AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF PRINT MEDIA IN CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined Audience perception of print media in curbing corruption in Nigeria. The study deployed survey with questionnaire sharedto thepurposively selected residents of Osogbo and Ede south local government area of Osun State. The questionnaires were distributed via facetoface administration. Also, the researcher considered that with the chosen respondents' level of maturity in age, reasoning and educational status, they could sensibly state their perception on the subject matter studied. The study finds out that the majority of the Nigerian population perceives print media as having a significant role in curbing corruption. Many participants believe that print media plays a crucial role in exposing corrupt practices and holding those in power accountable. The study finds out that the audience also view print media as a source of information and awareness about corruption issues in the country. The research findings suggest that several factors influence the audience's perception of print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption. These include the credibility and trustworthiness of the media organization, the quality and accuracy of reporting, and the extent of coverage on corruption issues.Thus, it recommended that print media outlets in Nigeria focus on building and maintaining their credibility by adhering to ethical standards and providing unbiased coverage of corruption-related issues. Furthermore, efforts should be made to increase accessibility of print media by making it available in remote areas and at affordable prices. This can be achieved through partnerships with local community organizations and government agencies.

Keywords: Audience, Perception, Print Media and Corruption.

Introduction
The mass media are effective vehicles for disseminating information. This involves promoting the anti-corruption movement's initiatives. Because newspapers frequently feature these events, they are effective tools for mass communication. In Nigeria, the entire system has collapsed due to corruption (Adegbamigbe. 2012).

One monster that has ravaged the socio-economic fabric of the Nigerian society over the years is corruption. All efforts to tame this monster seem to have defied all strategies and tactics. Despite the notoriety the word 'corruption' has attained and it's globally acclaimed disruptive and despicable consequences on peoples' lives and their respective society. Corruption has not only become a household name, but also a way of life in Nigeria. (Odionye& Yare, 2018).

According to Chiakaan, Gapsiso& Oliver (2023), the negative impacts of corruption in the lives of nations throughout the world can be seen by a blind person. Corruption is perhaps the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated socio-economic transformation of developing or less developing countries of the world. It is recognised by development scholars that the level of reduction in corruption has a very direct link to the level of economic development of nations in the world (Oyebode, 2017).

Kabiru, S. A. (2019) noted that the view of Nigeria as a country in the world community may be summed up by the one undeniable truth that corruption is rampant and widespread throughout the nation and among its people. One type of corruption or another is now routinely practised throughout the nation and is quickly eating away at the moral foundation of society, posing a threat to the survival of the entire state. Because of the terrible consequences of corruption, Nigeria's many governments and regimes have developed a variety of anti-corruption strategies to tame the problem. In this regard, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practises Commission (ICPC) were created by the Obasanjo Civilian Administration.

Ngene, M. M. (2016) observed that the Nigerian newspapers have consistently run anti-corruption campaigns using news pieces, editorials, feature articles, cartoons, and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to fight this issue. Despite these efforts, there are many detractors who contest the press's contributions to the drive to end corruption in Nigeria. They assert that the Press's performance falls well short of expectations in terms of launching an effective effort to eradicate corruption. A frequent topic of debate in discussions is the extent to which the media, particularly the newspapers, have been successful in championing the anti-corruption campaign. This is because the alarming issue of the on-going incidence and allegations of corruption, the seemingly unanswerable question of why corruption has consistently triumphed over the deluge of Nigerian newspapers' campaign efforts against it, and the alarming issue of why corruption has continued to be alleged and reported upon.

Research Objectives
1. Investigate and analyze the audience's perception of the role of print media in curbing corruption in Nigeria.
2. Identify and examine the key factors that impact the audience's perception of the effectiveness of print media in curbing corruption.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria, with a focus on its impact and limitations.
4. Develop recommendations and strategies for print media to enhance its effectiveness in combating corruption based on audience perceptions and feedback.

