

# AUDIENCE ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES TO MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

This study was carried out to assess audience attitudes and responses to media campaign for good governance and economic development in Nigeria. This study was instigated by the spate of underdevelopment that still characterize the Nigerian state despite the available abundant human and natural resources. To tackle this problem, key research questions were raised in line with the objective of the study. The survey methodology was adopted as the design while the questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Findings have it that that the role of the mass media campaign and support for good governance and economic development in Nigeria are through information from government to the people and the yearnings and aspirations of the people to the government, educating them on developmental and economic issues that need to be, enlightenment and agenda setting to the people. Also, it was gathered that good governance has been far from the Nigerian domain simply because of bad leadership, lack of accountability on the part the government, hoarding of information by government official as well as corruption on part of those saddled with the responsibility of running the affairs of the Nigerian state. The study recommended that the government should as a matter of urgency make moves to begin to live up to expectation by delivering dividends of democracy to the people in the form of good governance. The mass media should take the issue of good governance and economic development serious by putting pressure on political leaders to embrace accountability, transparency and responsibility to the Nigerian people.

**Keywords:** Economic Development, Good Governance, Mass Media, Media Campaign Economic Development

**Declaration of conflicting interests:** The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

## Introduction

The relationship between Nigeria's governments and mass media has been a hotly debated topic for many years, attracting the interest of independent research institutions, political scientists, and communication experts. There is agreement that the idea of sustainable development and good governance will be an impractical proposition without the efficient and uncontrolled involvement of news sources in the dissemination of national and political issues, despite differing opinions and findings regarding the role of the mass media in the nation and its relationship with governments. Whether a country is democratic or autocratic, the media institution, one of the state's

ideological tools, plays a crucial role in its political structure. In any nation, including Nigeria, the media establishment has a significant impact in defining, establishing, and solidifying the prevailing political culture. According to Trappel and Maniglio (2009), referenced in Okoro and Onyebuchi (2020), contemporary democracies, good governance, and the mass media are inextricably linked. The mass media serve as a conduit between the governed and the governed in today's democracies around the globe. The two are linked and mutually dependent in that democracy is necessary for the media to function properly since it is the only system of governance that permits both free speech and the free flow of information. Additionally, the media is

essential to democracy and those in power since it facilitates the establishment and institutionalisation of participatory and deliberative democracy.

It is impossible to undervalue the mass media's contribution to any governmental process, though. According to McChesney (2008), the media system serves two indisputable purposes in any type of government. First, the media offer a thorough accounting of those in positions of authority and those aspiring to such positions in the public and private spheres. This is known as the media's "watchdog function." Second, the media offer a variety of well-informed viewpoints and trustworthy information on the major social and political concerns of the day. According to Trappel and Maniglio (2009), the media help to ensure individual freedom in pluralist democracies like Nigeria; they serve as tools for expert bodies to use in administrative democracies to inform the public about their actions and practices; they help citizens get involved in matters of public interest in deliberative democracies; and they offer a platform for all social voices in direct democracies. According to Omosotomhe et al. (2022), the media, as information-dissemination agents, are essential to the long-term viability of a country's democratic system. This is because information is essential to every country's corporate life and cohesiveness. They added that before the country gained its independence, Nigeria's media, particularly its newspapers, actively and significantly contributed to maintaining unity among Nigerians, which in turn encouraged the populace to speak with one voice in support of the nation's democratic sovereignty.

The aforementioned makes it abundantly evident that the mass media is supposed to play a key role in solidifying inclusive participatory and deliberative democracy in any given society. To guarantee quality democracy, the public must be able to participate in the decision-making process. "One that provides its citizens a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular power over public policies and policy-makers through the lawful functioning of steady institutions" is what Trappel and Maniglio (2009) define as a quality democracy. Through its informational and culturally orientated roles, the media encourage public participation in the democratic process and inspire citizens to actively participate in governmental policy and decision-making processes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The interplay between mass media and good governance is a critical area of inquiry, particularly within the context of Nigeria's complex socio-political landscape. Media campaigns serve as vital platforms for disseminating information, fostering civic

engagement, and mobilizing public support for policies that drive economic development and enhance governmental transparency. Nevertheless, substantial challenges persist regarding the effectiveness of these campaigns in influencing audience attitudes, instigating behavioral change, and facilitating meaningful participation in governance processes. Several critics and scholars have observed that while the Nigerian mass media have made contributions towards promoting ideals of good governance, there remain significant limitations in their ability to reach diverse audiences, tailor messages to specific cultural and linguistic contexts, counter misinformation, and ensure equitable access across urban and rural communities. Ate et al. (2022) argue that the relationship between communication channels and governance is not only structural but also deeply embedded in Nigeria's cultural fabric, highlighting the importance of platforms that align with societal values and realities to achieve sustained cultural and economic development.

Moreover, prevailing issues such as media ownership concentration, political interference, limited journalistic capacity, and technological gaps often impede the reach and credibility of media campaigns. The limited feedback mechanisms further challenge the measurement and adaptation of these campaigns to reflect public sentiments and needs. These gaps underscore a pressing need to systematically examine how different audience segments perceive, interpret, and react to media messages related to good governance and economic development.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find how the mass media contributed to good governance and economic development in Nigeria.
2. To know the extent mass media have contributed to good governance and economic development in Nigeria
3. To find out the challenges facing the mass media in carrying out their functions in good governance in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. How have the mass media contributed to good governance and economic development in Nigeria?
2. To what extent has the mass media contributed to good governance and economic development in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges facing the mass media in carrying out their functions in good governance and economic development in Nigeria?

