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ASSESSMENT OF BROADCAST MEDIA CAMPAIGN AGAINST HATE SPEECH DURING 2022 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONEERING DRIVE IN OSUN STATE

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Abstract

Elections in the world are not taken with levity as it is one of the major determinants of who gets what and what becomes of the citizens and the nation at large in terms of growth and development. The use of hate speech grows even the best political terrain. The essence of the hate speech is to ridicule and denigrate political opponents is becoming a major threat to political stability across the globe. Several studies have established usage of social media to promote hate speeches during political campaign with little attention on conventional broadcast media. This study therefore examines public perception of broadcast media campaign against hate speech during 2022 Governorship Electioneering Drive in Osun State. This paper was anchored on the social responsibility theory of the media. Findings from the study revealed that broadcast media as not fully engaged in the campaign against hate speech during 2022 governorship electioneering drive in Osun State and few interventions of the broadcast media against hate speech was not effective. The study concluded that there was need for the broadcast media to be used to combat hate speech and recommended stringent punitive measures against any broadcast stations that broadcast hate speeches in order to curb future occurences.

Keywords: Broadcast Media, Electioneering Campaign, Hate Speech, Governorship Elections, Osun State.

Introduction

It is often argued that a credible and peaceful democratic election is impossible without the mass media. The mass media refers to as the fourth branch of government (the first three are the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary) because of the power they wield and the oversight function they exercise (Ezeibe, 2013) constitutes the backbone of any democratic state in the world. The media no doubt are essential to democracy. In a democracy, the media assists in building an environment conducive to democracy, promotes free choice of leadership, respect for the rule of law by the rulers and the ruled, social justice and equity as well as respect for human rights (Fasakin et al. 2017) and have the responsibility to ensure that the wheel of the electoral process grinds such that the election is free, fair and credible. In Nigeria, the mass media have not only encouraged mass participation of the public in the

political/electoral process, they have opposed and exposed antidemocratic tendencies at different times and equally play the role of watchdog with a view to promoting and safeguarding Nigeria's fledgling democracy.

There is global concern about the hate speech phenomenon. Nations are increasingly mindful of communications that are considered to express hatred for individuals or groups in terms of social characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and other defining attributes of human beings. Widely known as hate speech, this kind of communication has become common with the ubiquitous nature of new media that makes information dissemination so easy, snappy and with global reach. Online platforms such as social media, private and public messaging forums and blogs, as well as the conventional media platforms such as print and broadcast media serve as channels for hate speech to occur, be disseminated and amplified (Ijaseun, 2022).

The instantaneous nature of broadcasting is a power that has to be borne with a deep sense of responsibility, commitment and tact. Often, and as has been repeatedly shown across the world since the 1830s, broadcasting is and can be a powerful tool for good, protecting the rights of citizens to information, giving voice to people, providing platforms for diverse opinions, making policies and programmes of government accessible to people and creating conditions for tolerance and understanding. We have also had a glimpse of the flip side of broadcasting, where lack of professionalism, objectivity and impartiality have, in a number of unfortunate cases, plunged nations into turmoil as the experiences of Rwanda (1994) and Kenya (2007) have shown (Dunu 2018).

According to Fasakin et al. (2017) Broadcasting in Nigeria has surely come a long way since the first radio transmission in 1933 and television in 1959. Since then, broadcasting has played massive economic, social and political roles in the life of Nigerians. Quality programmes have not only educated, entertained and informed citizens, they have positively influenced citizens' perceptions and deepened understanding and tolerance amongst diverse socio-cultural and occupational groups. They have also provided farmers and others with knowledge and skills to improve their lives thereby laying the grounds for the emergence of a united, stable, prosperous and strong nation.

Statement of the problem

According to Ijaseun (2022) the expected responsibility for broadcast station is that they must provide equal distribution of airwaves for jingles and programmes throughout their peak period while maintaining that practitioners must act responsibly. Political parties, according to him, have a duty to notify any organisation abusing its privileges so that appropriate repercussions might be applied. Broadcasters are intended to also provide equitable forums for the fair exchange of ideas.

