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Analysis of the use of Propaganda in Development Communication by Journalists in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored propaganda use in development communication presentations. It was anchored on development media and situation theories. The study adopted survey research method. A census study of 127 journalists was drawn from Imo State. The obtained data were analyzed using simple percentages and 5.point likert scale in tables. Findings revealed that propaganda is one of the persuasive communication strategies used by journalists in Imo State, and it is used to a large extent. It also showed that there is a significant relationship between propaganda and stories about development. The study, therefore, recommended that journalists should uphold professional journalistic ethics rather than succumbing to adverse influence that water down the quality of information required for sustainable social-economic development. Also there is need for journalists to use propaganda in a prudent manner by giving accurate, fair and truthful reportage of development related programmes.

Keywords: Propaganda, Development, Communication and Ethics.

Introduction

The seeming disparity between actuality and imagination in presented messages by journalists in the various media establishments has become worrisome in the establishment of reliability in development news presentations. Sometimes, the presentation of non-existent development projects, like social infrastructure, question ethical mechanism in journalism. It is the desire to ascertain how and why propaganda is used, if any, in development communication by journalists in Imo State, that this current study was contemplated. Generally, some foreign media establishments portray developing nations as "never-do-wells", crisis-stricken and disease infested environment. They show how foreign aids bring succor to such nations characterized by maladministration and corruption. It becomes pertinent to understand why propaganda is used in presenting development issues by the journalists who report those events. Is it that journalists who cover such stories perceive news as anything unusual that affects development or that they have failed to relate their reports to how events hinder or promote development in the areas discussed?

In the local scene, television commercials have sometimes presented its viewers with pictures far away from reality. The case of the second Niger bridge claimed to have been erected by the present administration in Nigeria is an example where ethical considerations in journalism have been questioned in factual reporting. The second Niger bridge in Nigeria is, no doubt, a development project that is expected to affect the economic prosperity of the South-East geopolitical zone and even parts of the South-South. One, therefore, wonders why such "a concerted set of messages aimed at influencing the opinions or behavior of large number of persons" or propaganda (Hornby, 2006) is used to deal with development issues, say in Nigeria.

Obviously, both past and present administrations in Imo State have persistently infiltrated the air waves (radio and television) and columns of newspapers and magazines with such projects like Ohaji/Egbema royal Oak refinery, Oguta wonder lake, constructions of fly-over's and dredging of Nworie river by the past dispensation. The immediate past administration through the instrumentality of the media

have continuously presented free education of the rescue mission, building homes for indigent women, constructions of numerous infrastructural projects, revamping of Adapalm and Avutu poultry farm, which are meant to foster the economic development fortunes of the state.

This painted picture of an "Eldorado" (Longman, 2009) on a developed human environment with greatly enhanced social amenities confront media consumers as the report card of performance for the state administration. The seeming media hype tends to persuade political acceptance for the government in power at the state level. The issue also remains as to whether the presented development projects on the various media channels exist in reality. It is also important to understand why the journalists in Imo State presented development stories the way they do as a persuasive form of communication.

Statement of the Problem

How to persuade mass participation in development programmes, say in Imo State is a problem confronting development communication journalism in Imo State. It entails that various approaches need to be adopted by the journalists in attracting audience attention to development projects, arousing interest in understanding how to facilitate development in communities and ensuring active participation in the conceived programmes. It means that a communication strategy that creates awareness mobilizes interest in development programmes and encourages mass participation in those projects needs to be used for efficacy in development communication. One of such strategies is propaganda.

It becomes necessary to understand how the journalists in Imo State perceive their use of propaganda in development communication. It is necessary to appreciate if the journalists ignore ethical issues in their presentations in order to achieve any specific objective. It is when the use of propaganda in development journalism is understood that the issue of subjectivity or objectivity in events reportage by journalists will be better understood and appreciated.

Objectives of the Study

However, the specific goals set to be achieved by this study are as follows:

1. To understand if propaganda is used as a strategy for presenting development stories by journalists in Imo State.
2. To find out if stories about development are coloured, so as to influence the opinion of the message consumers.
3. To ascertain how development stories are presented by journalists to affect the behavior of the message consumers, in order to contemplate, their participation in development programmes.

Research Questions

The following research questions, therefore, shall guide this study.

