

BEYOND TOKENISM IN NIGERIA: STRATEGIES FOR AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSITY IN MEDIA

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Abstract

This study investigates strategies for enhancing authentic representation of diversity in Nigerian media, focusing on combating tokenism. Through a comprehensive analysis of prevailing patterns, underlying factors contributing to tokenism, and effective strategies for fostering inclusivity, the study aims to provide actionable insights for media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire distributed via Google Form, with a sample size of 352 media practitioners in Ogun State determined using the Cochran Formula and a voluntary sampling technique employed. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory and Critical Race Theory were utilized to interpret the findings, which revealed varying perceptions regarding ethnic diversity representation. Economic considerations, historical legacies, and political influences were identified as significant contributors to tokenism. Diversifying editorial teams, providing diversity training, and establishing clear guidelines for authentic representation emerged as key strategies. The study emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing tokenism and promoting a media landscape that reflects the true diversity of Nigerian society.

Keywords: Tokenism, Diversity Representation, Nigerian Media, Inclusivity Strategies, Cultural Sensitivity

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Introduction

Nigeria, renowned for its cultural richness and ethnic diversity, stands as a vibrant tapestry of various languages, traditions, and beliefs. With over 250 ethnic groups, it embodies a mosaic of identities and narratives that contribute to its societal fabric (World Bank, 2018). However, amidst this diversity, there persists a challenge in the media landscape - the issue of tokenism. Tokenism, characterized by the superficial inclusion of minority groups to create an illusion of diversity without genuine representation, remains a pervasive phenomenon in Nigerian media (Berger, 2012).

Historically, Nigerian media has grappled with portraying authentic representations of the nation's diversity. Often, minority groups are relegated to stereotypical roles or entirely absent from mainstream

narratives, perpetuating a homogenized and inaccurate depiction of Nigerian society (Okome, 2007). This tendency towards tokenism not only undermines the richness of Nigeria's cultural heritage but also reinforces power dynamics that marginalize certain groups within society.

The prevalence of tokenism in Nigerian media is not merely a reflection of editorial decisions but is deeply rooted in broader societal structures. Nigeria's complex history of colonization, ethnic tensions, and socio-economic disparities has contributed to a hierarchical system where certain groups hold more influence and representation than others (Oyedemi, 2018). Consequently, media organizations often prioritize narratives that cater to dominant ethnic or cultural groups, further marginalizing minority voices. Moreover, the digital age has introduced new

challenges to the quest for authentic representation in Nigerian media. While social media platforms offer opportunities for grassroots storytelling and alternative voices, they also present risks of amplifying tokenistic representations or misinformation (Akintunde, 2019). The democratization of content creation has yet to fully translate into equitable representation, as power dynamics and access to resources continue to shape whose stories are told and how they are portrayed.

Efforts to address tokenism in Nigerian media must extend beyond mere lip service or cosmetic diversity initiatives. Meaningful change requires a fundamental shift in editorial practices, organizational culture, and societal attitudes towards diversity and inclusion. It necessitates the recognition of the intrinsic value of diverse perspectives and experiences in shaping a more accurate portrayal of Nigerian society (Nwabueze, 2015).

Furthermore, the importance of authentic representation in media cannot be overstated in its role in shaping public perceptions and fostering social cohesion. When minority groups see themselves authentically represented in media, it validates their experiences, fosters a sense of belonging, and challenges harmful stereotypes (Brown, 2017). Conversely, continued tokenism perpetuates feelings of alienation and reinforces power imbalances that hinder national unity.

Considering these challenges, this study aims to explore strategies for moving beyond tokenism in Nigerian media towards more authentic representation of diversity. By examining current practices, identifying barriers to change, and drawing lessons from global best practices, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a media landscape that reflects the true diversity of Nigeria and empowers all its citizens to participate fully in shaping the nation's collective narrative.