Political broadcasting must be crafted to encourage tolerance, political harmony, and national cohesion. The worries associated with hate speech are not far from the high possibility it has in instigating or triggering violent conflict (Ijaseun 2022). Little wonder the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP, 2017: 1) has described hate speech as a catalyst for violence because it is considered generally offensive communication, noting that hate speech content "can create a vicious cycle as audiences convene around it and by acting as an

alternative source of information that neutralises positive information". This has compelled nations into adopting measures to ensure that the menace of the phenomenon is addressed. Opusunju (2017) reported that governments in various countries are worried by hate speech perpetrated through various media platforms social media platforms inclusive and described it as 'digital menace' of the media in a technological age that spread like wild fire.

Nigeria, like other nations of the world, is not immune to hate speech. Indeed, the country's diversity has made it even more vulnerable to hate speech. Its multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural characteristics has made it prone to sharp divides that influence political and social affiliations in addition to other issues instigating hate speech. The situation is such that government officials at federal and state levels have continued to express concern over the proliferation of hate speeches in the country, especially in social and mainstream media (Ehikioya, 2018; Falana, 2017).

The increasing wave of hate speech in recent years has made it imperative to recognise that effective counter-measures rely on main stream media campaigns. Osun State presents a unique scenario in Nigerian elections as it precedes the general elections thus it is seen as a warm up to the 2023 elections. This has made it worthy of studying to find out how political actors put in resources to curb spread of hate speech which in turn can affect the elections negatively.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine public perception of broadcast media campaign against hate speech during governorship electioneering in Osun State.
2. To find out the extent to which broadcast media was engaged in campaign against hate speech during electioneering in Osun State.

Literature Review

Concept of Hate Speech

Several attempts have been made to define the meaning of hate speech. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe conceived hate speech as covering all forms of expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance. As a result, it generates stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are constructed as being different (ICIR, 2015). Hate speech is any speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. Essentially, such speeches rob others of their dignity. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2013:4) noted that hate speech includes:

> (a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the grounds in (b) above; (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or

discrimination; (e) participation in organizations and activities which promote and incite racial discrimination.

Hate speech to Kukah (2015) is any communication that denigrates a particular person or a group on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or other characteristic; it can be in the form of any speech, gesture or conduct, writing, or display and usually marks incitement, violence or prejudice against an individual or a group. It is speech that employs discriminatory epithets to insult and stigmatize others on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of group membership (Adibe, 2015).

In the Nigerian context, hate speech include acts of insulting people for their religion; abusing people for their ethnic or linguistic affiliation; expressing contempt against people because of their place of origin; abusing or desecrating symbols of cultural or religious practices; denigrating or ridiculing traditional or cultural institutions of other people, and deliberately spreading falsehood or rumours that demeans or maligns or otherwise ostracizes other people on the basis of religion and ethnicity, gender or place of origin (Umar, 2015).From the foregoing definitions, it suffices to align with the thought of a political scientist and media commentator, Jideofor Adibe that hate speech is a catalyst for violence and that it is very doubtful if there would be hate-motivated violent attack anywhere without hate speech and the hatred that it purveys (ICIR, 2015).

Hate speech and Broadcast media

Broadcast media is best utilised for its audio and visual features; the reach to heterogeneous audience among many. On the other hand hate speech is done to incite spite or hate against a person or a group. A notable scenario of the use of broadcasting to incite hate was in Rwanda. It was 1993 and a radio station was born called Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLMC).There were phone-ins, pop music, and disc jockeys on the station, which was boisterous and used street language. The announcers occasionally drank too much. It was created to appeal to the unemployed, criminals, and militia gangs of thugs. The radio station quickly attracted a very big audience that found it to be incredibly amusing in a predominantly illiterate community. This entertainment led to the slaughtering of 800,000 people with machete in 30 days (Yusuf 2022; Fasakin et al. 2017).

Prior to any elections The Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, always cautions broadcast stations against airing hate speech content. Yusuf (2022) noted that Proliferation of hate speech especially in broadcast medium is serious threat to the survival of any society it operates. Broadcast media and media platforms are key to the success or otherwise of election, which makes it imperative for them to play their role, looking at the interest of the nation.

Yusuf (2022), also contends media organisations must have in their fold a journalist with requisite knowledge of the Law and the Constitution especially the ones guiding the conduct of the election. He noted that the media and journalists must rise above ethnic and religious profiling.