Literature review
According to Stople (2008), cited in Edema, Ufuophu-Biri, &Igben (2022), United Nations Convention against corruption recognized corruption as a multi-faceted, dynamic and flexible phenomenon, and therefore does not define, but describe corrupt practices. Corruption may not be easy to define but, according to Adegbamigbe. (2012),it is "generally not difficult to recognize when observed". Corrupt acts require a minimum of two individuals from one or more communities, and either exchange or the promise of an exchange of money or services takes place; typically secret, the pact benefits the dyad to the detriment of everyone else. According to Salisu (2000), cited in(Oyebode, 2017) the simplest definition of corruption is that it is the misapplication of public resources to private ends. For example, public officials may collect bribes for issuing passports or visa, for providing permits and licenses, for authorizing passage of goods at sea/airport, for awarding contracts or for enacting regulations designed to create artificial scarcity.
Corrupt acts are increasingly regarded as "unfair" and indeed criminal by many high-income countries because the bribe-recipient's betrayal of trust with his employer, when practiced systemically by high-ranking public officials, compromises the "development of fair and efficient markets" (Adegbamigbe. 2012). Acts of bribery are passive in that their voluntary acceptance offers an assurance of personal advantage (but misuse of public responsibility) whereas extortion is proactive (aggressive) in its demand for something of value under threat of non-cooperation.
The role of the media is critical in promoting good governance and controlling corruption. It not only raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption. The effectiveness of the media, in turn, depends on access to information and freedom of expression, as well as a professional and ethical cadre of investigative journalists (Chiakaan, Gapsiso& Oliver 2023).

The fight against corruption in Nigeria one must acknowledge, is one of the most daunting and challenging task to embark on, but with political will and commitment by her leaders and the right attitude by all Nigerians there is no doubt that someday, the Transparency International will in her report rank Nigeria as one of the least corrupt countries in the world (Adegbamigbe. 2012).
Several reasons have been adduced for corruption in Nigeria, one of which is the sudden disappearance of good moral and ethical values. Nwaobi (2004) cited in Oyebode, (2017) posited that Nigeria must be one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbours, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honoured by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely ask questions. Sociological and/or cultural factors such as customs, family pressures on government officials and ethnicity constitute potential causes of corruption.
Corruption thrives in environment where rent seeking tendencies abound and rent (especially government induced ones) is considered to be the major source of rent-seeking behaviour (Mauro, 1996:5; Tanzi, 1998,pp.10-16). Government intervention in economy leads to policy induced sources of corruption such as: government subsidies, price controls,

multiple exchange rates, low wages in the civil service, natural resources endowments and social factors. Such government pervasive regulations and the excessive degree of discretion allowed government officials; private parties' willingness to pay bribes to government officials in order to obtain any rents that the regulations may generate continues to promote corruption in both public and private sectors.

Corruption has been and continues to be a destructive element in the governance of Nigeria and the perception of the country in the comity of nations. According to Kupoluyi, Nwaodike&Ntiwunka, (2020), effects of corruption in Nigeria include loss of government revenue, negative national image, poor governance, brain drain, electoral malpractices, poor investment climate, business failure, unemployment and poverty. Nigeria's widespread corruption has historical roots that we should critically reflect on if we are to succeed in controlling and gradually eliminating it. Ribadu (2006) cited in Kupoluyi, Nwaodike&Ntiwunka, (2020) opined that corruption is responsible for perpetual collapse of infrastructure and institutions; it is the cause of the endemic poverty in Africa; it is behind the underdevelopment and cyclical failure of democracy to take root in Africa. Corruption is worse than terrorism. Public officials who are corrupt should receive worse treatment than that reserved for terrorists.

Theoretical framework

The Agenda setting theory was adopted for this study. The agenda-setting theory suggests that media has the power to influence what issues are considered important by the public. In the case of corruption in Nigeria, print media can play a crucial role in shaping the audience's perception of the issue and its importance.The ability of the media to pre-determine what issues are important gives the media an edge to fight corruption since they can easily lay emphasis on the atrocities being committed by public figures in the country. According to Ahmed, (2018), '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 are thinking about'.

The theory is relevant to this study because the media can utilize the elements of this theory through shaping the audience's perception of print media's role in curbing corruption in Nigeria. The power of the media to expose corrupt acts through the elements of this theory will go a long way in reducing corrupt acts in the country. If public figures know that their corrupt acts will be giving a lot of publicity, they are likely to have a rethink before stealing public funds.

