

*Public Perception of Media Coverage of the Activities of the Independent Corrupt  
Practices Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria*



## **Public Perception of Media Coverage of the Activities of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study set out to investigate the awareness level, attention and attitude of the public towards media coverage of the activities of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC). It also considered the appraisal of how the public select, organize and interpret stimuli about the commission. Consequent on the above, the study focused on identifying the factors and variables that define the perceptual frame of the public on media coverage of ICPC's activities. The survey research design was employed in the study while the instruments were the personal interview and questionnaire. From the study population of 13,000, a sample size of 400 was drawn through a multi-stage design. However, only 383 copies of the questionnaires were valid for analysis using the simple percentage to analyze data relevant to the research questions; Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the Chi-square for testing hypotheses. The study confirmed that ICPC has adequately communicated information about herself in the media with the intent of eliciting adequate attention and awareness on her activities which have been discovered to be high. It established that the public selected stimuli about the ICPC mainly from the print and electronic media as opposed to the established medium of the civil servants - official memo; organized whatever stimuli about the commission based on the rate of exposure towards her activities; past experiences; available information on the ICPC; rate of success recorded by the commission and communicated by the media; societal attitude towards the commission and the physical environment among others; and interpreted stimuli along the degree of media coverage of the commission's activities as well as her performance in recent times. It was therefore concluded that the public perceived media coverage of the activities of the commission as adequate, necessary, informative and necessary in the fight against corruption but contend that media presentation of the commission is markedly different from what the commission actually is. This conclusion is based on the physiological and psychological factors that define the respondent. The study recommended amongst others that the ICPC should not only publicize her activities,

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but ensure adequate media coverage directed at specific target groups to achieve adequate communication.

**Keywords:** Perception, Publics, Corruption, Media Coverage

## INTRODUCTION

The level of corruption has been used as an index in measuring the efficiency of governments and development in countries across the globe with the underdeveloped countries tagged as ‘most corrupt’. At other instances, corruption has been blamed for the poor state of infrastructural development in a country. But section 2 of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act 2000 in Nigeria, sees corruption as activities revolving around bribery, fraud and other related offences including the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit.

Consequently, corrupt practices according to The ICPC Act 2000 (2000, p.17) and Articles 15 – 28 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2003, pp.13-17) range from accepting gratification by an official; giving or accepting gratification through an agent; corrupt offers to public officers; corrupt demand by persons; fraudulent acquisition of property; fraudulent receipt of property; deliberate frustration of investigation by the commission; making of false statements or returns in respect of money or property received; gratification by and through agents; bribery of public officers in relation to voting or performance of duty; using office or position to gratify or confer unfair advantage on oneself, relation or associate; bribery in relation to auctions; inflation of the price of goods and services; award of contract without budgetary provision; transferring money from one vote to another (virement); failure to report bribery transactions; dealing with, holding, receiving or concealing gratification to willfully making false petitions.

These practices are very well etched in the fabrics of the Nigerian society (Ballat, 2007). As stated by Essien (2007, p.2) “there is no doubt that Nigeria had been perceived as a corrupt country”. At inception of the civilian administration in 1999, Nigeria was rated by Transparency International as the second most corrupt country in the world”, but with the efforts of agencies as ICPC, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Due Process Unit, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), it is no longer business as usual as the invidious and destabilizing impacts of corruption on the socio-economic well being of the country are being mitigated to the extent of being recognized “as 6<sup>th</sup> most corrupt nation in 2005”. However, recent releases by Transparency International revealed that Nigeria has improved her ratings to

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121 worst corrupt nations from the 147 it was in 2007. These efforts are continuing.

