



Environmental Education and Media Role in Creating Awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Media is said to be the fourth pillar of democracy. The media's power to stimulate the minds of millions of people is its key function. One of the important roles of media is that of raising awareness on some of the burning issues of the world. Environmental issues are numerous and affect all aspects of life. Or to put it another way, nobody is immune to the effects of environmental problems. This paper examined media's role in creating awareness with regard to environmental education. Three objectives were stated to guide the study and the survey design was adopted. Population of this study were residents of Ogun State which span through three Senatorial Districts, (Ogun Central East and West) Ogun State, Nigeria. A total samples of 200 residents were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques (Stratified, Simple random and purposive). A survey was used to acquire the data for the study. with a Likert-type rating scale. Data was analysed using SPSS software 25.0. Findings revealed lack of education on environmental ($X = 2.51$, $SD = 0.86$) and weak government policies ($X = 2.13$, $SD = 0.97$) were some of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. The result of the hypothesis revealed a positive significant correlation between environmental education and media awareness ($r = .649$, $p < .05$). The study recommended that the media should create more awareness on environmental hazards which can stimulate the public interest on the need to frequently observe governmental policies on environment.

Keywords: Media, Awareness Creation, Environmental Education

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Introduction

A section of the earth's natural environment includes all naturally occurring living and non-living things. It is a setting that includes how all living things interact. Industries grew and developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Archana, 2011). Due to this, the amount of forest cover has decreased and urbanisation has grown exponentially. Large tracts of wood have been lost mostly as a result of tree cutting and forest fires that were started to make room for growing agricultural and industrial sectors (Nzeadibe,

Egbule, Chukwuone, & Agu, 2011). The environment, in the opinion of Saikia (2017), is essential for all living creatures. Countries in both developed and developing worlds are struggling with serious environmental issues. While some of the problems may be similar because they are global in scope (such as global warming and ozone layer depletion), others are distinctly local. If environmental protection is not implemented, life on Earth will eventually become extinct. When used in this context, environmental awareness can be characterised as a strategy for

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assisting social groups and individuals in acquiring a fundamental understanding of the environment and the problems it is connected with.

One of the crucial functions of the media is to increase public knowledge of some of the most pressing global concerns, like the environment. According to Ukwela (2017), the goal of media, especially broadcast programming, is to positively affect the audience by providing them with relevant and timely information, entertainment, or education that will cause positive changes in their behaviour and attitudes. As a result of the media's significant contribution to bringing up environmental issues and concerns, along with the expanding significance of environmental education, these topics have received unprecedented global attention. Broadcast media, according to Maidunoma and Falmatani (2018), are effective tools that can depict the real picture for the audience to visualise the various environmental issues like sanitation and hygiene practises, global warming, waste management, safe water, climate change, deforestation, air pollution, and afforestation. According to Mannar (2014), media plays crucial roles in educating the public about complicated and dangerous topics like environmental challenges. In doing this, the media sets the agenda by repeatedly and relentlessly drawing attention to specific events or concerns through newspaper articles, current-issue, television debates, and radio awareness campaigns, as well as by informing the public of the gravity of the situation. The vibrant Nigerian media, which consists of over 200 radio stations, 150 television channels, and about 350 print (newspaper) outlets, has, in the opinion of Smith, Smith, and Ajayi (2020), remained a force to be reckoned with and has been obedient to its social obligations as the fourth estate of the realm. Okunnu and Olatunji (2020) opined that the media have remained essential because they act as a strong conduit between the government, society, and the governed as well as perform the watchdog duty that is one of its statutory major responsibilities and functions, supporting the aforementioned assertion.

These positions give them the ability to communicate government initiatives and policies. The mass media's surveillance function necessitates that they keep tabs on society and alert citizens about new issues (Oyedele, 2021). This role is an illustration of the media's "watchdog role." This is due to the fact that when a dog watches an area, it tries to alert people whenever there is a perceived risk. When a dog barks, it often draws attention from onlookers and may even prompt them to take precautionary measures. As a result, the mass media's surveillance function requires them to continuously monitor society, assess occurrences, and identify areas that could endanger society's overall well-being.

In addition to the fact that knowledge is a crucial decision-making tool, environmental education needs to be requirement at all educational levels, from basic school to postsecondary institutions. When speaking about environmental protection at the World Environmental Conference (WEC) in Bali, Indonesia, in 2017, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon provided evidence of the significance of environmental education. He said, to find a solution, every country must be involved in contributing to the promotion of environmental awareness (UNEP 2017).