Legal Frameworks for counteracting hate speeches

Hylton (1996) compared hate speech with free speech doctrine of J.S Mill which is enshrined in the constitutions of nations. He however noted that hate speech is not free speech. Hylton conceived hate speech as negative while free speech is a landmark achievement of democracy. Hence, most developed democracies added a clause on freedom of speech against the use of hate speech. For example, Article 10 (2) of the European Convention on Human Rights provides that "the exercise of freedom of expression…may be subject to such formalities, 6 conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law… the interest of national security… for the protection of the reputation or right of others" (Fasakin et al. 2017).

Impressively, most doctrines that established freedom of speech and expression in Nigeria added a clause to guard against hate speech, promote human dignity, societal cohesion and peace. For instance, section 39 (1) of the 1999 Constitution as amended in 2011 provides that "every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression…" More so, section 45 provides that nothing in section 39 shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society in the interest of public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedom of other persons. Similarly, sections 95 and 96 of the 2010 Electoral Act prohibited the use of any language in campaigns that will hurt tribal, religious and/or sectional feelings. Other legal frameworks that abhor the use of derogatory language in Nigeria are the Political Party Code of Conduct (2013) and the Abuja Accord (2015) (Ajani et al. 2021)

Despite these legal frameworks, there has been notable growth in hate speech before, during and after the 2011 and 2015 elections in Nigeria. In fact, instances of hate speech have been published in print and electronic media, social or digital media and preached in podiums of both churches and mosques (Dunu, 2018).

Theoretical framework

Social responsibility theory

The social responsibility propositions serves as the study's theoretical cornerstone. The social responsibility theory is a normative theory that describes how media should ideally function in a specific society of social norms. It serves as the benchmark by which the public evaluates media. According to this theory, the media must stay independent of the government, but in exchange, they must serve the public. The social responsibility theory stressed that the media must adhere to the professional standards of truth, objectivity, accuracy, and balance when performing this stewardship function through reporting on events and crisis situations in order to prevent further escalation of the crisis situation and instead include a variety of viewpoints as a means of putting the crisis to rest so that peace and progress can reign (Oyero, 2008).

According to the notion of the theory, the mainstream media cannot favour one group while downplaying the opinions or accessibility of other minor or major groups, nor can they encourage violence and social unrest in their reporting. The media should be open to other points of view and have the freedom to respond, reflecting the plurality of their society. The theory further asserts that it is an ethical principle that every person and every organization have a responsibility to behave in the interests of society as a whole.

The NBC was created to help regulate the broadcast media and also provide guidance on carrying out their social responsibility duties in order for the broadcast media to act appropriately and fulfill their social obligations to society (Folarin, 1998).

The fundamental tenet of the Social Responsibility Theory is that the press should have the freedom to carry out the tasks that the Libertarian Theory had provided it the right to carry out, but that this freedom should be exercised responsibly (Okunna and Omenugha 2012). It is clear from this analysis that the nation's various mass media have fallen short of upholding their social duty to the community.

Various hateful speeches were broadcast on television during Nigeria's histories of general election campaign. These hate speeches either stoked public opposition to a political candidate or to a particular political, religious, or ethnic group. One of the most notable hate speeches given by a political actor according to Fasakin et al. (2017) was the infamous address given by Ibrahim Shema, the governor of Katsina State, serves as a good illustration. Shema exhorted his followers to kill any member of the opposition who provoked them in the same manner as they kill "cockroaches." Premium Times covered the story in November of 2014.over time, the country's varied mass media have shifted from being instruments for nation-building to being propaganda weapons in the hands of politicians and other influential figures (Fasakin et al. 2017).

Empirical studies

Ajani et al. (2021) examined the influence of hate speech messages on voters' choice of candidate in Kwara State, Nigeria in 2019 general elctions. The study was anchored on the agenda-setting theory. The study used a survey research design with a single cross-sectional research method. The study generated 464,393 registered voters as the study population. Using cluster sampling and purposive respectively to select 400 samples. The study, therefore, discovered that social media is the most channel of exposure by respondents on hate speech messages during the 2019 gubernatorial election in Kwara State with 66%. The study also found that the use of hate speech undermines the importance of political candidates with 72% in any given election. The study further discovered that the use of hate speech during elections influenced the voters by making them change from one candidate to the other with 82% thereby encouraging more votes against the opposition party. The implication of these findings has a strong influence on the way electorates undermine the importance of political issues and as such rendered political candidates and parties irrelevant with a critical effect on the credibility, fairness, and smooth running of any political landscape and the conduct of Nigerian elections in general. The paper proposes critical political education to electorates on voting behaviour to promote good governance.