The World Anti-Corruption Day was set at December 9 every year after the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) opened up an instrument at the international stage for the fight against corruption in Merida, Mexico in 2003. Nigeria, as a country, signed the instrument the same year. Quoting *extensively* from NEPAD (2007, p.9), it was noted that:

*The Nigeria Governance and Corruption Study (2003) measured the perceptions of Nigerians on the major problems of development and ranked corruption in the public sector only second to unemployment, while corruption in the private sector was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> ... Most Nigerian surveyed believed that the key organs of bureaucracy and governance (Federal and State Executive councils and local councils, political parties, members of the National Assembly) were very dishonest. Our survey (APRM) in 2006 shows that similar perception persists. In other words, corruption persists in Nigeria. ... Again, our mass household and elite survey results reveal public appeal, approval and effectiveness of the related policy initiatives.*

But efforts at combating the scourge in Nigeria predate the UNCAC Convention. Although no definite date could be penciled down as the start point of corruption in Nigeria, Ekpo (2006) posits that the early 1970's provided a water-shed in the process of institutionalizing corruption in Nigeria and the practice has grown steadily to a point of being rated for three consecutive years (2000, 2001 and 2002) as the second most corrupt country. This rating is a direct effect of several failed attempts in the past at wiping or reducing the incidence of corruption to a tolerable level. It should be noted that the media did not give the desired coverage to the activities of these earlier anti-corruption agencies detailed below not until the recent efforts (Ekpo, 2007, p.2).

From the Jaji Declaration in 1977 by General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Ethical Revolution of Shagari in 1981-1983; War Against Indiscipline by Buhari in 1984; National Orientation Movement by Babangida in 1986; Mass Mobilization for Social Emancipation and Justice by Babangida in 1987; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption in 1996 by Abacha down to the various instruments (ICPC, EFCC, Due Process, APRM) by President Olusegun Obasanjo, the level of consciousness and responsiveness to the fight against corruption has been raised by the media to a point that is expected to dominate public discourse and may ultimately reduce the level of corrupt practices. ICPC News (2007) and ICPC (2005, pp. 33,35,50,51,66,67,88,89 & 90) provide ample evidence to suggest that the media have given what could be described as frenzied campaign to the activities of anti-corruption agencies, providing coverage for both high- and low-profiled cases treated by them.

The problem of this study, therefore, is since ICPC has intensified efforts at performing her constitutionally defined roles which have been given adequate media coverage based on the belief that the ICPC is performing well, what then is the level of awareness, attention and attitude of

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the public towards the media coverage of these activities of the commission and how do the public select; organize and interpret [perceive] sensory data from the media about Independent Corrupt Practices Commission ?

**Research Hypotheses**

The stated null hypotheses [H0] and there corresponding alternate hypotheses [H1] were:

1. [H0] The level of awareness/attention paid to media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly related to the perception held of her by the public

[H1] The level of awareness/attention paid to media coverage of the activities of the commission is significantly related to the perception held of her by the public.

2. [H0] Public perception of media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly related to the variables/factors identified.[H1]Public perception of media coverage of the activities of the commission is significantly related to the variables/factors identified.

3. [H0] Public perception of media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly different from the perception the commission holds of itself.[H1] Public perception of media coverage of the activities of the commission is significantly different from the perception the commission holds of itself.

4.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Perception: Frame and Characteristics.**

Perception according to Fill (2006, p.122) is “concerned with how individuals see and make sense of their environment. It is all about the selection, organization and interpretation of stimuli by individuals so that they can understand the world”. The essence of selection is for attention to be given to the stimuli; this is complemented by a process of organizing them into a comprehensible unit for meaning to be ascribed to them and then, these are interpreted with burgeoning influences from attitudes, values, motives and past experiences as well as the character of the stimuli.

In forming perception on a stimulus, McGuire (1976) identified eight interrelated stages. The stages begin from exposure to the information; selective attention; comprehension of attended information; agreement with comprehended information; retention in memory of accepted information; retrieval of information from memory; decision making from alternatives and actual action taken on the basis of the decision. The action involves forming a perception about the stimulus exposed to. All the stages are webbed together and a wrong factoring at any of these stages may likely affect the way the stimuli are selected, organized and interpreted.

