

THE ASSESSMENT OF TELEVISION AS TOOLS FOR NATIONAL ORIENTATION AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN ONDO STATE (A STUDY OF NIGERIA NTA “AM EXPRESS BREAKFAST PROGRAMMES”)

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to determine the public assessment of television as a tools for national orientation and social integration in the Yoruba speaking communities of Ondo State. A study of Nigeria Television”. The paper investigates how television broadcast can be used to promote national orientation and social integration in line with the various functions of the broadcast media. It gauges the views of the people on the role of NTA’s “AM EXPRESS” and how to proffer solution to socio-political, and cultural disintegration that tend to tear the nation apart, with a particular reference to the Yoruba speaking communities of Ondo State. Opinions of respondents have been carefully observed and analyzed. One can say categorically that ninety percent (90%) of the people believe that television is a tool to enhance national orientation and social integration. However, the data analysis from survey method, which ensures the use of questionnaire to elicit responses from respondents, show that the level of national orientation and social integration for development in Ondo State is not satisfactory. Therefore, the researcher recommends more adequate efforts (are needed) by NTA on “Am Express” programmes, for sustainability, promotion of national orientation and social integration. It is hoped that the little

contribution of this paper will act to ginger further a more, critical and analytical finding of then studied. Key words: Television, National Orientation, Social Integration.

Introduction

Mass media serve as a watchdog and the mirror of the nature as they perform crucial roles in the society as well as their influences in editorial policies. Newspaper continues to distinguish itself because of its relative advantage of performance of record it has over other means of communication especially broadcast. Besides, the characteristics, treatment of events deeper than its counterparts in the broadcast medium tends credence to this assertion. The process does not only assure the coloration of the society in which it functions (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1965), it reflects the social and political structures as well as the dominant ideals of that society, At the same time, the press affects the society and the society in turn influences the development and practices of the press (McQuail, 2005). Editorial seek to influence action, persuade and aim at redirecting policy decisions. Therefore, analyses of editorial discourses always dwell on the strength of the editorial argument and the devices employed to convince the readers. Research or opinion journalism suggests that editorials may impacts public opinion regularly on important issues (Pak, 2010).

Contents of newspaper are different from one another due to sophistication and modernity that characterize our present days. Individual differences are at variance with one another. Business people are susceptible subscribing to what is reported in the business world, legal practitioners are prone to reading law related news. To encapsulate this analogy, people tend to display favourable behavior towards what affect their group, positive values of one's own group. So in most Nigerian newspapers, most people are reading what is of great interest to them. This is facilitated by varieties in newspaper contents. They are straight news, news analysis,

investigative reports, features, editorials, letters to the editor's, Obituary, supplement games and puzzle, advertisement, the verbatim interview and photographs, news in pictures (Adisa, 2003).

Therefore, from the foregoing contents, more item than not, determine what newspaper to read and where to read in such newspaper. This postulation heralds what this work attempts to unravel. The target is the studying a survey of Newspaper editorial reading among Rufus Giwa Polytechnic (RUGIPO) students. It is a truism that education improves the wealth and knowledge of students. This ultimately facilitates there taste of the bahavioural pattern, inclusive of newspaper reading. So the study attempts to know the dispensation of RUGIPO students in spite of their academic domestic and social engagements, to newspaper editorial reading and the type of newspaper and contents they would prefer to read.

Statement of Problem

There is the insinuation that student of Tertiary Institutions, especially RUGIPO students have less flair for reading newspaper which serves as fundamental sources of knowledge of contemporary events in the society. Some assert that their pre-occupation in their academic pursuit which is predicated on the limit of their scheme of work. Besides, they assure that the students only restrict themselves to some areas of the newspaper editorial if read at all, How true are these notions? More so, there is yet another controversial proposition that newspaper editorials influence Higher Institution students to behave in certain ways. Are these established on the soul of reading? These are the phenomena, which this study targets to investigate in order to arrive at sound conclusion.

