus on providing information (as evidenced in this study) is no doubt a major pitfall in Nigerian newspapers' coverage of MCH issues. Wallack and Dorfman (1996) stress the importance of the media advocacy role in effective communication of public health issues noting that the media are expected to generate issues and set the agenda for discussions around public health issues with the aim of influencing policy decisions to promote desired policy change. In relation to studies that establish the importance of supporting laws to enhance health campaigns (e.g. Snyder & Hamilton, 2002), findings from this study show that Nigerian newspapers rarely focus on promulgating laws and policies around MCH; instead, contents focused on MCH rights, policy and laws received minimal coverage (Table 3).

Nigeria has an array of policies relating to MCH, such as the Integrated Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (IMNCH) Strategy, the National Child Health Policy, the National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Nigeria, the National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategy, and the National Strategic Plan of Action for Nutrition, among others. These policies were infrequently mentioned in the MCH-related items analyzed in the study. Findings from the study thus suggest that Nigerian newspapers seldom "promote public health goals by strategically applying pressure for policy change" as suggested by Wallack and Dorfman (1996).

RQ 2: Dominant forms of coverage of MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers

The study found dominant coverage of MCH-related issues as straight news stories, favored over investigative reports and other features, while editorials were seldom written. Findings from the study also suggested that an increased frequency of coverage of an issue may

not reflect the in-depth coverage necessary to drive development. This is because the newspaper with the least reported MCH-related stories might have performed better in providing detailed coverage to the issue. *The Nation*, which published the least number of MCH-related items, has the greatest percentage of features, more investigative reports, and better framing of the issues, necessary to stimulate readers' understanding, and attract the attention of concerned authorities.

The poor depth of coverage of MCH issues found in this study supports earlier findings, that health issues in the media are hardly reported in-depth, but given shallow coverage across various conventional media platforms (Laboli, Caselli, Filice, Russi, Belletti, 2010; Soola & Alawode, 2013; Wang & Gantz, 2010). The low depth of coverage may be related to the fact that most of the stories may have been written by general beat reporters from across the country since most were published in the general news pages of three of the sampled newspapers. The general reporters may not have been interested or well-grounded in the health issues they happened to be reporting on, hence their limited possibility for in-depth coverage of the health issues. Wilson, Robertson, McElduff, Jones and Henry (2010) have established that specialist health reporters are more likely to write superior-quality health stories than the general reporters and other identified groups. This study also confirms findings from an earlier study by Odoemelam, Okeibunor and Okorom (2015) on the limited use of editorials to push MCH issues. The sampled newspapers only published between three and six editorials each, despite the array of MCH-related issues begging for attention. The prevailing low depth of coverage impedes the potential of newspapers to effectively contribute to improving MCH. Shallow coverage of MCH issues, mostly as straight news reports, is unlikely to attract the attention of policymakers and the public to challenges bedevilling MCH to subsequently stimulate desired change. The limited use of editorials to push MCH issues by the sampled newspapers, also suggests poor disposition of newspaper editors to

MCH. Onwubiko (2017) has noted a general apathy of newspaper editors towards health issues, thus limiting in-depth coverage and prominent placement of health-related issues in newspapers and other news media.

RQ 3: Prominence accorded MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers

MCH-related issues tended to receive low coverage in the media. This study found that MCH might have attracted greater attention from the media as the issues gained fair coverage, in frequency terms, over the sample period. Although many of the sampled editions have no published MCH-related item; some included up to six items in one single edition. Since MCH is just an aspect of general healthcare, this suggests a high frequency of coverage among the sampled newspapers. Martinson and Hindman (2005) have described newspaper contents as "a reflection of organized activity within the community", with Tipton (1992, cited in Martinson & Hindman 2005) noting that public officials (and policymakers) tend to perceive regular news media coverage of an issue as an indication of renewed public interest in the issue**.** The increased coverage of MCH issues therefore has the potential to influence public perception of MCH as an important public health issue, thus attracting the attention of policymakers of the need to address pressing challenges in the sub-sector.

The considerable number of MCH-related items published by the sampled newspapers is, however, marred by poor placements and the low depth of coverage. The dominant placement of the MCH-related items in the inside pages suggests that MCH is rarely considered important or newsworthy enough by newspaper editors to warrant front-page placement. The lack of prominence in Nigerian newspapers' coverage of health issues is well established in past studies (e.g. Bello, 2015; Uwom &Oloyede, 2014). For instance, Bello (2015) notes a general perception among news workers that "health does not sell

newspapers in Nigeria, except when there is a national or international health outbreak".

There appears to be little prospect for better placement of health stories due to perceived poor dispositions of the public, government, and newspaper editors to health issues, as noted in previous studies (e.g. American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2008; Bello, 2015). Hence, newspaper front pages may continue to be disinterested in health-related stories except in times of major disease outbreaks leading to mass casualties, occasional involvement of prominent personalities, dramatic sensational human-interest stories, among a few others.

RQ 4: Dominating region of coverage of MCH-related issues in Nigerian newspapers

The study also found that locations tended to influence the frequency of coverage of health issues in Nigerian newspapers. Newspapers published in Lagos focused attention on MCH activities and occurrences in Lagos and its environs (Southwest region), and those published in Abuja concentrated their coverage on their immediate regions (North Central), with extension to other northern parts of the country. Bello (2015), and Soola and Alawode (2013) found similar trends in their studies on health coverage in Nigerian national newspapers, and in broadcast stations respectively. Findings from this study also showed that northern-based newspapers gave more coverage to MCH issues (Table 1), probably because of the poor MCH indices, and increased MCH interventions in the region. The high frequency of coverage recorded by the northern-based newspapers may, however, not be sufficient to drive development in the sector, as their coverage was dominated largely by straight news coverage of events. The southern-based newspapers performed better in this regard as they recorded greater percentage share of their stories as features. The high percentage of stories from beyond the African continent reflected the increasing

tendency for newspapers to rely on agency reports which is a disservice to coverage of health as such stories often lack context for proper understanding of issues.

Conclusion

This study examined coverage of maternal and child healthcare (MCH) issues in Nigerian newspapers and *found that the level of coverage accorded MCH issues may be insufficient in driving development of MCH in the country, as newspapers deviated from the tenets of development media theory* evaluated in this study. The evidenced lack of context, mostly occasioned by straight news coverage of activities around MCH, is a major pitfall. It limits people's understanding of the issues, and possibilities of influencing appropriate stakeholders in addressing pressing MCH-related issues.

Given the importance of MCH to the overall development of a nation, coupled with the need to end needless deaths and morbidities among women and children, there should be a greater commitment of newspapers and other media organizations towards promoting improved MCH in the country. Newspapers should therefore endeavour to increase the depth of coverage and the level of prominence accorded MCH and other health issues across the country, despite their prevailing challenges. The ability of newspapers claiming to be 'national', to truly cover all regions in the country (as evidence in this study suggests) it may be more economically viable for such newspapers to concentrate their efforts on specific regions or areas where they are most influential, rather than overstretching their limited resources to attempt to sustain their expected national outlook.

Limitations of the Study

The examination of coverage of MCH issues over a one-year period is possibly limited by the generalized findings of this study. The study period which falls around the end of the erstwhile MDG and the early period of the SDG could have influenced the media coverage of

the issues in various ways. A longitudinal study over a longer period might have provided a more comprehensive representation of trends in the newspapers' coverage of MCH-related issues in Nigeria. The study was also limited to an analysis of published MCH-related items in Nigerian newspapers. Further studies are required to examine factors driving similar patterns of coverage of health issues evident in this study.

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Agricultural Extension Officers as Unsung Heroes of Climate Change Communication to Farmers in South-Western Nigeria.