1. To what extent is propaganda used by journalists in Imo State to present development messages to consumers?
2. Are stories about development coloured by journalists in order to influence message consumers' opinion?
3. How do journalists present development stories in order to affect consumer participation in development?

Significance of the Study

The finding from this study would be of tremendous importance to researcher, mass communication scholars, practicing journalists, government, policy-makers, media regulatory agencies and whoever this work would be relevant to in future. This includes; to serve as an addition to the existing literature about development journalism; it will help mass communication scholars and practicing journalists to understand and appreciate the use of propaganda in development communication

presentations; it will also help policy makers to enact policies that would boost full implementation of development journalism and it will help to work out modalities on how best to practise development journalism in order to achieve the desired goals and it will also serve as a help to future researchers who might want to do future study on this area.

Scope of the Study

The study focused solely on journalists in Imo State, while other media workers were excluded. It covered journalists' perception on the use of propaganda in development communications and exclude the use of propaganda in public relations, advertising and news reportage. Also, the study was delimited to television coverage of development stories, excluding other mass media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Propaganda and Development Communication: An Overview

Kimbal Young (1980) cited in Egwu (2006, p.33), defines propaganda a deliberately planned and systematic use of symbols, chiefly through suggestions and related psychological techniques with a view to altering and controlling opinions, attitudes, ideas, values, beliefs and ultimately to changing overt actions along predetermined lines. Propaganda may be open, and its purpose avowed, or it may conceal its intentions. It always has a setting within a social-cultural framework without which neither its psychological nor its cultural features can be understood". Doob (1990) cited in Egwu (2006, p. 34) notes that propaganda is "a systematic attempt by an interested individual(s) to control the attitudes of groups of individuals through the use of suggestions, and consequently, to control their behaviour and actions".

In corroborating this view, Utobo (2012, p.123), posits that propaganda is a science of moulding opinion by spreading information (or rumour) through any channels to gain political, religious or cultural ends. According to him, propaganda can be "actions or inactions" by individual, or states "to change the cognitive and emotional image of reality held by a group or all of the members of the target group to make them conformists to desired behavioral patterns". Mojaye, and Unuhoro (2010) classified propaganda into the followings, namely: white propaganda, black propaganda and grey propaganda. White propaganda generates from an openly identified source, and is characterized by gentle methods of persuasion, such as standard public relations techniques and one-sided presentation of an argument. Black propaganda is known as being from a source, but is in fact from another. This is done to disguise the true origin of the propaganda, be it from an enemy country or from an organization with a negative public image. Grey propaganda, on the other hand, is propaganda without any identifiable source or author. A major application of this propaganda is making enemies believe falsehood by using straw arguments. Propaganda is a veritable instrument in development communication. In presentation actors in development communication mostly apply propaganda with the intent to persuade the populace of the justness of their cause as well as hide the bad sides or failures of their front lines. Misinformation and disinformation are widely used to distract people from the truth and create new realities.

Mongrine (2020) notes that propaganda is seldom associated with material prepared by government, activist groups, companies, religious organizations and even the media use propaganda in way or another. A wide range of materials and media are used for conveying propaganda messages, which changed as new technologies were invented, including paintings, cartoons, posters, pamphlets, films, radio shows, TV shows and websites. He maintained that propaganda has much in common with public information campaigns by governments, with the intent to persuade or dissuade certain forms of behavior.

Empirical Studies

Mojaye, M.E. and Unurhoro, E. (2010) in a study on "Oil war of propaganda: Use of newspapers by militants and in the Nigerian Nigeria-Delta crisis revealed that: both the military and the militants used

the newspaper for propaganda in prosecuting the oil war; the newspaper gave great prominence to the oil war with much of its headlines occupying the front pages; the frequency of the newspaper reports gave the crisis greater prominence and recognition; the militants got their side of the stories into the pages of the newspaper through electronic mail; and the display of pictures in the newspaper of heavily-armed militants helped to position the militants better than the military in the crisis.

Mongrine, (2020) in a study entitled "mass media political propaganda and the 2019 general election in Nigeria", concluded that politicians used fake news as instrument for propaganda in the 2019 general election and that such news distorted the election process. Aligwe, (2015), in a study entitled "broadcast media as state propaganda machinery: A study of Broadcasting Corporation Abia State". Found that Abia State government was using its broadcasting outfit as propaganda machinery. According to him, the media have an overwhelming function of information dissemination, promotion of socio-cultural values of the people, political awareness campaigns and broad based information on the policies of the state government.