To achieve this, a comprehensive review of literature spanning media studies, sociology, and cultural studies will be conducted. Additionally, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with media professionals, diversity advocates, and representatives from marginalized communities will provide valuable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for authentic representation in Nigerian media. Through this multi-faceted approach, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on diversity and inclusion in Nigerian media and pave the way for tangible change.

Despite Nigeria's rich cultural diversity, the media landscape often falls short in authentically representing this diversity. Tokenism persists, with

minority groups frequently relegated to stereotypical roles or omitted entirely from mainstream narratives. This superficial approach not only undermines the richness of Nigeria's cultural heritage but also perpetuates societal inequalities by marginalizing certain groups. Consequently, there is a pressing need to address the issue of tokenism in Nigerian media and foster more genuine and inclusive representations of diversity.

Moreover, tokenistic representations in media contribute to distorted perceptions of Nigerian society, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and hindering efforts towards social cohesion. This problem is exacerbated by the digital age, where social media platforms can amplify tokenistic portrayals and misinformation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore strategies for moving beyond tokenism and promoting authentic diversity representation in Nigerian media to foster a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of the nation's cultural mosaic.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the current state of representation in Nigerian media, focusing on the portrayal of ethnic diversity.
- To identify the key factors that contribute to tokenism in Nigerian media and their impact on the accuracy of diversity representation.
- To propose practical strategies aimed at promoting genuine and inclusive representations of diversity in Nigerian media, with a focus on implementation feasibility and effectiveness.

Research Questions

- What are the prevailing patterns of representation in Nigerian media, particularly concerning ethnic diversity?
- What are the underlying factors contributing to tokenism in Nigerian media, and how do they perpetuate inaccurate portrayals of diversity?
- What strategies can be employed to foster more authentic and inclusive representations of diversity in Nigerian media, and how can these strategies be effectively implemented?

Literature Review

Overview of Nigerian Media Industry

The Nigerian media industry comprises a diverse landscape of print, broadcast, and digital platforms, reflecting the country's complex socio-cultural fabric. Print media, including newspapers and magazines, has a long-standing presence in Nigeria, with publications such as *The Guardian*, *ThisDay*, and *Vanguard* being prominent players (Onwumechili, 2015). These newspapers serve as vital sources of information, shaping public discourse on various issues ranging from politics to culture. However, the print sector faces challenges such as declining circulation and revenue in the digital era, prompting publications to adapt their business models to remain relevant (Ogunleye & Oso, 2017).

Broadcast media, particularly television and radio, also play a significant role in Nigeria's media landscape, reaching diverse audiences across the country. The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels Television are among the leading television networks, providing news, entertainment, and educational content (Olorunnisola & Adebayo, 2018). Similarly, radio stations like Radio Nigeria and Cool FM have extensive reach and influence, serving as platforms for music, news, and interactive programming (Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2016). However, challenges such as regulatory constraints, funding issues, and competition from digital platforms pose ongoing hurdles for the broadcast sector (Akinfeleye, 2019).

In recent years, the digital revolution has transformed the Nigerian media landscape, ushering in a new era of online news portals, social media influencers, and digital content creators. Platforms like Linda Ikeji's Blog and Nairaland have gained immense popularity, offering alternative sources of news and entertainment (Adegoke & Abidde, 2016). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have also emerged as influential channels for information dissemination and public engagement (Oyedele, 2019). However, the digitalization of media presents both opportunities and challenges, including issues of misinformation, privacy concerns, and the need for digital literacy initiatives to navigate this rapidly evolving landscape (Adegboye, 2018).

Overall, the Nigerian media industry reflects the country's dynamic cultural milieu and diverse communication needs. While traditional media continues to play a vital role in information dissemination, the digital revolution has reshaped audience consumption habits and created new opportunities for content creation and distribution.

Moving forward, addressing regulatory challenges, investing in digital infrastructure, and promoting media literacy will be crucial for ensuring a vibrant and inclusive media ecosystem in Nigeria.

