



ROLE OF BROADCAST MEDIA IN ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM 2015 – 2023 (A STUDY OF THE BROADCAST MEDIA IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA)

Sam Okechukwu Omeje

Authors' Affiliation

Department of Mass
Communication,
Institute of Management and
Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.
drsamokeyomeje@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the scorecard of the Federal Government in anti-corruption campaign from 2015 – 2023, using the broadcast media in the southeast amid cross-sectional studies. One key objective was to determine the extent of the campaign which was promised Nigerians, and looked at the strength and weaknesses of these government and privately owned broadcast stations to fight the cause. The study was a qualitative and quantitative research which employed questionnaire as instrument for the generation of data from the audience based on their perception of broadcast media and agencies like the EFCC, and ICPC in the campaign. The researcher found out among others, that all the broadcast media in the region had a regular weekly programmes in political matters emphasizing total crusade on anti-corruption as the bane of democracy – dividends. It was established in the course of this investigations that the promise and assurances by government to end corruption in shortest possible time was woefully performed below expectation. The researcher recommended that the anti-graft agencies as well as the media should be truly independent from the government and their owners if they are to succeed in their anti-graft war.

Introduction

Corruption is a complex socio-political and economic phenomenon that affects the countries in the developed and developing world. This cancer called corruption had undermined the democratic institutions in Nigeria for nearly six decades. From independence, the first Coup d'état was against the corruption when young military officers took over and deepened corruption. Between 1966 – 1970, what appeared to be marginalization led to the first crisis and war broke out between a regional section against the rest. Badly affected were the Igbos of the South Eastern Region of Nigeria.

At the end of the civil war, the corruption still raged unabated with military leaders that chased out the civilians on top of the game. Besides, corruption attacked the foundation of any democratic institutions, whether military or civilians. The effort of the military to transmit power to civilians later introduced distortion in electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic bottlenecks which were backed by unstoppable bribery and corruption. Despite series of the military dictatorship through forceful ejection of the civilians from power, Nigeria remained in shambles, a situation that has crippled the quest for good leadership.

Consequently, the economic development is stunted because investments especially the foreign nations are discouraged and small business within the country often do not survive corruption. For instance, the United Nations on Drug and Crimes in 2011 listed various types of corruption in the society such as distrust, public embezzlement at the level of governance, i.e. from the local government to the federal government, forgery, impersonation, oil theft and many more. Corruption has been identified as the most prevalent in our nation and drastically eroded the legislative powers by the leaders.

Other problems in the land are so numerous to mention, all yawning to be resolved. The upsurge of corruption is at the centre and very troublesome.

Despite the earlier known menace of this disease called corruption, which lead to very slow pace of files moving to wrong hands, extortion at all level, collection of illegal dues at borders, roads, markets, and all sectors doing repeatedly same practice. Other catalogues of this, ill triggered the unemployment to be on the increase, no job after secondary and university education, agitators from almost all regions of the country as a result of marginalization with hands pointed at the ineptitude, weak and nonchalant leadership with immorality and corruption.

Today, Nigeria has recorded the 24th year of uninterrupted democracy, yet the root of the matter is still with us. The elections which produced the weak leaders through the dubious and electoral manipulations have bluntly refused to create an enabling environment for fair election where we can put trust in good leadership. The attempted effort to create an Electoral Act to checkmate the excesses of these greedy politicians were dashed in the last election in February and March 2023, and the results have put us back where we were. Nigerians together accused the Goodluck government in 2015, and all worked exceedingly to bring President Muhammadu Buhari to power as he was seen to be the messiah to the Nigerian problem. Unfortunately, this was not so despite his desperation to fight for corruption, his administration became worse as he failed in most of his campaign promises. It is against this background that the broadcast media that continually shape the societal behaviour and quest for good leadership were chosen for this research. Confronted with catalogues of the media regulations problems, there are no other media institutions that will unveil these corrupt practices than the broadcast media, both government and privately-owned.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's democracy is weak. Corruption in Nigeria had turned to be natural phenomenon, and right of existence. Bad leadership had widely created errors in the nation; insecurity as a result of negligence of human rights and nonchalant attitude by those that are responsible.

