

The Influence of Mass Media in Promoting Good Governance: Study of Some Selected Local Governments in Kano State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The research examines the influence of Mass media in promoting Good governance. The media has constructive role to play in the society. The media are mouth piece of social issues which help us to estimate the reality of life. The media are expected to report and compose accounts of events. They are also expected to analyze issues and facts that is in line with the need and interest of social justice. Mass media have a special place in our live today, individually or collectively they serve the various needs of audiences who have specific preference. Each medium is powerful in its own rights in serving people and each has gone through stages of development (Hassan, 2013, p.107). Good governance is characterized by predictable and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy characterize with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government that is always accountable for its action Andrews, (2008). The paper therefore adopted agenda setting and Social responsibility theories. Survey research methodology was used among the six Local Governments in Kano State: Bagwai, Gabasawa are representing Kano North, Aginji and Kibiya are representing Kano South, Dala and Nassarawa are representing Kano Central. Findings revealed that for the media to effectively contribute to Good Governance, must uphold professional ethical rules set up through self-regulation, and must be accountable to the people. Media must have a favourable legal environment which will give them freedom and independence. The study recommends that the media organization must be objective in their reporting, the government must allow the media to function effectively. The media can apply the basic principles of patriotism, accountability, transparency and objectivity in the discharge of their duties

Background to the Study

Mass media uses different technologies in educating, informing, entertaining and captivating the society. It is the fastest and easiest means of reaching out to the general public. Its importance in the society has made it a reliable source of information (Bitner, 2003). The general public strongly agreed that mass media play significant role in their day-to-day activities. The media is the most powerful tools of communication. They help in promoting what is right in any society (Curran, 2002)

The media has a constructive role to play in the society. The media are mouth piece of some social issues which help us to estimate the reality of life. The media are expected to report and compose accounts of events, responsible to inform people about societal projects and programmes design by policy makers for them to be enlightened. The nature of the media in our society is to inform, educate and entertain, interpret to create amusement and mobilize the general public on certain issue. Before a media can operate effectively certain factors determine their freedom Types of ownership, type of political system, co-opting, judiciary, gives the media Freedom to function effectively. There are so many agencies which regulate the activities of the mass media for example Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United State of America, while in Nigeria, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), National Films and Video Censor Board (NFVB).

Mass media play significant role in good governance, it can make or break a society by the way and manner it set agenda. Mass media has a disproportionately role and influence in shaping an environment. The mass media play significant role in good governance (UNESCO, 2005). The media are the only institution with the capacity to allow and facilitate regular checks and assessing the activities of government and also assist in bringing public discussion. The nature and character of the media greatly impacts on the governance process in any society. Governance is the manner in which power is executed in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Government is also the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine when they involve and how they render account ((Doornbos, 2001, Grindle, 2004). Good governance is characterized with transparency, rule of law, participation, effectiveness, equity, efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of political, Economic, and administrative authority (UNDP, 2002, 2)

Statement of the Problem

Mass media has universally positive effects on the development of democracy and good governance in Kano State, it is important to look at the nature and consequences of how the media operate in Kano State without Government restrictions. It is also essential to identify the enabling and constraining factors that influence the ability of the media to operate and have impact on government activities in the socio-political context of Kano State. It is based on the above that the paper intends to find out the influence of mass media in promoting good governance, with specific reference to some selected Local Governments in Kano State, Nigeria.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the influence of mass media in promoting good governance.

The following are the objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which mass media promote good governance in some selected Local Governments in Kano State.
2. To investigate the challenges mass media face in reporting the government activities in some selected Local Governments in Kano State.
3. And see how Mass media promote good governance in some selected Local Governments in Kano State.

Research Questions of the Study

1. To what extent does mass media promote good governance in some selected Local Governments in Kano State?
2. What are the challenges Mass media face in reporting Government activities in some selected Local Governments in Kano State?
3. How does mass media promote good governance in some selected Local Governments in Kano State?

Brief Literature Review

Mass media provides information available. Transparency ensures that information is available and can be used to measure the authorities' performance and to guard against any possible misuse of power (Pope, 2000; Bellver, and Kaufman, 2005).

The media using various communication technologies are the outlets for disseminating large amounts of information to reach; large heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences. The traditional role of the media as reporters of facts is therefore the cornerstone to transparency and accountability in the public sector, because the functions of the media are to give the public necessary information and to make proper decision.