Historical Context of Media Representation in Nigeria

The historical context of media representation in Nigeria is deeply intertwined with the nation's colonial past and struggle for independence. During the colonial era, the British authorities controlled the media, using it as a tool for disseminating their own narratives and maintaining colonial rule (Omu, 2017). Indigenous voices were marginalized, and media representation primarily served the interests of the colonial administration, perpetuating stereotypes and narratives that reinforced colonial hierarchies (Ogwezzy-Ndisika, 2016). This period laid the foundation for the uneven power dynamics and skewed representations that continue to shape Nigerian media today.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, there was a surge of optimism for a media landscape that would reflect the aspirations and diversity of the newly liberated nation. The Nigerian government established state-owned media outlets such as the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to serve as vehicles for nation-building and cultural promotion (Akinfeleye, 2019). However, despite the noble intentions, these state-controlled media often propagated government agendas and neglected the voices of marginalized groups, leading to criticisms of censorship and lack of diversity in representation (Olorunnisola & Adebayo, 2018).

The period following Nigeria's transition to civilian rule in 1999 witnessed significant changes in the media landscape, with the emergence of private and independent media outlets challenging the dominance of state-controlled media (Adegoke & Abidde, 2016). This era of liberalization brought about greater diversity in voices and perspectives, yet challenges such as media ownership concentration, political interference, and ethical standards persist (Onwumechili, 2015). Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to promote more inclusive representations in media, with civil society organizations advocating for the rights of marginalized groups and promoting media diversity initiatives (Oyedele, 2019). Understanding this historical context is essential for comprehending the complexities of media representation in Nigeria and identifying strategies for fostering more authentic and inclusive portrayals in the future.

Tokenism in Nigerian Media

Tokenism remains a prevalent issue within the Nigerian media landscape, where superficial attempts at diversity often mask underlying disparities in representation. Minority groups, including ethnic minorities, women, and individuals from marginalized communities, are frequently tokenized, portrayed in stereotypical roles, or excluded altogether from mainstream narratives (Okome, 2007). This tokenistic approach perpetuates a skewed representation of Nigerian society, where certain groups are marginalized and their experiences minimized. Research suggests that tokenism not only undermines the credibility and authenticity of media content but also reinforces existing power dynamics that marginalize minority voices (Berger, 2012).

One of the root causes of tokenism in Nigerian media lies in deep-seated socio-economic and political structures that prioritize certain identities over others. Nigeria's history of colonization, ethnic tensions, and socio-economic disparities has created a hierarchical system where dominant groups wield more influence and control over media narratives (Oyedemi, 2018). As a result, media organizations often cater to the preferences and perspectives of these dominant groups, marginalizing minority voices and perpetuating tokenistic representations. Additionally, the commercialization of media further exacerbates tokenism, as media outlets prioritize profit over authentic representation, leading to the commodification of diversity and the perpetuation of stereotypes (Akintunde, 2019).

Efforts to combat tokenism in Nigerian media require a multi-faceted approach that addresses systemic inequalities and challenges prevailing norms. Media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors must work together to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the media industry. This includes implementing diversity initiatives, fostering an inclusive organizational culture, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities through platforms and storytelling (Nwabueze, 2015). By challenging tokenism and striving for more authentic representation, Nigerian media can play a vital role in promoting social cohesion, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a more inclusive society.

Factors Contributing to Tokenism

Several factors contribute to the perpetuation of tokenism within the Nigerian media landscape, reflecting broader societal dynamics and power structures. One significant factor is the historical legacy of colonialism and its enduring impact on social hierarchies. Colonial policies often favored certain ethnic or cultural groups over others, creating

entrenched inequalities that continue to influence media representation today (Oyedemi, 2018). Consequently, media organizations may unconsciously prioritize the narratives and perspectives of dominant groups, relegating minority voices to tokenistic roles.

Economic considerations also play a crucial role in perpetuating tokenism in Nigerian media. Media outlets, particularly those in the commercial sector, are driven by profit motives and audience preferences. As a result, they may prioritize content that caters to mainstream tastes and demographics, sidelining stories and perspectives from marginalized communities (Akintunde, 2019). Additionally, the reliance on advertising revenue further reinforces tokenism, as advertisers often target audiences perceived as more affluent or desirable, marginalizing those from less privileged backgrounds.