Broadcast media have had a troubling time. Laws that regulate broadcast operations had hindered their functions. For the past years, both radio, television, newspaper and social media platforms like Twitter have all felt the wrath of the government with different accusations. The Freedom of Press Act is hindered despite its freedom: The popularity in non-disclosure of information is saddled. Some professionals do compromised their source for fear of litigations in a democratic formation. However, the seamless powerful effects of the broadcast media as a watch dog, still suppress some information due for public perception. Such weaknesses undermined the broadcast operation as it concerns corruption. The expectation from them did not correspond to the yawning of the public despite the so called political programmes claimed to form their objectives.

Objectives of the Study:

The following objectives were raised to guide the study:

1. To determine the extent to which the broadcast media in the southeast have contributed to anti-corruption in Nigeria from 2015-2023.
2. To find out the strengths or weaknesses of the broadcast media in the southeast in its anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.
3. To examine the role played by the Nigeria leadership and her anti-graft agencies to curb this corruption practice from 2015 – 2023 in all sectors of the economy.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent has the broadcast media in the southeast contributed to anti-corruption in Nigeria from 2015 – 2023?
2. What are the strengths or weaknesses of the broadcast media in the southeast in its anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria?

3. Has the leadership in Nigeria and her anti-graft agencies played significant role to curb this corruption practice from 2015 – 2023 in all sectors of the economy?

Literature/Empirical Review

Corruption has received an extensive attention in the country and perhaps over flogged in the academic circle. There are many definitions to the word corruption. For instance, corruption is effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means. Lipset (2000) opined that it is a mean to privately gain at public expense for private benefit. Corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role and violates rules against the exercise of a certain types of duties. Theoretically, the ability of the media to pre-determine what the issues are important gives the media an edge to fight corruption.

According to Folarin (2000), agenda-setting theory does not ascribe to the media the power to determine what we actually think, but it does ascribe to them the power to determine what we think about. McCombs & Shaw admitted that agenda-setting has no rival to media dominance of power on daily basis. The theory basically is relevant through consistent reportage of issues of universal interest.

Eze (2011) emphasized the need for an independent press that scrutinize other social institutions and provide objective and accurate news report. The theory holds that the media have right to criticize government and stakeholders, but has a holistic responsibility and obligations to preserve democratic institutions.

Dominick (2000) in Ezinwa (2010) affirmed that the media do not have freedom to do as they pleased, but were obliged to respond to societal requirements for being properly and legitimately informed. The obligations expected of the broadcast media at this point in time ranges from the professional standard of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance in news, while the media should be self-regulating within the framework of laws.

Corruption has three major characteristics namely; political, bureaucratic and electoral corruption. Political corruption takes place at the highest apex of political authority while Bureaucratic affect the administrative manipulation and electoral frauds. The fundamental duty of this study is to find out and also examine the extent the broadcast media have done to contribute positive action to campaign against corruption which had eroded the nation from 2015 to date, and the way forward. The research was carefully conducted in the five states in the southeast region by examining how these stations tackled the corruption in their reportage for the eight years of this regime. This is true despite the existence of draconian laws which appeared to impede the performance of media over time.

Scope/Significance

The scope of the study is the broadcast media and anti-corruption campaign. Geographically, the study covered the southeast region with sample of two state owned radio stations, ABS Awka and Imo state Broadcasting Owerri. In addition, NTA of Enugu, Aba and Abakaliki owned by the federal government were used. The study is indeed beneficial to the government, professional and academic community and researchers. A corruption free society is plus to job creation, bread peace and harmony, and make nation's branding strong at global level. A free corrupt nation gives room to economic boom.

Methodology

The survey research method was employed for the execution of the study. Random sampling method was employed in a cross-sectional studies of this nature, the five states where these radio and TV stations located in the southeast region were covered by the research assistants and questionnaire instruments used to obtain answers from the cross section the listeners and viewers of these broadcasting stations on political programmes and good governance. The demographic analysis of the respondents from the five states were imperative and significantly in sharing opinions based on

broadcasting news processes. The variables notably used to assess the opinions of the respondents in their age, sex, marital status, occupation and level of education respectively.