While drawing an analogy between perception and comprehension, Shimp (2000, p.137) underscores the perceptual process of interpreting stimuli, which he called perceptual encoding. Two stages are said to be involved in this process namely the feature analysis and active synthesis. Both analyses focus on the degree of attention generated. The feature analysis according to Shimp (2000, p.137), “is the initial stage whereby a receiver examines the basic feature of the stimulus (such as size, shape, colour and angles) and from this makes preliminary classifications or grouping”; whereas the active synthesis “goes beyond merely examining physical features”. It focuses on the context or situation in which information is received as well. Information received is well defined by media coverage of the stimuli in question. Interpretation as depicted by perceptual processes “results from combining, synthesizing stimulus features with expectations of what should be present in the context in which a stimulus is perceived”. Comprehension resides in the feature analysis, while perception is in the active analysis.

But then, wrong perceptions or misconceptions might occur and are typically done in what Shimp (2000, p.139) describes as “without conscious awareness”. It is fitting to draw on the work of Carr (1979, p.25) which advances three (3) basic characteristics that help in distinguishing perception. First, it is selective as it has to do with people’s personal needs, motives, interests, beliefs and leaning as people rely on evidences of past experience to give credence to what they support or reject. Next are the socio-cultural affinity and environmental factors; and then the influence by six things in the environment. These are changes, reputation, intensity, contrast, novelty and distraction. Giles and Powersland (1995) added the fourth and fifth characteristics. They assert that perception is active and not fixated because it is capable of being modified at any point in time on the basis of newer information released from any medium and conviction, forcing the perceiver to evaluate his/her position, opinion, meanings and interpretations. The last characteristic is the relativeness of the concept of perception to objects, events, issue, situations etc.

Accordingly, Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1992, p.64) conclude that perception is influenced by three sets of determinants. These are physical stimuli falling upon the eyes, ear, nose, and skin of the perceiver; the psychological state of the perceiver and the physiological equipment of the organism. Perception, therefore, gives the basic framework for interpreting experiences, and the environment play significant roles. As have been amplified, exposure and attention are prerequisite for perception and equally create the desired degree of effects (Batra, Meyers and Aaker, 1996, p.220). This aligns with the position that perception is the “process by which an individual maintains contact with his environment” and it is “the process whereby an individual receives stimuli through the various senses and interprets them” (Kollat, Blackwell and Engel, 1970, p.48)

Perceiving the activities of the ICPC as presented in the media, no doubt with the contributions of wrong societal ethos from the institutionalizing of

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corruption before the inauguration of ICPC, is likely to affect what impression is held about anti-corruption agencies such as ICPC.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Theory of Perception**

In providing a base for this theory, Little (1999) advance three fundamental questions which are - how does an external reality influence the perception? What are the steps in that influence? How can the influence be conceptualized? Since perception has to do with selecting, organizing and interpreting stimuli with the use of the senses, there is therefore the likelihood of something influencing the sensory mechanism within ourselves, more so when the extent of our senses could be manipulated. Again, these perceptual systems, is argued can be active without any psychological factors (Magnussen and Greenless, 1997).

Little equally drew from the premise of Palmer (1975) where it was argued that while it is difficult to engage in uninterrupted perception, it is possible to stop the process, to raise the key issue of the possibility perceiving without being aware of it. The response to this meant that two distinct levels of perception are defined – immediate and interpretative levels – which were both germane to this study.

The essence of both approaches is informed by the facts that perception is psychoanalytical and relates greatly to the psychological and physiological disposition of the perceiver. This clearly aligns with several other theoretical propositions of perception and the individuality of the process.

