



Residents' Perception of Media Coverage of Youth Restiveness and Cult Killings in Andoni

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Abstract

This study examined the perception of residents of Andoni in the media coverage of youth restiveness and cult killings in the area between 2008 and 2021. The objectives of the study were to, among other things, ascertain the perception of the residents on the extent of mass media coverage of youth restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021, establish the perception of residents of the most used medium in the reportage of restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni, and find out the perception of residents on whether the media coverage contributed to addressing the restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni or not. The study was anchored on the perception and media systems dependency theories. The survey design was adopted for the study with an estimated population of 299,646 and a sample size of 384. The quota and accidental sampling techniques were used for the study. From the findings, residents perceived that the extent of media coverage of youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni was low, and that the newspaper was the most used medium in the coverage of the restiveness. They also perceived that the coverage contributed in the restoration of calmness in the area. Among others, the researcher recommended that media organisations should establish more presence in the local areas to cover events in the communities and accord rural dwellers a sense of recognition in societal issues.

Keywords: perception, media coverage, youth restiveness, cult killings, Andoni

Introduction

Journalism's highest role in the society has been to provide information that enables citizens to make intelligent decisions. Campbell, Martin, Fabos and Reeves (2013) assert that the foregoing is true as human beings generally, have always valued news since it provides the people the platform to gather information and create narrative reports to help one another make sense of events happening around them. Harold D. Lasswell had conceptualised the roles which the mass media play in the society. These roles are in addition to his model aimed at understanding the concept of communication. Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) submit that studies by Harold D. Lasswell and Charles Wright amongst others classified the functions of mass communication into four broad categories, which are surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment.

Surveillance refers primarily to journalism which provides information about the processes, issues, events and other developments in society. Correlation refers to the ways in which media interpret events and issues and ascribe meanings that help individuals understand their roles within the larger society and culture. Cultural transmission refers to the transference of the dominant culture, as well as its subcultures, from one generation to the next or to immigrants. The entertainment function is performed in part by all

three of the activities of surveillance, correlation and cultural transmission but also involves the generation of content designed specifically and exclusively to entertain (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2011).

Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) posit that “the most important function served by newspapers in modern society is surveillance, or to inform the public of important events taking place” (p.111). Hasan (2013) corroborates the foregoing when she states that the surveillance of environment is one of the most important functions of mass communication. Hasan describes surveillance as the process of monitoring the behaviour of people, objects or processes within systems for conformity to expected or desired norms in trusted systems for security or social controls. Hasan (2013) states that “surveillance of environment involves seeking out and then transmitting information about the society and all other relevant elements” (pp.98-99). The emphasis on the surveillance role of the media as the most important function places the responsibility on the media to properly mirror the society and inform the public of happenings in the society.

Pavlik and McIntosh point out that one weakness in the surveillance function is that too much news about disasters, murders, or other unusual events can skew the audience’s perception of what is normal in society. Though Pavlik and McIntosh see the foregoing as a weakness, the concepts of unusual events, audience perception and society are critical to this study. This is because the issues bordering on youth restiveness and cult killings which constitute part of the thematic scope and a major focus of this study are unusual events that deserve proper media attention and reportage. On audience perception, McQuail (1994) sees audience as simply referring to readers, viewers or listeners of one or another media channel or of this or that type of content or performance. Hasan (2013) points out that “whosoever is the recipient of mass media content constitutes its audience” (p.106). In this work, the residents of Andoni communities are the audience.

Santrock (2003) defines perception as the process of organising and interpreting sensory information to give meaning. Amodu (2006) adds that perception represents the process of making meaning out of experiences. Deductively therefore, audience perception, can be explained as the interpretation given to certain information by recipients of mass media contents based on what the recipients read in the newspaper, watch in the television or listen to on radio and view on social media.

