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EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS IN CHAMPIONING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria, a large and ecologically diverse country, suffers several environmental issues, including pollution, deforestation, and poor waste management. Environmental sustainability is a major worldwide problem. Mass media initiatives have become increasingly effective in recent years as a means of educating Nigerians about and encouraging sustainable behaviors. With this in mind, this study evaluated how well mass media campaigns promoted environmental sustainability in Nigeria. The researcher set out to accomplish three goals. The Two-Step Flow Theory served as the foundation for this investigation. For this investigation, a survey was determined to be the most appropriate research strategy, and a questionnaire was used to gather data. The results of this study demonstrate that public knowledge of environmental issues in Nigeria has significantly increased as a result of mass media initiatives. The importance of preserving the environment and the negative effects of unsustainable behaviors have been effectively conveyed by these campaigns. Additionally, many respondents reported behavioral changes including trash reduction, energy conservation, and support for environmental efforts, demonstrating that they have inspired

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residents to take action. The significance of ongoing funding for mass media efforts for environmental sustainability in Nigeria is emphasized in the study's conclusion. To develop a comprehensive and effective strategy for environmental education and advocacy, this study suggests adjusting campaigns to the local context, utilizing new media platforms, and strengthening cooperation between the public, business, and civil society sectors.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Media Campaigns Environmental Sustainability, Enugu State

Introduction

The world is currently grappling with a wide range of environmental challenges. Climate change, in particular, is having an increasingly visible impact on ecosystems across the globe. Key indicators—such as rising global temperatures, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution of air and water resources, as well as the growing frequency of extreme weather events like droughts and floods—paint a troubling picture of the planet's future and that of its inhabitants. The concept of "sustainable development," as articulated in the landmark United Nations report *Our Common Future* (commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report), emphasises development that addresses present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (WCED, 1987).

The condition of socioeconomic development at the center of environmental debate for Nigeria and other African nations undoubtedly aligned with development, which is already regarded as the primary aim of the African state. After all, the post-colonial African state has been compelled to adopt the appearance of a progressive state due to its historical circumstances and political demands (Egwu, 2016). Beyond political considerations, however, Nigeria is already facing the hard reality of environmental deterioration and climate change's repercussions. The consequences of the environment's poor state on Nigerian society are evident in the rise in issues like drought, floods, desertification, and water scarcity that endanger human existence and food security. For example, the majority of both urban and rural populations have experienced flooding in recent years, with 2012 being the worst year on record (Odermeho, 2020).

This is on top of the ongoing conflict between farmers and herders, which has caused enormous losses in terms of both lives and property and has been indirectly linked to climate change. The Nigerian government has responded to these obvious and imminent threats of environmental deterioration by establishing organizations, laws, and initiatives that are meant to safeguard the environment and promote sustainable growth. Numerous papers, regulations, and establishments that span the whole Nigerian administrative system make some of these goals very plain. Numerous Nigerian governments have made clear attempts to incorporate environmental protection and sustainability into their development agendas, starting with the 1999 constitution's environmental protection provisions

(Sections 20, 16(2), 17(2)), the National Policy on Environment of 1989, the Millennium Development Goals project, and the numerous international conventions and summits to which the nation is a party. With countries all over the world realizing how important it is to safeguard and conserve their natural resources for coming generations, environmental sustainability has emerged as a global imperative.

Mass media campaigns have become an essential instrument for promoting sustainable practices and increasing awareness in Nigeria, a nation dealing with a number of environmental issues like pollution, deforestation, and climate change. The improper disposal of solid waste that arises from human activities for survival and development is one of the biggest environmental problems facing emerging nations. All countries acknowledged the issue during the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, and it is thought to be a significant obstacle to environmental sustainability (Ifegbesan, 2019). Olaniyi (2021) claims that logging, urbanization, and the growth of agriculture are some of the causes of the notable deforestation that has occurred in Nigeria. Increased greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, and soil erosion result from this. Nigeria suffers from a number of pollution sources, such as land pollution from inappropriate waste disposal, water pollution from oil spills and poor waste management, and air pollution from industrial emissions and vehicle exhaust. Natural resources, ecosystems, and public health are all negatively impacted by these contaminants.