Objective of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

- i. To determine the frequency of newspaper editorial they read.
- ii. To determine the level or source in the editorials.
- iii. To determine which editorial they read.
- iv. To determine the influence of editorial on story writing.
- v. To determine the reasons for editorial.

- vi. To find out whether or not there is conducive environment for editorial readership in Nigerian Higher Institution of learnings?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the frequency of newspaper editorial did you read?
- ii. What is the level of source of the editorials?
- iii. Which editorial did you read?
- iv. What is the influence of editorial on story writing?
- v. What are the reasons for reading editorials?
- vi. Is there enough conducive environment for editorial reading in Higher Institution of Learning in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Newspapers continued to occupy a unique place in journalism and the entire universe. Its readership cuts across nooks and crannies of inhabited places by human beings. Fortunately, Higher Institutions who are about to accomplish an academic mission are thrown into the global events. Hence their adulteration to another environment they find themselves.

Many researchers have undertaken to study newspaper readership among different audiences and in several societies. The works of some of these scholars are reviewed hereunder.

Nwabueze et al (2012) conducted a study titled “An Analysis of Radio/Newspaper Headlines Review: Influence on Readership Pattern” which aimed at determining whether newspaper headlines review on radio influences respondents’ exposure to newspapers, and whether there is a significant relationship between newspaper headlines review on radio and readership pattern. The scholar adopted quantitative research method and utilized multi-choice

with study conducted that news editorial and review on newspaper has positive influence on readership pattern as it influences people to buy and read newspapers.

Importance of Readership Habits

Readership habits enhance individual self confidence, moral and intellectual development with a good reading habits, students will inevitable attain success in their academic endeavours. Reading provides experiences through which the individual may expand horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify and gain deeper understanding of himself, other human beings and the world. Readership is an exceedingly important ability that every students should strive to possess. It is essential for Higher Institution students in order to achieve the desired outcome in their academic pursuits and beyond.

Review of Editorial Readers

It is not debatable that editorial has become a dominant feature of newspapers and magazines. The reason is obvious. Editorials which represents the collective voice of the media outfits play a unique role in the society incisively chronicling day's intelligence. No wonder some people regards editorial as the conscience of the newspaper that set agenda on public issues. Ukonu (2005) describes editorials as the melting pot of all kinds of journalistic writings. According to him investigative, interpretative and hard news reporting are incorporated into editorials. Objectively precision and advocacy are also styles adopted in treating editorials topics.

In the political realm, for examples, exposure to political differences through editorials is a defining element of effective deliberation and has important consequences for society at large. The presence of political viewpoints stimulates more thorough information searches and more careful scrutiny of alternatives (Mendelberg, 2002; Nemeth and Rogers, 1996 and Delli Eapini et al., 2004). In their contributions, Mutz (2002) and Price et al., (2002) add that exposure to other perspectives also increases familiarity with the rationals that motivates opposing views which in turn foster political tolerance. Conversely, if individuals are denied viewpoint challenging

information, the society to which they belong is likely to become more politically fragmented (Sunstem, 2002).

Some editorials on salient rational issues appear to be dull and unattractive, various reasons are responsible for this. It could be due to the quest of being pacesetter (and end up falling flat), influence of advertisers, public relations activities and ownership. Duyile (2005) discourses the influence of ownership on such editorials that the New Nigerian Newspaper, which was entirely owned by the Federal Government, before its sales to the Northern State Governments was patently unfavourable in its editorial on the issue of the 1994 struggle for revalidation of the annulled June 12, 1993 election purportedly won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola. This affirms Enwefah's (2010) findings that the editorials found in the private newspaper is unfavourable and not in government newspapers.