By Obasanjo Joseph Oyedele

Abstract

Effective climate change communication has been identified as a weapon for better understanding and practice of climate-friendly farming strategies among farmers in developing economies. For farmers who are aware of and know about climate change through

the mass media, a more engaging and participatory medium is expected for this graduation and studies have identified the resilient, village-to-village encounters between farmers and extension agents as the medium. However, there is a gap in knowledge on the specific experiences of farmers on what, why and how agricultural extension communication contributes to effective climate change communication to and with farmers. After questionnaire administration, focus group discussion and interview sessions among farmers in the Osun, Oyo and Ondo states in Southwestern Nigeria, findings show that agricultural extension officers clarify, reinforce and distill climate change messages from the mass media for farmers to use. They educate farmers on what to do, how to manage the effects of climate change, when to plant different seedlings, and apply chemicals. They promote self-efficacy among farmers on their capacity to practice climate-friendly farming strategies. Like gospel witnesses, they teach, train and work with farmers to build understanding and capacity needed for improved climate change mitigation and adaptation.

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Kcommunication, farmers, South-west Nigeria.

Introduction

The results of several studies conducted among farmers on the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy show that economic growth, food security, and sustainable development are, and will continue to be, affected in the foreseeable future (Food and Agricultural Organization, International Food for Agricultural Development and World Food Program, 2015; Liz, Malcolm & Williams, 2014; Ayanwuyi, 2013; Odjugo, 2011; Okunmadewa, Okoruwa and Adegboye, 2005). An inability to get water for humans and livestock to consume, a shortage of pasture for animals to graze in, the reduction in household incomes, the death of farm

animals and crops, irregular rainfall patterns, the failure of crops and animals to yield as expected, and the loss of nutrients are some of the effects of climate change farmers have experienced. The agricultural sector is especially important to a nation that is trying to shift its focus and reliance on an oil-dependent economy to an agriculture-dependent economy. Added to this is the fact that most Nigerians rely on agriculture for their survival. Therefore, smallholder farmers in the country will need to adapt their farming strategies and systems to the fluctuating weather patterns and other climate change-induced factors that affect farming in order to ensure national food security and the economic survival of the farmers (Food and Agricultural Organization, International Food for Agricultural Development and World Food Program, 2015; Liz, Malcolm & Williams, 2014; Mkisi, 2014; Ayanwuyi, 2013; Odjugo, 2011; Okunmadewa, Okoruwa and Adegboye, 2005).

One thing is also clear from empirical studies (Bello, Salau, Galadima and Ali, 2013; Longe and Oyekale, 2013; Ejembi and Alfa, 2012; Ekpoh, 2010; Tologbonse, Auta, Bidoli, Jaliya, Onu and Isa, 2010; Agwu and Adeniran, 2009) on climate change communication to farmers in Nigeria: farmers are aware of climate change. Farmers already know about increasing temperatures, declining levels of precipitation, increasing droughts, irregular rainfall patterns and other effects. This level of awareness and improved knowledge, according to the studies listed, are tied to farmers' exposure to various sources of information about climate change. Farmers in the studies reported that they received information from a range of sources, which included radio and television broadcasts, interactions with fellow farmers, information from agricultural extension agents and agricultural workshops and others. The media is central to a public understanding of climate change, its effects, and how to adapt to the changing climatic conditions. In developing countries where the effects of climate change have significant implications for agricultural businesses and development, the media is the reliable link between climate change researchers, professionals and the farmers. This is because it is through the media that victims (farmers in this case) of the effects of climate change develop a deeper understanding about climate change, share their

experiences and perspectives, and learn effective strategies for managing its effects. Beyond these, "sustained dialogue and two-way flow of information that empowers African citizens and ensures publics and politicians in countries mainly responsible for causing climate change are better informed of African realities and perspectives" through the media (Tagbo, 2010:16).

Agricultural extension communication is one form of media to communicate climate change to farmers and this old medium is still relevant and potent among farmers in the age of the mass, technology-driven information super-highway. As a matter of fact, some studies (Prokopy, Bartels, Burniske, and Power, 2017; Idrisa, Ogunbameru and Madukwe, 2012, cited in Mkisi, 2014; Ayanwuyi, 2013; Anaeto, Asiabaka, Nnadi, Ajaero, Aja, Ugwoke, Ukpongson and Onweagba, 2012; Mwazi and Ndokosho, 2011) have highlighted the role of agricultural extension officers in farmers' understanding of climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, in this mixed method research, the questions of what, why and how agricultural extension communication contributes to effective climate change communication and the capacity of farmers to manage the effects of climate change in specific, defined contexts are answered. This study moved beyond administering questionnaires and specifically aimed to engage opinion leaders among farmers in interview and focus group discussion sessions as a deeper strategy for investigating the contributions of agricultural extension officers to climate change communication and management among farmers in three out of six states in Southwestern Nigeria.

Agricultural Extension Communication and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The diffusion of innovations emerged from the empirical works of Everett Rogers who theorized that the mass media and face-to-face interpersonal interactions are reliable platforms for ensuring that useful innovation reached the target audience. Innovations are new ideas, technologies, information and strategies which are adopted to promote change. However, Rogers (2003) says that new ideas do not get adopted unless the following steps are followed: invention, diffusion or communication, time and consequences. There needs to be an invention (something new that can be adopted); it must be communicated to or

diffused among the target users or audience; the potential adopters will need time for the desired adoption and change to be noticed among them; and the result (consequence) could be positive or negative (Mkisi, 2014). Rogers (2003) identifies five types of innovation adopters: these are the first few (2.5%) people who will rush to adopt the innovation immediately after they hear about it; the 'early adopters' (13.5%) will follow the first group of adopters to adopt and practice the promoted change or innovation; about 34% of the target audience who are called 'the early majority' (because they are many) wait to see what happens to the group before them. The next group is the 'late majority' (34%) which has the same percentage as the 'early majority' and also requires more time than the other groups to adopt the change. The last group is the 'laggards' (16%). People in this group are usually rigid and difficult to convince because, they detest adoption, take longer to consider the consequences of the adoption on other adopters and finally decide to adopt the innovation at a later time. As a matter of fact, the decision to adopt the promoted change by the last two groups is predicated on their contacts with extension agents who take time to explain, build understanding and ensure adoption and usage among the two groups (Rogers, 2003; Mkisi, 2014).

Extension agents are crucial to the adoption of new technologies (in this case new strategies aimed at promoting climate change adaptation among farmers). The mass media is a good platform for information dissemination and promotion of understanding, but it lacks the capacity to engender behavior modification (practice) unlike extension communication, wherein extension agents have enough time and opportunity to demonstrate, embark on field days, hold workshops and training sessions, and persuade potential innovation adopters to embrace change. Agricultural extension communication agents are pivotal to successful climate change adaptation by farmers because of constant education and interaction, persuasion, opinion molding, trust and believability (Idrisa, Ogunbameru and Madukwe, 2012, cited in Mkisi, 2014). Having realized climate change and climate science are relatively new concepts to farmers in developing economies, it is important to determine, through which of the sources of information farmers are receiving accurate information, education, understanding

and sensitization on climate change, its effects on agriculture and how to practice sustainable adaptation.

Where farmers from the basic, rural level of agricultural production agree on cultural and technological changes, agricultural productivity is increased. This is because new knowledge and techniques acquired through education, sensitization and mobilization will boost farmers' capacity for improved agricultural activities. This is the area of expertise of extension agents who supply agricultural information, education and innovation to the farmers in rural communities. There is no doubt that the quick reach and spread of ideas and innovations happen through the mass media; however, because they are mediated (non-human), they lack the warmth, affinity and quality that interpersonal exchanges between farmers and extension agents produce. In fact, some mass media platforms are also used by extension agents to communicate with farmers. Extension communication has educational, economic and social aspects that make it suitable for rural agricultural development. Through education, extension agents work with farmers to understand and modify their attitudes and behaviors; they focus on increasing the income of farmers by cooperating to increase crop yield, encourage prudent management of financial resources and improved preservation of produce. The social aspect concerns the ability of these extension agents to train and grow the skills of farmers in order to better manage their health, develop their leadership acumen and better position themselves for development (Anaeto, Asiabaka, Nnadi, Ajaero, Aja, Ugwoke, Ukpongson and Onweagba, 2012).