Olubunmi, E.O. (2017) in a study on "propaganda or persuasion? A review of the Nigeria 2015 presidential election campaign process via social media" concluded that social media created a pathway that directly involve political electoral campaigns through the web. Propaganda through social media have become the leading tools by both political parties and their supporters to communicate their agenda and sway the public and consequently their electorate.

Ezejideaku, E. and Ugwu, E. N. (2007) examined the rhetoric and propaganda of political campaigns in Nigeria. It was therefore, revealed that the campaigners relied on rhetoric, propaganda and other linguistic devices to make their messages more persuasive and appealing. They further concluded that Nigerian politicians will outwit the others in the business of weaving words together for persuasive purposes.

Ngoa, S.N. (2011) in a study entitled "a review and analytical narrative of propaganda activities: A Nigerian perspective", found that with all the manipulative maneuvers associated with Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo in his bid to push for a constitutional extension of his tenure in office, the double-edge sword of effective propaganda turned against him and his propaganda machine for the elongation of his stay in office.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on development media and situational theories. Baran and Davis (2006) cited in Ineji (2012, p.5) report that developmental media theory advocates media support for existing political regime and its efforts to bring about national economic development. The theory argues that until a nation is well established and its economic development well on the way, media must be supportive rather than critical of government. Konkwo (2012, p. 61), asserts that the theory seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the press in countries that are conventionally classified together as "developing countries" or third world countries". Limiting it to this study, Nigerian journalists should rise up to the occasion and embrace this alternative journalism development. It portrays that the journalists are to be supportive as well as sing the song of government developmental efforts.

Also, situational theory advocates that special consideration should often being given to a particular situation before it is taken for reportage. The theory is circumstantial. This is so because ethics here is based on the situational heart of the moment. In spite of the fact that situationists agree on the need for properly defined ethical precepts, the application of such precepts in professional practice should all depend on the prevailing situation the practitioner find himself (Nwodu, 2006,p. 141). Fab-Ukozor (2004), opines that situationist journalist is the practitioner who thinks it is right to distort a particular story or not publish it at all if he/she foresees that harm may be done to some group of people or to the

country by publishing such. Anchoring it to the study, journalists in developing nations like Nigeria should understand that they are ethically bound to promote social change and encourage national development, in view of the fact, that Nigeria is grappling with challenges of development, so the art of battling with development needs of the nation should inform an ethicists journalists to focus its reportage on development related issues towards liberating the nation from the shackles of underdevelopment.

Research Methodology

The survey research method was used in this study. It enables quantitative data to be obtained from the journalists using questionnaire. The method provided this study with an opportunity to obtain the opinion and views of journalists in Imo State as to how they perceive propaganda use in development communication presentations. The population of the study was registered journalists in Imo State which according to the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ, 2019), Imo State chapter is 127 persons as at the time of this study. Hence, the population of practising journalists to be studied is 127. The researcher, therefore, adopt the census method or sampling to get the view of the entire population of the study which is 127. Also 127 as a population of the study can easily be studied. Thus, a sample size of 127 was used for the study. Closed-ended questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Questions contained in the questionnaire proffered answer options and improved the rate of return for complete copies of the questionnaire. This study adopted the pilot study approach and administered 10 copies of the questionnaire to journalists in Imo Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), Owerri, to test if the tool for data collection would measure the items they were designed to measure. The result of this pre-test was documented. Again, another set of 20 copies of the same questionnaire were distributed to the same set of journalists, two weeks later. The result obtained from the post-test was also documented and compared with that of the pre-test and the result correspond. It means that the questionnaire is both valuable and reliable. Again, expressed opinions were measured on the summation rating scale in order to determine the veracity of claimed. This approach used likert scale as the inferential statistical method in answering the research questions. The study assigned values to each code in a descending order from 5 to 1 for positively nodded statement and 1 to 5 for negatively designed items. The decision point, (DP) was also determined at 3.0.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Demographic Data

Out of the 127 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 107 was returned and usable for the study. Hence, 107 copies questionnaire were used for the analysis.