There are many environmental challenges that affect every element of living. But, the level of vulnerability varies by region and sector. For the general people, the media serves as their main information source. Therefore, the media must set an agenda for environmental issues and give them priority in order to save lives as well as raise awareness. The creation of awareness about these issues has not been identified in all media institutions and developmental projects within the various economic sectors, and society at large, according to an overview of environmental assessment documents and annual environmental reports. As a result, information is not being disseminated enough to enable the enormous rise of the fight against environmental degradation. It is important to assess the media's contribution to a



favourable movement in public opinion as well as the problems with geographic coverage, accessibility to communities, and audience response to media messages. This study therefore examines media role and the challenges faced in creating environmental awareness. As well test if there is significant relationship between environmental education and media awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria

Methodology

The study used a survey-design methodology. The researchers were able to concentrate on the study's population and sample thanks to this methodology. - The study's design enabled the researchers to draw conclusions about population parameters using sample statistics for a quantitative study. Residents of Ogun

State, which is located in Nigeria and is divided into three senatorial districts (Ogun Central, East, and West), made up the study's population. - Through the use of multiple-stage sampling procedures (including stratified, quota, and purposive sampling techniques), 300 residents in total were chosen as samples. The residents engaged in different occupations that might contributed to environment in one way or the other. The data collection instrument was questionnaire. Data were analysed with Inferential and Descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The descriptive statistics were used because it involves simple percentages, frequencies while hypothesis was tested using Pearson Correlation Moment.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	91	46.4
Female	119	53.6
Age (Years)		
18-25 years	54	26.4
26-35 years	60	31.8
36-45 years	45	22.7
46-55 years	41	19.1
Education		
No Formal Education	19	8.2
SSCE/GCE	54	21.9
NCE/OND	95	59.1
First Degree	32	10.9
Religion		
Christianity	111	55.5
Islam	73	39.1
Traditional	16	5.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 showed that 53.6% of the respondents were female while 46.4% were male. For the age category of the respondents, 31.8% were within the age

category of 26-35 years, 26.4% were within the age category of 18-25 years, 22.7% were within the age category of 36-45 years while 19.1% were within 46-

55 years. Based on educational qualification, 59.1% had NCE/OND qualification, 21.9% had SSCE/GCE while 10.9% had First degree. Based on religion,

55.5% were Christians, 39.1% were Muslims while 5.5% practiced Traditional religion.

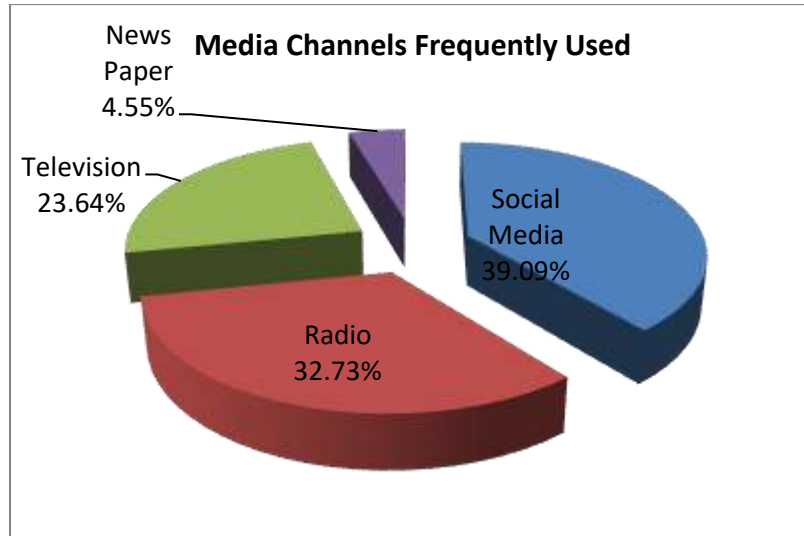


Figure 1: Media Channel Frequently used in Reporting Environmental Issues

Figure 1 showed that 30.09% of the respondents claimed that social media is one of the media channels frequently used in reporting environmental issues, 32.73% claimed that radio is one of the frequently used media, 23.6% of the respondents claimed that the Television is one of the frequently used media while 4.55% claimed that News Paper is one of the

frequently used media used in reporting environmental issues. This implies that the most frequently used media used in reporting environmental issues are social media platforms, radio and Television.

Research Question One:

What is the role of media on environmental awareness?