Agricultural extension officers or agents in Nigeria work within four layers. The first layer is the state headquarters where the agricultural development program (ADP) manager lead state officers in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture to define and execute agricultural policies and projects. A typical state in the country has three senatorial districts and these usually form the zonal layers of the organization; the third layer is the blocks at the local government level while the fourth is the cells or villages where farmers are located. Extension officers interact, communicate and work with farmers following these layers and there is direct contact through facility visits,

project inspection, demonstrations, training sessions, seminars, meetings, workshops and conferences. The effectiveness of the extension service is in its capacity to contribute to rural development and an improved standard of living for rural farmers (Anaeto, Asiabaka, Nnadi, Ajaero, Aja, Ugwoke, Ukpongson and Onweagba, 2012).

Public understanding of climate science and climate change as complex realities have associated ambiguities, making effective communication a necessity for public participation and sustainable management of issues associated with these realities. In the case of agriculture and food security, agricultural extension officers are saddled with the responsibility of assisting farmers to understand and effectively communicate (with other stakeholders) and to manage climate change effects on agricultural production. There is an assumption that public awareness and understanding of issues (climate change is important therein) comes from exposure to mass media; however, the link that connects researchers/scientists, extension agents and farmers in their communities is mostly effective in producing desired action (Mwazi and Ndokosho, 2011). Why are extension agents so important in climate change communication? Prokopy, Bartels, Burniske, and Power (2017) note that the ability to work together to produce and share knowledge and the capacity for active engagement of farmers and extension agents as critical stakeholders in climate change mitigation and adaptation as reasons (see also Ayanwuyi, 2013).

Materials and Method

Farmers in the states of Osun, Oyo and Ondo (three out of six states in the Southwest geopolitical zones) in Nigeria were the study population. Each state in Nigeria has agricultural zones, blocks and cells as subdivisions by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture for easy access, quick implementation of policies and spread of decisions on agricultural development. These subdivisions are used by the officials of the Agricultural Development Programmes and international donors for program implementation. It is important to note that the researcher followed the multi-stage sampling procedure in selecting the sample size. The simple random sampling was adopted in picking the three states from the geo-political zone, while the existing stratification into zones, blocks and cells was also followed. Two agricultural zones were

selected from each state, five blocks from each zone, two cells from each block and ten farmers from each cell were selected using the simple random sampling. The available sampling was adopted in selecting six hundred farmers from the three states (two hundred from two cells in each state) to fill copies of the questionnaire designed to elicit information for the quantitative-survey aspect of the study, while eighteen farmer-opinion leaders (six in each state) were selected as interviewees. The interviewees were selected based on their leadership roles among their peers, their exposure and representation of other farmers at different meetings and other events organized by government agencies, local NGOs and international donor agencies. They were relied on by their peers for information, education and enlightenment. The available sampling was adopted because most of the farmers would spend many hours during the day on their farms and return late at night. These farmers provided data on their awareness, sources of information, knowledge, attitude to and effects of climate change information among them. Note that illiteracy, poverty and other challenges associated with rural living in Nigeria characterize the population.

Table 1: Sources of climate change information available to the farmers

Sources	State	Yes	No	Total
From a Relative	Ondo	14(7)	186(93)	200(100)
	Osun	57(28.5)	143(71.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	88(44)	112(56)	200(100)
From a radio	Ondo	142(71)	58(29)	200(100)
	Osun	174(87)	26(13)	200(100)
	Oyo	177(88.5)	23(11.5)	200(100)
On the television	Ondo	141(70.5)	59(29.5)	200(100)
	Osun	118(59)	82(41)	200(100)
	Oyo	113(56.5)	87(43.5)	200(100)
In the newspaper	Ondo	71(35.5)	129(64.5)	200(100)
	Osun	65(32.5)	135(67.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	32(16)	168(84)	200(100)
Magazine	Ondo	80(40)	120(60)	200(100)
	Osun	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	200(100)

	Oyo	15(7.5)	185(92.5)	200(100)
On the Internet	Ondo	10(5)	190(95)	200(100)
	Osun	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	39(19.5)	161(80.5)	200(100)
Mobile telephone	Ondo	9(4.5)	191(95.5)	200(100)
	Osun	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	24(12)	176(88)	200(100)
Correspondence	Ondo	30(15)	170(85)	200(100)
	Osun	18(9)	182(91)	200(100)
	Oyo	11(5.5)	189(94.5)	200(100)
Seminar/Public seminar	Ondo	33(16.5)	167(83.5)	200(100)
	Osun	44(22)	156(78)	200(100)
	Oyo	53(26.5)	147(73.5)	200(100)
From a friend	Ondo	30(15)	170(85)	200(100)
	Osun	23(11.5)	177(88.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	85(42.5)	115(57.5)	200(100)
Non-governmental organization	Ondo	47(23.5)	153(76.5)	200(100)
	Osun	23(11.5)	177(88.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	68(34)	132(66)	200(100)
On a billboard	Ondo	7(3.5)	193(96.5)	200(100)
	Osun	15(7.5)	185(92.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	5(2.5)	195(97.5)	200(100)
Flyer/poster	Ondo	28(14)	172(86)	200(100)
	Osun	14(7)	186(93)	200(100)
	Oyo	19(9.5)	181(90.5)	200(100)
Extension agents	Ondo	116(58)	84(42)	200(100)
	Osun	154(77)	46(23)	200(100)
	Oyo	187(93.5)	13(6.5)	200(100)

Among the farmers in the three states, radio and agricultural extension agents are popular sources of climate change information for the farmers. However, exposure to agricultural extension agents ranks highest in the Oyo State (93.5%), followed by the Osun State (77%) and the Ondo State (58%) respectively for accessing climate change information by farmers. Sources of information such as flyers/posters, newspapers, billboards, friends, non-governmental organizations, seminars, Internet, mobile telephone, magazine and correspondence are

not seriously popular among farmers for accessing information on climate change. There is a clear explanation for the farmers' preference for extension agents and radio as sources of information. Radio was arguably the closest mass medium to the grassroots or villages where farmers live and its portability, reach and reduced cost of purchase were strengths that made it far exceed the others. However, face-to-face interpersonal communication between farmers and extension agents was superior because of the warmth, affinity, opportunity for clear explanation and demonstration, and the human feelings attached to face-to-face communication. Television ranked third because of the peculiarities of village life which made it difficult for the medium to compete with radio and extension agents. Such rural communities hardly have access to an electricity supply and almost all the farmers may not have had time to watch television, unlike radio sets that they could listen to on their farms while working. It is also possible that because other listed sources are highly technical, modern and literate media, they were not popular among the farmers.