### **2.7.2 Agenda Setting Theory**

The theory attributed to Walter Lippman (1922) in his famed work on *Public Opinion*, indicates that the mass media create images of events in people's mind that helps them in forming perception about the subject. This effort prompts Cohen (1963, p.13) to argue that: *the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. And it follows from this that the world looks different to different people depending not only on their personal interest, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the writers, the editors and the publishers of the papers they read.*

These views of Cohen were significantly shaped by the predominance of the media at the time, the print medium; while the media is said to draw maps in the mental spleen of its consumers in a stunningly successful manner. In describing the Agenda Setting approach, two views present themselves, the broad and the narrow sense.

The point of emphasis for the broad sense according to Miller (2002, p.258) is in terms of three independent but related agenda. These are the media agenda, the public agenda and the policy agenda. The media agenda is

seen as a set of topics addressed by media sources as newspapers, television, radio, magazines; the public agenda sets topics that members of the public believe are hegemonically important to public discourse while the policy agenda represents issues that policy makers or decision makers believe are particularly salient and definitive of a society. In its narrow sense, it concentrates on the link between the media agenda and the public agenda, stemming out of the work of McCombs and Shaws (1972).

While Zhu and Blood (1997) see the agenda setting game as being played in the mind of the public by leading them to assign relative importance to various public issues; Folarin (1998, p.68) says the elements involved include the quantity or frequency of reportage, the prominence given to the reports through all forms of audio visual displays and timings, the degree of conflict generated and the cumulative media specific effects over time.

In all, McQuail and Windahl (1993, p.105) argue that the basic idea is that amongst a given range of issues or topics, those which get more media attention will grow in their familiarity and perceived importance over a period of time, and those which get less will decline correspondingly. Talking about the relationship between the three levels of agenda, it is said that media agenda influences public agenda thus making public agenda a virtual reflection of what the media pertains itself with. The underlying quotient of the media agenda influencing public agenda is the basis for which perception could be formed on the media coverage of the commission. There is the possibility for the public agenda to drive the media agenda, but studies have indicated a stronger pull towards the former than the later (Zhu and Blood, 1997; McQuail and Windahl, 1993).

The theoretical developments which gave credence to the theory are Consistency Factors, Second-level Agenda Setting, Explication of dependent variables, and Explication of the Psychological Mechanism. For the Consistency Factor, the focus is on audience characteristics, the issue and the media that might predict variations in the agenda setting effect. On audience characteristics are needs for orientations (relational), educational level, political interest. For issues, the obtrusiveness of such issue, that is if most members of the public had had direct contact with it, is important. Unobtrusive issues present the strongest base for agenda setting because people are not well aware of it and depend on the media. The contingency factor that rubs off on the media simply ask which of the media will have a stronger lasting impact if such issues come out through her. The effects of the second level agenda setting on the development of the Agenda Setting theory draws on the attribute of the object for agenda. Unlike the first level agenda which just mention the object, for instance media coverage of the activities of the ICPC, the second level instill interests by talking about the attributes that actually makes the media cover such activities. Thus, second level agenda meant that the media actually influences public opinion, perception and attitude.



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The theory finds relevance in this study in that there is a strong correlation between media coverage about the subject and the perception people hold of the subject. There is the likelihood to suggest that the extent of media coverage as depicted by the intensity, frequency, content and frames which are index in measuring agenda setting is directly related to the degree of perception generated.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The survey design was used in this study. The population of this study was thirteen thousand 13,000 subjects. Drawing from Meyer's (1979, p.23) categorization of sample size relative to population, a sample size of 400 was used for the study. The questionnaire and structured interview were the research instruments employed to get data.

To achieve reliability in line with Bordens and Abbott (2008, p.127) approach, the questionnaire was administered twice to a group of 20 persons, who though not part of the respondents for the final data collection process, but are aware of the activities of the ICPC. 85% or 0.85 strength of correlation was realized. This was deemed to have acceptable level of stability when compared to the established 0.95 regarded as high reliability. Data analysis for the research questions was the frequency and simple percentage. The simple percentage helped to analyze the data generated from the questionnaire to show level of significance in a bid to help answer the research questions.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) were used to ascertain if there are significant relationships and differences between the variables in measuring the perception of media coverage of the activities of the ICPC. The interview data generated was analyzed using the explanation building pattern and weighed against conclusion drawn from such analysis.