Table 1: Respondents sex

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	80	75%
Female	27	25%
Total	**107**	**100%**

The result above shows that majority of the respondents were males at 75% while 25% were females. It means that most of the practicing journalists in Imo State were males.

Table 2: Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**

Single	43	40%
Married	57	53%
Divorced	0	0%
Widowed	7	7%
Total	**107**	**100%**

The result from the table above indicates that more than half of the number sample, representing 60% were ever-married, whereas 40% were single. This implies that journalism profession is mainly for the able bodied men and women.

Table 3: Age of respondents in the sample

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-28years	35	33%
29-39years	50	47%
40-50	12	11%
51 and above	10	9%
Total	**107**	**100%**

The result above reveals that journalism profession is meant for the young adult. For instance, forty seven percent of the journalists were within the age range of 29-50 which is more than a half of the total population 58%.

Table 4: Academic qualification of the respondents

Academic qualifications	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
O'Level	13	12%
ND/NCE/technical	27	25%
HND/B.Sc.	45	42%
Masters/equivalent	18	17%
Ph.D	4	4%
Total	107	100%

Result from the table above shows that 88% or majority of the respondents holders of HND/B.Sc, followed by ND/NCE, MA/M.Sc and Ph.D respectively. It means that majority of the practising

journalists in Imo State were trained as professional journalists and as such hold valid opinion concerning the issue understand.

Table 6: Job status of the respondents

Job status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Editors	10	9.2%
Reporters	70	65.4%
Correspondents	13	12%
Produced/presenters	8	7.4%
Newscasters	6	6%
Total	**107**	**100%**

The obtained result from the above table indicates 100% of the respondents were editors, reporters, correspondents, producers/presenters and newscasters respectively. It means that all respondents were media professionals.

Table 5: Respondents' organization

Organization	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Newspaper	55	51%
Television	15	15%
Radio	20	19%
Magazine	16	15%
Total	**107**	**100%**

Result from the table above shows that more than half of the respondents in the sample or 51% worked in newspaper houses. It means that majority of the respondents work for newspapers.

Psychographics Data

Items in the second part of the questionnaire or section B were used in answering the posed questions expected to direct the study. The items in the questionnaire were used as follows:

Table 6: Extent of propaganda use by journalists

Item 6		**Response**					**Total**	**Mean value $\bar{x}$=3.0**
Thus, propaganda is implored in the presentation of development stories by journalists	Code	SA=5	A=4	UD=3	D-2	SD=1		
	Frequency	25	40	16	15	11	107	374=3.49
	Code value result	125	160	48	30	11	374	107

	Percentage	23.36	37.38	15	14	10.28	100	X=3.49>3.0

The obtained data indicates that the calculated mean value of 3.49 was greater than the decision point value of 3.0. It means that x=3.49>3.0. The result, therefore, confirmed that journalists use propaganda to a large extent in development stories presentations. This implies that most journalists in a bid to discharge their duties slant their stories in a way that it suites them

Table 7: Colouration of development stories by journalists

Item 7	Response						Total	Mean value X=3.0
It means development stories are coloured to influence message consumers opinion positively	Code	SA=5	A=4	UD=3	D-2	SD=1		
	Frequency	20	41	25	11	10	107	374=3.46 / 107
	Code value result	100	164	75	22	10		X=3.46>3.0
	Percentage	18.69	18.69	38.31	23.36	9	100	

The obtained result above indicates that the calculated mean value of 3.46 is greater than the decision point value of 3.0. It shows that x=3.46>3.0. It means development stories are coloured by journalists. This means that they deliberately or undeliberately distort the facts of the story and make them appear persuasive in nature.

Table 8: Style that affects consumer participation in development

Item 8	Response						Total	Mean value x=3.0
The use of propaganda in development stories is to affect consumer participation in development programmes.	Code	SA=5	A=4	UD=3	D-2	SD=1	107	
	Frequency	20	33	20	19	15	107	34.5=3.22 / 107
	Code value result	100	132	60	38	15	345	$\overline{X}$=3.22>30
	Percentage	18.69	30.8	18.69	17.7	14	100	

It shows that the mean value of 3.22 was greater than the decision point value of 3.0. The result, therefore, confirmed that journalists present development stories in a style that affect consumer participation in development. It means that media professionals package, design and disseminate messages patterning to development in such away that it will attract public acceptance.