An important factor in advancing environmental sustainability is the mainstream media. The media spreads pertinent information and informs the public about the need of environmental preservation through a variety of platforms, including radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and internet sites. The media not only raises awareness of environmental concerns but also shapes public opinion and attitudes toward them. They play a crucial role in fostering responsible conduct and supporting programs, laws, and environmental preservation techniques.

Statement of the Problem

Cities in the southeast region of Nigeria continue to struggle with trash management and disposal, which compromises environmental sustainability. As technology advanced throughout time and the population grew at an alarming rate, waste management and disposal became major issues, even in urban areas. Road flooding, foul odors, and the spread of diseases have all been caused in part by the careless disposal of home solid waste on our streets, rivers, and drainage systems. Waste management is a problem for many households. Due to a lack of trash management, waste is growing daily. Some areas of the region dispose of solid trash by burning waste on unapproved dumping sites during the dry season and dumping refuse in roadside ditches, drains, gutters, stream

channels, and unauthorized dumping sites during the rainy season.

When the region's waste management issue is coupled with unplanned expansion and fast urbanization, it is anticipated to become so severe that there are compelling reasons to act right away to address this terrible state of affairs. In light of this, the various governments in the southern states established the Ministry of Environment along with other relevant organizations. Since their perspectives on household solid waste management ultimately contribute significantly to the solution of environmental issues, community members' awareness and attitudes seem to be vital.

Nonetheless, Nigeria has seen a number of mass media campaigns on environmental sustainability; yet, their efficacy has been questioned given the rise in inappropriate waste management and disposal; as a result, this study aims to fill this research gap.

Study Objectives

1. Investigate the ways in which the audience interacts with current mass media campaigns focused on environmental sustainability in Nigeria.
2. Evaluate the behavioral shifts and practices that have been shaped by mass media campaigns among the Nigerian population.
3. Identify the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in fostering environmental sustainability.

Literature Review

Concept of Environmental Sustainability

The term "environment" refers to the physical and social conditions that surround and influence individuals. It has both subjective and objective dimensions, as it encompasses various natural elements such as land, forests, grasslands, deserts, animals, people, and bodies of water, along with all the life that exists within these areas and the interactions that occur between them (Gana & Toba, 2015). It also includes both natural resources and those created by humans to enhance comfort and quality of life. This encompasses homes, trees, grasses, water, air, and land, all of which impact human life (Nwanne, 2013). According to Nwanne (2013), the environment is fundamentally composed of the biological and physical elements that support human existence in all its forms. The environment plays a vital role by providing essential life-support systems, such as air, water, and land, and supplying resources needed to achieve human development goals, highlighting its overarching importance. The realization that the environment is a repository of resources that must be preserved is key to understanding sustainability.

The United Nations Bruntland Commission, in its 1987 report, established the concept of sustainability, defining it as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. In its broadest

sense, environmental sustainability refers to the careful use, management, and preservation of natural resources in a way that supports all life, protects biodiversity, and prevents environmental degradation. Alongside social and economic sustainability, environmental sustainability is a core pillar of sustainable development. This aspect of development focuses on the use of both social and natural resources, with an emphasis on continuity and the needs of future generations.

Given the challenges the Earth faces, including global warming due to ozone layer depletion, the expansion of the universe caused by electromagnetic effects, reduced agricultural productivity, and declining human health due to weakened immune systems, the importance of "environmental sustainability" has never been more critical. The impact of environmental degradation is undeniable in the present century, making the preservation of the environment vital (Offiong & Dibie, 2020). Environmental sustainability involves not just an awareness but a proactive attitude, behavior, and approach towards both oneself and the surrounding environment (Adebimpe, 2019). It takes into account factors such as competitive development, industrialization, population growth, sustainable resource yields, and waste management.