Furthermore, political factors contribute to tokenism by shaping media ownership, regulation, and content production. In Nigeria, political elites often have significant influence over media ownership and control, allowing them to shape narratives in line with their interests and agendas (Olorunnisola & Adebayo, 2018). This concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few powerful individuals or groups can stifle diversity of thought and perpetuate tokenistic representations. Additionally, regulatory frameworks may lack sufficient safeguards to promote diversity and ensure equitable representation, further exacerbating tokenism in the media landscape.

Effects of Tokenism on Society

Tokenism in society, particularly within media representations, yields profound effects that extend beyond mere misrepresentation. One significant consequence is the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes and the perpetuation of systemic inequalities. When minority groups are tokenized or portrayed in stereotypical roles, it reinforces preconceived notions and biases held by the majority, leading to the marginalization of these groups (Berger, 2012). This perpetuation of stereotypes not only distorts public perception but also hinders progress towards achieving true diversity and inclusivity in society.

Moreover, tokenism contributes to feelings of alienation and disenfranchisement among marginalized communities. When individuals see themselves portrayed tokenistically or absent altogether from media representations, it sends a message that their voices, experiences, and contributions are not valued or acknowledged (Okome, 2007). This sense of exclusion can have detrimental effects on individuals' self-esteem, identity formation,

and sense of belonging within society, exacerbating social divisions and reinforcing power imbalances.

Furthermore, tokenism undermines efforts towards building a cohesive and equitable society. By perpetuating unequal power dynamics and marginalizing certain groups, tokenistic representations hinder progress towards achieving social justice and inclusive development (Nwabueze, 2015). In a diverse society like Nigeria, where unity and social cohesion are paramount, tokenism in media representations can impede efforts to bridge ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic divides. Addressing tokenism in media, therefore, is not only essential for fostering a more accurate portrayal of society but also for promoting social harmony and empowering all individuals to participate fully in shaping the nation's collective narrative.

Issues of Tokenism In Representation of Diversity In Nigerian Media

The media are the channels, modes, or means through which messages are disseminated. They act as the channels via which information is transmitted. (Sadeeq, 2006). The majority of Nigerians get their news from radio, television, and newspapers, where they are exposed to stories about diversity in terms of race, religion, and other categories. However, online media is shifting the narrative to appeal to younger audiences and tech enthusiasts, and Nigerians' responses to these stories depend on how the media presents the news and which angle the public chooses to follow. As a result, many Nigerians use the media as their mouthpiece and ears. In a similar spirit, the media also assume a leading role in governance by informing the public about the goals and objectives of the government as well as by communicating with it. As a result, the media plays a crucial role in society by promoting understanding between the governed and the government(s).

Nigeria is perceived as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic state, and there is no denying that religion and ethnicity have had a detrimental influence on the state's politics, having serious ramifications for both human lives and property. In actuality, this tends to refute the central tenet of the majority of religions, which is to encourage harmony among human groups. Nigeria is based on ethno-regions. The First Republic, which consisted of four regions, gave way to the current 36 states, which are conveniently divided into six geopolitical zones for public discussion. Other times, particular mention and acknowledgment are made of other political entities, like the Middle Belt and the Niger Delta. There is also diversity in terms of religious identities and beliefs, with Islam and Christianity being the two most prominent and prevalent. Nigeria is split once more into its North and South with regard to what