**HYPOTHESES TESTING**

1. The level of awareness/attention paid to media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly related to the perception held of her by the public.

The level of attention and awareness is calibrated in the 'x' column, while the one on perception on the ICPC are presented in the 'y' column.

$$r = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

The decision rule after computing the Pearson 'r' is if sampled calculated correlation of r is equal to or larger than ( $\geq$ ) critical r (0.7545) reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and adopt the stated alternate hypothesis and vice versa at 0.05 alpha level on the two-tailed test. Degree of freedom is  $N - 2 = 5$ .

***Correlation between Awareness/Attention level and Perception of ICPC***

|   | x   | Y  | xy    | x <sup>2</sup> | y <sup>2</sup> |
|---|-----|----|-------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 347 | 56 | 19432 | 120409         | 3136           |
| 2 | 355 | 66 | 23430 | 126025         | 4356           |
| 3 | 166 | 12 | 1992  | 27556          | 144            |
| 4 | 210 | 27 | 5670  | 44100          | 729            |
| 5 | 287 | 31 | 8897  | 82369          | 961            |
| 6 | 357 | 69 | 24633 | 127449         | 4761           |
| 7 | 314 | 46 | 14444 | 98596          | 2116           |

N = 7     $\Sigma = 2036$      $\Sigma = 307$      $\Sigma = 98498$      $\Sigma = 626504$      $\Sigma = 16203$

Pearson r = 0.949437

$$r = \frac{7(98498) - (2036)(307)}{\sqrt{[7(626504) - (2036)^2][7(16203) - (307)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{689486 - 625052}{\sqrt{[4385528 - 4145296][113421 - 94249]}}$$

$$r = \frac{64434}{\sqrt{240232 * 19172}}$$

$$r = \frac{64434}{\sqrt{4605727904}}$$

$$r = \frac{64434}{67865.51}$$

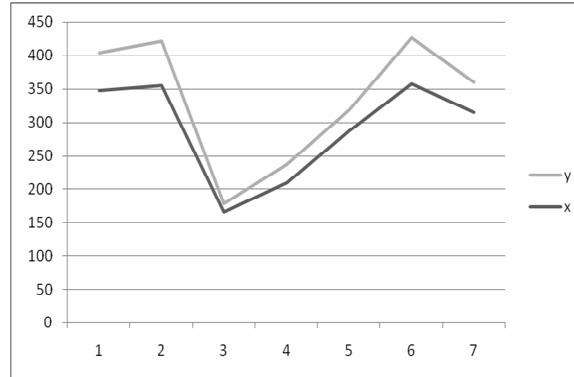
$$r = 0.9494$$

From the decision rule, the calculated ‘r’ is more than the critical value for the Pearson, therefore the null hypothesis that the level of attention paid to media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly related to the perception held of the public is rejected for the stated alternate hypothesis.

This indicates that a relationship exists which is a direct one that is positively correlated between the level of attention/awareness paid to these media stimuli on the activities of the commission and the perception held of her. The relationship is equally linear, that is as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other increases and vice versa. It suggests that as the level of attention/awareness to media coverage of the activities increases, the degree of perception of the commission equally increases. For instance, if the level of awareness on the activity of the commission in prosecuting corruption offenders increases, there is every possibility that the perception of the commission as active will also increase. Each activity has a corresponding perceptual frame. The magnitude of correlation is strong and

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very high that is almost approaching a perfect score although the range is very wide. What this connotes is that the commission should improve on the level of awareness/attention so as to elicit a corresponding perceptual frame. However, there is a point at which both variables are almost equal, interestingly here is at the lowest values.