Table 2: Focus of climate change information from the sources

Focus	State	Yes	No	Total
Recent flood disaster	Ondo	93(46.5)	107(53.5)	200(100)
	Osun	67(33.5)	133(66.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	72(36)	128(64)	200(100)
Stoppage of harmful agricultural practices	Ondo	40(20)	160(80)	200(100)
	Osun	90(45)	110(55)	200(100)
	Oyo	67(33.5)	133(66.5)	200(100)
Prevention of run-off of top soil	Ondo	38(19)	162(81)	200(100)
	Osun	51(25.5)	149(74.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	64(32)	136(68)	200(100)
How to fight harmful effects of climate change	Ondo	37(18.5)	163(81.5)	200(100)
	Osun	68(34)	132(66)	200(100)
	Oyo	79(39.5)	121(60.5)	200(100)
Living with climate change without harm	Ondo	16(8)	184(92)	200(100)
	Osun	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	94(47)	106(53)	200(100)
What to do when aware	Ondo	17(8.5)	183(91.5)	200(100)

of climate change	Osun	58(29)	142(71)	200(100)
	Oyo	102(51)	98(49)	200(100)
How to prevent climate change	Ondo	5(2.5)	195(97.5)	200(100)
	Osun	14(7)	186(93)	200(100)
	Oyo	31(15.5)	169(84.5)	200(100)
The dangers of climate change	Ondo	11(5.5)	189(94.5)	200(100)
	Osun	33(16.5)	167(83.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	81(40.5)	119(59.5)	200(100)
Provision of relief materials during crises	Ondo	5(2.5)	195(97.5)	200(100)
	Osun	3(1.5)	197(98.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	8(4)	192(96)	200(100)
Others news	Ondo	200(100)	0(0)	200(100)
	Osun	199(99.5)	1(0.5)	200(100)
	Oyo	200(100)	0(0)	200(100)

Climate change information to farmers from the identified sources will have a theme or appeal, whether as news reports, features/special programs, advertisements, jingles or other content. There is a known order of campaign promotion on climate change, which follows the traditional awareness, understanding or knowledge, attitude and practice model. In developing countries where there is a reported low level of understanding, media messages on climate change are expected to focus on awareness and understanding. Knowledge or understanding of what the phenomenon is, its effects, mitigation and adaptation, and other climate change management practices will be crucial. Table 2 shows that on the identified foci of climate change communication to farmers from the mass media, most of the farmers do not get the information they need about how to prevent the effects of climate change. This is because only 2.5% in Ondo, 7% in Osun and 15.5% in Oyo are actually exposed to mass media messages about the prevention of climate change effects. The situation is the same with information about the dangers of climate, living with climate change without harm, how to fight harmful effects of climate change, prevention of run-off of top soil and what to do when they are aware of climate change (only Oyo State (51%) is better on this). This shows that mass media agencies in the states have yet to produce and release noticeable and sufficient content about the identified issues. Instead, the

news media is predominantly about other things in the society. The author of this study agrees with the observation of the interviewees and FGD participants who concluded that warnings and weather forecast are the prominent contents of the mass media on climate change, with real engagement, understanding and explanation provided by the agricultural extension agents. That is why the position of the representative of women who is also the wife of the traditional ruler in Ibapon Adindi Village (Oyo State), Mrs Racheal Orodokun si germane stated that "what we hear is announcement and warning; there is no clear information on what we can do to manage it by ourselves."

To further showcase the prominent place of agricultural extension officers in the ability of the farmers to be aware of, understand and practice climate-friendly farming strategies, participants at the interview and focus group discussion sessions applauded these extension agents for filling the gaps left the mass media. This is because farmers depend on them for everything about climate change awareness, knowledge and practice. Here is the submission of one of the FGD participants in Oyo State:

Farmers do not get adequate information concerning this. We are in the rural community it is only when the likes of OSSADEP go around to inform farmers about this and it is through them that we get information about climatic change, the provision government have for us and what we are expected to do to tackle these problems. At other times we just listen to Oyo radio, 'tifuntedo'.

It is not only about information provision; it is also about training and seminars aimed at training the trainers. Since it is impossible to gather all farmers together in a place for training and demonstrations on how to manage the effects of climate change on their farms, farmers admitted that agricultural extension officers at the state level do invite opinion leaders among farmers for training, seminars and demonstrations. When these opinion leaders get to their cells, they are saddled with the responsibility of teaching, training and encouraging others. For Mr. Isaac Olateru, the President of Akure God's Gift Farmers' Group in Ilu-Abo, Ondo State, his constant interaction with agricultural extension agents and experts, through training and seminars organized by local

and state agencies on agricultural development, has been the major source of climate change information. He says:

They (agricultural extension officers) talk about climate change in ADP meetings, even the resource person that came from Abuja that time was hammering on it. Often and often, they usually invite us for meetings and trainings. Even last month, we were at the Fishery Section of the Agricultural Development Programme of Ondo State at Alagbaka for a training organized by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. Whenever they invite us for lectures we go.

As observed by the interviewees and FGD participants, what is available on radio as news or on programs about climate change is always about rainfall and sunlight for the general public, which is different from what farmers will specifically need for managing the effects of climate change. Although the reach and popularity of radio means that it ranks the highest among the sources, farmers who listen to radio for information on climate change, still depend on agricultural extension officers who clarify, reinforce and distill climate change messages for farmers to use. This is the submission of farmers at Ibapon-Adindi and Koguo villages (Oyo State) and Oloba Ogundiran and Omi funfun villages (Osun State), who maintained that they rely on the agricultural extension officers to build requisite understanding and know what to do. The opinion of farmers in the communities visited by the researcher is that they could link their understanding of climate change management to regular visitation by agricultural extension officers who come to inform them on what to do, which they always do. Also, they said that extension officers educate farmers; tell them how to manage effects of climate change; tell farmers when to plant different seedlings or seeds; and when to apply chemicals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analyses of quantitative and qualitative data show that, like the Biblical beautiful feet of gospel bearers, agricultural extension officers constitute an important link in the ability of farmers in Nigeria to understand and manage the effects of climate change on their farms. Just as the Biblical gospel bearers bring good tidings of hope and salvation, agricultural extension officers raise hope and promote self-

efficacy among farmers on their capacity to manage climate change and practice climate-friendly farming strategies. As torch bearers and witnesses, they go from one village to another, teach, train and work with farmers to build understanding and capacity needed for improved mitigation and adaptation. The submissions of various interviewees and FGD participants have indicated that the mass media only raises partial awareness and fear appeal, while farmers principally rely on agricultural extension officers as they navigate the routes of knowledge, attitude and practice. All these points have further established the findings of previous studies (Prokopy, Bartels, Burniske, and Power, 2017; Idrisa, Ogunbameru and Madukwe, 2012, cited in Mkisi, 2014; Ayanwuyi, 2013; Anaeto, Asiabaka, Nnadi, Ajaero, Aja, Ugwoke, Ukpongson and Onweagba, 2012; Mwazi and Ndokosho, 2011) on agricultural extension communication and the understanding and management of climate change among farmers. Therefore, it is critical for government at all levels to encourage or motivate extension officers to do more. They (officers) need constant training and re-training on climate change management, and how to sustainably manage climate change for sustainable agricultural development. Food security is tied to this, as is the reduction of unemployment and an improved economy. There was a time that foreign donor agencies (e.g. UNDP) were actively supporting agricultural extension services in rural Nigeria with vehicles and motorcycles, training manuals, loans for farmers, facilities for demonstrations and other equipment, pesticides and herbicides, and so on. This support actually helped the extension agents to reach the remotest villages to boost the capacity of farmers for food production. Since most of the agricultural extension officers who assisted in gathering data for this study lamented the near-zero existence or continuation of such a laudable support, it will be beneficial if such is re-introduced and boosted.

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Towards Effective Anti-Student Crises Internal Communication: Sidekick PRO and Communication Strategy Loopholes at the University of Dar es Salaam.

By Dietrich Kaijanangoma

Abstract

This paper addresses the perennially alarming rate at which students disrupt activities in Tanzania's universities, often leading to a widespread destruction of property in addition to disruption of scheduled academic programs. Purposive sampling was used to draw a sample of 28 respondents comprising senior administration officials, academic staff, student leaders and students. A qualitative case study design was adopted with data generated using interviews, focus group discussions and documentary review. Data was subjected to thematic content analysis. The study found that, although the University management was not wholly to blame for the turmoil, the frequent recurrence of crises suggests a fundamental love-hate relationship between the university and the students also linked to the kind of internal communication in place. In this regard, the study found that management treats the public relations functions as peripheral as the PRO (public relations officer) was not at liberty to exercise public relations professionalism to help control and even stave off student crises

through deliberate PRO forays. The findings also show that the students' union was considered inept and largely negligent in playing the communication role that it is entrusted with.