we might call "territorial politics.". The media sector is entangled in the web as well because, in addition to being based on geography, ethnicity, and religion, their products also exhibit these tendencies. "Northern newspapers" and "southern newspapers" are mentioned. This means that the interests of the north or the south are expressed and safeguarded by these documents. Newspapers like Leadership and New Nigerian primarily advance the interests of the north, whereas The Guardian and The Sun primarily advance the interests of the south. For the Hausa/Fulani people, there are ethnic newspapers. Each works to advance and safeguard their own interests as well as those of the group. Instead of serving as national representatives, even government-owned non-print media like the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) appear to represent the interests of the local states in which they operate. For instance, Christian programming is prohibited by NTA-owned and federal government-owned FM stations in many northern states due to the mistaken belief that doing so would uphold communal interests at the expense of individual rights and the right of all to freely practice their religion. These media channels are in charge of encouraging dubious agenda setting, which is the process of determining ahead of time which topics are seen as crucial in a particular society (Umuerrri, 2008). The Nigerian state's ethno-religious complexity was further enhanced by the colonial social formation that had driven different ethnic groups from one another. First, there was increased rivalry between the three dominant groups in Nigeria—the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba—for control of the country. On the other hand, there was also the issue of majority-minority relations, with the latter complaining of marginalization (Mamdani, 2003; Danjibo 2005; Osaghae, 2006).

Stereotypes seem to arise in part because of the way the media represents racial and ethnic minorities. For instance, stories about minority groups' shortcomings are prevalent in western media representations of these groups, which leaves the audience with unfavorable opinions of these groups (Liu, 2006). Subsequent assessments of minority groups are adversely affected by exposure to derogatory racial images in the media. Minorities are typically stereotypicalized as a result of their exclusion from news and entertainment media, which either gives them little space and coverage or flatly disregards their opinions. (Fursich, 2010). Minorities are frequently portrayed in the media as abnormal people. But this isn't always the case. News is often presented according to the political inclinations of the elite and those with strong political ties in Nigeria, where the majority of the major media outlets are

owned or run by them. News stories that portray the media owners' interests are frequently given more weight than those that are viewed negatively. For instance, the Tinubu family owns *The Nation Newspapers*, which frequently adopt an APC (the ruling political party) viewpoint. Therefore, the media in Nigeria has the potential to be, and frequently is, a tool of political domination and warfare in the hands of the political elite (Kizito & Silk, 2017).

Nigerian media has been instrumental in stoking tensions and promoting social harmony at the same time. One such instance is the case of Ese Oruru, a teenager who was kidnapped and "forcefully" wed by a young Hausa man. The way the news was presented made the Christians in southern Nigeria feel threatened by the Muslims in the north. The fact that comparable crimes do occur in Southern Christian communities without drawing much attention from the media is instructive. The recent nationwide "herdsmen" attacks and kidnappings are another example of how the media stoked conflict. Even as the Nigerian Police struggled to identify the individuals behind the rampage, the media labeled the killers as "Fulani Herdsmen.". The media designation of the killers as "Fulani" stoked anti-Fulani sentiments and resentment in many regions of the nation. In contrast to how the media has framed it, some people believe that the assassins may not even be Fulani tribe members or herdsmen, but rather Boko Haram members on the run or even unscrupulous people in the society can be perpetuating the act in disguise as Fulani tribe. Such falsehoods in the media create ethnic and religious divisions in the country (Kizito and Silk, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

In understanding tokenism in Nigerian media, several theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights. Firstly, Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive their sense of self from the groups they belong to, and this identity shapes their perceptions and behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the context of media representation, this theory suggests that tokenism can exacerbate feelings of social identity threat among marginalized groups, leading to negative psychological outcomes such as reduced self-esteem and increased intergroup tensions.

Finally, Critical Race Theory highlights how power structures and systemic racism perpetuate inequality and marginalization within society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Applied to media representation, this theory underscores how tokenistic portrayals serve to maintain existing power dynamics, reinforcing stereotypes and hindering progress towards racial equity.

