Role of Nigerian Media in Reconciling Promises and Performances of Politicians in Fourth Republic for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT
Mass media usually serves as a veritable platform through which people get information about happenings in society. It is through the media that people find out about the election and the political choices they may have to make at one time or the other. Consequently, the study investigated Role of Nigerian Media in Reconciling Promises and Performance of Nigerian Politicians in Fourth Republic, May 1999 till date. To do this, the study drew five objectives and formulated related research questions and hypotheses. The study drew inspirations and theoretical basis from Agenda-setting theory and Social Responsibility media theory. These two media theories were used for better appraisal of media role in national politics. The researcher adopted triangulation (mixed) research methods with a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study covered the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria with 514 respondents (Nigeria citizens) randomly selected through a multi stage sampling procedure. Questionnaires were used as instruments of data collection for the aspect of quantitative approach and analysis while recording devices were used to collect data generated from interview for qualitative analysis. Ten senior media practitioners from prominent media organizations in the country were purposively selected. Findings from this aspect were used to corroborate and juxtapose findings from the quantitative survey approach. Previous studies related to this work were also reviewed with a view to establishing academic trends and possible correlations or gap in this field of academic study. Findings in this research revealed that respondents felt dissatisfied with the media weak role in holding politicians accountable to their electioneering promises. The study also found that Nigerian politicians have not performed well in relation to their promises before being voted into power. It concluded that Nigerian politicians are not performing as expected because the development of the nation, as revealed by the findings, is at low ebb compared to other nations of the world, especially those that got Independence along the same time frame that Nigeria got hers.

Key words: Perception, Nigerian media, social responsibility, political communication, fourth republic

I. INTRODUCTION
Mass media usually serves as a veritable platform through which people get information about happenings in society. It is through the media that people find out about the election and the political choices they may have to make at one time or the other. People need to know how well the government, represented by the elected politicians, has run the country since last election. They particularly need to know how well politicians have delivered on promises made while canvassing their votes which eventually brought them to power. Voters always elect a political party based on their perception of promises as contained in the policies and manifesto of such party (and as communicated to them through the media) which they believe to be beneficial to them. While seeking votes from electorate, politicians always promise to do better than the previous government, try to do everything to win the election.

However, the role media plays in reporting and bringing politicians' promises live to the people upon which people base their voting decision is paramount in political communication

research. The media serves as a platform for political communication generally, and particularly for communicating political campaign promises of politicians to the electorate during elections. There has always been an intimate connection between mass communication and the conduct of politics, in whatever kind of regime (McQuail, 2010, p. 523). McQuail noted that the media provides channels by which state and powerful interests address the people, as well as platforms for the views of political parties and other interest groups. Similarly, Nwokeafor and Okunoye (2013, p.17) further amplify by stating that:

The media significantly become very influential in bringing campaign messages including party choices of candidates, their promises to the electorate which sometimes become a mirage when elected, their financers and what they bring to the campaign table. The media coverage of these campaigns most of the times involves endless political rallies where political information is disseminated to the voters to attract their support.

The views of McQuail (2010), and Nwokeafor and Okunoye (2013) are similar to the views of other political and communication scholars on media role and influence in society. Intensive use of the media by competing candidates and parties during election as identified by McQuail (2010), is an example of one of the roles of the media in political communication. The primacy of media may have been recognized by governments across different countries, as 'there has always been an intimate connection between mass communication and the conduct of politics, in whatever kind of regime', and as also reflects in government legislation and inclusion of media obligation in their laws. Nigerian government for instance, may have recognized this when they included what they entitled Obligation of the mass media in Chapter II, Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). It states: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people."

Nevertheless, as there seems to be universal recognition of media role (media functions) which have attracted a large volume of works, as found in the literature, on media functionalism, it appears a few or no study has been undertaken on evaluation of media 'functionalism' in reconciling promises made by politicians with their performances, especially in Nigeria fourth republic. This is further corroborated by Richard Allen (1980, p.38) when he said: "[w]hile theorists, such as Merton and Wright, have called for empirical research on functionalism, it appears that few researchers have taken up the challenge." Although many studies may have been conducted between 1980 when Allen made this statement and now, again, many of such research have not been done on this particular topic: Role of Nigerian Media in Reconciling promises and Performances of Politicians in the Fourth Republic for Sustainable Development.