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptualization of Mass Media and Democracy**

People consider the media to be the primary source of information for the general public. Free and independent media guarantee the public's access to information. The media can play a significant role in enhancing public accountability by providing information about government policies and actions, including what needs to be done, how and why it must be done, who is involved, and the standards used to make decisions. This exposes government actions and inactions to the public's scrutiny.

Omosotomhe et al. (2022) assert that the media has a greater impact on people's daily life than other familial or cultural organisations. They contend that the primary information and entertainment sources are the mass media. This implies that people are unable to live without the mass media since they provide us with entertainment and news that affects our daily life. The mass media are the Fourth Estate of the Realm and have an impact on our daily life. The government's operations are checked by them.

Perhaps the Nigerian media's continued recognition lies in its contribution to fostering transparency in society (Olaiya, 2013). It will be sufficient to highlight a few notable media contributions in this area.

Ate (2010) asserts that the mass media extensively covered and reported on every facet of the democratic transition between 1998 and 1999. According to Dunu (2013), the media's role is to provide alternatives to the transition agenda when needed, hold the administration accountable for its promises regarding the transfer of power to civilians, provide feedback on government policies, and broaden the scope of the transition to include morality, accountability, national economic management, and poverty alleviation. According to Igba (2012), the media looks into high-profile corruption cases involving high-ranking public officials and exposes them as a result in a democratic context.

### **Roles of Mass Media in a Democratic Setting in Nigeria**

The press in Africa constitutes an active force in the realisation of the goal of the evolution of sustainable democracy in the continent of Africa (Obilade, 1999). He went on to say that in African states with non-democratic regimes, the press has a role. The mass media was supposed to encourage public participation in the democratic process as part of their constitutional duties.

According to Ciboh (2010), in order for citizens to fully engage in a nation's democratic process, they require the assistance of the mass

media in order to define and sort out the democratic process as knowledgeable participants. He continued by saying the mass media is the most widely used source of knowledge on elections in democracies and cultures undergoing transition worldwide, despite the existence of alternative methods of citizen education. The mass media provided extensive coverage of every election that was held in the nation starting in 1994 and continuing through the elections in 2003 and 2007.

Setting the agenda for public debate on current issues is one of the mass media's primary functions in a democracy. Umechukwu (2001) explains that in order for the mass media to maintain democracy, agenda-setting for public debate on current issues is unquestionably necessary. This will foster a participatory democracy and greatly influence citizens' acceptance or rejection of government-initiated policies.

According to Izah (2003), the media's extensive coverage, reporting, and exposing of corruption in Nigerian politics during that time may have had a direct impact on the fight against corruption that was stepped up under Obasanjo's rule. The media was crucial in this process, which resulted in the creation of organisations like the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Crime Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). This function is evaluated as an accountability or whistle blowing role (Omoera, 2017). The administration of Muhammadu Buhari has recently rekindled this whistle blowing role.

According to Jobarteh (2012), institutions and procedures must make an effort to serve all stakeholders in a fair amount of time by attending to the wants, desires, and concerns of the populace. According to Jibo (2000), the media serves as a feedback system that allows the public to draw the state's attention to their situation. He continued by saying that the media typically accomplishes this by reminding the government of its duties to the people through a variety of media campaigns.

The aforementioned indicates that the media's competence and attentiveness are especially crucial in monitoring the accessibility and availability of services to different public segments, which promotes effective governance. In a particular civilisation, there are several actors and points of view. In order to get to a broad consensus on what is best for the entire community and how this may be accomplished, good governance necessitates the mediation of the various interests in society. It also necessitates a long-term, comprehensive view of what is required for sustainable human development and how to accomplish its objectives.

Understanding a society's or community's historical, cultural, and social settings is the only way to do this. This region is where the media's primary functions are observed: Supplying citizens with information, education, and enlightenment so they can make well-informed judgements and act accordingly for the benefit of society. By doing this, the media aids in energising the populace to support national development initiatives. One excellent example would be the role played by the mass media in enlisting Nigerians for the 2006 census. The census was conducted from March 21 to March 27, 2006. The role of the media was evident before, during, and following the head count. To ensure a full-scale participation in the census exercise, the National Population Commission (NPC) worked with the media (Ojete, 2008). The media used editorials, news, headlines, and other journalistic genres to convey important information and education about the census.

The media contributed to the enormous participation that was observed during the census by disseminating important information and education about it through editorials, news, headlines, and other journalistic genres. This also applied to the current administration's most recent election. The unprecedentedly high voter participation was partly caused by the extensive publicity that was provided in the run-up to the election. In fact, the media has been recognised as the leading force in promoting government development initiatives in a way that will encourage citizens to get involved (Ogundiya, 2010).