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organizational communication strategies, PRO (public relations officer), student leadership, student welfare DARUSO

Tanzania's post-independence higher education has been dogged by occasional violent student protests, riots, boycotts and strikes, which have often largely reflected the government's attitude towards addressing the students' immediate concerns. One such hotbed has for a long time been the University of Dar es Salaam, the country's oldest and premier public university. This situation tends to raise questions pertaining to the efficacy of both internal and external organizational communication in place to address and even stem further upheavals connected to communication breakdowns. As such, communication must be strategic, focused, and specific in addressing students' affairs for it to engender a positive relationship between students and the university administration.

At the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), two main clusters of publics are responsible for this effort: internal and external publics. The first category comprises all the UDSM management staff, students, the students' union (DARUSO), and students' various service providers. The other constitutes external stakeholders, who directly or indirectly exercise functions, and policies that affect student lives. These include the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB), the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), and the Ministries of Education and Vocational Training (now reconstituted as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), and, that of Finance.

All of these stakeholders ought to provide students with appropriate information as the stakeholders are responsible for student upkeep and for ensuring that student study programs progress normally. When timely and apt communication fail, there are far-reaching consequences. In this case, the recurrence of student crises at the University of Dar es Salaam has persisted, despite several previous recommendations to build capacity for handling student-related communications and to stave off any spats with the students. Moreover, some findings point an accusing finger at the HESLB, TCU and the

Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Finance for their ineptitude in addressing student problems which, in turn, trigger student crises from time to time.

Though both internal and external publics account for the student upheavals, this study focused on the internal side of the problem, particularly the university's management and its handling of its primary clients—the students. The organizational communication strategies used to manage student crises at the University of Dar es Salaam were analyzed.

Over the years, student crises have increased particularly in African universities (Blakemore & Cooksey, 1981). The few studies that exist include those by Blakemore & Cooksey (1981) and Omari & Mihyo (2000) have tended to focus on short-term solutions and do not explore the underlying root-causes of the seemingly intractable problem. Students have been known to spearhead civil struggles for various rights, causes and interests all over the world. These crises have resulted in protests, demonstrations and riots and seem to act as nerve centers of agitation for social, political and economic reforms. Some scholars have focused on the relationship between the state and students and noted the deterioration of these relations as part of general deterioration in governance (Peter and Mvungi 1986).

African student protests and crises witnessed in the colonial era took place at the Rhodesia University (now University of Zimbabwe) and Nairobi Technical College (now University of Nairobi) in 1956 and in 1963, respectively. Omari (1991) tends to draw attention to the question of a lack of information as part of the problem: "One of the often-observed weaknesses of African universities is the lack of basic data and information for comprehensive budgeting, planning and corporate management" (Mihyo 2000, 25). Such data dearth encompasses many aspects which ultimately contribute to the problem;

this study, however, focuses on the communication dimension of the problem, particularly, internal communication in Tanzania at the University of Dar es Salaam.

In Tanzania, post-independence student crises can be traced to the 1960s. The first major student crisis occurred in 1965 when students at the University College of Dar es Salaam (then an affiliate of the University of East Africa), protested against the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Usually, such student crises have been portrayed as a mostly negative and disruptive truancy. As a result, little attention appears to be directed at the social context of higher education in the democratic transformation of society and to its qualitative improvement, except in the broad context of class struggle (Peter and Mvungi, 1986).

Although acceleration trends in student crises at the University of Dar es Salaam have been extensively documented in literature (Mbwete and Ishumi, 2000), the focus has been on how to pre-empt and prevent crises without necessarily addressing the core part of the problem.

Indeed, managers of higher education institutions should always be prepared to prevent, pre-empt and manage all the potential crises to minimize unwarranted interference of the smooth running of the university. This preparedness also entails having an effective communication strategy in place for fostering internal communication. Yet this has not always been the case. Peter and Mvungi (1986), for example, attribute the 1978 crisis at the University of Dar es Salaam to the vice chancellor's effort to conceal crucial information. The students had sought an explanation and an audience with the chancellor which the vice chancellor had ignored even when he had offered to meet the students in the first place. This attitude signals an attempt to ignore the importance of fostering an internal mechanism for talks to clear the air.

On the other hand, Omari (1991) attributes the perennial student revolts to political repression, official corruption, institutional ideologies, poor management, and weak academic leadership, including lack of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, as well as, academic confidence. This viewpoint requires an even more all-encompassing strategy, where communication is just one dimension of it. Still, Mpangala and Shao (2000) believe that campus crises result from economic factors, social structures, the existing political climate, lacklustre management, lack of information, and suppressed communication. The last two aspects— lack of information and suppressed communication—directly inform why the crises occurred amidst effective internal communication at the university.

Moreover, a condescending attitude towards students by administrators, coupled with the absence of student representation within university's decision-making bodies have also been cited as a cause (Mpangala and Shao, 2000). This lack of student representation has recently been vindicated, as increased representation of students in various key bodies from the unit level up to the senate level has coincided with a more pacified campus environment and a thaw in student unrest, which is a topic of a discussion that is outside the scope of this paper.

Overall, most student crises begin with mundane demands such as increase an in sustenance, book and stationery allowances. Consequently, students use the disturbances as a platform for voicing their concerns and grievances to the authorities. Sometimes they use this platform to embarrass leaders by exposing evils done by those in power. In response, those in power use force or expel students and close the university to quell or curb student crises (CHEAR 1970, and Blakemore & Cooksey, 1981). However, Shoo (1994) insists that the closure of a university is not the best solution, as it is only a stop-gap measure aimed to return the campus to normality without necessarily dealing with the

fundamental problems, including the lack of an effective internal communication strategy.

Most of the demands expressed by students, leading to the crises at the University of Dar es Salaam can be summarized as educational, political, economic or democratic. Apart from the major crises illustrated in Table 1, there are also less significant ones that have preoccupied faculties, departments and other units (as such, these major ones are for illustrative cases).

Table 1: Summary of major UDSM student crises on record since 1971

Year	**Reason for disturbances**	**Remarks**
1971	The Akivaga Crisis – students demand democracy and participate in the running of the university.	Disruption of classes.
1978	Students oppose the introduction of new terms of service for ministers, members of parliament, government and party leaders.	Earmarked students sent home; DARUSO is banned.
1978	Students demand new rates of books and a stationery allowance.	Disruption of classes.
1986	Students demand commercialization of the university cafeteria services and payment of book allowances in cash.	Disruption of classes.
1988	Students demand increases of allowances.	Disruption of classes.
1989	Students protest against the detention of student leaders who had attended a conference in Pyongyang in North Korea. They were alleged to have said what they were not supposed to say.	Disruption of classes.

	Students demand the formation of their own independent organization to replace MUWATA.	
1990	Students demand: 1. an increase in their allowance 2. the rehabilitation of university facilities 3. an explanation from the government as to what caused the arson attack that gutted the Central Bank in 1984 4. an explanation for the purchase of a defective ferry (UNIFLOTE) 5. an explanation for the scandalous waste dumping site in a residential area 6. an explanation for the squeeze on the educational budget.	Disruption of classes.
1991	Students protest against the cost-sharing policy.	Expulsion of 'ring leaders' in the Faculty of Engineering.
1992	Students press for the abolition or reversal of the cost-sharing policy because it was said to be a double burden on their parents, who were also taxpayers.	Disruption of classes.
1994 (May)	Boycott of EM 100 Examination resulting in a physical confrontation.	211 students boycott examinations.
1994 (Nov)	DARUSO president is forcefully removed from power during a students' general meeting.	Students were injured, property was destroyed.