According to Ugboma (2020), environmental sustainability ensures that human needs are met without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It stresses the importance of responsible engagement with the environment to prevent the depletion or degradation of natural resources, thereby maintaining long-term environmental quality. Environmental sustainability is about safeguarding and preserving the ecosystem while prioritizing its health for the future.

Strategies for achieving Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

The preservation of Nigeria's natural resources and the welfare of its citizens depend on achieving environmental sustainability. There are various tactics that can be used to handle the nation's complicated problems. The use of renewable energy is one of the best ways to achieve environmental sustainability in Nigeria, claims Kabiru (2019). Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels can be lessened by switching to renewable energy sources including solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, which will lower air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, according to Kabiru. Another strategy for attaining environmental sustainability in Nigeria is reforestation and afforestation.

Planting trees and preserving existing forests can improve biodiversity, reduce soil erosion and deforestation, and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Additionally, better methods for the collection, recycling, and disposal of garbage can lessen pollution in the environment. It is crucial to support recycling initiatives and ethical waste management techniques. Both human health and the survival of ecosystems depend on having access to clean water and adequate sanitary facilities. It is crucial to manage

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wastewater and guarantee access to sources of clean water.

Olubukola (2022) asserts that implementing biodiversity protection is one strategy a country may use to create a sustainable environment. Maintaining ecological balance depends on conservation initiatives and the creation of protected areas to safeguard endangered species and their habitats. Additionally, encouraging the use of electric cars, public transit, and non-motorized forms of transportation can help to promote environmental sustainability by lowering greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from the transportation sector. Additionally, sustainable environmental activities can be supported by effective agricultural methods. According to Adeolu (2021), promoting crop rotation, sustainable agricultural practices, and lowering the usage of chemical pesticides and fertilizers can all enhance soil health and lessen adverse environmental effects. A culture of environmental responsibility can be fostered by increasing residents' awareness of environmental issues and encouraging eco-friendly behaviors. To discourage environmentally harmful activities like pollution and illegal logging, environmental rules and regulations must be strengthened and properly enforced.

Challenges of Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

Numerous problems and challenges have plagued Nigeria's environment, including poverty, pollution, desertification and deforestation, population increase, and urbanization. Here, an outline of some of these environmental issues and their potential effects on socioeconomic development is attempted. The following are some of Nigeria's environmental sustainability challenges:

a. **Poverty**: One of the most difficult issues threatening Nigeria's environmental sustainability is poverty. This is due to the fact that it encompasses the majority of actions that compromise people's capacity to maintain environmental protection objectives. Poverty as a condition places people in states of lack and want that have an impact on their physical health as well as their access to information and other resources. Regretfully, Nigeria's poverty rate is so high that, according to official data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), more than 50 million Nigerians were unemployed in 2021 alone. This amounted to 31% of the total population and a 20% rise over the prior years' unemployment rates. High unemployment rates suggest that a large portion of the population lives in poverty. About 133 million Nigerians currently live below the poverty line of 1.9 dollars per day, according to ActionAid, which reports that poverty levels have gotten worse since 2021 from a range of 54-60% in 2022 (NBS, 2022). This implies that a significant section of Nigerians may scarcely be said to be concerned with environmental or even future challenges, given their basic necessities for survival.

b. **Desertification and deforestation:** Desertification is a type of land degradation where relatively dry regions become

progressively more arid, often leading to the loss of water sources, vegetation, and wildlife. Deforestation refers to the process by which forested areas are converted to other uses (Geist, 2015). Human activities have significantly contributed to the occurrence of environmental and ecological degradation, especially in Nigeria. As highlighted in the poverty section, a large portion of the Nigerian population depends on the natural environment for their survival. For instance, firewood serves as the primary source of energy for over 95% of rural and economically disadvantaged communities in Nigeria (Nathaniel & Nathaniel, 2011). In addition, many people engage in tree felling as a source of income. The challenges of deforestation and desertification in Nigeria have been exacerbated by other human activities, such as open-range grazing and traditional slash-and-burn farming methods, which have consistently led to the destruction of forested areas.