Assuring that every member of a society feels involved and not left out of the mainstream is essential to its well-being. This necessitates providing chances for all groups, especially the most vulnerable, to enhance and/or preserve their wellbeing. In this sense, the media's responsibility is straightforward: They must provide fair, impartial coverage of all topics while ensuring that a range of voices and viewpoints are heard. Perhaps the Nigerian media has been heavily criticised for this role. When covering and handling matters of public interest, the Nigerian media has been charged with bias (Okeme, 2000).

When institutions and procedures are run well, they maximise the use of available resources while delivering outcomes that satisfy societal demands. In the framework of good governance, efficiency also refers to environmental preservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. Efficacy and efficiency greatly increase the general effectiveness of government by ensuring that state institutions are operating at their best in accordance with the rule of law. Even so, the media cannot guarantee the efficacy and efficiency of every institution in society on its own. However, by quickly and consistently highlighting instances of

inefficiency and other associated vices in the system, the media can assist the various institutions and officials on their toes. In this manner, inefficiencies in government, organisations, and public institutions will be significantly decreased. Ineffective and unproductive institutions and practices can be brought to light by the media through the creation of media campaigns, films, editorial comments, and other venues of criticism (UNESCO, 2005).

One essential component of successful government is accountability. Civil society organisations and the commercial sector, in addition to governmental institutions, must answer to the public and their institutional stakeholders. Depending on whether choices or actions are made inside or outside of an organisation or institution, different people have different accountability levels. Generally speaking, society holds the government responsible. Accountability refers to the duty of evaluating public officials' actions to ascertain how well they carry out their official duties. It is a process of accepting accountability for the choices and actions made by civil society institutions and organisations, private sector businesses, government and public service organisations, and the people who work for these businesses, organisations, and institutions. Accountability also includes how these people and organisations are handling public funds, as well as whether everything is done fairly and in compliance with established guidelines, agreements, and standards, and whether performance outcomes are fairly and accurately reported in relation to required roles and/or plans (Jobarteh, 2012). One of accountability's advantages is that it virtually eliminates the likelihood of corruption in the political system by limiting the abuse of authority by the government. Accountability encompasses a variety of internal and external mechanisms of examination.

One of the main accountability mechanisms is the media. Therefore, the Nigerian media is required under the constitution to hold the government accountable. The foundation of accountability is information access. The public can only hold those in power responsible for their deeds and inactions if they are given accurate and pertinent information. The public has a duty to get accurate and consistent information from the media, which is the primary information provider. The FOI bill was brought into law by the Nigerian government in appreciation of the media's important role. According to a recent study, there is no accountability without information. Power is information, and the more people who have it, the more power is shared. The ability of a media outlet to effectively carry out the public watchdog role of

“Public Affairs” is a measure of its independence (Pope, 2000).

According to Orucu & Onalo (2017) cited in Olley, Wilson, Utsalo (2023), the success of sustainable development in Nigeria depends on effective communication. Stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public might not be able to comprehend and participate in the current issues without effective communication. Additionally, communication is a vital instrument for informing, educating and inspiring communities and individuals to assume responsibility and take part in the process. To promote sustainable development in Nigeria, communication can be used in a variety of ways, including public campaigns, awareness-raising efforts, and stakeholder dialogues.

According to them, for Nigeria to thrive sustainably, good governance is crucial. The decision-making process must be transparent and accountable in order to achieve good governance. Additionally, it is critical to safeguard the preservation of human rights and encourage citizen participation in the development process (Orucu & Onalo, 2017).

Also, it is critical to support the rule of law and fortify the institutions in charge of managing and putting sustainable development policies into action (Adeniyi, 2020).

Olaniyi, Ogundana, and Olufemi (2020) claim that sustainable development in Nigeria, is a complicated subject, because it requires good government, effective communication and environmental management. In order to achieve sustainable growth in any country, communication is essential. Making sure that citizens have access to information that helps them comprehend the potential and difficulties related to sustainable development is crucial. Creating strategies and laws to stop environmental deterioration and promote environmental preservation is known as environmental management. Economic development is required to make sure that economic activities are carried out in a way that is consistent with the objectives of sustainable development. In order to facilitate the implementation of sustainable development policies, good governance is essential for sustainable development. The success of Nigeria's efforts at sustainable development is dependent on successful cooperation between the government, the corporate, audience sector, and civil society organisations (Olaniyi, Ogundana, and Olufemi (2020).

However, an important component of attaining sustainable development is the economy. Policies should be developed to address poverty reduction, job creation, and gender equality in order to ensure an inclusive and sustainable economy. This entails making investments in education and the

advancement of skills facilitating access to financing and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, economic policy should emphasise boosting environmentally friendly manufacturing and consumption and eliminating inequality (World Bank 2019). A key component of sustainable development is the economy. It is the growth engine that can raise living standards, lower poverty, and create jobs. A sustainable economy needs to strike a balance between social equality, environmental conservation and economic growth. It ought to encourage waste reduction, resource efficiency, and the utilisation of renewable energy sources. Additionally, it should assist the creation of resilient communities and ensure that economic activities are socially and environmentally responsible. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, for instance, contain objectives for economic development employment, and ethical production and consumption.

Jobarte (2012) asserts that in order for the media to support accountability in governance, journalists must be aware of the four basic questions surrounding accountability: Who has an obligation? What obligations or requirements are expected to be fulfilled? What will demonstrate whether the criteria and promises have been fulfilled? What happens if someone misbehaves or performs poorly?