Data collected were codified in accordance with the known variables on the study, the discussion was analyzed using demographic data of the four hundred respondents sampled for this purpose. The expectations was significantly rested on the reliable information that the broadcast media used and advance the crusade against corruption for the last eight years of the Buhari administration.

Presentation and Analysis

The factual information generated in this research accordance to Nwodu and Ikeagwu (1998, 2006) were analyzed to show the overall goal of understanding social phenomena recorded through the process of defining, explanation and prediction. This explanation was clearly visible on tables showing details of the response rate across the five broadcast stations in the south east.

1. Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	250	62.5
Female	150	37.5
Total	400	100%

Field survey, 2023.

2. Age Distribution

Age Category	Frequency	%
20-25	124	31
26-30	152	38
31 & above	124	31
Total	400	100%

Field survey, 2023.

3. Marital Status of respondents

category	Frequency	%
Single	280	70
Married	120	30
Total	400	100%

Field survey, 2023.

4. Occupation of respondents

category	Frequency	%
Journalists	120	30
Public servants	170	42.5
Politicians	60	15
Domestic duties	50	12.5
Total	400	100%

Field survey, 2023.

5. Qualifications

Gender	Frequency	%
WAEC/GCE	50	12.5
National Diploma	80	20
First Degree	170	42.5
Second Degree	60	15
FSLC/Technical	40	10
Total	400	100%

Field survey, 2023.

Explanations from the demographic data presented above showed that 250 or 62.5% are male, and 150 or 37.5% represented the female. Similarly, the age category of the respondents indicates that those aged 20-25 years are 124 or 31%, 26 – 30 years are 152 or 38%, while 31 years and above numbered 124 or 31%. Consequently, 280 or 70% were single, and married respondents are 120 or 30%. Going deeper in the study, we articulated the number of people either working or remained on their own comprising 120 working journalists or 30%, public

servants 170 or 42.5%, politicians 60 or 15% while independent respondents numbered 50 or 12.5%. The general assessment of the respondents engaged in their background, indicates 50 or 12.5% as holders of WAEC/GCE, the national diploma are 80 or 20%, the first degree and second degree, we have 170 or 42.5% and 60 or 15% respectively. Those who obtained the least represented 40 or 10% the above revealed the summary indices of those sampled to critique the political programmes of these media institutes in the southeast and what they did to support the 8-year of Buhari government as per corruption. The analysis thus gives room for us to comprehensively put the key questions in discourse.

For instance, four principal questions that provoked those investigations are presented in the context of Nigeria politics.

Questions

Q1. Could the media institutions sampled in this region helped to sustain the anti-campaign of the Buhari regime in the last eight years?

Q2. Did you agree that these broadcast media contributed to fight this corrupt practice?

Q3. Was there any intervening factors that prevented the broadcast media to discharge their role in this crusade against corruption?

Q4. Did broadcast media give the necessary support in the anti-corruption campaign of the government?

Responses	Frequency	%	Remarks / Results
Yes Nil	350 50 <u>400</u>	87.5 12.5 <u>100</u>	About 350 respondents agreed, and 50 said nonr of such effort
Yes No	270 130 <u>400</u>	67 32 <u>100</u>	Whereas 270 investigated said yes in support, other 130 categorically rejected, as there was no impact.
Yes No No idea	248 97 55 <u>400</u>	62 24.3 13.7 <u>100</u>	The respondents observed lots of intervening variables. The media control played major role as all broadcast stations studied ARE government owned. frankly and interesting the Anambra broadcasting at Akwa and Imo radio broad
Yes No	300 100 <u>400</u>	75 25 <u>100</u>	Even though 300 of the respondents agreed that these stations supported the anti-corruption campaign when in the real sense, the efforts were baseless and fruitless due to hidden agenda of the government.
			Casting Substantially Did Well In Their Programme, More Than What Other Three NTA Did. The Nigeria television authority at Enugu, Aba and Abakaliki existed in name, the actual programme on politics were ineptitude and unrealistic. The other 97 and 55 respondents descended which means that there was nothing difference in the much publicized crusade on corruption.