Statement of Problem

It is the traditional responsibility of the mass media to inform, educate, entertain as well as perform surveillance function in society. Media potency, especially her influence in obtaining, maintaining and transferring political power has been recognized. Considering this influence, politicians have been continually exploiting the potency of the media in their quest to attain power. In every electioneering period, politicians do devise strategies and make promises using the media's capacity to reach a wider range of audience in an attempt to canvas votes. Since media are used by politicians as a veritable platform of political information dissemination, including persuasive campaigns and messages of promises of good governance, it consequently becomes imperative that media be responsible to highlight, remind and reconcile the promises made during electioneering campaigns with performances of elected politicians by constantly supervising, through their watchdog role, the activities of government. Media watchdog role underscores checks and balances in the operation of government activities. However, it becomes a problem when the media do not report government activities or create awareness and sensitize the citizenry on programmes of government in such a way that will empower them to demand greater accountability from the elected politicians.

Consequently, the study examines citizens' awareness of constitutional provision for media obligation in holding elected politicians accountable to their promises made while canvassing votes during elections which brought them into power, and as a corollary, investigates citizens' assessment of media's role in discharging this obligation. The study intends to do this for recommendations of plausibly practicable solutions.

Objectives of the Study

The central objective of this study was to assess media performance of its obligation in holding people in government (politicians) accountable to their promises with a view to ensuring national development through dividends of democracy. The study specifically sought to:

1. Determine the extent of citizens' awareness of constitutional provision for obligation of the mass media to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.
2. Ascertain public assessment of media function holding politicians accountable to their electioneering campaign promises.
3. Examine how the citizens assessed the performances of the Nigerian politicians in the fourth Republic, 1999 till date, based on what the media reported about their performances.
4. Find out how the public viewed government policy agenda and media agenda on government programme of activities.

Research Hypotheses

As an extension, and provision of clearer picture toward better achievement of the stated objectives, following two hypotheses were used in this study:

1. $H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between media (reconciliatory/watchdog) role and politicians' performances.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between media agenda and government policy agenda.

Review
Nigerian Politics

Nigerian politics has passed through different phases in the political history of the country, from the First Republic through Second and Third to the present Fourth Republic. Oluwole (2014) describes Nigeria's political situation during this period as being intertwined between military rule and democratic governance. Nigeria became independence about fifty seven years ago, precisely on first of October 1960. Out of these fifty-seven years, however, the country has only had about twenty-seven years of civil/democratic rule. The remaining thirty years or thereabout were period of military rule and dictatorship. Sobowale (2013) captures Nigeria's political situation since independence this way:

Nigeria has gone through a chequered history in its relatively short span of existence as an independent nation. Next year will mark the centenary of the amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern Protectorates to form the entity known as Nigeria. In this period, the country has cascaded through different phases of experience – colonial subjugation, inter and intra-ethnic wrangling, a bloody military coup d'état, a civil war, then, a log spell of military rule, return to democratic dispensation and an uneasy co-habitation among the various ethnic components of the federation (Sobowale, 2013, p.5).

The above submission by Sobowale, a Nigerian Professor of Journalism, summarizes the nature of political situation in Nigeria. The phases of experience which Nigeria has passed through – colonial subjugation, inter and intra-ethnic wrangling, a bloody coup d'état, a civil war and a long spell of military rule, as submitted by Sobowale (2013), were the former and present characteristics of Nigerian politics while colonial subjugation, coup d'état, civil war, and long military rule were the former features of political situation in Nigeria, ethnicity remains the current feature, among others, of politics in Nigeria. In his definition of ethnicity, Omu (2008, P.88-89) states: "…the concept of ethnicity applies to the consciousness of belonging to, identifying with and being loyal to a social group distinguished by shared cultural traditions, a common language, in-group sentiment and self-identify." Writing earlier in his work on Ethnicity, Nationalism and Federalism in Nigeria, Omu succinctly depicts the nature of politics in Nigeria especially in relation to ethnicity when he states:

The concept of ethnicity is of critical importance in the analysis of Nigeria's political and constitutional development in the colonial and post-colonial period. The character of the nationalist movement which eventually lost its mutual unity of direction to factional pressures and the evolution of the federal principle which was encouraged and reinforced by the emergence of separatist and regional political outlooks all have their roots in the intrusion of ethnic identifications into practical politics (Omu 2008, P.88).

Nevertheless, the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria did not just creep into the Nigerian politics suddenly; an understanding of the genesis of what today became Nigeria will suffice. "In the beginning, there was no Nigeria. There were Ijaws, Igbos, Urhobos, Itsekiris, Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Nupes, Kanuris, Ogonis, Gwaris, Katafs, Jukars, Edos, Ibibios, Efiks, Idomas, Tivs, Junkuns, Biroms, Angas, Ogojas and so on" (Sagay, nd, P.1). Sagay states further that there were kingdoms like, Oyo, Lagos, Calabar, Brass, Warri, Benin, Tiv, Borno, Sokoto caliphate, Bony, Opobo and so on. According to him,: "Prior to the British conquest of the different nations making up the present day Nigeria, these Nations were

independent Nation states and communities independent of each other and of Britain." These independent Nation states and communities independent of each other were what the British amalgamated in 1914 and made one Nation with independence in 1960.

Historical Evolution that Led to the Nigeria's Fourth Republic

In the beginning, what is now Nigeria was under European control just like other African countries. In 1885, European colonists organized a conference known as Berlin Conference, during which Africa was carved into spheres of influence amongst the powers (Sagay, nd, p.3). The hitherto Nation-states and independent communities in the territory now known as Nigeria were parceled off to Britain at the conference. So, between 1885 and 1914 Nigeria was under active and total British control. In 1914, North and southern Nigeria were amalgamated and on first of October 1960, Nigeria became independent of British and other forms of colonial control.

Between October 1ˢᵗ 1960 and now, Nigeria has cascaded through different phases of governance and natural transitions. Within this period of self-rule, the country has had three interrupted republic; as it's now in the fourth one. The four different republics were punctuated and interrupted by military coup d'etat and subsequent dictatorship. The following section reviews contributions of scholars on the historical evolution that led to the Fourth Republic, from the First, through the Second and the Third, in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

In conducting a research on this topic, the study drew inspirations from Agenda-setting theory and Social Responsibility media theory. These theories were used to produce a framework for data collection, analyses, and interpretation. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) were the first scholars who coined the term 'agenda-setting' in relation to their study of media and conduct of election campaigns. The Agenda-setting Theory evolved from the research work of these authors in 1972. They specifically examined the correlation between the media reports of the 1968 election campaign in Chapel Hill and the issues the members of the public discussed about the elections (Oboh, 2014, p. 42). His submission regarding the influence of the media is in agreement with MicCombs' and Shaw's. Oboh submits: "[. . .] the news media indirectly determine what issues are important in society through the prominence they accord to the different

issues that make up the editorial content of the newspaper. Most important stories appear either on the front page or on the back page of the newspaper" (p.43). In the introduction of their original work, McCombs and Shaw (1972) state:

"In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the importance issues – that is, the media may set the "agenda" of the campaign. (p.176).

The Social Responsibility Theory is one of the four normative press theories evolved by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956, cited in Folarin, 2002). According to Folarin (ibid, p. 27), "The basic assumption of normative theory . . . is that the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates." Writing on this (normative theory), McQuail (2010, p. 162) said: "The mass media are presumed not only to have certain objective effects on society, but also to serve a social purpose." He stated that there are many different opinions about what the media ought or ought not to be doing and how well they are performing, which undoubtedly show that much is expected from the media by the public, adding "[w]hen we speak of normative theory, we refer to the ideas of right and responsibility that underlie these expectations of benefit from the media to individuals and society" (ibid). Consequently, many countries, including the United States, decided to accord legal recognition to the role of the media in society on the argument that it was the duty of journalists to protect the rights of the citizens and not for the press to protect the government against public criticisms (Oboh, 2016).