According to the aforementioned, accountability and transparency are two ideas that are essential prerequisites for democracy and just governance, which help to guarantee that the people's will is followed when the government exercises its authority. It clarifies what we mean when we state that a nation like Nigeria has just or equitable governance. These four viewpoints could be used to analyse the answer to this question.

As stated by Jobarte (2012): “When the government makes prudent use of capital and limited resources for the good of all citizens, but particularly for the most underprivileged. When the majority of citizens believe that the regulations that the state follows are fair and just. When the government respects its people, tells them what it is doing or is not doing, and let them decide who will lead them and what they need and want from the government.”

### **Mass Media and the Promotion of Government's Policies**

The Nigerian government actively uses mass media to promote its policies and programs aimed at fostering national development.

According to National Orientation Agency (NOA, 2025), below are some key government policies that have been aired on mass media

platforms to inform, educate, and mobilize citizens for national progress:

### 1. Economic Policies

**Fuel Subsidy Removal:** The government has used mass media to explain the rationale behind the removal of fuel subsidies, emphasizing its long-term benefits for economic stability and development. This includes transitioning to alternative energy sources like Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

**National Youth Investment Fund (NYIF):** Aimed at empowering Nigerian youth with access to loans for entrepreneurial ventures, this policy has been widely publicized to encourage youth participation in economic activities.

**Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI):** This initiative promotes the adoption of CNG as a cheaper and more sustainable energy source for transportation and other uses.

### 2. Education and Youth Empowerment

**Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND):** This policy provides interest-free loans to students in tertiary institutions, ensuring access to quality education. It has been promoted through television, radio, and online platforms.

**Skill-Up Artisan (SUPA) Program:** A program designed to train artisans and equip them with modern skills to boost their productivity and employability.

**National Youth Talent Export Programme (NATEP):** This initiative focuses on identifying and exporting Nigerian talents to the global market.

### 3. Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation

**Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** The government has used mass media to inform vulnerable Nigerians about cash transfer programs aimed at alleviating poverty.

**National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP):** Programs like N-Power, TraderMoni, and MarketMoni have been widely publicized to support small businesses and unemployed youth.

### 4. Agriculture and Food Security

**Dry Season Farming Initiative:** The government has aired campaigns to promote its agricultural initiatives, including the cultivation of 7,000 hectares of land with irrigation facilities.

**N250 Billion Agricultural Fund:** This fund supports farmers with loans and grants to boost agricultural productivity and ensure food security.

### 5. Health and Wellbeing

**Diabetes Dialysis Centers:** The establishment of dialysis centers across the country has been highlighted in mass media to improve healthcare access for Nigerians.

**Zero Tax on Pharmaceutical Inputs:** The government has publicized its policy of removing taxes on imported pharmaceutical inputs to make medicines

more affordable.

### 6. Infrastructure Development

**National Housing Initiatives:** The government has used mass media to showcase its housing projects aimed at providing affordable homes for Nigerians.

**Road and Rail Infrastructure:** Projects like the Lagos-Ibadan railway and the Second Niger Bridge have been widely promoted to highlight government efforts in improving transportation.

### 7. National Unity and Value Reorientation

**National Values Charter:** The government has launched campaigns to promote patriotism, unity, and ethical values among Nigerians.

**Reorientation Campaigns by the National Orientation Agency (NOA):** Campaigns such as "Do the Right Thing" and "Change Begins with Me" environment and you, it pays to pay your tax, #proudlyNigerian# #realnigerian#, have been aired to encourage responsible citizenship.

### 8. Technology and Innovation

**Digital Economy Policies:** The government has used mass media to promote its efforts in building a digital economy, including initiatives like the Nigeria Startup Act and broadband expansion projects.

### 9. Environmental Sustainability

**Green Energy Transition:** Campaigns have been aired to promote the government's commitment to renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

### 10. Security and Governance

**Community Policing Initiatives:** The government has used mass media to inform citizens about efforts to enhance security through community policing.

**Anti-Corruption Campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns have been launched to highlight the government's fight against corruption.

### Mass Media Platforms Used

**Television and Radio:** Channels like NTA, Channels TV, and Radio Nigeria are used to broadcast government policies.

**Social Media:** Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are leveraged for wider reach, especially among the youth.

**Print Media:** Newspapers like The Guardian, Punch, and Vanguard are used to publish detailed information about government initiatives.

**Online News Portals:** Websites like Premium Times and Sahara Reporters are also used to disseminate information.

### Impact of Mass Media Campaigns

**Increased Public Awareness:** Citizens are better informed about government policies and programs.

**Enhanced Participation:** More Nigerians are participating in government initiatives, such as applying for loans or enrolling in skill acquisition programs.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Mass media provides a platform for citizens to give feedback on government policies, helping to improve implementation.

By leveraging mass media and modern communication tools, the Nigerian government aims to foster transparency, build public trust, and ensure that citizens are well-informed about its policies and programs.

### **Challenges facing the Mass Media in Fostering Good Governance in Nigeria**

The issue of low journalistic pay; the polarisation of the media along ethnic lines that permeates Nigerian politics; ownership influence that shapes media positions; the accusation that both the public and private media reflect the ideological and political considerations of their owners; protocol journalism, which involves high-ranking public officials being purposefully shielded from embarrassing questions and investigations by the media in exchange for some payment for the media (Jibo, 2003).