c. **Urbanization and population growth:** Nigeria is undoubtedly the most populous Black country in the world, with a population exceeding 200 million people. According to the database site Trading Economics, Nigeria is home to 1.35% of the global population, meaning one in every 43 people worldwide resides there. A large population inevitably leads to increased human needs and a greater dependence on the environment, which is clearly evident in Nigeria. The country's expanding population has driven demand for agricultural land, infrastructure, industry, and residential areas, all contributing to its rapid urbanization. Currently, about 47.8% of Nigeria's land is urbanized, with an annual urbanization growth rate of 4.66%. As people congregate in new urban centers in search of employment and opportunities, this trend has led to significant deforestation. Unfortunately, the combination of poverty and inadequate urban planning has created severe challenges for Nigeria's environment. Human actions have left the environment increasingly vulnerable, particularly due to the lack of political will to address the needs of the growing population. The rapid urbanization, coupled with population growth, is the primary driver of high pollution rates, social issues, poverty, industrial decline, and environmental degradation in the country.

d. **Pollution**: According to estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO), extended exposure to environmental pollutants is responsible for around 25% of the diseases that affect people today. Additionally, according to the UNEP Report on Environmental Pollution and Impacts on Public Health, most diseases linked to environmental pollution are difficult to detect and may be acquired during childhood but only show symptoms later in adulthood, although some of these diseases may be identified within brief periods of infection. This allusion to human health perfectly encapsulates the actual nature of environmental pollution's impacts, which can be both immediate and long-lasting. Poor urban planning, a lack of basic waste management facilities, and ineffective industrial practices that endanger the

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environment are only a few of Nigeria's environmental pollution issues. Cities with a large number of slums without waste management systems have emerged as a result of a confluence of linked problems, including poverty, population growth, rapid urbanization, and governments' incapacity to create efficient housing schemes (Ezeabasili, 2013). Citizens, particularly the poor and vulnerable who live in slums, are more susceptible to infectious diseases and other health-threatening situations as a result of these conditions.

Mass Media Campaign in Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

Effective, methodical, and well-planned use of the media to promote environmental sustainability has been and likely will continue to be a hot topic in academic, policy, and practice circles for some time to come. This is due to the lack of a solid body of research and tried-and-true practical methods that can be used to preserve the environment with a higher level of success guarantee than the efficient use of mass media for communication. Nigeria, one of Africa's most populous nations, confronts numerous environmental issues. Environmental sustainability is a global concern. Mass media campaigns have been an effective instrument for addressing these problems and advancing environmental sustainability. Public opinion and behavior are greatly influenced by mass media, which includes radio, television, newspapers, magazines, social media, and other digital platforms.

Mass media initiatives are crucial to environmental sustainability for a number of reasons. Mass media campaigns are effective means of teaching the public about environmental problems, their causes, and possible solutions, according to Okoro (2021). They aid in closing the knowledge gap that exists between the general public and professionals. By encouraging eco-friendly behaviors, conservation initiatives, and responsible consumerism, these campaigns have the power to affect both individual and group behavior. Campaigns in the media can also promote reforms and changes to policies that promote sustainability and environmental preservation. They can exert pressure on businesses and governments to implement more environmentally friendly policies and procedures. Nigerian mass media projects that are successful use a variety of tactics to inform and involve the public with environmental sustainability.