The Role of Media in Good Governance

Media plays gigantic role in promoting a healthy democracy and fostering good governance. As watchdog and information disseminator, media has been serving the function of the heart of any democratic society and good governance. (Ifeoma, 2013). In contributing to democratization and good governance, the media is to act as a watch dog over the powerful, promoting accountability, transparency and public serenity. Media serve as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating informed electoral choices and actions; and act as an agenda setter for policy makers. Strengthening government responsiveness for instance to social problem and to exclusion. The mass media can reveal maneuvering and abuse of fundamental human rights. It reprimand election rigging and offer objective assessments of the process and result of election and offer recommendation for improvement. The media also has a critical role to intervene between the state and citizens through debates and discussions about the major issues of the day and informing people about the stand of their leaders on such issues.

Adequate information helps the citizens to decide sensibly and take the right course of action favorable to them. Media thus helps people to know what is happening around the world and socialize them with values of pluralism. By publicizing information the media also make public services more responsive to the people (Jobarteh, 2002). Media has been playing a crucial role in making people aware of their rights. Media also make people to be vigilant on political developments in the world and helping them to stimulate debate by drawing their attention to all social evils including the institutional failures, corruption, inefficiency and illegal activities (Yadar, 2001).

According to the findings of Ifeoma, 2013 Achieving good governance requires the understanding and participation of every member of the society and the media must be credible and must embrace the principles of Good governance themselves as a critical precondition for effectiveness in the discharging of their functions. However, the watchdog must watch themselves (Ifeoma, 2013, 194)

There is an overall feeling that intend government issues within the government and opposition camps do not get enough coverage in a manner that would allow the public to make informed choice in regards to voting; especially regards to corruption reporting was not as frequent, as rigorous or as unbiased as they would hope for, over the past 15 years, the media has succeeded in bringing the issue to public notice and debate. Respondents noted that there was a greater focus on public corruption in media coverage as related to procurement and financial mismanagement, rather than private and corporate business dealings. In a study carried by Ifeoma (2013) on Good Governance requires the understanding and participation of every member of the society.

Another study was carried in U.K of Policy opinion on Governance and the media by BBC (2009) according to their findings there seems to be an increasing recognition of the mass media role in governance in the development community. They further posits that all aspects of Good Governance are facilitated by existence of a strong pluralistic and independent media within society (UNESCO, 2005) The media are considered to be a major source of information disseminating to the public, and for them to function effectively according to Olutokun and Seteelu, (2001). Olaiya, Apeoko, and Ayeni, (2013) they must be guaranteed by free and independent in discharging their duties. The degree to which a media is independent is the capacity to which it can serve and act as a watchdog to the public affairs.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda setting and social responsibility theories were adopted. The agenda setting theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. In its evolution, the agenda setting perspective over the past 25 years has formulated a general umbrella for a number of research traditions and concepts in media and communication.. The agenda setting theory with the prevailing selective exposure hypothesis, reaffirming the power of the press while maintaining individual freedom. In their ground breaking study which was first discussed and measured during presidential campaign McCombs & Shaw

believed that the theory created a cause and effect relationship between the media and public agenda. They emphasized that the media influence is the way public think. Thus, the theory comes from scientific viewpoints, which assumed that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues. Therefore, this theory will help to understand how the media particularly broadcast media set the agenda to promote good governance.

While Social responsibility theory by Siebert et al 1956, explains the main pre occupation of the press (Mass media) by providing information, discussion and debate in Public affairs, and safe guarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog. In this regard the media must be free from any biased reporting and serve as the watchdog over government activities these would help to promote good governance in any society (Folarin, 1998).

Methodology

The study employed survey research method. Survey is a methodology that is used in the study of a segment or portion of a population for the purpose of making estimation, assertions about the total population from which samples has been selected (Babbie, 2001).

Population

The population of the study consist the entire Kano State. A sample is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The study used Purposive sampling in selecting six Local governments in Kano State. While stratified sampling was used in selecting the respondents for the study. Stratified sampling ensures that a sample is drawn from a homogenous subset of the population, example from a population that has similar characteristics. Homogeneity always helps to reduce sampling error (Wimmer and Dominick 2011, 28) As Babbie (2001), notes: stratified sampling ensures the proper representation of the stratification variables to enhance representation of other variables related to them. Taken as a whole, then, a stratified sample is likely to be more representative on a number of variables than a simple random sample. Therefore, the various six local governments were divided into six, stratify by the use of convenience sampling which allows the researcher to select subjects based on appearance or convenience, or because they seem to meet certain requirements, 20 samples was drawn from each of the strata to answer the questions.