There are still important problems that the Nigerian media must address, even though it is acknowledged that the country's mass media have attempted to promote good governance in a variety of ways. Nigerian journalists, especially those in the public media, frequently over censor themselves out of fear of retaliation. This results in factual inaccuracy, a circumstance in which certain facts are lacking, information is frequently insufficient, or it is purposefully minimised.

The media themselves determine whether or not they can support effective governance. UNESCO (2005) lays forth exactly what the media must be and possess in order to carry out their mandate. The statement states that these three factors, media freedom, independence, and pluralism, are necessary for the media to successfully support good government. It is interesting to note that this identical argument was mirrored in a 2006 document from the Centre for Development Communication.

The media should be editorially independent, free from outside pressure and interference and represent a range of viewpoints in order to support good governance. This will allow citizens to be better informed, comprehend the issues at hand, form their own opinions, and ultimately evaluate events independently. These texts' arguments emphasise the need for the media to be essentially free from all forms of influence, including political, ownership, commercial, and governmental control. But for the Nigerian media, this seems to be a major obstacle. According to academics, the Nigerian media is riven by issues of commercialisation, the "he who pays the piper dictates the tune" syndrome, and ethnic division. Second, plurality has been characterised as

the presence of as many newspapers, magazines, and television channels as feasible that represent the broadest possible spectrum of societal viewpoints. It is useful to note that, despite their sheer size, Nigerian media cannot yet be considered truly pluralistic as these publications contend since, unlike in other nations, community media have not yet taken root in the country's media landscape.

The fact that community media have not yet been formed in Nigerian media, unlike in other nations, makes it important to note that, despite their overwhelming numbers, Nigerian media cannot yet be considered fully pluralistic as indicated in these documents.

The media itself must be a reliable illustration of the good governance notion in order to properly support it. First and foremost, the media should respect the professional ethical standards established by self-regulation, continuously improve their professionalism, and answer to the public for the information, education, and entertainment they provide. All things considered, the media should understand that they are answerable to the public, their industry, and themselves for their activities.

The three Cs, corruption, collusion, and cronyism, must be combated by the media. They have to defend the rule of law, advance human rights, and provide citizens with ongoing information. Journalists must possess the investigative skills required to uncover the truth and carry out their duties in advancing good governance in order to carry out this responsibility with integrity. Press conference releases are sometimes skewed to fit the peculiarities of the medium owners or the reporter, and the Nigerian media has been accused of factual inaccuracy. What is clearly being promoted here is that the media should always embrace professionalism and avoid any unprofessional behaviour that could endanger the media. However, given the disputes surrounding journalism as a career in Nigeria, the question of professionalism still poses a significant obstacle (Adaja, 2012).

This suggests that the media must support the development and/or upkeep of a supportive legislative environment or regulatory framework that ensures media freedom, independence, and plurality in order to operate effectively in the pursuit of good governance. It is also crucial to note, though, that the nation must also create an environment that is conducive to media investigation. In order to protect journalists and their right to obtain information, harmful media regulations, such as criminal and defamation laws, are frequently applied against investigative journalists.

All of the aforementioned arguments show

that media professionals have obligations to the public, their industry, and the nation. These responsibilities can be fulfilled in two ways: professionally and ethically when collecting and evaluating data. Additionally, the media would struggle to effectively promote good governance without the infrastructure, organisational capacity, and investigative capabilities that are necessary (SCG, 2006).

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in the Agenda-Setting theory of the press, which explains how the media can shape public opinion by determining the issues that receive the most attention and are perceived as important by the public. According to Severin and Tankard (1979), agenda-setting is the mass media's ability to select and highlight certain topics, thereby influencing the public's perception of their significance. Folarin (2002) further explains that through this process, the media effectively predetermine the issues society views as most pressing at any given time. Baran and Davis (2003), cited in Soola (2007), affirm a strong positive correlation between the prominence of issues in media coverage and their perceived importance by the public.

Expanding on this, Nwanne (2010) notes that the theory elucidates how the media help audiences become aware of and prioritize key societal concerns. Agbo (2003) emphasizes that factors such as the quality, frequency, prominence, and cumulative impact of media reporting all contribute to the media's agenda-setting power.

Applying this theory to the current study, it is posited that when the Nigerian media place sustained attention on critical national issues such as good governance and economic development, they can influence public attitudes and responses towards these topics. In turn, this media-driven prioritization can foster greater civic engagement and support for policies that promote effective governance and national development. Thus, the study seeks to examine how audience attitudes and responses are shaped by media campaigns, reflecting the core notion of agenda-setting—that media emphasis can motivate public concern and action on important social and political issues. This theoretical linkage provides a foundation for understanding the media's role as a catalyst in advancing good governance and economic progress in Nigeria.

**Methodology**

The research design used in this study was survey. While supporting the significance and applicability of the survey research design, Nwodu (2006) holds the opinion that the survey method

concentrates on a representative sample drawn from the complete population under consideration. According to Baran (2004), this approach is based on the idea that a population is too big for any researcher to really examine every component of the population being studied.