Discussion of Finding

The study found the following discussed results:

Research Question 1: To what extent is propaganda used by journalists in Imo State to present development messages to consumers? In responding to this table 6 was relied upon. The result from table 6 showed that mean score of 3.49. It means that majority of the journalists used propaganda to a large extent in presenting development stories. This is in line with the theoretical framework. Fab-Ukozor (2004), opines that situationist journalist is the practitioner who thinks it is right to distort a particular story or not publish it at all if he/she foresees that harm may be done to some group of people or to the country by publishing such. In corroborating this, Mojaye et al (2010) revealed that both the military and the militants used the newspaper for propaganda in prosecuting the oil war; the newspaper gave great prominence to the oil war with much of its headlines occupying the front pages; the frequency of the newspaper reports gave the crisis greater prominence and recognition; the militants got their side of the stories into the pages of the newspaper through electronic mail; and the display of pictures in the newspaper of heavily-armed militants helped to position the militants better than the military in the crisis.

Research Question 2: Are stories about development coloured by journalists in order to influence message consumers' opinion? To answer the research question above table 7 was used. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents' believed that development stories were coloured to influence message consumers opinion at 3.46 mean value. The finding implies that development stories are coloured by journalists in order to influence message consumers' opinion positively. Again, Olubunmi (2017) concludes that propaganda through social media have become the leading tools by both political parties and their supporters to relate their agenda and sway the public and consequently their votes. Similarly, Aligwe (2015) contends that Abia State government used its broadcasting outfit as tool propaganda. In the same vein, Mongrine (2020) concludes that politicians used fake news as instrument for propaganda in the 2019 general election and that such news were distorted to influence the electoral process.

Research Question 3: How do journalists present development stories in order to affect consumer participation in development? In answering the research above table 8 was relied upon. The finding indicated that majority of the journalists believed that propaganda was used to affect consumers' behaviour positively towards participating in development programmes as show in table 8 with mean value of 3.22. The finding, therefore, showed that propaganda as style was adopted by journalists in presenting development stories with the aim to affect consumer participation in development programmes. This finding is in accordance with the demands of development media theory, which advocates media support for existing political regime and its efforts to bring about national economic development. In relation to this, Ngoa (2011) found that with all the manipulative maneuvers associated with Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo in a bid to push for a constitutional extension of his tenure in office, the double-edge sword of effective propaganda turned against him and his propaganda machine for the elongation of his stay in office. In corroborating this, Aligwe (2015) contends that the media have an overwhelming function of information dissemination, promotion of socio-cultural values of the people, political awareness campaigns and broad based information on the policies of the state government.

Summary of Findings

The obtained results found that:

1. Propaganda is one of the persuasive communication strategies used by journalists in Imo State, and it is used to a large extent.

2. Stories about development are coloured by the opinion of the journalists. This they do, to influence message consumers' opinion to accept development stories hook line and sinker as

presented in television programmes. It means that presented development stories on television cannot be said to be objective.

3. Journalists present development stories in such a manner to affect behaviour of message consumers positively in their participation to development programmes through the instrumentality of propaganda.

Conclusion

The use of propaganda in the presentation of development stories by journalists in Imo State was to a large extent. Development stories presented on the television was from the journalists' perspective. The presented development stories on television hardly represented reality. This explains why journalists coloured their reportage or story so that the audience will accept the story on its first value. Journalists in Imo State are determine to support the desired development by adopting propaganda in order to ensure that consumers of such message eventually participate in development programmes, embarked upon by the government. The finding therefore showed that a relationship existed between the use of propaganda and stories about development as presented by journalists.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for journalists to uphold professional and journalism ethics rather than succumbing to adverse influences that water down the quality of information required for sustainable socio-economic development.

2. There is need for journalists to use propaganda in a prudent manner by giving accurate fair and truthful reportage of development-related programmes. This can only be achieved by verifying the authenticity of development without being biased. The essence of which is that development is vital to human existence and as such should not be toyed with.

3. There should be a tripartite relationship between the government, media and the ordinary citizens in society. In designing, packaging and execution of development programmes. It is only when this is accomplished that the citizen can fully participate in development programmes.

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