Empirical Review

A study conducted by Adebowale (2020) delves into the representation of ethnic diversity in Nigerian television programming. Adebowale's research employs content analysis to scrutinize a sample of popular TV shows, revealing prevalent tokenistic portrayals of minority ethnic groups. The study highlights the need for media producers to move beyond superficial diversity and strive for more authentic and inclusive representations that accurately reflect Nigeria's multicultural society. Additionally, Okafor and Obi (2018) investigate the impact of tokenism on audience perceptions and attitudes towards media representation in Nigeria. Through surveys and focus group discussions, Okafor and Obi explore how tokenistic depictions contribute to stereotype reinforcement and societal divisions. The findings underscore the importance of combating tokenism to foster a sense of belonging and promote social cohesion among diverse audience demographics.

Moreover, a study by Yusuf, Abdullahi, Ibrahim, and Sani, (2019) examines the role of social media platforms in perpetuating or challenging tokenistic representations in Nigerian media. Yusuf et al. analyze user-generated content on platforms like Twitter and Instagram to assess the prevalence of tokenism and the emergence of alternative narratives. The study emphasizes the potential of social media as a tool for amplifying marginalized voices and advocating for more authentic representation in mainstream media channels.

Furthermore, Okonkwo and Nwosu (2017) investigate the organizational factors within media institutions that contribute to tokenism and hinder efforts towards diversity and inclusion. Through interviews with media professionals and content producers, Okonkwo and Nwosu uncover systemic barriers such as editorial biases, limited resources for diverse programming, and resistance to change within newsrooms. The study underscores the need for structural reforms and diversity training programs to address tokenism at its root within media organizations.

Lastly, a study by Eze and Aliyu (2016) explores the effectiveness of diversity initiatives implemented by Nigerian media organizations in promoting genuine representation of diversity. Eze and Aliyu conduct a comparative analysis of diversity policies and practices across various media outlets, assessing their impact on content production and audience engagement. The study highlights successful strategies such as inclusive hiring practices, community outreach programs, and collaborative partnerships with minority organizations, while also identifying areas for improvement in fostering more inclusive media

environments.

In summary, these five empirical studies provide valuable insights into the prevalence of tokenism in Nigerian media, its impact on audience perceptions, the role of social media in challenging traditional narratives, organizational barriers within media institutions, and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. By synthesizing findings from these studies, media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for promoting authentic representation of diversity in Nigerian media.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is a Descriptive Survey, chosen to assess and describe the current state of tokenism in Nigerian media, particularly focusing on media practitioners in Ogun State. To gather primary data, a questionnaire is utilized as the main instrument for data collection. The population of interest comprises media practitioners within Ogun State; however, due to limitations in accessing the entire population, the exact size remains unknown. Consequently, the study applies the Cochran Formula to determine a suitable sample size, resulting in a sample size of 384 participants. The sampling technique employed is Voluntary Sampling, where media practitioners are invited to participate voluntarily in the study. Questionnaires are distributed electronically through Google Forms to ensure efficient data collection.

Upon collection of the data, the study proceeds with the analysis, utilizing Descriptive Statistics to summarize and interpret the gathered information. Descriptive Statistics allow for the organization and presentation of data in a clear and concise manner, providing insights into the prevalence and nature of tokenism within Nigerian media as perceived by media practitioners in Ogun State. This methodological approach ensures a systematic and comprehensive examination of the phenomenon, facilitating a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding tokenism and informing potential strategies for improvement in diversity representation within the Nigerian media landscape.

Data Presentation and Data Analysis

The data gathered during the research findings were analyzed utilizing Descriptive Statistics, employing a systematic tabular representation of respondents' responses to determine the percentage of response rate. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed, but only 352 copies were retrieved and analyzed for data processing.

Research Question 1: What are the prevailing patterns of representation in Nigerian media, particularly concerning ethnic diversity?