- Public perception of the media coverage of the activities of the commission is not significantly different from the perception of the commission.

The thrust of this hypothesis is to ascertain if there are significant differences between the respondents' perception of media coverage of the commission activities and perception of the commission. It measured perception of media coverage as 'x', while perception of the commission is tested as 'y'.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{[f_o - f_e]^2}{f_e}$$

The decision rule is if sampled calculated value for 't' is equal to or larger than ( $\geq$ ) critical t (12.5916) reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and adopt the stated alternate hypothesis and vice versa at 0.05 alpha level on the two-tailed test. Degree of freedom is  $(c - 1)(r - 1)$ ,  $(7 - 1)(2 - 1) = 6$ .

**Data for Calculation of Chi-Square**

|                   | Perception of Media Coverage | Perception of the Commission |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Very Aggressive   | 288                          | 66                           |
| Very Hostile      | 356                          | 69                           |
| Repulsive         | 187                          | 56                           |
| Active            | 278                          | 31                           |
| Necessary         | 184                          | 46                           |
| Humane            | 302                          | 27                           |
| None of the Above | 361                          | 12                           |

*Contingency Table for the Data above*

|                   | Perception of Media Coverage | Perception of the Commission | Total |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Very Aggressive   | 288                          | 66                           | 354   |
| Very Hostile      | 356                          | 69                           | 425   |
| Repulsive         | 187                          | 56                           | 243   |
| Active            | 278                          | 31                           | 309   |
| Necessary         | 184                          | 46                           | 230   |
| Humane            | 302                          | 27                           | 329   |
| None of the Above | 361                          | 12                           | 373   |
|                   | 1956                         | 307                          | 2263  |

*Calculation for Chi-Square*

| <i>fO</i> | <i>fE</i> | <i>fO - fE</i> | $[fO - fE]^2$ | $[fO - fE]^2/fE$    |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 288       | 305.977   | -17.977        | 323.1725      | 1.056199            |
| 356       | 367.344   | -11.344        | 128.6863      | 0.350316            |
| 187       | 210.035   | -23.035        | 530.6112      | 2.526299            |
| 278       | 267.081   | 10.919         | 119.2246      | 0.446399            |
| 184       | 198.768   | -14.768        | 218.0938      | 1.097228            |
| 302       | 284.368   | 17.632         | 310.8874      | 1.093257            |
| 361       | 322.399   | 38.601         | 1490.037      | 4.621718            |
| 66        | 48.024    | 17.976         | 323.1366      | 6.728648            |
| 69        | 57.656    | 11.344         | 128.6863      | 2.231968            |
| 56        | 32.966    | 23.034         | 530.5652      | 16.09431            |
| 31        | 41.919    | -10.919        | 119.2246      | 2.844165            |
| 46        | 31.202    | 14.798         | 218.9808      | 7.018166            |
| 27        | 44.632    | -17.632        | 310.8874      | 6.965572            |
| 12        | 50.601    | -38.601        | 1490.037      | 29.44679            |
|           |           |                |               | $\Sigma = 82.52104$ |

$$\chi^2 = 82.521$$

From the tested value of the Chi-Square for the fourth hypothesis which is 82.521, the null hypothesis is rejected because the calculated value is higher than the table value; that is there is significant difference between public perception of the media coverage of the activities of the ICPC and the way they perceive the commission. The way they perceive what they read, hear or

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see about the commission in the media is not the same way they are likely to perceive the commission itself. Consequently, the respondents could be said to perceive the commission as very aggressive, very hostile, repulsive and at the same time humane, active and a necessary organ of governance in the fight against corrupt practices based on what they get from the media, while in actual fact what they perceive of the commission is markedly different. The perception of the commission might be better than the way they perceive stimuli about the commission in the media or worst.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

On the level of public awareness of media coverage of the activities of ICPC, fur analysis revealed a high awareness level of media coverage of the activities of the ICPC. It was noted that the degree of awareness became amplified by the responses that indicate a strong collaboration with anti-corruption agencies in the crusade against corruption.