Residents of Auchi, Etsako West Local Government Area, Edo State make up the study's population. The population of Etsako West Local Government as projected by cityfacts.com (2022), is 245,469. Farmers and traders make up the majority of Etsako West population, and many of them work in the public and civil service.

Due to time and resource limitations, it is frequently difficult to examine an entire population. Therefore, obtaining a sample would be the standard course of action in this case. The Taro Yamane Sample size calculation formula was used to select 400 respondents as a sample from the population.

The purposive sampling method was used to determine the sample size for the study. As stated by Ikeagwu (1998), the fundamental principle of purposive sampling is that, with sound judgment and a suitable strategy, one can selectively choose the cases to be included in the sample that best meet the research needs.

**Data Presentation and Analysis  
Demographic Data**

**Figure 1: Sex of Respondents**

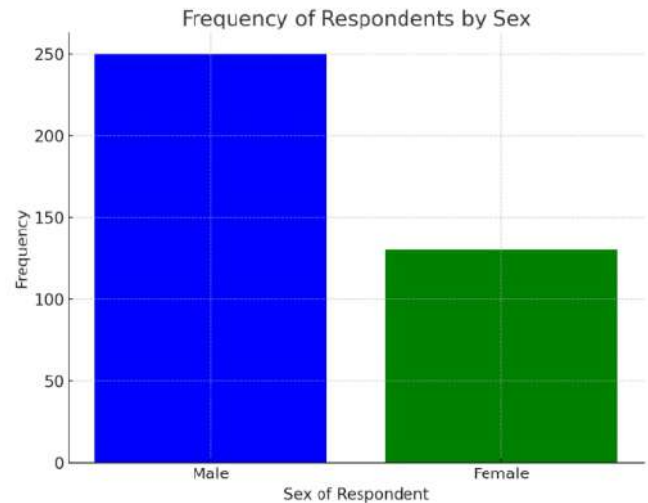
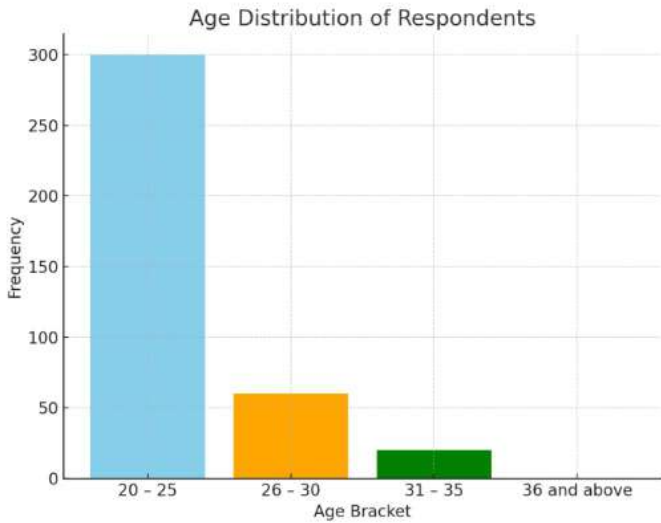


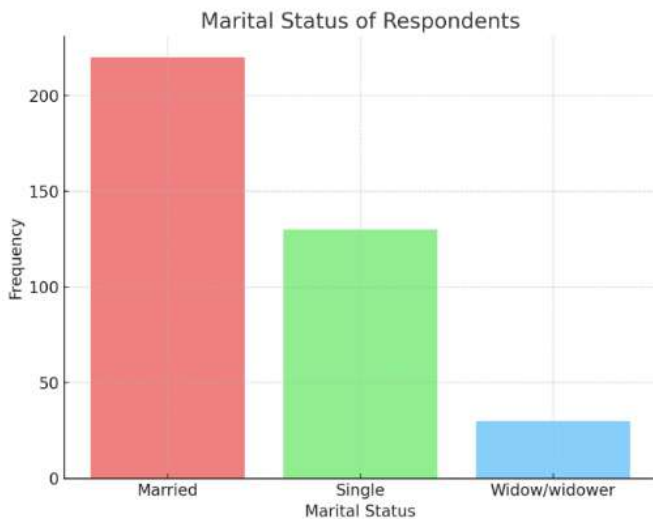
Chart above shows that out of the 380 respondents, 250 representing 65% are male while 130 or 34% are female. What this implies is that there were more male respondents than the female.

**Chart 2: Age Distribution of Respondents**



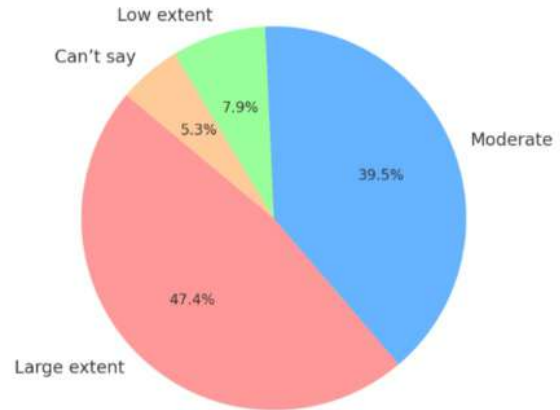
The above chart shows that out of the 380 respondents, 300 respondents representing 78.9% fall within the age bracket of 20 - 25 years, while 60 respondents representing 15.8% fall within the age bracket of 26 - 30. 20 of them representing 5.3% fall within the age bracket of 31 - 35.