Another factor that renders an editorial unattractive to readership is what is referred to as Afghanistan editorial. This is a term used for the practice of concentrating editorial on problems in distant parts of the world while ignoring similar controversial local issues. In the light of this, Hutchins (1955) maintains that it is the practice of referring always to some remote country, place, person or problem when there is something that ought to be taken care of near at home that is very acute. For example, currently Nigeria is faced with problems of unemployment, insecurity, bomb blasts, hostage taking, collapsed building and plane crash. If editorials in the Nigeria newspapers ignore these local issues but cover similar incidents in different countries of the world, one could conclude with every sense of responsibility that the editorials have Afghanistan flavor or undertone and this can discourage readership. In any case, the bottom line that people generally read editorials.

Understandably, the magnitude of readership is polarized along some demographic and psychographic considerations. Giving perspective on this, Ossai (2002) posits:

Readership survey done in various countries of the world show that many people (more men than women) read editorials. Research also shows that older, more enterprising people tend to read editorials, more than youngsters. It has also been shown that in time of crisis, readership of editorials is higher.

This position is maintained by Hallock (2007), who writes that in a survey, despite the fact that nearly half of weekday readers read the editorials page, readers tend to get even older, more affluent and better educated than the average reader. He buttresses this point adding in 1994 study of editorial page readership, 79 percent of adult daily newspaper readers read or look at the editorial page. On the basis of income, Hallock (2007) admits “the percentages by income of those who generally read the editorial range from 81 percent to 78 percent.”

Interestingly, the Readership Institute (2000) completed one of the most ambitious analysis of US daily newspaper content in decades. This study looked at 75,000 stories in 100 different newspapers titles spread across the country. The impact study aimed at exploring ways to increase reader satisfaction with editorials found that improving the content more effectively has a great potential for increasing readership. Against this background, editorial writers adopt different strategies to attract readers to the editorials page.

One of the devices is the use of editorial cartoons, Asan-Ate (2007) defines editorial cartoons as caricatures that reveal the editorial dimension or direction of a newspaper. Editorial cartoons inform, educate and entertain readers.. These cartoons contain sketches of comic relief for greater impact. Osai (2002) posits that the power of editorial cartoons derive from the fact that ours is a computer age as well as a picture-minded age, and many readers who feel they lack the time to read a conventional editorial will gladly pause long enough to glance at the cartoon and catch its editorial meaning.

Also, is letters to editor. This is the platform for readers to express their opinions. Akpan (2000) find justification in this when he attests that on the modern editorial it is fashionable to

see the readers' "talking back" to the editors. And this really attracts readers to the editorial page. Apparently, wider columns in editorials, as opposed to what we have in conventional newspaper column facilitates reading, such columns mark the editorial page as unique and distinct. Pictures or photographs are also used to attract readers' attention to the editorial page. Just as photograph beautify, communicate and authenticate stories, use of good photograph on the editorial page attracts readers to the editorial page.

Typography which implies how bold is the editorial headlines and text is yet another device editors use to enhance readership. In this arrangement editor sets the headline and text on a larger and bolder type than the regular body type of the news column. On the account of this, Idemili (1996) asserts that "Typographies have proved that Roman type can maximize legibility. On the other hand he contend that the monotonous sameness of Gothic face impairs reading. The irregular designs features of Roman Faces help the reader to grasp word forms more rapidly in reading became the contrasting strokes give a rhythmic structures.

Not left out is rearrangement of the masthead. The masthead is the column in the newspaper and magazine where editors and crew put down the name of the newspaper or magazine and name of the editorial board members. Traditionally, the editorial page places the masthead at the top left of the page. This tradition of style sometimes makes the editorial to become dull and boring. To attract attention editor periodically rearrange it.

Readership Habits of Tertiary Institution Students in Nigeria

There are various factors hindering the development of good editorial reading habits among the students of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. These include:

- 1) Lack of functional school libraries in the institutions.
- 2) Large percentage of obsolete information materials among the library stock.
- 3) Lack of professional libraries.