These campaigns use gripping storylines to engage with the audience and arouse emotions by sharing success stories and environmental challenges. Campaigns use pictures, movies, infographics, and animations to make difficult environmental concerns understandable and interesting. Campaigns in Nigeria's mass media have shown a strong influence on advancing environmental sustainability. Nigerians' understanding of environmental problems like garbage management, air pollution, and deforestation has increased because to these initiatives. They have affected how people behave both individually and collectively, promoting behaviors like recycling waste,

conserving water, and lowering carbon emissions. Stricter environmental laws and the encouragement of renewable energy sources are just two examples of the policy changes brought about by mass media campaigns.

Campaigns that involve local communities have given residents the ability to take charge of environmental projects and cultivate a sense of accountability for their surroundings. In Nigeria, mass media initiatives have become essential instruments for advancing environmental sustainability. They have the ability to promote policy changes, influence behavior, and increase awareness. But in order for these activities to keep improving Nigeria's environmental future, issues like funding and regional diversity need to be resolved. Nigeria may go closer to creating a sustainable and healthy environment for its people by utilizing the power of the media.

Odufuwa (2005) asserts that environmental education should be able to raise awareness of environmental issues, inspire people to avoid waste, conserve resources, and safeguard the environment; promote understanding and collaboration among individuals regarding sustainable environmental issues; and preserve environmentally friendly indigenous knowledge, customs, and culture. This will encourage broad public involvement on all levels and help everyone—from the grassroots level to the leaders and the appropriate agencies—understand the issues, the pressing need for action, and the actions that must be taken to safeguard the environment in a sustainable way.

Theoretical Framework

The Two-Step Flow Theory serves as the foundation for our investigation. According to Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet's 1948 two-step flow hypothesis, media impact frequently happens in two stages. It implies that media information initially reaches "opinion leaders," who then interpret it before disseminating it to their followers, or "opinion followers." People are more likely to be persuaded by these opinion leaders in their social circles than by the media itself, according to the idea, which highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships in the process of media impact.

According to the two-step flow theory, opinion leaders' influence frequently determines how successful mass media efforts for environmental sustainability are. These could be celebrities, prominent bloggers, community leaders, or anybody else with the ability to change public opinion in their circles. Their followers are more inclined to follow suit when these people support or encourage sustainable behaviors.

Finding and interacting with opinion leaders in diverse communities and socioeconomic groups is a necessary part of using the two-step flow theory in Nigeria. The main target audience for environmental sustainability mass media initiatives is these opinion leaders. After being educated and convinced, these leaders can then share the information with their followers,

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encouraging a chain reaction of influence and action.

For instance, religious leaders have a lot of power in Nigeria. There may have a big impact if these leaders are contacted to support and encourage environmental sustainability. The idea of environmental sustainability can also be spread by using well-known celebrities, social media influencers, and even local community leaders as opinion leaders.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a survey design, which was deemed the most appropriate for the research as it primarily relies on the opinions of Enugu residents for the collection of primary data. The population for this study consists of all the residents of Enugu State. Enugu was selected as one of the states where the radio drama was broadcasted nationwide. According to the 2006 population census by the National Population Commission (NPC), Enugu's population was 1,951,092. However, this figure is now outdated and does not reflect the current population. To estimate the current population, the annual population growth rate was applied to calculate the state's population over the past 18 years. Using the straight-line formula, the calculation was performed as follows:

$N_1 = N_0 (1 + K n)$

Where N_1 = Current population at a given growth rate as of 2024.

Where N_0 = Census figure as of 2006.

K = Growth rate.

N = Number of years after last census

Population of Enugu State

N_0 = 1,951,092

K = 0.032% or 3.2%

n = 18

N_1 = 1,951,092 (1 + 0.032 x 18)

= 1,951,092 (1 + 0.576)

= 1,951,092 (1.576)

= 3,074,920

Thus, the estimated population of Enugu State for this study is 3,074,920. The sample size for this research is 385 respondents, determined using the Australian Calculator provided by the National Statistics Service (NSS). Multi-stage sampling was employed to select the sample for this study. A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument, which underwent face validity testing. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the test-retest method. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were applied to examine the data collected.