The audience's perception of print media's role in curbing corruption in Nigeria is shaped by the media's agenda-setting power and their own personal beliefs and experiences. The factors that influence this perception can include the credibility of the media, previous exposure to corruption-related news, and personal experiences with corruption.

Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of print media in addressing corruption in Nigeria can also be influenced by the media's agenda-setting power and the audience's personal beliefs. For example, if the media consistently covers corruption cases and highlights their impact on society, it can increase public awareness and potentially lead to increased pressure for change. However, if the media is perceived as biased or not actively addressing corruption issues, it may weaken their effectiveness in addressing corruption.

Based on this theory, it can be posited that the audience's perception of print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption in Nigeria will be influenced by both external factors

(such as media coverage and government actions) and internal factors (such as personal beliefs and experiences). Print media can improve its effectiveness in addressing corruption by addressing these factors through responsible and unbiased reporting, increasing public awareness and engagement, and advocating for government accountability and transparency.

Methodology
The descriptive survey was conducted using residents of Oshogbo and Ede south purposively selected by the researchers. Also, the questionnaires were distributed via face to face administration. Also, we considered that with the chosen respondents' level of maturity in age, reasoning and educational status, they could sensibly state their perception on the subject matter studied. The current metro area population of Oshogbo in 2023 is 772,000, a 2.93% increase from 2022. While Edesouth population is estimated at 198,000 Population 2023 projection a 1.6% increase from 2022 (Macro trends 2023). The total is 970, 000 thus using the taro Yamane formula to get the sample size

$n=N/ 1+N(e)2$

Where n= sample size

N= Population

1= 1 (constant)

(e)2= level of precision or sampling error

$n= 970,000/1+970,000(0.05)2$

$n= 970,000/1+970,000(0.0025)$

$n=970,000/1+2435$

$n=970,000 /2436$

$n=398.2$

$n=398$

thus the population for this study is 398. To get the right population for the two areas in this study the researcher conducted a ratio share:

•   Oshogbo: is 772,000/ 970,000 by 100 = 79.6% x 398 = 316.8

•   Ede South: 198,000 /970,000 by 100 = 20.4% x 398 = 81.2

Thus, 317 was shared in Oshogbo while 81 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in Ede south. Of the 398 questionnaire distributed only 388 were retrieved.

Data presentation
Table 1:perception of print media as having a significant role in curbing corruption

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	369	95.1
No	19	4.9
Total	388	100%

Table one show the responses of respondents on perception of print media as having a significant role in curbing corruption. Majority (95%) of the respondents perceived print media as having a significant role in curbing corruption. Indicating that print media has a significant role in curbing corruption.

Table 2: Factors influencing audience perception of print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
credibility and trustworthiness of the media organization	128 (32.9%)	183 (47.1%)	14 (3.6%)	34 (8.8%)	29 (7.5%)	3.78
the quality and accuracy of reporting	145 (37.3%)	164 (42.2%)	21 (5.4%)	39 (10.0%)	19 (4.9%)	3.81
Extent of coverage on corruption issues.	108 (27.8%)	189 (58.7%)	20 (5.2%)	41 (10.6%)	30 (7.7%)	3.60
Political will of Government	150 (38.7%)	191 (49.2%)	12 (3.1%)	18 (4.6%)	17 (4.4%)	3.91
Public Engagement of the media organisations	117 (30.1%)	179 (46.1%)	15 (3.9%)	49 (12.6%)	28 (7.2%)	3.64
Grand Mean						3.79

Table 2 shows respondents responses on the factors influencing audience perception of print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption. The table has a grand mean of 3.79, which signifies that respondents agree with all the factors stated. The table indicated that all respondents believe that credibility and trustworthiness of the media organization, the quality and accuracy of reporting, and the extent of coverage on corruption issues are factors that influence their perception print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption.

Table 3:Strengths and weaknesses of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria.