In the recent past until when Erastus Awortu was sworn in as Chairman of Andoni local government area on June 17, 2021 following his victory in the Rivers State Local Government elections held on April 17, 2021, communities in Andoni were under the firm grip of cultists who engaged themselves in series of clashes, thereby, killing some innocent persons in the process (Samuel, 2018; Mba, Ihejirika & Deekor, 2021). Youth restiveness, according to Igbo and Ikpa (2013) involves the combination of actions, conducts and behaviour which constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behaviour exhibited by youths in the society. Espousing on the nature of restiveness in Andoni, Mba et al (2021) reveal that activities of miscreants in the area included kidnapping, raping, killing, violent protest, cult group clashes and public harassment of citizens by cultists. From 2007 when cultists made their first killing in Andoni (Samuel, 2018) to June 2021 before the Council Chairman brought together the leaders of all the warring groups in October 2021 and made them to renounce cultism, several lives and property had been lost to the menace of youth restiveness and cult clashes.

It should be noted that there is always the expectation that the media would publicise issues bordering on the welfare of the people in a bid to inform the larger audience and ultimately, draw the attention of relevant agencies to address them. Getting to know how people appraised the performance of the media during the dark days of youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni is the crux of this study. In other words, this study investigated varied interpretations given by residents of Andoni following the youth restiveness and cult killings that took place in the area between 2008 and 2021. The interpretations were appraised based on the level of exposure of the residents to what they read in the newspapers, watch on the television, listen to on radio and view on the social media. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to ascertain the perception of residents on media coverage of the menace while it lasted in the area.

Statement of the problem

The period spanning between 2008 and first half of 2021 witnessed increased rate of youth restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni with the death of over 200 persons, destruction of property and loss of personal effects. Data from a memorandum by Asarama people in Andoni to the Rivers State Panel on EndSars and others obtained by the researcher showed that Asarama alone recorded about 138 deaths and destruction of 91 houses.

Due to the location of Andoni communities in the riverine terrain, which is about a driving distance of one hour 20 minutes and 60 kilometres from the Port Harcourt metropolis, it usually seems difficult to get reporters to cover events in the area, except on special arrangements or the coverage is done by indigenous practising journalists. Other times, media practitioners whose offices are mostly in Port Harcourt obtain information from local sources. Within the period of the clashes, the mass media through the various channels comprising the radio, television, newspaper and the social media were used to disseminate information to the residents. To this end, how did the residents of Andoni perceive the coverage of the mass media during the period of restiveness?

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to determine the perception of Andoni residents in the media coverage of youth restiveness which claimed several lives and property in Andoni between 2008 and 2021. The objectives were to:

- 1 ascertain the perception of residents on the extent of media coverage of youth restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021.
- 2 determine, in the perception of the residents, the most used medium in the reportage of restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni
- 3 find out the perception of the residents on whether the media coverage contributed to alleviate the restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni or not.

Theoretical framework

Perception theory

Perception theory has its roots in psychological studies on how human beings process stimuli before responding to them. Psychologists generally agree that selective perception influenced by opinions, attitudes and beliefs offer important explanations to the way individuals behave. The proponents of perception theory are Bernard Berelson and Gary Steiner (1964). The crux of the theory is on individual differences and how audience members select, organise and interpret information to have a meaningful understanding of the world. Folarin (2005) posits that perception depends on a complex of variables which comprise psychological disposition, past experiences, cultural expectations and social relationships.

Perreault and McCarthy (2005) identify a set of theories that guide the study of perception in communication, which are: selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention. The fourth is selective attention. Perreault and McCarthy (2005) explain selective exposure as what comes to play when people tend to expose themselves to information which falls in line with what they believe but avoid information that challenges their beliefs. Amodu (2006) explains that selective perception is hinged on the individual's misinterpretation of a message based on his pre-existing attitudes, experiences and opinions. No matter how factual what is being viewed is, the individual is judging from an already existing stereotyped template which definitely will influence the result of his assessment. He adds that at this stage of the perceptual process, people screen out or modify ideas, messages and information that conflict with previously learned attitudes and beliefs. Selective retention is the ability of an individual to remember media contents which make more meaning to him than the ones which he considers secondary. Sometimes, such

contents are retained with distorted interpretation depending on how they were perceived. One of the major aids to selective retention is on the medium the message was received. Messages, which came through visual aids, have the tendency to stick for a long time and be easily recalled. According to Amodu, at this most important stage, people remember only what they choose or want to remember. Selective attention occurs when one selects contents one can concentrate on among a variety of available options, while ignoring others. Amodu (2006) points out that selective attention refers to the brain choosing the information it interprets since it cannot interpret messages as fast as the eyes can see them. Therefore, a person selects the information he pays attention to.