Nwozor et al. (2022) studied the use of Facebook by political supporters and electorates to canvass for support for their preferred presidential candidates in the 2019 general elections and the underlying hate speech that emanated therefrom. The authours critically evaluate how political supporters and electorates used the instrumentality of Facebook to share hate messages during the 2019 presidential election and its impact on Nigeria's political space. The study adopted content analysis. The results of the study indicate widespread dissemination of hate comments by political supporters and electorates in the furtherance of their support for their preferred presidential candidates. The study thus advocated responsible use of

Facebook in electioneering and the imperative of regulation to guard against the circulation of hate electoral comments that could heat up the political arena and trigger electoral violence.

Methodology

This study maximises the survey method. The instrument used was the questionnaire. A survey design can be used when the researcher is investigating the characteristics of a given object to minimise error. The population of the study comprises of residents of Oshogbo metropolis. This study adopts Saunders (2011), proposed sample saize of 384 for this study according to the scholar academicians look at the proposed sample size for any study with mixed characteristics and disperse respondents. He further argues that the sample size is similar but superior in reliability to the Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table for the determination of sampling size which states a population between a certain figure and what the sample size should be.

The copies of questionnaire were distributed to 384 respondents using the purposive sampling. Of the 384 copies 381 were deemed useful and accurately filled.

Data presentation and analysis

Figure 1 Gender representation for respondents

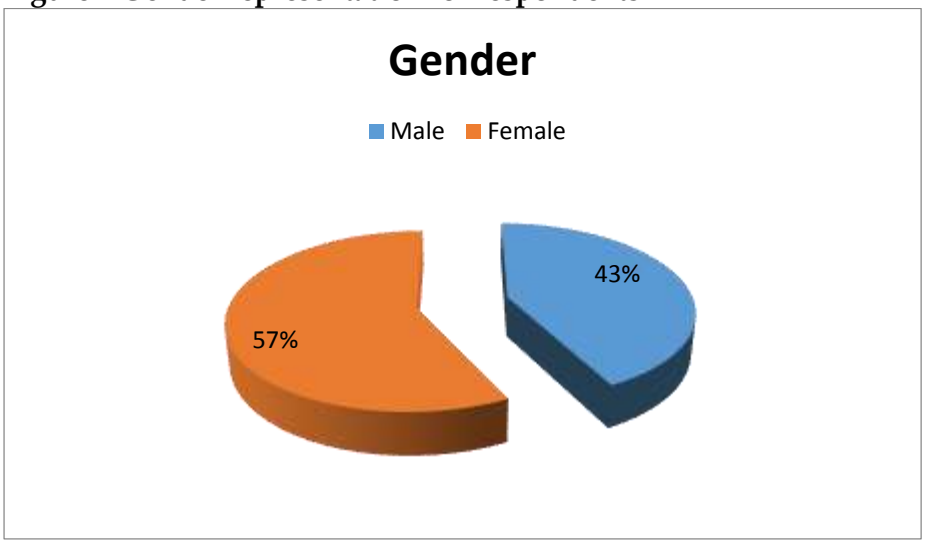


Table 1. Extent of exposure to hate speech campaigns

Response	Frequency	percentage
Very high	56	14.69
high	76	19.94
Cant tell	98	25.72
Low	119	31.23
Very low	32	8.39
total	381	100%

Table 1 shows the respondents' perception of broadcast media campaign against hate speech during governorship electioneering drive in Osun State. Majority of the respondents said they had very low exposure to hate speech campaigns on broadcast media (31.23%).

Table 2Responses on the Broadcast Media Channels through which hate speech Campaigns were mostly accessed

Response	Frequency	percentage
Radio	213	55.9
Television	168	44.1
Total	381	100%

Table 2 shows the responseson the Broadcast Media Channels through which hate speech Campaigns were mostly accessed. Majority of the respondents said it was radio (55.9%). The data show that was the most used broadcast media during the electioneering campaign.