This position is complemented by the data presented where 90.6% of the respondents said they were aware of the activities of the commission in prosecuting corruption offenders as presented in the media; 91.6% are aware of media coverage of the commission's activity of investigating reports on offenders; 74.9% on advising relevant organ of government on how to reduce the incidence of corruption; 93.2% on educating the public's on and against corrupt tendencies and 82.0% on enlisting and fostering support from the public in the fight against corruption. Media coverage of the activities of examining the practices, system that aid corruption and advising relevant agencies on how to eliminate corruption recorded low awareness level as 43.3% and 54.9% attest to this respectively.

Consequent on the above, the awareness level on media coverage of the activities of the commission could be said to be high and appreciable. This position is not surprising as the Agenda Setting hypothesis as premised from the work of McQuail and Windahl (1993 p.105) that issues given more media attention will grow in familiarity, awareness and perceived importance over a period of time. The onus is that there is a corresponding relationship between attention paid to media content and the level of awareness on such media content. Exposure level to media content about the activities of the ICPC here becomes established on the basis that awareness level on the same media content is deemed to be high.

On the attitude of the public towards media coverage of the activities of the commission, the analysis suggests that the attitude of the respondents towards media stimuli about the activities of the commission is positive. Respondents (81.2%) said they liked what they heard, read and saw about the commission on the media. Reasons that they advanced for this high likeness rate focused more on the success story of the commission in that there has been a more pragmatic approach by the commission towards the issues of reducing the incidence of corruption in the country and how such is perceived. This degree of likeness was evaluated to see whether it is

positive, negative or neutral. 67.6% of the respondents did say that the reports are positive and brings about positive colouration about the commission; 18.0% thought it was negative while 14.4% were undecided and claimed such likeness had neutral effect. Since the attitude is positive, it therefore implies that there are no disdainful remarks harboured against the commission and that the level of media exposure, awareness and attention is significant enough to provoke a positive attitudinal disposition towards the activities of the commission. From the interview analysis, the respondent noted that the commission has been effective in the discharge of her duties as well as a necessary organ of government.

All the positions above are in tandem with the work by Hellman, Jones, and Kauffman (2000) and Kauffman (2004) where it was advocated that although there is a strong level of collision and influence between the firms and civil servants in entrenching corruption, the colour corruption has is given to it by the actors in the process. That is, if they had perceived the media coverage on the activities of the ICPC as negative, then it suggests that, they, the respondents support the penchant for corruption to thrive in the society. A positive response indicates that the civil servants recognized the roles they have to play in the fight against corruption. In Kauffman (2004), a correlation was drawn between governance, its process and the challenges of corruption; whereas most of the challenges are domiciled in the realm of the public sector (civil servants) and that their attitude towards the anti-corruption agencies is instructive to the whole campaign against corrupt practices.

Equally, the proper agenda seemed to have been set in that the response on positive attitude indicate that the level of exposure, attention and awareness are significant enough to elicit positive attitude towards media coverage of activities of the commission. The affirmative results to the research questions already discussed above in 1,2 and 3 support claim by the Gestalt psychologists that the perception of an object cannot be done in isolation or solitary stimuli but as part of an overall pattern or gestalt, a kind of cohesion. In this regards the cohesion is from the degree of attention through to the level of awareness and then exposure. These viewed together provides a frame for assessing the perception of the organization

On how the public select, organize and interpret stimuli from media coverage of the ICPC, respondents said they purposively select stimuli about the commission in the media. This aligns with studies by McGuire (1976), Carr (1979), Fazio, Roskos-Ewoldsen and Powell (1994), Folarin (1998), Shimp (2000) and Akindele (2005) that the whole discourse of perception ranging from attention, exposure to awareness is individualistic and selective. These views were further corroborated by the response where 76.8% of the respondents argued that the rate of media exposure/media coverage of the activities of the commission equally influence the intensity of their section of the stimuli. It is only the issue of frequency of selection of the stimuli that threw up diverse responses which are equally not categorical. For instance 49.4% said they frequently select stimuli from the media about the