Perception theory is relevant to this study in the light of its perceptual process which is hinged on the predisposition and opinion of individuals. In this context, the relevance is anchored on the opinion of residents of Andoni with regards to media coverage of restiveness and cult-killings that took place in Andoni.

Media systems dependency theory

The media systems dependency theory is the second theory that provided the theoretical foundation for this study. The theory was propounded by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. Miller (2002) avers that the theory “has at its heart a tripartite system in which **media, audience and society** are seen to have **dependency relationships** with each other” (p.247). Each of the system components which are the media, audience and society are seen as depending on the other components in the system by drawing on resources in order to satisfy goals. Citing Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), Miller (2002) avers that dependency is “a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party” (p.247).

In the context of this study, residents of Andoni (audience) are deemed to have relied on radio, television, newspaper and social media (media) for information on how to liberate the Andoni communities (society) from the stronghold of youth restiveness and cult killings. Each of the system components is seen to depend on the other in the relationship. Thus, the media systems dependency theory is another appropriate theory that provided direction for this study.

Conceptual review

Andoni (Obolo) people

The Andoni people are otherwise known as Obolo people. Their habitation cuts across some states in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. According to Ejituwu (1991), Obolo is both linguistic and an ethnic term. Citing an unpublished article by Ekeneoriono Thompson, Samuel (2018) points out that the Obolo people spring out to Oron and Ibeno in the present day Akwa Ibom State and Ohafia in Abia State. They are said to also have historical affiliation with the Ogoloma and Kalaido in Rivers State. Ejituwu (1991) posits that the Andoni people in Rivers State inhabit a strip of territory extending from the Andoni River (7.21E) to the Qua Iboe River (8.00E). The Andoni territory, according to him is bounded by Bonny and Kalabari to the west, Okrika and Ogoni to the north, Ibibio to the north-east, Ibeno to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Ejituwu avers that the Andoni people are originally the first settlers in the present location before two sizeable non-Obolo groups which are the Nkoro from Okrika and the Opobo from Bonny later joined and constituted part of the population of the coastal area. Ejituwu (1991) states that Andoni is:

broken into islands by a network of saltwater creeks and estuaries, the most important of the latter being those of the Imo and Andoni Rivers. The Imo River estuary cuts the territory into halves, namely, Eastern and Western Obolo...Western Obolo, with its headquarters at Ngo, is in the Rivers State, whilst Eastern Obolo, with its headquarters at Okoroete, is in Akwa Ibom

State...the Obolo Mainland, has a thirty-five kilometer road running from Oyorokoto on the Andoni River through Ngo, Ekede and Ikuru Town to Agbama on the Imo River. Another road runs from Unyeada through Egendem to Asarama...(p.xi).

For this study, the focus is the Andoni in the Western Obolo which is the Andoni with the headquarters at Ngo Town in Rivers State. The choice of the Western Obolo is premised on the fact that it is the part of Andoni that was basically hit with the restiveness and cult killings within the period under review.