1996	Some male students' storm into the hall of residences and physically assault female students who allegedly refuse to take part in the crisis; more than 700 students from the Faculty of Engineering boycott lectures, demanding dismissal of one lecturer following wide-scale failures in examinations.	Some male students and female students are injured; property is destroyed.
1997	Students march to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education demanding an increase in allowances.	Students are accosted by police.
2000	Students stage a boycott demanding an increase of allowances.	Closure of the university.
2002	Demand for calculators by engineering students as a result of the Ministry of Education withholding disbursement of student project funds and special faculty (calculator) allowance.	Strike is prevented through negotiations.
2003	Engineering students boycott classes on the same grounds as the previous year.	Some students are suspended.
2004	Students protest against the new cost-sharing policy.	Disruption of classes.
2006	Students demonstrate against the erratic changes in the criteria for accessing loans from HESLB.	Disruption of classes.
2008	Students protest against the suspension of second-year student and presidential candidate (2008/2009) Odong Kefa Odwar, for failure to prove that he was a bonafide student of UDSM. About 300	Disruption of classes. Four students - "ring leaders" are suspended.

	students force others out of class and abuse them through beatings. Classes are disrupted classes. A series of strikes is caused by students.	
2010	Students stage a strike and demand that meals and accommodation allowances be raised from TSH 5,000/- a day to 10,000/-a day.	T2-day class disruption.
2011	Students strike to protest against the TCU and HESLB for admitting students on programs that are not a priority and who did not qualify for loans. Other students did not qualify for loans due to poor examination results.	Disruption of classes. Some students are expelled.

Source: Omari & Mihyo (1991)

In summary, the root-causes of the student crises fit into four different categories: national governance, academic issues, student welfare, and institutional management. A number of scholars have attempted to explain the causes leading to the emergence of such student crises. Peter & Mvungi (1986) and the Ministry of Education National Probe Team report (2004) observe that the major causes of crises in Tanzania's public universities are (a) the government's inability to finance universities (b) institutional governance and (c) external interference of the universities by political authorities. This paper focuses on the second aspect, institutional governance, which is essential in fostering internal communication and establishing a mechanism for dealing with external communication that could help deal with the other dimensions (the government's inability to finance universities and external interference of universities by political parties). The argument is that effective internal communication is an important aspect of dealing with external communication and helping the internal publics see the bigger picture.

To realize the set objective, the study adopts the Media Richness Theory through an exploration of internal communication at the University of Dar es Salaam and the ability to deal, in this case, with the internal publics. Also known as the Information Richness Theory, the Media Richness Theory—developed by Daft and Lengel in 1984—is a framework that describes a communications medium in terms of its ability to reproduce the information sent over it. Daft and Lengel provide several illustrations to explain what they mean by the Media Richness Theory. A phone call, for example, will not reproduce visual social cues, such as gestures. This makes it less rich (as a communication medium) than a video conferencing call, which communicates gestures in addition to the audio. Specifically, the Media Richness Theory states that the more ambiguous and uncertain a task is, the richer the format of media suits it (Daft and Lengel, 1984).

This study set out to establish the extent to which the organizational communication strategies the University of Dar es Salaam employed in managing student crises, were strategic enough to foster internal communication with its internal publics. Effectiveness, in this regard, is seen in terms of the effectiveness of the organizational strategies in staving off future disturbances. In particular, the study sought to establish the internal communication strategies that the UDSM managers considered most appropriate (i.e., most-rich) and strategically directed to the intended internal publics.

Generally, effective communication occurs when a desired effect results from intentional or unintentional information sharing, which is interpreted between multiple entities and acted on in a desired way. Strategic communication in an organization requires several measures, such as communication plans, proposed messages, the medium (or media), the codes employed, the context and experience that are brought to situations, as well as the ethics that are adopted, all of which have a direct impact on the outcome (O'Rourke, 2001). In fact,

strategic communication entails aligning and supporting its goals with the goals of the organization and this is where good public relations also comes in.

Lattimore et al. (2007, 15), indicate that there are many useful definitions of public relations (PR), "we stress that public relations is a management and relation-building function based on effective two-way communication with publics or those affected by the organisation". Similarly, Grunig (1992, 10) states that "excellent public relations embodies a worldview that defines the communication function in organizations as symmetrical, idealistic and critical, and managerial." Only specialists should handle the information and the communications of an organization. Specialists of organizational communications are public relations practitioners. At the University of Dar es Salaam, for a long time, the PR unit has been rather small with a largely marginal and peripheral role in fostering internal communication with the university's primary public, the students.

Creswell (2009) sees worldviews as a general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds. As this study called for an understanding of strategies used by the UDSM administration in communicating with stakeholders on student-related affairs, which have frequently led to turmoil, it adopted a case study approach as the most relevant method (Baxter and Babbie, 2004). Creswell (2007, 73) defines a case study as a piece of research which "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system". As such, the case study method provided an opportunity to analyse the experiences of the research participants from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) through their views, opinions, feelings about recurrence of student crises at the UDSM, and how organizational communication strategies could be used to manage them, particularly in dealing with the internal publics. The study was conducted at the UDSM, which is the oldest and largest public

university in Tanzania. The university also has the largest concentration of professors and PhD holder-instructors, and, the second highest enrolment of students in the country.

Out of 7,199 undergraduates who graduated in 2017, 2,051 (28.5%) were female, and, out of 1,274 postgraduates, 606 (47.6%) were female, that is, (57 at PhD, 488 at masters, and 61 at postgraduate diploma). This is in comparison, to the 2008/2009 academic year, where out of 19,718 undergraduates who graduated, 7,493 (38%) were female. This background information shows how UDSM has been striving to raise the female enrolment to ensure that more women are enrolling in its courses and programs.

This study only focused on the Mwalimu J. K. Nyerere (Mlimani main) campus, the bastion of the university's academic endeavour, which has over the years witnessed a series of student crises. Therefore, the information generated might help the university to pre-empt or manage student crises through effective internal communication. By the 2016/2017 academic year, the UDSM had about 30,000 registered students, and more than 2,000 workers. The UDSM was chosen as the area for this study because, apart from having a well-established organizational communication infrastructure, it has been the site of several notable recurrences of student crises.

In all, 36 subjects from the UDSM's main (Mwalimu J. K. Nyerere Mlimani) campus took part in the study. The internal stakeholders were five administrative staff, two public relations officers (PROs), three officers from the Dean of Students Office, eight students, and eight student leaders from the Dar es Salaam University Students' Organization (DARUSO), and four academic staff. Purposive sampling, a strategy which uses a researcher to identify subjects relevant to the issue being studied, was used in the selection of participants (Kombo, 2006). The eight students and eight DARUSO leaders took part in the

four focused group discussions (FGDs). These were purposively selected based on their years of study, academic programs, the schools and colleges, on-campus and off-campus status, and gender. Overall, the study employed four data collection instruments—semi-structured interviews, observation of non-verbal cues, FGDs, and documentary review. As this was largely a qualitative study Thematic Analysis, which "is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" was used (Braun and Clarke 2006, 78).

Overall, the study found a complex litany of factors affecting the internal communication with internal publics at the UDSM, which abetted or contributed to the recurrence of student crises particularly up to 2011. Students at universities, who are mostly young, exhibit dynamism with an aspiration to be on top of things, and if their voice is not heard, they will resolve their disagreements through strikes and demonstrations to force their voices to be heard, particularly when they meet a dead-end in formal internal communications channels. Over the years student protests have become accepted as a universally legitimate tool of communication, so long as they are conducted within the law. In Tanzania, this is not the case and has been an integral part of the problem for both internal and external communication:

In Tanzania demonstrations or strikes are not illegal, only that there are rules that have got to be followed; students are to be educated on those things. Although rules provided for student demonstrations are not written in the student regulations, the university has to improve the student guidelines for a student's life at university. (Academic staff, November 2012)

It is part of this attempt to familiarize students at the UDSM with pertinent rules that freshers are exposed to a one-week orientation week. Yet, the study found that new student arrivals at the university usually miss several planned activities during the first week of induction, which should enable them to acquire useful information: "Orientation sessions

have indeed proved to be very useful. The orientation programme is designed to provide new students with information they need […] to function comfortably and effectively during their stay at the Institute" (Mbwette and Ishumi 2000, 113). Yet, information emerging from the FGD participants indicate that the orientation week preparations were so poor, that many new students failed to benefit from them in a meaningful way. Even then, orientation is only a part of the problem associated with internal communication.