Table 3 Format of broadcast hate speech campaign

Response	Frequency	percentage
Jingles	201	52.76
announcements	92	24.14
News	56	14.69
Drama	32	8.39
Total	381	100%

Table 3 shows the respondents' perception format of broadcast hate speech campaign during governorship electioneering in Osun State. Majority of the respondents said the format used most was jingles (52.76%). The data show that jingles were engaged more.

Table 4 Perception of broadcast media campaign against hate speech during governorship electioneering drive in Osun State

Response	Frequency	percentage
Very effective	53	13.91
Effective	65	17.06
Can't say	89	23.36
Less effective	101	26.50
Not effective	73	19.16
total	381	100%

Table 4 shows the respondents' perception of broadcast media campaign against hate speech during governorship electioneering in Osun state. Majority of the respondents said it was less effective (26.50%). The data show that the hate speech campaigns were engaged on in broadcast media during the electioneering campaign.

Table 5 Extent to which broadcast media was engaged in campaign against hate speech during electioneering in Osun State

Response	Frequency	percentage
Very high	35	9.18
high	85	22.31
Cant tell	84	22.05
Low	100	26.25
Very low	77	20.21
total	381	100%

Table 5 shows the respondents' perception of the extent to which broadcast media was engaged in campaign against hate speech during electioneering in Osun State. The data (26.25%) show that the hate speech campaigns were not frequently engaged on in broadcast media during the electioneering campaign.

Discussion of findings

Findings of this study showed broadcast media campaign against hate speech during governorship electioneering drive in Osun State was not perceived very effective by respondents. This may not be unconnected to the fact that hate speech is now more prominent on social media. Little wonder Fasakin et al (2017) noted that the mass media have many social responsibilities they are to perform in the society. They are to be used as tool for nation building and shun any news, information or report that will elicit violence or any bad behaviour in the society. And according to Oyero & Oyesomi, (2014) many television stations in Nigeria failed to live up to their social responsibility in the country as they were used as propaganda tools during the campaign for the 2015 general elections.

The findings also revealed that broadcast media was engaged not highly engaged in campaign against hate speech during electioneering in Osun State. Little wonder the respondents were not exposed to campaigns against hate speech on broadcast media. This might underline the lack of use of broadcast media to fight against the scourge of hate speech which leads to electoral violence and other incitements. The broadcast medium comprising of television and radio has the greatest credibility among the mass media due to its ability to transmit motion pictures as well as audio messages. Both have been described as the medium with the greatest effect on the audience because the information from it can be seen and heard. According to Fasakin et al. (2017) television for instance in the country played a huge role in the propagation of hate speeches during the 2015 general elections campaigns in the country. Politicians, knowing the powerful effect of the medium, used various television channels to attack their opponents and other political parties. During the campaign, many political enthusiasts and politicians were seen on the different television programmes attacking their political opponents with derogatory speeches during political rallies and even interviews. Television documentaries, political jingles and used by politicians to attack and condemn their political opponents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Hate speeches directed at gaining political power lead to electoral violence. Nigeria's background of intolerance provides ample grounds for the use of hate speech. It is this study's conclusion that the broadcast media has been maximised to propagate hate speech thus it is high time to use the medium against the scourge of hate speech. In law, hate speech is any speech, gesture or conduct, writing, or display which is forbidden because it may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group. hate speeches should not be elements of political messages during electioneering. This is because hate speeches negate the fundamental principles of democracy in any modern society.

This study thus recommends that

- political actors that engage in the use of hate speeches during electioneering should be punished according to the electoral laws of the country.

- stringent punitive measures should be meted to media outlets that publish or broadcast hate speeches as a form of deterrent for the growth of democracy in Nigeria.
- speaking out loudly against hate speech is no longer enough. INEC and other civil society organizations such as the Nigerian Human Right Commission should identify and prosecute individuals and organization that breach relevant laws governing electoral campaigns and public speech.
- Government and civil societies in Nigeria should also monitor the media, especially the native language radio stations who use hate speech to fan the ember of ethnic division.

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