Strength	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Ability to expose corrupt practices	138 (35.8%)	193 (49.7%)	10 (2.6%)	28 (7.2%)	19 (4.9%)	3.80
provide information and raise awareness	140 (36%)	179 (46.1%)	20 (5.2%)	29 (7.5%)	20 (5.2%)	3.78
hold those in power accountable	148 (38.1%)	189 (48.7%)	21 (5.4%)	20 (5.2%)	10 (2.6%)	3.60
Grand Mean						3.76

Table 3 shows responses on the strengths of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria. The table has a grand mean of 3.76, which signifies that respondents agree with all the factors stated. The table indicated that all respondents believe that Ability to expose corrupt practices, provide information and raise awareness, hold those in power accountable are strengths of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria.

Table 4: weaknesses of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria

Weakness	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
biased reporting	157 (40.5%)	191 (49.2%)	13 (3.4%)	17 (4.4%)	10 (2.6%)	3.93
lack of investigative journalism	137 (35.3%)	197 (50.7%)	15 (3.9%)	21 (5.4%)	18 (4.6%)	3.81
limited reach to rural areas	151 (38.9%)	189 (48.7%)	14 (3.6%)	11 (2.8%)	23 (5.9%)	3.91
Grand Mean						3.89

Table 4 shows responses on the weakness of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria. The table has a grand mean of 3.89, which signifies that respondents agree with all the factors stated. The table indicated that all respondents believe that biased reporting, lack of investigative journalism, limited reach to rural areas are weaknesses of print media's approach to addressing corruption in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings
The findings of this research show that the majority of the Nigerian population perceives print media as having a significant role in curbing corruption. Many participants believe that print media plays a crucial role in exposing corrupt practices and holding those in power accountable. They also view print media as a source of information and awareness about corruption issues in the country. This consistent withNgene(2016), found that newspaper readers' exposure to anti-corruption newspaper campaigns had a significant impact on shaping their attitudes and behaviours; that Nigerian newspapers effectively used their editorial columns to wage their anti-corruption campaign.
The research findings suggest that several factors influence the audience's perception of print media's effectiveness in curbing corruption. These include the credibility and trustworthiness of the media organization, the quality and accuracy of reporting, and the extent of coverage on corruption issues. Additionally, the political and economic climate of the country can also affect how audiences perceive the effectiveness of print media in addressing corruption.
The strengths of print media in addressing corruption in Nigeria, according to audience perceptions, include its ability to expose corrupt practices, provide information and raise awareness, and hold those in power accountable. However, some weaknesses were also identified, such as biased reporting, lack of investigative journalism, and limited reach to rural areas. This is consistent with Ngene (2016) who advised that Nigerian journalists be considerably more inspired, protected, and encouraged to continually battle against corruption in the nation. It is also imperative that their reports be made to reach the rural regions, where over 70% of Nigerians still live. These implies that print media can improve its effectiveness in curbing corruption by increasing its coverage on corruption issues, providing more accurate and unbiased reporting, and investing in investigative journalism. Additionally, building trust with the audience through transparency and accountability can also enhance print media's effectiveness in addressing corruption. Moreover, expanding its reach to rural areas through partnerships and collaborations can also contribute to improving its effectiveness (Yusuf 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the research has revealed that audiences in Nigeria see print media as an important tool in curbing corruption. The findings also suggest that factors such as credibility, accessibility, and coverage of corruption-related issues greatly influence the audience's perception of print media's effectiveness in addressing corruption. Additionally, the strengths of print media in addressing corruption include its ability to provide detailed and in-depth coverage of corruption cases, while its weaknesses include lack of resources and potential for bias.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that print media outlets in Nigeria focus on building and maintaining their credibility by adhering to ethical standards and providing unbiased coverage of corruption-related issues. Furthermore, efforts should be made to increase accessibility of print media by making it available in remote areas and at affordable prices. This can be achieved through partnerships with local community organizations and government agencies.

To improve its effectiveness in curbing corruption, print media should also prioritize investigative journalism and expose corrupt practices. This can be achieved by investing in resources and training for journalists, as well as collaborating with other media outlets and civil society organizations. Additionally, print media should strive to engage with their audience through interactive platforms such as social media to increase public awareness and participation in anti-corruption efforts.

print media has a crucial role to play in curbing corruption in Nigeria and can improve its effectiveness by addressing the identified factors and implementing the recommended strategies. By doing so, print media can contribute significantly to promoting transparency and accountability in the country.

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