Sample Size

A sample size is simply the number of units of a sample. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) assert that to ensure validity of a research, the researcher must ensure the sample represents the whole population in question. Therefore, for the purpose of this work, one hundred and twenty (120) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Twenty copies of questionnaires were distributed to each of the selected Local Governments in Kano State: Bagwai, Gabasawa are representing Kano North, Aginji and Kibiya are representing Kano South, Dala and Nassarawa are representing Kano Central.

Instrument of Data Collection

Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was designed in line with the research questions and objectives of the study in such a way that the variables were clearly identified as such getting the appropriate response necessary for meaningful interpretations. The questionnaire was constructed in the open and closed ended question format.

Analysis of the Results

A total of one hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed to the six local governments selected in Kano State, but only one hundred and sixteen were retrieved and used for the study. Tables, frequencies and simple percentages are the statistical tools adopted for the presentation and analysis of the data obtained.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Male	76	65.5%
Female	40	34.5%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report 2021

Table one indicates that 76 respondents representing 65.5% were male, while 40 respondents representing 34.5% were female. This is to show that most of the respondents were male with the highest percentage.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 24	84	72.4%
25 - 31	28	24.1%
32 - 38	04	3.4%
39 - 45	0	0%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

From the age distribution table 2 shows that, 84 respondents representing 72.4% were within 18 - 24 and 28 respondents representing 24.1% fall within 25 - 31 while 4 respondents representing 3.4% were within 32 - 38 age brackets.

Table 3: Respondents views on whether they own any form of mass media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	104	89.7%
No	12	10.3%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

Table 3 shows that one hundred and four respondents (104) representing 89.7% have access to mass media. While 12 respondents representing 10.3% does not have access to any form of the mass media.

Table 4: Respondents views on whether they believed mass media can promote good governance

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	107	92.24%
No	09	7.76%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

Table 4 shows that one hundred and seven representing 92.24% believed that mass media promote good governance by being transparent to government activities, only nine respondents representing 7.76% said no.

Table 5: If yes, give your reasons

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Media provides accurate information of high quality	39	33.62%
Media provide information to the people about government activities this can make the elected representatives accountable to the people	46	39.65%
All of the above	28	24.14%
None of the above	03	2.59%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

Table five shows that majority of respondents representing 39.65% believed that media provide information about government activities; this can make the elected representatives accountable to their people.

Table 6: Respondents views on whether mass media face challenges in promoting good governance

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	76	65.5%
No	40	34.5%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

Table six shows that 76 respondents representing 65.5% believed that mass media face challenges in promoting good governance while 40 respondents representing 34.5% did not agree.

Table 7: If yes, what are the challenges?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Ownership and control of the media	96	82.76%
Corruption and paid news	20	17.24%
Total	116	100

Source: Field report, 2021

Table 7 shows that ninety-six respondents representing 82.76 % believed that media face challenges due to ownership and control of the media only 17.24% believed that corruption and paid news are other challenges that the media face.

Discussion and Findings

Findings revealed that mass media has a disproportionately visible and influential role in fostering an environment where good governance will prosper.

As the watchdog, the agenda setter of public discourses and interpreter of public issues and events, mass media play significant and gigantic role in good governance. To contribute to good governance media should be editorially independent, free from control, pressure and external interferences in order to keep their duties effectively. Findings of the study also revealed that mass media are the only institution with the capacity to allow and facilitate regular checks on Governments activities, and even assist in bringing public concern and voices into the activities of their ruling parties by providing a platform for public discussion. Findings also revealed that media informed people about government activities this will facilitate elected representatives accountable to their people.

Conclusion

The study concluded with facts that media play significant role in good governance. Without the information people received from the media, they cannot demand changes or accountability from their government and social institutions. This is in line with the findings of Ifeoma, (2013) achieving good governance requires the understanding and participation of every member of the society and the media must be credible and must embrace the principles of Good governance themselves as a critical precondition for effectiveness in the discharging of their functions. However, the watchdog must watch themselves (Ifeoma 2013, 194).

Media creates opinion climate which influence the public's perception of political actors and events, and their desire to voice opposition and demand change. Thus, the media acts

as a catalyst for creating positive governance outcomes, and in turn governments are motivated to bring changes in the institutional structures that promote democracy. The study is also in line with the theories adopted that the media set the agenda to promote good governance by providing information, discussion and debate in public affairs, and safe guarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. The media should always be efficient and effective in providing policy makers and government with information important to addressing a nation's policy and development needs.
2. Government should allow the media itself to function independently, to provide news and information of a high quality which can reach large number of people.

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