Table 1: Representation in Nigerian Media concerning Ethnic Diversity

Representation in Nigerian Media concerning Ethnic Diversity	Freq	\bar{x}	Median	Mode	Range	σ^2	σ	Rating of Ethnic Diversity Representation (Scale: 1-5)
Adequate representation of all ethnic groups	124	3.23	3	-	4	0.66	0.81	1-5
Partial representation, some groups are underrepresented	164	3.78	4	-	4	0.45	0.67	1-5
Tokenistic representation, minorities are superficially included	64	2.88	3	-	4	0.81	0.90	1-5
Total	352							

Source: Researchers' field survey (2024)

Table 1 above illustrates the representation patterns in Nigerian media concerning ethnic diversity, categorizing responses into "Adequate representation of all ethnic groups," "Partial representation, some groups are underrepresented," and "Tokenistic representation, minorities are superficially included." The table provides frequencies alongside essential descriptive statistics, including mean, median, and range, offering insights into respondents' perceptions of ethnic diversity representation. The data reveals varying opinions among respondents, reflecting both the distribution and variability of views regarding ethnic diversity portrayal in Nigerian media. This comprehensive analysis aids in understanding the current landscape of media representation and identifying potential areas for enhancement to foster more inclusive and authentic depictions of ethnic diversity.

Research Question 2: What are the underlying factors contributing to tokenism in Nigerian media, and how do they perpetuate inaccurate portrayals of diversity?

Table 2: Factors Contributing to Tokenism in Nigerian Media

Factors Contributing to Tokenism in Nigerian Media	Freq	\bar{x}	Median	Mode	Range	σ^2	σ
Historical Colonial Legacies	98	3.45	3	-	4	0.72	0.85
Economic Considerations	156	3.78	4	-	4	0.60	0.77
Political Influences	98	3.12	3	-	4	0.65	0.81
Total	352						

Source: Researchers' field survey (2024)

Table 2 above delineates the contributing factors to tokenism in Nigerian media, including historical colonial legacies, economic considerations, and political influences. The frequencies of each factor are presented alongside essential descriptive statistics such as mean, median, range, variance, and standard deviation. With a total frequency of 352, the table offers insights into the prevalence and significance of these factors in perpetuating tokenistic practices within Nigerian media. This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of tokenism's root causes and their implications for diversity portrayal accuracy, providing valuable insights for stakeholders aiming to address these challenges and foster more authentic and inclusive representations in the media landscape.

Research Question 3: What strategies can be employed to foster more authentic and inclusive representations of diversity in Nigerian media, and how can these strategies be effectively implemented?

Table 3: Strategies for Authentic and Inclusive Representation in Nigerian Media

Strategies for Authentic and Inclusive representation in Nigerian Media	Freq	\bar{x}	Median	Mode	Range	σ^2	σ
Diversifying Editorial Teams	120	3.65	4	-	4	0.56	0.75
Providing Training on Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Awareness	98	3.45	3	-	4	0.72	0.85
Establishing Guidelines for Authentic Representation	134	3.92	4	-	4	0.48	0.69
Total	352						

Source: Researchers' field survey (2024)

In this table, the frequencies of various strategies for fostering authentic and inclusive representations of diversity in Nigerian media are presented. Each strategy is accompanied by descriptive statistics including mean, median, range, variance, and standard deviation. With a total frequency of 352, the table provides insights into the distribution and variability of opinions regarding these strategies. This comprehensive analysis aids in understanding the efficacy of different approaches and their potential impact on promoting diversity and inclusion in Nigerian media.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Prevailing Patterns of Representation in Nigerian Media

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the prevailing patterns of representation in Nigerian media concerning ethnic diversity. The data reveals varying perceptions among respondents regarding the adequacy of ethnic diversity representation. Across the categories of "Adequate representation of all ethnic groups," "Partial representation, some groups are underrepresented," and "Tokenistic representation, minorities are superficially included," respondents provided ratings ranging from 1 to 5. The mean ratings indicate a moderate level of satisfaction with ethnic diversity representation, with higher mean values observed for partial representation compared to tokenistic representation. This suggests that while some progress has been made in representing ethnic diversity in Nigerian media, there are still significant challenges to address, particularly regarding the depth and authenticity of representation.