Discussion of findings

Environmental sustainability is a significant global concern, and Nigeria faces unique environmental challenges due to its diverse ecosystems and growing population. To address these issues, numerous mass media campaigns have been launched across the country to raise awareness and promote sustainable practices. Television remains one of Nigeria's most influential mass media platforms, with advertisements promoting environmental sustainability reaching a broad audience. Initiatives like "Eco-Watch" and "Green Nigeria" have successfully brought environmental issues into the homes of both urban and rural communities.

Additionally, radio campaigns have effectively reached remote and underserved areas.

Local radio stations broadcast programs and jingles that educate listeners about sustainable practices, and, with the support of NGOs, the "Radio for the Environment" campaign has spread environmental messages across Nigeria. These mass media initiatives focusing on environmental sustainability have made significant strides in engaging the Nigerian population, increasing awareness, fostering environmental consciousness, and encouraging support for sustainable behaviors. However, to ensure their long-lasting impact, continuous efforts are required, including regular assessments and adjustments to address changing circumstances.

Nigeria must work towards a more environmentally conscious and sustainable future by leveraging the power of mass media and encouraging active audience participation. Media campaigns have raised awareness about recycling and waste management, with many Nigerians now more informed about the importance of separating recyclables from non-recyclables. Community recycling programs and individual composting of organic waste have contributed to a decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfills. Energy conservation campaigns, disseminated through social media, radio, and television, have urged Nigerians to adopt energy-efficient habits, with many households now using energy-saving appliances, turning off lights when not in use, and utilizing natural light.

Mass media initiatives have played a pivotal role in shifting the behavior and practices of Nigerians towards greater environmental sustainability. These campaigns have not only informed the public but also motivated both individual and collective action. Despite the progress made, Nigeria must continue to strengthen these efforts, evaluate their impact, and adapt to new environmental challenges to ensure sustained progress towards a more sustainable future. For mass media campaigns to be successful in promoting environmental sustainability, several factors are essential: effective messaging, influential spokespersons, media coverage, interactivity, cultural sensitivity, partnerships, timely interventions, community involvement, impact measurement, and youth engagement. By thoughtfully integrating these elements, mass media campaigns can drive meaningful change and contribute to building a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.

Conclusion

The evaluation of mass media campaigns' efficacy in advancing environmental sustainability in Nigeria identifies both noteworthy successes and opportunities for development. Initiatives in the mainstream media have been essential in educating the public, increasing awareness, and motivating action in the direction of a more ecologically conscious society over the years. Critical environmental issues in

Nigeria, from waste management and deforestation to climate change and water conservation, have been effectively brought to the public's attention through mass media campaigns.

They have taught the populace the value of embracing eco-friendly activities and the repercussions of unsustainable practices. The Nigerian populace has changed its behavior as a result of these initiatives. Sustainable measures including recycling, energy conservation, and tree planting have been adopted by both individuals and communities. Adopting these practices is a step in the right direction toward environmental stewardship that is more responsible.

In addition to involving the public, mass media projects have impacted lobbying and policy debates around environmental sustainability.

They have given people the ability to express their concerns, back environmentally friendly laws, and hold businesses and the government responsible for sustainable operations. Youth-focused initiatives have had a particularly significant influence. The younger generation, who are ardent supporters of sustainability, now feel a feeling of environmental responsibility as a result of them. Initiatives for youth participation could help Nigeria create a more sustainable future.

Recommendations

1. To determine how well mass media efforts are promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria, thorough assessment studies are crucial.
2. There is a need to improve cooperation and collaborations amongst government agencies, private sector groups, environmental NGOs, and media outlets.
3. It's critical to use a variety of media outlets in order to optimize the impact and reach of mass media campaigns.
4. Long-term audience engagement and sustained action should be the goals of mass media campaigns.

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