**Figure 3: Marital status**



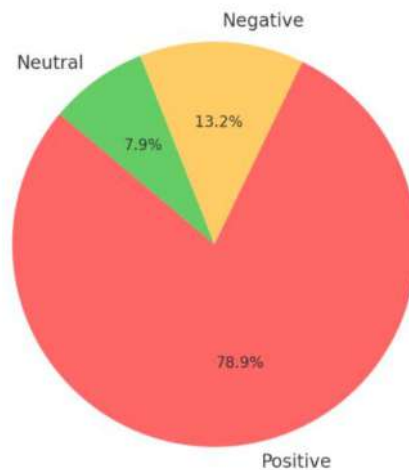
The results of the above table shows that 220 respondents or 58% are married, 130 or 34% are single, while 30 or 8% are widow/widower.

**Figure 4: Attitudes and responses to media campaign for good governance and economic development in Nigeria.**



Data in the chart above indicates that 180 (47%) of the respondents said to large extent, the mass have carried out campaign for good governance and economic in Nigeria, 150 of the respondents or 39% said that the mass have moderately carried out campaign for good governance and economic in Nigeria, 30 or 8% of the respondents said to low extent, the mass have carried out campaign for good governance and economic in Nigeria while 20 or 5% of the respondents were indifferent.

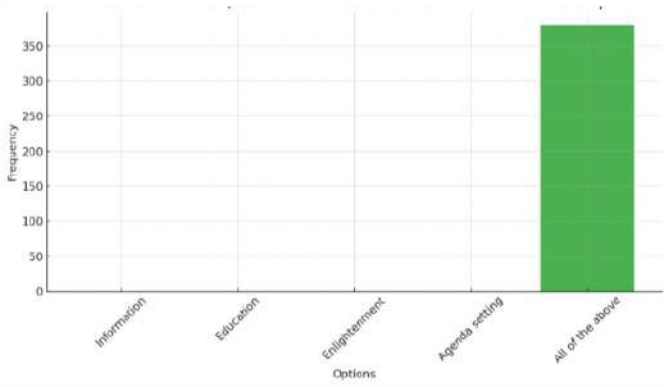
**Figure 5: Respondents' attitude on the role of media in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria**



The data in the chart above shows that 300 of the respondents or 79% were positive on the role of media in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria, 50 or 13% of the

respondents' responses were negative as they said the role of media in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria has not yielded any good results, while 30 or 8% were neutral on the role of media in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria.

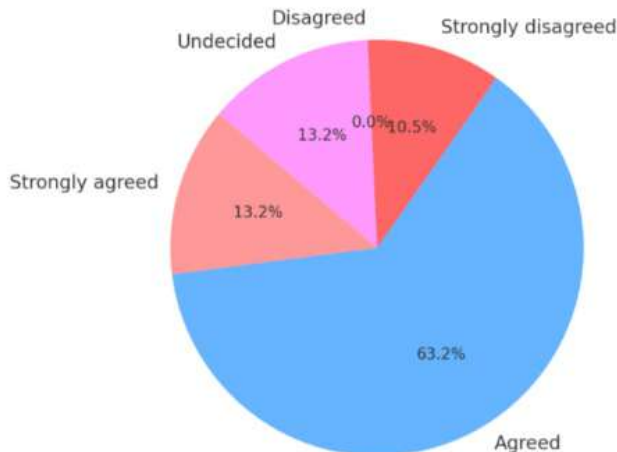
**Figure 6: The roles of the mass media in the quest for good governance and economic development in Nigeria?**



The chart above shows that all the respondents were of the opinion that the role of the mass media in support for good governance and economic development in Nigeria are through information from government to the people and the yearnings and aspirations of the people to the government, educating them on developmental and economic issues that need to be, enlightenment and agenda setting to the people.

This means that the Nigerian media is strategic and crucial to the quest to realize good governance and economic development in Nigeria.

**Figure 7: The mass media have contributed to the promotion of good governance and economic development in Nigeria?**



Data in the above chart indicate that 50 of the respondents, representing 13.2% said that they strongly agreed that the mass media have contributed greatly to good governance and economic development in Nigeria, 240 of them representing 63.5% agreed. However, 40 or 10.5% strongly disagreed while 50 or 13.2% were undecided.