The expectations and concerns for media obligations, especially widespread criticism of the American newspaper press regarding sensationalism, commercialism and imbalanced political reporting necessitated establishment of a private commission of inquiry known as Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1942. The Commission funded by Henry Luce, CEO of Time Inc., and chaired by Robert Hutchins, Chancellor of Chicago University, coined the notion of social responsibility, and released a major report of its findings in 1947 (Baran & Davis, 2009; McQuail, 2010). The report criticized the sensationalism of the press and the mixing of news with editorial opinion, and named the key journalistic standards

that the press should seek to maintain. The Commission reported that a responsible press should:
- 'Provide a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning';
- 'Serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism' and be a 'common carrier of the public expression';
- Give a 'representative picture of constituent groups in society'; and
- Present and clarify the 'goals and values of society'.

The argument by the Hutchins Commission was that the press plays an important role in society, and as such, it would be necessary that the commitment of social responsibility be imposed on the media. This is because journalists are expected to have the moral obligation to consider first the interest of the society when making editorial decisions on what to report about regarding the events that occurred in society (Oboh, 2016). According to him, social responsibility theorists expect the media to report the true accounts of events and also be mindful of the implications their reports will have on the peace and development of the society. Relating to this, Dennis McQuail (2010, p.171) gave five main propositions of social responsibility theory as follows:

- The media have obligations to society, and media ownership is public thrust
- The news media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant
- The media should be free, but self-regulated
- The media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct
- Under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest.

Similarly, Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2012) said the major premise of the social responsibility theory is that freedom carries concomitant obligations, and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of Mass Communication, and as a result, added that society has the right to expect high standards of performance from the media.

Methods

This study mainly employs cross-sectional field survey research method to examine media role in reconciling promises and performances of fourth republic Nigerian politicians. This was done with the joint use of questionnaire and interview schedule as data collection instruments. The study adopted survey as a method of securing information concerning the phenomenon under the study from a selected number of respondents of the concerned universe (Kothari & Garg, 2012). Bhattacherjee (2012) defines a survey research as a research method involving the use of standardized questionnaires or interviews to collect data about people and their preferences, thoughts, and behaviours in a systematic manner.

II. RESULTS

Test of Hypothesis

Having considered the demographic characteristics of the respondents and answering research questions, the researcher proceeded to test the research hypotheses and the first and second were thereby tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Chi-square goodness of fit technique respectively at 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis I

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between media (reconciliatory/watchdog) role and politician's performance.

In order to test this research hypothesis, responses on media role as well as politicians' performances were collected on a 6-point likert scale. The items were scored per respondents based on average score of the items answered by each respondent. The data collected from the study was analyzed as shown.

Table 1: Relationship between Media Role and Politician Performance

Variables	N	Pearson Co-efficient	Sig	Status	
Media Role	514				
X		0.910	0.000	Significant	
Politicians' Performance	514				

Significant 0.05**

`As shown on the above Table, the calculated correlation coefficient between media role and politicians' performance was 0.910, while its calculated significance value is 0.000 at alpha level of 0.05. The value of the coefficient indicates that there is a very high relationship between media role and politicians' performances. On the basis of the significant value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between media role and politician's performances. The reason was because the significant value (0.000) was lower than 0.05 alpha level ($\rho < 0.05$).