Research Question 2: Underlying Factors Contributing to Tokenism in Nigerian Media

Table 2 sheds light on the factors contributing to tokenism in Nigerian media, including historical colonial legacies, economic considerations, and political influences. The frequencies and descriptive statistics highlight the significance of these factors in perpetuating tokenistic practices. Notably, economic considerations emerge as the most prevalent factor, with the highest frequency and mean rating among respondents. This underscores the role of economic incentives and commercial interests in shaping media representation. Additionally, historical colonial legacies and political influences also play significant roles, albeit with slightly lower frequencies. These findings emphasize the complex interplay of historical, economic, and political dynamics in shaping media narratives and the need for multifaceted strategies to address tokenism effectively.

Research Question 3: Strategies for Authentic and Inclusive Representation in Nigerian Media

Table 3 outlines the strategies that can be employed to foster more authentic and inclusive representations of diversity in Nigerian media. Diversifying editorial teams, providing training on cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness, and establishing guidelines for authentic representation emerge as key strategies with varying frequencies and mean ratings. Notably, establishing guidelines for authentic representation receives the highest frequency and mean rating, indicating strong support

among respondents for this approach. This underscores the importance of clear standards and guidelines to guide media practitioners in creating more inclusive content. However, it's essential to note that all three strategies are crucial and should be implemented in tandem to address tokenism effectively and promote a more accurate portrayal of diversity in Nigerian media.

In summary, the findings highlight the multifaceted nature of tokenism in Nigerian media and underscore the importance of adopting comprehensive strategies to address underlying factors and promote authentic and inclusive representations of diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the pressing need for concerted efforts to address tokenism and foster authentic representations of diversity in Nigerian media. The analysis revealed varying perceptions among respondents regarding the adequacy of ethnic diversity representation, with indications of progress alongside persistent challenges. Economic considerations emerged as a prominent factor contributing to tokenism, highlighting the influence of commercial interests on media narratives. Moreover, historical colonial legacies and political influences were also significant contributors, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the issue and the need for holistic approaches to combat tokenism effectively.

Moving forward, the implementation of strategies aimed at promoting authentic and inclusive representations of diversity is imperative. Diversifying editorial teams, providing training on cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness, and establishing guidelines for authentic representation emerged as key strategies with strong support among respondents. These strategies offer tangible pathways to address tokenism and promote more accurate portrayals of diversity in Nigerian media. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion in media practices, stakeholders can contribute to fostering a media landscape that reflects the rich tapestry of Nigerian society.

In conclusion, addressing tokenism in Nigerian media requires collaborative efforts from media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors. By recognizing the complex dynamics underlying tokenistic practices and implementing targeted interventions, stakeholders can work towards creating a more inclusive and representative media environment. Ultimately, fostering authentic representations of diversity in Nigerian media is not only a matter of social responsibility but also crucial for promoting social cohesion, challenging stereotypes, and empowering all individuals to participate fully in

shaping the nation's collective narrative.

Recommendations

1. Media organizations should prioritize diversifying their editorial teams by actively recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds. This initiative should encompass ethnic, cultural, gender, and socio-economic diversity to ensure a broad range of perspectives and experiences are represented in decision-making processes and content creation. By fostering a more inclusive workplace environment, media organizations can enhance their capacity to produce authentic and nuanced portrayals of diversity in Nigerian media.
2. Educational institutions and industry associations should collaborate to develop and implement comprehensive training programs on cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness for media practitioners. These programs should provide practical guidance on how to navigate complex cultural dynamics, challenge stereotypes, and promote inclusive storytelling practices. By equipping media professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge, such initiatives can facilitate the creation of content that reflects the diversity of Nigerian society accurately.
3. Regulatory bodies and policymakers should establish clear guidelines and incentives to incentivize media organizations to prioritize authentic representations of diversity. This could include introducing diversity quotas for media content, providing funding or tax incentives for projects that promote inclusive storytelling, and implementing measures to monitor and assess diversity representation in the media. By creating a supportive regulatory framework, policymakers can encourage media organizations to adopt best practices and contribute to fostering a more inclusive media landscape in Nigeria.

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