On the other hand, an administration staff informant implicitly blamed the bureaucratic procedures of the university imposed on students, as a contributory factor to the limitations evidenced in the internal communication with the students. At the UDSM, students are supposed to channel vertically most of their problems through DARUSO, then to the dean of students (aptly known as 'Mshauri wa Wanafunzi' in Kiswahili, meaning advisor of students) and eventually to the top management. Because DARUSO was considered to be communication-deficient, students tended to ignore. Whenever students decided to go straight to the next offices upstairs, they were told to go back and follow procedures, which basically entailed going through DARUSO. As a consequence, such students would decline to return to DARUSO and resolve to go on strike. Red-tape here appears to be a source of the problem as the following statement affirms:

Bureaucracy is the major possible communication barrier at UDSM between students and management. You see, there is bureaucracy here when it comes to students' affairs. We have the office of the Dean of Students, which is the first stop. However, despite the bureaucratic lines of communication, *the management skips the bureaucracy and communicates with students as much as possible whenever there is an urgent issue to communicate about.* (UDSM administration November 2012; emphasis added)

It is evident that the UDSM management is aware of the constraints bureaucratic procedures can cause and the kind of frustration they can engender, hence its willingness to side-step the established protocol to communicate with students.

It was also established that the UDSM PRO did not have specific duties associated with fostering internal communication with the primary publics—the students. After all, the PRO's assignments depended on what the vice chancellor directed him to do on a particular day. The PRO's office is located in the VC's office so there is little opportunity for the PRO to operate independently as a PR professional. Although the PRO occasionally carries out certain petty duties that are loosely related to PR, such as organizing press conferences (for external communication), and preparing advertisements for the radio, television, and newspapers (again for external communication), the PRO's role in strategic internal communication appears rather severely curtailed. In fact, the role appears to be limited to writing and posting announcements on the notice-boards based on instructions received from the top authorities in the university's hierarchy.

In fact, the top three administrators of the UDSM management had diametrically opposing views about what the duties of a PRO should be at UDSM. They argued that a university is such a sensitive organization, that it cannot entrust sensitive information and communication to what tends to be perceived as a junior member of staff, such as a public relations officer. As one administrator commented:

A public relations unit at a public university, like UDSM, cannot be an independent unit, because universities are very sensitive organisations. So, instead of depending on a PRO to manage information and communication of the University, there is a Committee of Deans. Students are represented in the Committee of Deans. In turn,

they take the information back to their fellow students. (UDSM administration category, November 2012*)*

Simply put, this statement removes the PRO from the core of UDSM internal communication. As a peripheral and marginal figure, the PRO is therefore unable to assist in designing an effective internal communications strategy and has to depend on information that has been provided by university administrators to post on notice-boards and so forth. Jefkins (1998, 22) advises that, "management must keep the PR manager fully informed—preferably in advance and by direct contact—which means that the PR manager must have access to the management." It seems that Jefkins' ideas have not been put into practice at UDSM. In other words, the Dean of Students Office (as the 'Mshauri wa Wanafunzi') assumes an even more significant role in fostering communication with the UDSM students.

The Dean of Students Office is organized into four units: counselling, governance and control, health and catering, and the accommodation unit. However, the officers in the Dean of Students Office usually avoided visiting students in their halls of residences:
The Dean of Students is to blame for not playing her primary duty of communicating with students. She has not taken initiatives to visit us and hold meetings with us at our schools, colleges. (FGD Participant, November 2012)

In effect, DARUSO leaders were perceived as inefficient leaders due to their tendency to keep information to themselves after they had attended university meetings such as the council, senate, college or school board meetings. In this regard, the stakeholders accused DARUSO leaders of being so inept that they did not care about their fellow students. In this regard, one respondent charged:
DARUSO's inefficiency in relaying information to fellow students from the management is one area of weakness as far as the students'

government is concerned. There is no mechanism of giving feedback to other students. It all depended on the office of the Dean of Students because that office is responsible for facilitating interaction between students' leaders and students. (Academic staff, November 2012)

As a result, the study reveals that the recurrence of student crises in public universities was mostly due to the students' mistrust of the management. In this regard, ten participants from various categories were emphatic about this fact. They argued that most of the student crises in universities occurred because some of the students had lost trust in the university management. For example, one respondent said: "If students don't believe or have no trust in what their leaders say, they will go on strike" (Interview, academic staff, November 2012). So, according to him, lack of trust made students ignore promises made to them by the university management, especially those related to issuance of loans. Once students fail to believe what the administration is telling them, they start throwing stones at it.

The UDSM management also confirmed the existence of students who mistrusted the university administration. Indeed, a participant confirmed awareness of such students as follows:

It is that students who mistrust the management are there. Good to say that it is a small group of students. They are the minority. When they clearly breach rules and regulations, we take them to task. And at least when this happens, they overtly do no operate. (Interview, UDSM administration, November 2012)

The general student respondents also claimed that DARUSO did not have the legitimacy to lead because leaders were elected by less than one-third of the student population (i.e. students from the main campus and not the entire university student community including Mkwawa College of Education [MUCE] and Dar es Salaam College of Education [DUCE], constituent colleges with substantive numbers of

undergraduate students). The problem of under-representation prompted one academic member staff to say:

I think trust is a major issue in any case of leadership. If they elect a government into power, they should respect that government. If they lose trust in that government, then they should use the same rules to get it out of the way. But to operate with the government you do not trust, I think, that is very dangerous because then students will not listen to what their leaders are saying. They will just act out of emotions, and it will bring chaos. (Interview, academic staff, November 2012)

A number of flaws which are associated with the internal communication breakdown at the UDSM were brought to the fore during our survey. These include delays in communicating information to students by the university administration and DARUSO leaders. The flaws can be summed up as follows:

1) Failure to promptly and in good time, inform students about pertinent issues
2) Lack of credible persons to communicate important information to the students during the times of the crises
3) Failure to fulfil promises that the UDSM management make known to students regarding their demands.

In the case of student accommodation, the UDSM had a serious student accommodation problem at the time of carrying out this study. In fact, the accommodation problem was so critical, that the fifth-phase government leader, President Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, intervened in 2017 and constructed a 3,800-capacity hostel to ease the crisis. The then seven halls of residence—before the recent additions—could accommodate as many as 6,849 students whereas new student enrolment in 2017/2018 was in excess of 13,629. This means that more than half of the students at UDSM Mlimani Campus failed to secure accommodation on campus. One academic explained the dilemma:

When the University of Dar es Salaam decided to expand the intake, one of the things that was not decided upon was that the university was not in the business of providing accommodation. So, you end up with eight or more students living on campus in a room that is meant to take four students [infamously known in Kiswahili as 'kubebana', carrying one another]. Despite that huge number of students, facilities such as toilets and shower rooms remained the same. So, potentially such a situation was likely to trigger a strike. (Academic staff, October 2012)

Although the University of Dar es Salaam boasts of a well-founded infrastructure of sports and games, students have not been encouraged to use them. Without ample support, students were generally not interested in making use of such facilities, unless of course they were physical education students in the School of Education, where many sports exertions are mandatory. By neglecting sports, Tanzania's universities, including the UDSM, perform miserably during Eastern Africa regional university sports competitions.