**Figure 8: The mass media's efforts in promoting good governance and economic development have really had an impact**

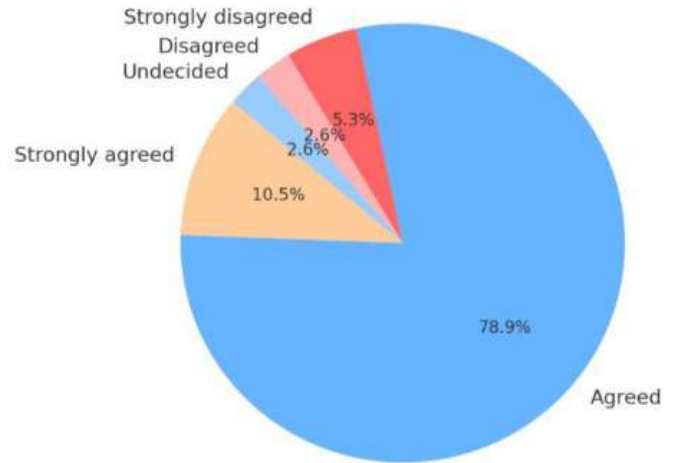
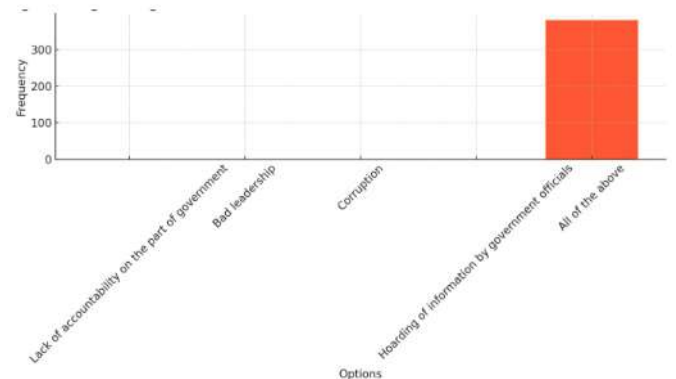


Figure 8 shows that 40 of the respondents or 10.5% strongly agreed that the mass media's efforts in promoting good governance and economic development have really had an impact, 300 (78.4%) agreed that that the mass media's efforts in promoting good governance and economic development have really had an impact, 20 (6.3%) strongly disagreed that that the mass media's efforts in promoting good governance and economic development have really had an impact while 10 representing 2.6% were undecided.

**Figure 9: The challenges facing the Nigerian mass media in the promotion of good governance and economic development**



The chart above indicates that all the respondents 100% affirmed that the challenges of the mass media in the promotion of good governance and economic development in Nigeria include lack of accountability on the part of the government, bad leadership, corruption and the

### **Discussion of Findings**

One thing is very evident from the study findings. That is, the mass media play a vital and essential role in the functioning of society. Additionally, they have had a favourable influence on Nigerian society by supporting the path of economic growth and good governance.

Table Four found that 47% of respondents said that the mass media had carried out the campaign for good governance and economics in Nigeria to a large extent, 39% said that the mass had carried out the campaign for good governance and economics in Nigeria to a moderate extent, 8% said that the mass had carried out the campaign for good governance and economics in Nigeria to a low extent, and 5% said they were indifferent.

According to Ciboh (2005), the mass media is the most prevalent and significant source of information regarding the electoral process in democracies and societies undergoing transition worldwide, even though there are alternative ways for citizens to be educated. As a result, since democracy began in 1999, the Nigerian elections have received extensive coverage in the media. The media must immediately continue to make sure that they shine their searchlight in places of governance in order to eradicate any abuses related to public offices if they are to adhere to the principles of the social responsibility theory.

According to table 5, 79% of respondents had a positive opinion of the media's role in campaigning for and advancing good governance and economic development in Nigeria, 13% had a negative opinion, stating that the media's efforts to advance these goals had not produced any positive outcomes, and 8% had a neutral opinion.

On the other hand, table six data showed that all respondents (100%) agreed that the mass media campaign's role in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria is to inform the public about the government's intentions and aspirations, as well as to educate the public about economic and developmental issues that require attention and to set the agenda. Accordingly, the Nigerian media plays a critical and vital role in the country's efforts to achieve economic growth and

good governance.

Similarly, table 7 shows that 63.5% of respondents agreed, with 13.2% confirming that they strongly agreed that the mass media has played a significant role in Nigeria's economic growth and excellent governance. However, 13.2% of respondents were unsure, and 10.5% strongly disagreed.

According to data in Table 8, 10.5% of respondents strongly agreed that the efforts of the mass media to promote economic development and good governance have had a significant impact, 78.4% agreed, 6.3% strongly disagreed, and 2.6% were unsure.

According to the findings, poor leadership, a lack of accountability on the part of the government, information hoarding by government officials, and corruption among those tasked with managing the affairs of the Nigerian state have all contributed to the country's lack of good governance. This was clearly stated in table nine results, where every respondent agreed that the problems are poor leadership, corruption, and a lack of accountability. This indicates that corruption, poor leadership, and a lack of accountability and transparency on the part of Nigerian officials are the root causes of the country's terrible governance issue.

### **Conclusion**

The Nigerian mass media, which even spearheaded and fought for the country's independence, has been at the forefront of the advocacy and promotion of the democracy that currently exists in Nigeria over the years. Nonetheless, a large proportion of the nation's current media outlets must assume the duty of effectively promoting improved governance and economic growth in our democracy. Since the mass media are organisations tasked with holding the public accountable to the government, they can accomplish this goal if they uphold the sanctity of truth and justice at all times and apply the fundamental values of patriotism, accountability, transparency, and objectivity in the performance of their duties.

### **Recommendations**

1. The government should act immediately to start living up to expectations by providing the people with the benefits of democracy in the form of effective governance.
2. By exerting pressure on political leaders to embrace accountability, transparency, and responsibility to the Nigerian people, the mass media should take the issues of

economic development and good governance seriously.

3. Additionally, the media should work harder to combat political corruption and abuses of the government process. Good governance will result from the eradication of all forms of abuses related to Nigerian governance.

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