Cultism in Nigeria

Cultism is the devotion to a religion or sect that is generally considered to be outside conventional societal practices. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), citing Ajayi (2015) define cultism “as a ritual by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret with their activities having negative effects on both members and non-members alike” (p.222). Several authorities including Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) and Kpae (2019) were unanimous in attributing the historical development of cultism in Nigeria to some university students who formed the Seadog Confraternity also known as Pyrates. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) write that “In the 1953/54 session at the University College Ibadan, now University of Ibadan, seven idealist young students namely Wole Soyinka (now Professor), Pius Oleghe, Raph Opara, Tunji Tubi, Daign Imokhuede, Olu Agunlay and Muyiwa Awe (now Emeritus Professor of Physics) formed the Seadogs Confraternity (a.k.a. Pyrates)” (P.223), with the objectives of using the group as a non-violent but intellectual platform against imposition of foreign conventions, to revive the age of chivalry and to find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism.

In 1972, a schism occurred within the Pyrate Confraternity which led to the formation of a rival group known as Buccaneer. Also, within the same period, the Eiye Confraternity was formed, making a total of three confraternities that emerged at the University of Ibadan. The confraternities started spreading to other universities that were established in the country (Muyiwa, 2004; Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, 2015). According to Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi, the original idea behind the formation of the confraternities had suffered so much corruption that no one wanted to be openly identified with the campus cult as they have degenerated into secret societies and become a terror to the campuses and communities around the universities. Owonikoko and Ifukor (2016) assert that from campuses, cultism spread to the communities through the establishment of affiliate groups in communities by major cult groups and some ex-students who were expelled from studies on account of their membership of secret cult and withdrawal for academic failure.

Cultism and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta

Aside the trivial street and worrisome campus cultism, the origin of the arbitrary use of cultists in Niger Delta was traced to the agitation by the people of the region for fair treatment following the exploitation of natural resources by oil multinationals who pay royalties and taxes directly into the coffers of the Federal Government without adequate development plans for the oil-producing communities.

Odungweru (2010) states that the like of late Isaac Adaka Boko and Ken Saro-Wiwa had at different times led agitation for equitable distribution of sources of wealth produced in the Niger Delta to benefit the host communities who bear the adverse effect of oil exploration and production. Odungweru notes that after a period of time, the agitation was hijacked by militia groups that veered away from the objective of promoting the interest of the oil-bearing communities to becoming a platform for kidnapping, killings, vandalisation of oil installations, oil theft and several other forms of criminal activities.

Odungweru (2010) recalls that the struggle for control over oil royalties gave birth to two cult groups, Isongoforo and Agbara-Fero in Nembe which resulted in three clashes in 1995. The first clash took place on November 12, 1995, the second clash was on November 25, and the third was December 14, 1995. He discloses that the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Vigilante Service (NDVS) were formed in the early 2000s in Rivers State with the guise of promoting Niger Delta cause but were later hijacked by politicians. Odungweru (2010) notes that “the leaders of these groups (NDPVF and NDVS), who drew inspiration from their political godfathers, attacked their political opponents and re-aligned with smaller cult groups to identify with their cause for a reward—the control of oil bunkering and unhindered drug trafficking or peddling” (p.2). He adds that the spate of violence became worse during the general elections in 2003 as politicians and political parties resorted to violence in a bid to win elections. Corroborating the foregoing, Samuel (2018) notes that “...cultism had gained ground in Rivers State and prominent persons including Chief Marshall Harry, the Deputy National Chairman (South-South) of ANPP (All Nigeria Peoples Party) was killed on 5th March, 2003. Chief A. K. Dikibo was also trailed to Delta State and killed by suspected assassins from Rivers State” (p.59). Lending credence to the fact that the spate of violence increased in the early 2000s in Rivers State, Ogele, Sarki, Solomon and Kaka (2020) note that:

...as the number of dropouts from universities who were members of confraternity increased in the late 1990s and 2000s, they resorted to re-establishing cultism in Port Harcourt City. Rivers State became a hotbed for the recruitment of cult organizations...Initially, the essence of forming local gang groups was to facilitate local drug peddling, which was aimed at making money. Over time, these groups began to contend over who controls drug business in the city of Port Harcourt, particularly in Diobu, Abonnema Wharf, and Port Harcourt Township...However, in 2003, these cult groups were integrated into the political landscape in Rivers State (p.2).