However, of all the four hypothetical questions formulated, the researcher would represent question 3 and perhaps analyzed statistically with hypothetical test thus:

Optional Response	OE	EX	O-E	(O-E) ²	<u>(O-E)²</u> E
Yes	248	133	115	13225	94.4
No	97	133	-36	1296	9.7
Can't Say	55	133	-78	6084	45.7
Total	400				149.8

DF = K-1; DF = 3-1 = 2. Level of significance ≤ 0.05 (5.991)

In application of decision rule based on the above circumvention, we observed that since the calculated chi-square value of 149.8 is greater than the table value of 5.991, the rule was to adopt the alternative hypothesis which significantly justified the result. More importantly by believing that intervening factors were prominence to determine the effectiveness of the quality of the programmes of the stations, definitely the media role was presumed to inadequate. Why? Many factors that have nailed the Nigeria media to comatose overtime was the ownership, control, gatekeepers etc., which had hindered the growth of media professionalism. The fact was not too far from seeing the ownership deciding which news will come on the air, and at a particular time of the day or week. For the past eight years, the existing government had promised a lot to this campaign, unfortunately, the public are yet to be informed on those supporting and financing the Boko Haram, kidnappers and terrorists in the North and South.

More regrettably, there was a report of having named the financiers of the terrorists at far away land in the Middle East, however, the Nigerian Government didn't do anything about it. Across the sectors, corruption had become the regular house style of Nigerians. A nation where same disgruntled individuals stole, arrested or allowed to run away with millions of funds, yet the government had it as one of its cardinal duties to provide transparent and good governance.

Media nevertheless are confronted with lots of challenges as enumerated above. The role of media were not enough since there was free hand extended to them to perform objectively. The activities of the anti-graft agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practice and related offence commission (ICPC), were below expectation, despite being the government appointed agencies. Within the period of study, a lot of things had happened and all kept in the suspense, the whereabouts of the Accountant General of the Federation, the former boss of the EFCC, the pension money fraudster, and the highly corrupt Minister of Humanitarian and Disaster Management that fed pupils during COVID-19. When during COVID-19 pupils were at home, there were several losses of money at NNPC, Nigerian defense, and in all places that held the nation at ransom. The questions being raised are yet to be answered and only window droning of the Nigerian Media at this 21st century of our time.

Cross Sectional Analysis

The theme of this study anchored in the agenda and social responsibility theories gained empirical support in multi-disciplinary contributions submitted by McCombs and Lipset (2000), Folarin (2000); Eze (2011); Ezinwa (2010) among other cited works.

The media have a distinct presence in our homes and providing us with rich information or multitudinal channels. As part of social structures, the intervening factors that held them domicile need to bridge and restore the societal confidence in media referred to as

the watchdog. If they lose this sight, it would be extremely difficult to believe in them. Although they adopted political programmes in their operations, their best was short-lived due to the principal variables of their ownership which was counter-productive to a nation having good agenda but undermined by fellow citizens. Their efforts were hindered. The outcome of this significant, insightful and elucidating piece is that it exposed the scenes behind the smooth media operation especially as all their effort to join hands was disarmed.

Conclusion/Recommendations

This study concludes that the level which the corruption has escalated in the past years reached the highest degree in Nigeria despite all promises which appeared unrealistic. The anti-graft agencies are not measuring up to expectations due to none backings from their appointees.

Many obstacles like ownership, control, gatekeepers, new technology helped to mar the functional practice of media institutions. Except, otherwise, we have media revolution, we shall continue to work as in the military era where freedom of press was caged and closely checked. These unnecessary restrictions would do more harm than good and this should be fought and buried for free corruption to thrive in the country.

The anti-graft agencies as well as the media should be truly independent from the government and their owners if they are to succeed in their anti-graft war.

Post directional action of this study:

1. Media to be repositioned and strategized in their functional programme
2. Public to accept the fact that media are on the course to fight against corruption through reports, commentaries, and analysis.
3. These hierarchy of agencies to complement the government rather than being figured as taking a side.
4. The result to immensely enhance the media professionalism.

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