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commission 9.9% said 'No' while 40.7% were undecided. However, 50.4% said they select the stimuli daily; 25.8% on a weekly basis, 16.5% on a bi-weekly basis and the remaining 7.3% on monthly basis. This again tie on the Agenda setting hypothesis that frequency of exposure to media content on the subject is most likely to induce a positive perception and begin to make the people think about the issue through the instrumentality of media-agenda which could reproduce itself into policy-agenda.

Factors such as intensity of media coverage, degree of repetition, media contrast employed, type of media as well as media content among others have influence on how the respondents select, organize and interpret these stimuli. Folarin (1998) had earlier identified these variables and elements to premise the Agenda Setting model. McQuail and Windahl (1993) and Zhu and Blood (1997) equally contend that the basic idea is that among a given range of issues or topics, those which get more media attention will grow in familiarity and perceived importance over time than those which get less will decline correspondingly. These variables and elements were figured to help influence the way the civil servants arrange and make meaning out the stimuli they get from the media.

In their responses to activities of the commission that are supposedly best covered by the media, the respondents views were likely influenced by the elements above. In the media, activities that bother on investigating reports on offences and enlisting and fostering public support in the fight against corruption received greater response than other activities of the commission owing to high media coverage and intensity. Prosecuting corrupt offenders, educating the public on and against corruption and advising relevant instruments of governance against corruption equally received good responses. The onus is that their opinions are shaped along the inputs of the media thus maintaining the basis for the Agenda Setting theory. Finally, the respondents from data presented in Table 17 perceived the commission as very aggressive (17.2%); very hostile (18.1%) and repulsive (14.6%) on the one hand and active (8.1%); necessary (12.0%) and humane (7.1%) on the positive side.

On the whole, the public purposively select stimuli about the commission from the media on a daily basis more than on weekly basis and organize these stimuli along the intensity of media coverage, degree of conflict generated, type of media, media content and frequency of media coverage.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study confirmed that ICPC has adequately communicated information about herself in the media with the intent of eliciting adequate attention and awareness on her activities which have been discovered to be high. It established that the public selected stimuli about the ICPC mainly from the print and electronic media as opposed to the established medium of the civil servants - official memo; organized whatever stimuli about the commission

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based on the rate of exposure towards her activities; past experiences; available information on the ICPC; rate of success recorded by the commission and communicated by the media; societal attitude towards the commission and the physical environment among others; and interpreted stimuli along the degree of media coverage of the commission's activities as well as her performance in recent times.

It was therefore concluded that the public perceived media coverage of the activities of the commission as adequate, necessary, informative and necessary in the fight against corruption but contend that media presentation of the commission is markedly different from what the commission actually is. This conclusion is based on the physiological and psychological factors that define the respondent.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations arising from this study were: The ICPC should not only publicize her activities, but ensure adequate media coverage directed at specific target groups to achieve adequate communication. This will help mitigate crass ignorance about her activities; a properly defined Public Relations unit should be set up in the ICPC which should be saddled with the task of achieving optimal media coverage that will result in perceptual equilibrium. This unit is different from the existing Public Enlightenment and Education department of the commission as her duties is broader in scope. Perception is highly dependent on stimuli selected; organized and interpreted hence the Public Relations unit will help in sending the right stimuli for selection, organization and interpretation; for enhanced perception the ICPC among for the civil servants and by extension her publics, the commission should increase performance, awareness level on her activities as well as media coverage as these have been found to be directly correlated with perception. Perceptual equilibrium should be maintained at all times. Perceptual equilibrium is the point at which the intensity of media coverage equals the type and intensity of media content available to the respondents at any given point in time.

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