As Peter and Mvungi (1986) and the Ministry of Education National Probe Team report (2004) have observed, external interference of the universities by political authorities has also been one of the causal factors behind the student unrest, yet it appears that there was no internal communications strategy at UDSM for dealing with the issue. Although a government directive forbids—albeit unconstitutionally—students and staff from running or participating in political activities in public university campuses, students and staff were at liberty to participate in politics off campus:

When such students come to the university because of wanting to pursue various interests that they have acquired from the various organisations outside the University, they focus on issues which they think can help them to cause a crisis. So, the recurrence of student strikes at the UDSM has, in most cases, been caused by differences in their political

ideologies which are supported by various groups of students. (Dean of Students Office, October 2012)

At times, politicians have approached groups of university students—either overtly or covertly— to influence them, based on their vulnerability and culpability as students in need. For instance, an participant from the dean's office stated:

People who are affiliated to those political parties are in the University 'just like we say the government has no religion, but there are people with their religions in the government.' So, people with their political affiliations are allowed to join the University and become members of the student community, and that is not a problem. The problem arises when those political parties out there plant in DARUSO leaders who are affiliated to them. So, however much you communicate, if there is that interference from outside there is not much you can do about it. (Dean of Students Office, October 2012)

Many of the students at the UDSM are mature students who have the chance to learn the art of government and should be inducted into good governance practices. The students' government (DARUSO) offers an opportunity for them to learn how to govern. It is evident that many of those in student leadership positions at the university, ended up winning political positions and as one participant pointed out:

Why do you want to suppress the political activities within universities? All that you need to do is to have principles that would guide the engagement in political activities. Not to ban them, but to guide them. You can always engage in politics provided conditions one, two, three… have been observed. Universities should set the rules that will be followed by whoever engages in politics while serving or studying in a university. (Interview, academic staff, November 2012)

In other words, external political interference may not necessarily be the cause of student fracas when an effective internal communication

strategy coupled with good guidelines is in place could be more effective. After all, the more open the communication, the more likely it is to bring about the desired effect amongst the students' body politic.

The study shows that the participants had mixed views about whether or not the relationship between students and the university's central administration was good. Whereas the UDSM administrators on the one hand, insisted that they always tried to ensure their relationship with students was good through their open-door policy which allowed students to meet the administrators whenever they encountered problems, students, on the other hand, claimed that their relationship with the UDSM management was good only when there were no students crises on campus. There exists an implicit long-running, love-hate relationship between the UDSM administration and the students. The recurrence of crises on campuses is one that exposes the limits of the kind of internal communication currently in place.

In fact, and to a certain extent, the UDSM management was not wholly to blame for all of the causes of the student turmoil. Some reasons were more external in origin than internal, which implies that internal communication alone might not be enough without backing it up with external communication, for example, those policies that relate to the disbursement of loans. Despite the defence that the HESLB was responsible for loans, many students still believe that UDSM was responsible for ensuring HESLB and other stakeholders disburse these loans to them well in advance of the commencement of a semester. In short, they take on the immediate internal stakeholder, which also hints at the need to strengthen internal communication with the students, as a primary client and public. Indeed, to cultivate and foster a good relationship between the two sides, there should be frequent meetings where timely and accurate information is disseminated and students' questions answered to clear the air. In this regard, Mpangala and Shao

(2000) assert that for any real chance at staving off any potential or looming student crisis, meaningful dialogue needs to occur between varied stakeholders in the university and students. For the latter group, the UDSM ought to have an open internal communication channel, devoid of any unnecessary red-tape.

Another hurdle is the problematic position of the PRO wing, whose role in the UDSM in fostering internal communication with students is severely curtailed. In this regard, the study found that the UDSM management considers the position of the public relations officer more of a personal assistant to the vice chancellor than one for being actively engaged in developing and executing an effective internal communication strategy. As a consequence, the PRO was not at liberty to exercise its public relations professionalism at the university and this explains why even the leader of this office, is a junior member of staff at the level of officer rather than manager or director.

Indeed, although there is a public relations office, most of the activities and operations that are done through that office, tend not to focus on co-ordinating the university's information and communication. On the contrary, public relations scholars and communication theorists suggest that a public relations officer of an organization, including at UDSM, should be a director or a co-ordinator of information and communications of an organization (Jefkins 1998; Cutlip et al. 1994; Fisher 2007; Hoover 2010). Jefkins (1998, 22) maintains that "to co-operate effectively, the public relations manager needs to be positioned so that he or she is responsible to top management and serves all departments of the organization." Although it was evident that the UDSM administration sends and receives information to and from colleges, schools, and institutes as its major way of communication on campus, there still is a great need for a focal point where all the communication avenues converge in a bid to foster internal communication among the varied units and with the students. This

communication should be co-ordinated by a professional communications manager who is conversant in both internal and external communication strategies (Jefkins 1998; Cutlip et al. 1994; Grunig and Hunt 1984). Overall, a communication unit is a common place where all the information and communications of the university can be received, processed, stored, and disseminated to the varied internal and external publics, depending on respective needs at a given time. Moreover, it can enable the stakeholders (internal ones in this case) to avoid student-based conflicts and promptly retrieve information from any section such as the school, college and institution at any time and disseminated accordingly.

The dean of students—the current focal point of the student body politic— at UDSM has employed several channels of communication. However, results of this communication appear limited due to what emerged in the study as an attempt—whether deliberate or not—for the UDSM dean of students to avoid holding one-to-one meetings with the students when such a head-on approach could do some good in fostering internal communication and making students feel integrated into the organization of the university and running of their own matters. Besides, the Ministry of Education National Probe Team (2004), which was formed to investigate the causes of student crises in public universities, recommended that the UDSM Dean of Students' office desist from ignoring students' grievances. And yet, this study found that many students were unaware of the existence of the dean of students and the services that their office offers. In fact, some of the students mistook this dean ('Mshauri wa Wanafunzi'), with the dean running a professional academic entity such as the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC), School of Education (SoED), UDSM School of Law (UDSoL) and UDSM Business School (UDBS), all run by deans as part of the university's administrative structure.

On the whole, there must be goals of internal communication that can be measured to determine whether they were achieved at the UDSM (Hoover 2010). Also, students should be visited at their schools, colleges, and halls of residence where they can air their views and ask questions. Doing so can significantly foster effective internal communication and ease the frosty relationships that tend to exist between the management and the student body. In fact, such an approach can also result in the administration and students operating on the same wave length of a viable communication medium. Wilcox and Nolte (1995) underscore the value of using meetings to solve problems by recommending that participation in meetings as best suited for problem solving. DARUSO, as a students' government, is largely inefficient and often times negligent when it comes to playing any form of internal communication role. Thus, DARUSO leaders inadvertently end up betraying their fellow students. They are also betraying the university's central administration which has entrusted in them to, first, act as spokespersons for the student body; and second, to assist the university administration in promoting law and order among students and their welfare (Luhanga 2009).

In light of the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested for action:

i. The university should establish a substantive position of Director of Public Relations and Corporate Communication at conventional directorate level with overall responsibility for university-wide communication. The deputy could superintend over the main campus with each constituent college or school manned by a Public Relations Officer, but in a co-ordinated way for them to have an effective college-wide internal communication strategy that would also benefit the students and administration alike.

ii. DARUSO leadership should also engage more actively in student organization management and governance for effective student-body representation. In this regard, the leaders should be equipped with

tools for fostering effective internal communication with the students and the university administration.

iii. The UDSM *cadres supérieurs* and the Dean of Students Office should ensure that first-year student orientation programs are well-organized and that subsequent regular meetings with students are given primary priority to ensure that students get the orientation they need and acquire the means for communicating and having their needs met while on campus. After all, records show that students at the UDSM have gone on strike simply because they did not have substantial, relevant and timely information.

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