- 4) Lack of inviting and conducive environment for reading.
- 5) Lack of adequate funds from government to procure information materials that will cover both intensive and extensive reading.
- 6) High poverty rate.
- 7) Illiteracy.

Taking cognizance of all the aforementioned factors, all educational stakeholders should be involved in developing and sustaining the editorial habits in the country.

Theoretical Framework

The study finds relevance in the Selectivity theory. “Selectivity” describes audience bias in the direction of agreeing to an unusual extent with the communicator’s stand on an issue relevant to the communication. Arens, Weigold and Arens (2008, p. 149) aptly said that we simply focus on same things and ignore others. Perhaps the most general statement has been made by Berolson and Steiner (1964) about human behavior “people tend to see and hear communication that are favourable or congenial to their predisposition. They are more likely to see and hear congenial communication than neutral or hostile ones”. The predispositions refused to include ‘sex role, educational status, interest and involvement, ethnic status, political attitude, aesthetic position, and indeed any way of characterizing people that matters to them.

The selectivity theory propounded by Klapper (1960), identifies basic processes of media content consumption, selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention. The selective exposure process is what is of benefit in framing the theoretical foundation of this study. Innumerable studies show that readers tend to read what they agree with, approve or like” these are simply descriptive statements they only assent that communication audience usually share to an extraordinary degree, the view points of this communicator. Hovland (1993) extends the notion by saying that the selectivity process helps achieve mental consonance in media

consumption. In our case, despite the fact that audience are fed with several articles in form of news, columns, features, analyses and editorials among others, they are naturally selective on what to read and ignore others based on what is congruent with their belief and expectations.

Methodology Adopted

A survey was conducted to determine the category of students in Rufus Giwa Polytechnic that read editorial as well as reason and type of editorials that interest those most. For Ohaja(2003), survey is the study of the characteristics of a sample through questionnaires that enable a researcher to make generalization concerning his population, According to Osuala ((1982) Surveys are of great advantages because they do more than just uncover data. Surveys are usually thorough in approach and often use questionnaire or interview to collect data. The population of the study covered Editorial readers in RUGIPO, Owo, Ondo State, 300 sample size was chosen, 150 each from the Department of Mass Communication, representing the Faculty of Social Science and Communication Studies, Department of Public Administration from the Faculty of Business Administration and Department of Science Laboratory Technology from the Faculty of Sciences. The simple random sampling was used. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered, 240 copies were returned representing 80% and considered sufficient enough for the study.

According to the Gender respondents, female respondents had 140 (58.3%) while the male gender had 100 (41.7%). The implication is that we have more female students than the male counterparts.

From the educational respondents, HND 2 students has 88 (36.7%), HND 1 respondents are 70 (29.2%) with ND 2 and ND 1 students having 46 (19.1%) and 36 (15.0%) respectively.

Out of the 240 population, 214 respondents, representing 89.2% claimed they read Editorial, while 26 respondents representing 10.8 claimed they did not.

Table 1: Frequency of Respondents who Reads Editorial

| Respondents | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Daily | 98 | 40.8 |
| Twice in a week | 36 | 15 |
| Weekly | 69 | 28.8 |
| Monthly | 26 | 10.8 |
| Once in a while | 11 | 4.6 |
| Total | 240 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

From the above table, daily respondents had 98 (48.85), followed by Weekly with 69 (28.85) while one in a while had 11 (4.65).

Table 2: Level or Sources of the Editorial

| Sources | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Tribune | 88 | 36.7 |
| This Day | 79 | 32.9 |
| Guardian | 60 | 25 |
| Daily Sun | 13 | 5.4 |
| Total | 240 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table above shows that the highest sources is the Tribune with 88 (36.7%), This Day came next with 79 (32.95%) while Daily Sun came last with 13 (5.4%).