Ogele et al (2020) also concede that contrary to the original claim that the formation of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force and Niger Delta Vigilante Service was to advance the perceived injustice meted out to the people of Niger Delta by the Federal Government and multinationals operating in the region, politicians used the leaders of the groups for political gains leading to many casualties in the state.

Cult killings in Andoni

The first cult killing in Andoni, according to Samuel (2018) took place at Isiama on April 13, 2007, which was the eve of the Governorship Election in Rivers State on April 14, 2007. Samuel (2018) points out that, “the deceased was a supporter of the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) in Andoni” (p.59). He was killed by a group of cultists who served as thugs to a rival political party. After the first killing, the second recorded killing was in Asarama and it claimed the lives of Obediah Ogbulu and Dennis Ernest on April 12, 2008. Thereafter, a security guard of a contracting firm constructing the Andoni-Ogoni-Opobo/Nkoro Unity Road, Isaiah B. Amah was killed on the company’s vessel in the middle of the Asarama-Ebukuma section of the Andoni River on May 18, 2008 (Samuel, 2018).

Following successful operations and killings of some innocent persons and perceived opponents of their paymasters, the cultists then established their full presence with the recruitment of more young people. They held down the communities in Andoni and operated freely until they started having splinter groups and rival gang which worsened the security situation in Andoni. There are different cult groups in Andoni, some of which are the Icelanders, Greenlanders, and MEND fighters. At several times, these groups engaged themselves in shootouts and in most cases innocent persons were caught in the fray by stray pellets. One of the several cases of cult clashes in Andoni was a fierce encounter in the Egbormung axis of the Andoni River on January 1, 2018, where the Iceland and MEND fighters engaged themselves in a

confrontational gun duel that lasted some hours. At the end of the clash, over twenty dead bodies were recovered from the river.

In its periodic reports, The Fund for Peace (2015) disclosed that eight people were reportedly killed in a cult clash between the Icelanders and Greenlanders in Andoni in June 2013. In October of same 2013, The Fund reported that three soldiers were reportedly killed in a raid on a community by an armed gang. Though there has not been official figure of casualties, but it is estimated that Andoni must have recorded over 200 deaths from cult-related clashes if Asarama alone recorded about 138 deaths according to the figure presented before a Rivers State Panel on arbitrary killings in Asarama communities.

In 2020, the then Chairman of Andoni local government area, Paul Lawrence, set up a vigilante group to tackle the cases of insecurity in the area. The vigilante service did little as the cult gangs were prepared to engage the vigilante group headlong. However, on assumption of office in July 2021, a new Chairman of the local government area, Erastus Awortu devised the carrot-and-stick approach, rather than setting a counter force. His approach paid off with the return of peace to the local government area.

Cultism and Media Coverage

Ekeanyanwu and Igbino (2007) studied the coverage of cultism in two newspapers in Nigeria for a period of three years. Of the 1,099 items covered on crime and corruption, only 54 items bordered on cultism. Thus, the study concluded that the frequency of coverage of cult-related clashes was low. They concluded that the mass media are the most effective and powerful means of disseminating information the world over. They stressed the need for media professionals to come to grip with the responsibility placed in their hands to mould public opinion.

Similarly, Uriah, Egbezor and Ololube (2014) in their study entitled: “*The Challenges of Youth Restiveness and Educational Development in Rivers State*”, concede to the fact that “television, radio, newspaper (or the print generally), internet and other devices have significant influence on the attitude, behaviour and decisions of youth either directly or indirectly” (p.112). In other words, the scholars reinforced the significant role of the mass media to attitudinal change of the youths and societal growth.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Ndiyo (2005), the survey research design employs questionnaire and interview to determine opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perception of persons of interest to the researcher. The survey is suitable for investigating phenomenon in their natural setting. It is most appropriate for this study since the research is about sampling the perception of people on media coverage of communal unrest and cult killings with a view to curbing the ugly trend. The population of the study is 299,646. The figure is the estimated population of Andoni local government area in 2021 from the census figure of the local government in 2006 which stood at 217,924, according to the National Population Commission. The figure was arrived at using 2.5% annual growth rate.