Table 2: Role of media on environmental awareness

S/No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand. Dev
1.	Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts	59 (53.6%)	45 (40.9%)	6 (5.5%)	-	2.13	0.97
2.	Media advertises ways of protecting the environment	60 (54.5%)	43 (39.1%)	7 (6.4%)	-	1.95	0.68
3.	Media provides articles on environment	25 (22.7%)	69 (62.7%)	13 (11.8%)	3(2.7%)	1.52	0.62
4.	It announces government laws on environment	16 (14.5%)	84 (76.4%)	5 (4.5%)	5 (4.5%)	1.42	0.94

Table 2 showed that 59 (53.6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 45 (40.9%) while 6 (5.5%) disagree that Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts, 60 (54.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 43 (39.1%) agree while 7 (6.4%) disagree that Media advertises ways of protecting the environment, 25 (22.7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 69 (62.7%) agree, 13 (11.8%) disagree while 3(2.7%) strongly disagree that Media provides articles on environment. Furthermore, 16 (14.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 84 (76.4%) agree while 5 (4.5%) disagree and

strongly disagree respectively that it announces government laws on environment. The Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts has the highest mean score ($X = 2.13$, $SD = 0.97$) followed by Media advertises ways of protecting the environment with a mean score ($X = 1.95$, $SD = 0.68$).

Research Question Two:

What are the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness?

Table 3: Challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand. Dev
1.	Lack of skills on environmental issue	21 (19.1%)	63 (57.3%)	20 (18.2%)	6 (5.5%)	2.51	0.86
2.	Journalists lack access to understandable information on environment issue	31 (28.2%)	53 (48.2%)	14 (12.7%)	12 (10.9%)	1.86	0.63
3.	Weak government policies	42 (38.2%)	53 (48.2%)	13 (11.8%)	2 (1.8%)	2.13	0.97
4	Low funding of the media	37 (33.6%)	54 (49.1%)	19 (17.3%)	-	1.52	0.62

Table 3 showed that 21 (19.1%) of the respondents strongly agree, 63 (57.3%) agree, 20 (18.2%) disagree while 6 (5.5%) strongly disagree that Lack of skills on environmental issue is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness, 31 (28.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 53 (48.2%) agree, 14 (12.7%) disagree while 12 (10.9%) strongly disagree that journalists lack access to understandable information on environment issue, 42 (38.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 53 (48.2%) agree, 13 (11.8%) disagree while 2 (1.8%) strongly disagree that weak government policies is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. Furthermore, 37 (33.6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 54 (49.1%) agree, 19

(17.3%) disagree that low funding of the media is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. Lack of skills on environmental issue has the highest mean score ($X = 2.51$, $SD = 0.86$) followed by Weak government policies with mean score ($X = 2.13$, $SD = 0.97$).

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness

Table 4: Pearson Correlations of the relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness

		Environment al education	Environmental awareness
Environmental education	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	110	110
Environmental awareness	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	110	110

The result of the hypothesis revealed a positive significant correlation between environmental education and environmental awareness ($r = .649$, $p < .05$). This indicates that there is a positive relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness which implies that high level of environmental education increases environmental awareness.

Conclusion

After reviewing all the relevant data, it is obvious that the media has a big impact on how people perceive and are aware of environmental issues. The study's findings showed a substantial positive association between media awareness and environmental education ($r = .649$, $p = .05$). This result supports Maidunoma and Falmatani's (2018) argument that media outlets should use a variety of sources to create more trustworthy and fair stories. According to Saneh (2018), the media has always addressed social and environmental issues, making it the most innovative tool for raising awareness of environmental conservation. Saneh's (2018) findings concur with the findings of this study, which showed that the media is essential for rousing individuals from inactivity because it has the capacity to communicate certain messages. Similarly, Saikia (2017) discovered that since the media has always covered social and environmental issues, it is the most innovative tool for raising awareness about environmental conservation. The findings are also supported by PMC (2006), which stated that some of the difficulties in reporting on

environmental issues include a lack of information, a lack of editorial support, community ignorance of and misunderstanding of environmental issues, pressure from industry and environmental groups, and a lack of skill and training. Along with government representatives, environmental activists, scientists, and businessmen, journalists and broadcasters set the agenda for environmental debate and decision-making.

Environmental issues receive thorough front-page attention in the media for readers and viewers. Not to mention the campaigns that the government and other governmental bodies have started to raise awareness. Media representations, from news to entertainment, play a crucial role in connecting formal environmental science and politics with the realities of how people really perceive and engage with their environments. A fundamental problem for many nations throughout the world is how to incorporate the environment into development strategy and use communication and education as tools of policy. Broadcast media have consistently shown to be one of the most effective and influential channels for prospective sources available now for environmental education.

They play a key role in distributing environmental information to the general public. While some groups use it to document instances of environmental crimes and damage, the majority use it to encourage environmental action and awareness. According to this study, the media can increase public awareness of environmental issues by emphasizing the value of



routinely checking weather forecasts and other weather conditions.

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