Table 3: Types of Editorials that Interest Respondents most

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Attack/criticism | 70 | 29.2 |
| Entertainment | 20 | 8.3 |
| Tribute/Praise | 60 | 25 |
| Education/Interpretation | 90 | 37.5 |
| Total | 240 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

From the above table, Educational interpretation editorial response was 90 (37.5%), followed by Attack/Criticism with 70 (29.2%) and Tribute/Praise and Entertainment has 60 (25) and 20 (8.35 respectively).

Table 4: Efforts of Editorial or Story Writing

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Positive | 204 | 85 |
| Negative | 32 | 13.3 |
| Undecided | 04 | 1.70 |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Total | 240 | 100 |
|-------|-----|-----|

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

From the table above, positive response shows 204 (85%) Negative response shows 32 (13.3%), while undecided shows 4 (1.70%).

Table 5: Reasons for Reading Editorials

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To get information/Education | 195 | 81.2 |
| For entertainment | 29 | 12.10 |
| Has become my habit | 16 | 6.7 |
| Total | 240 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

From the above table, 195 (81.2%) responses indicates information and Education, 29 (12.10), for entertainment and 16 (6.75) went for Has become my habit.

Table 6: Is there enough conducive environments for editorial readership in Nigerian Higher Institutions of learning?

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 88 | 36.7 |
| No | 140 | 58.3 |
| No idea | 12 | 5 |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 240 | 100 |
|--------------|------------|------------|

Source: Field survey 2022

From the table above, No respondents came first with 140(58.3%) followed by Yes respondents with 88(36.7%), while No idea came with 12(5%).

Discussion of Findings

The first two of the five questionnaire posed are whether or not respondents reads editorial and the frequency of respondents who read editorials respectively. Analysis from respondents responses in Table 4 indicates that most respondents (89.2:%) read editorials. This portends that the editorials section is well read. This is in accord with the1992 Summons Market Research Bureau cited in Hallock (2007) which indicates that editorials page readership is seemed only to general news particularly for adult readers at every educational level and ranks ahead of newspaper categories that indicate sports, business, entertainment, food and home.

Rationale for editorial readership could be tied to its placement and treatment. The first expression in the words of Baker and Macdonald (1960) who post that “giving an editorial the lead position, or preferred typographical treatment will gain its readers editorial page farewell in readership by a brand of readers who like effective writing”

Table 1 shows that 40.8% read editorial daily, 28.8% read editorial weekly, 15.5 read editorial twice in a week., while 10.8% and 4.6% read the editorial monthly and once in while respectively. Research question 6 seeks to find the levels of sources of the editorial. 36.7% sources are from Tribune, 32.9% from This Day, 25% from Guardian while 5.4% from Daily Sun.

Responses display disloyalty in different types o editorials that appeal to respondents consistent with human nature which is that interest one may not necessarily interest the other.

While 37.5% of respondents indicate that they are mostly interested in educational/information, 29.2 percent opted for attack/criticism. The next on the ladder (25% is for editorial of tribute/praise) and that of entertainment have least with 8.3%.on the effects of editorial on story writing, positive response was higher. On the final reasons for reading editorials, to get information/education has the highest response.

Conclusion

The paper seeks to determine the survey of newspaper editorial rading among Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo., Ondo State. Having illuminated on the different types of editorials which includes editorials of argumentation interpretation/Explanation, education, information, entertainment, commendations/praise, and highlights. Based on data obtained via survey, it concludes that editorial readership in Nigeria is high. Reasons student read editorial varies considerably with the selectivity theory the piece is anchored on. Recommendations made were meant to improve on quality of editorial to sustain of readership.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- N. Inducing students through bonanza such as scholarship awards opportunities and free trips to foreign countries for holidays
- N. The editorial writer as an activist and social crusader must avoid the temptation of dancing to the rhythm or tune of PR men and women by refusing to be censored by any positive of inducement.
- N. Editorialists should encourage readership by avoiding dull editorials.
- N. It is important for the student to incorporate newspaper editorial readership into thie academic pursuit because of its comparative advantages.

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