Hypothesis II
H0₂: There is no significant relationship between media agenda and government agenda.
In order to test this research hypothesis, responses on questions seeking to know the relationship between media agenda and government agenda were collected. The data collected from the study was analyzed as shown below:

Table 2: Observed and Expected Frequency

Response	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
YES	318	257	61
NO	196	257	-61
Total	514		

Table 2 shows the frequency, expected and residual of respondents' responses on the relationship between media agenda and government agenda. Majority of the respondents (318) claimed that there is relationship between media agenda and government agenda. However, chi square goodness of fit test was further carried out to examine the discrepancy between the observed and expected.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis

Variable	Degree of freedom		p-value	Significant Status
Response	1	28.957	0.000**	Significant

**significant at p0.01 *significant at p0.05

Table 3 shows the summary of chi-square test result to examine if there is significant relationship between media agenda and government agenda. Since the p-value (0.000) is <0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus accepting the alternative. This result indicates that the agreement frequency is significantly different. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between media agenda and government agenda.

III.   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Research objective 1 seeks to determine the extent of citizens' awareness of constitutional provision for obligation of the mass media to uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people. Findings from the validated analysis showed that respondents are aware of such constitutional provision for obligation of the mass media to uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people. This awareness was further reflected in their ascription of information and education role about political parties and their candidates during elections to the media. This role as revealed also influenced majority of the respondents in their choice of candidates to vote for during elections.
2. Research objective 2 examines how the citizens assessed the performances of the Nigerian politicians in the fourth Republic, 1999 till date, based on what the media reported about their performances. Findings revealed that Nigerian politicians have not performed well in relation to their promises before being voted into power as they (the politicians) are not guided by their campaign promises in their activities after being voted into power.
3. Research objective 3 sets out to ascertain public assessment of media function holding politicians accountable to their electioneering campaign promises. Findings from the quantitative data revealed that respondents felt dissatisfied with the media function in holding politicians accountable to their electioneering promises during this republic while responses from the qualitative data showed that media are considered to be highly critical in their watchdog role by calling politicians to give answers to their policy thrusts as well as exposing corruption and (its) tendencies.

4. Research objective 4 seeks to find out how the public viewed government policy agenda and media agenda on government programme of activities. Findings revealed that there is a strong relationship between media agenda and government agenda/policies, though, the influence of such relationship in this fourth republic is not felt much. The respondents felt dissatisfied about the status of the relationship between the two in this fourth republic; despite that, there is a supposed relationship between them as revealed from the findings.

5. Result of the test of hypothesis 1 which seeks to measure the relationship between media (reconciliatory/watchdog) role and politicians' performances showed that there is a significant relationship between media role and politicians' performances. This is shown as the value of the coefficient (0.910) indicates that there is a very high relationship between the two.

6. Result of the test of hypothesis 2 which sets out to examine the relationship between media agenda and government policy agenda indicated that there is a strong relationship between media agenda and government policy. This is shown as the P-value (0.000) is <0.05.

IV. CONCLUSION

Media as the fourth estate of the realm are saddled with three classical functions according to Harold Laswell (1949) with the addition of one by Charles D. Wright in 1960. The functions, now four are: Surveillance of the environment, Correlation of parts of society in responding to the environment, transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next and entertainment function. These functions as encapsulated include media functions in the politics and political landscape of a society. Thus, it was aptly revealed that the respondents were adequately aware of the mass media's constitutional obligations to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. This constitutional backing is domiciled in Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It can however, be concluded from this study that Nigerian politicians are not performing as expected because the development of the nation according to the findings in this study, is at low ebb compared to other nations of the world, especially those who got Independence along the same time frame that Nigeria got hers. It is more worrisome that the Nigerian media with the ascribed role and constitutional backing have not been so critical in making politicians accountable to their campaign promises. The study recommended that agenda setting role of the media be stepped up, utilizing the relationship between the two to influence government policies for national development.

Advantages From The Above Results

This study has succeeded in contributing to the available literatures and empirical studies on Communication, Political Communication, Media Studies and Political Science. It has also added to the knowledge base of behavioural science as it dwelled on perception. Further, the study aptly reflected on the current realities of the Nigeria-state which might be germane towards charting a new course for our political milieu and national polity in ensuring that the people's representatives in public and political offices live up to their campaign promises. Evidently, in charting the new course, the think-tanks will need to know as already revealed by this study that the respondents perceived Nigerian politicians' performances as poor and development as slow in this fourth republic.

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