The Taro Yamane scientific formula was used to determine the sample size for the study. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n= is the sample size

N= is the population size

e= is the level of precision (sampling error)

For the population which stood at 217,924, the formula is applied as follows:

$$n = 217,924 / (1 + 217,924 (0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 217,924/(1+217,924 (0.0025))$$

$$n = 217,924/(1+544.81)$$

$$n = 217,924/(545.81)$$

$$n = 399.27$$

The sample size for the study is 399. To ensure fair representation of the respondents, the quota sampling technique was adopted to sample opinion of respondents in the seven Districts of Andoni. The quota sampling technique is a non-probability method which aims at making the sample representative of the population by setting quota controls (Ndiyo, 2005). For this study, the quotas are delineated into the seven Districts in Andoni which are Ngo Urban, Okwanaja, Agwut-Obolo, Ataba, Asarama, Unyeada and Isiokwan. Each district received 57 copies of the questionnaire, making the exact figure of 399 being the sample size. Female respondents were given 29 copies and male respondents received 28 copies of the questionnaire in each district. The idea was to ensure fair representation of the female in the research more so, as women are believed to suffer more adverse effect of restiveness. In all, a total of 368 copies of questionnaire were retrieved, making a return rate of 92%. The 368 copies were used for analysis.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Sex of the Respondents

S/No	District	Male	Female	Total	%
1	Ngo Urban	24	29	53	14.4
2	Okwanaja	21	28	49	13.3
3	Agwut-Obolo	27	29	56	15.2
4	Ataba	27	25	52	14.1
5	Asarama	28	29	57	15.5
6	Unyeada	27	29	56	15.3
7	Isiokwan	21	24	45	12.2
	TOTAL	175 (47.6%)	193 (52.4%)	368	100

Data presented in Table 1 show that from the copies of the questionnaire that were duly filled, 47.6% of respondents are male, while 52.4% are female. The data show that female respondents committed themselves to responding and returning their copies of the questionnaire more than their male counterparts.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

S/No	District	15-25yrs	26-35	36-40	41& above	Total	%
1	Ngo Urban	9	12	17	15	53	14.4
2	Okwanaja	6	11	15	17	49	13.3
3	Agwut-Obolo	15	17	13	11	56	15.2
4	Ataba	7	23	14	8	52	14.1
5	Asarama	18	26	9	4	57	15.5
6	Unyeada	17	21	11	7	56	15.3
7	Isiokwan	12	19	10	4	45	12.2
	TOTAL	84(22.8%)	129(35.1%)	89(24.2%)	66(17.9)	368	100

Data presented in Table 2 show that respondents within the age bracket of 26 to 35 returned the highest number of the copies of the questionnaire with 35.1%, while the least number of respondents with 17.9% falls within the age bracket of 41 and above.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

S/No	District %	FSLC	SSC	NCE/Others	1st degree	Higher degrees	Total
1	Ngo Urban	3	6	11	27	6	53
2	14.4						
3	Okwanaja	4	9	17	15	4	49
4	13.3						
5	Agwut-Obolo	2	5	17	19	13	56
6	15.2						
7	Ataba	1	3	9	29	10	52
	14.1						
	Asarama	0	12	5	27	13	57
	15.5						
	Unyeada	2	11	13	28	2	56
	15.3						
	Isiokwan	6	13	7	17	2	45
	12.2						
	TOTAL	18 (4.9%)	59(16%)	79 (21.5%)	162(44%)	50(13.6%)	368
	100						

Data presented in Table 3 show that respondents with first degree (44%) participated more in the exercise, while those with First School Leaving Certificate (4.9%) were with the least educational qualification.

Research question one: What is the perception of residents on the extent of media coverage of youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021?

Table 4: Perception of Residents on Extent of Media Coverage

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Decision
1	The cult killings in Andoni received serious media coverage	104	261	324	93	782	2.1	Rejected
2	The media coverage of the cult killings was regular	92	213	358	95	758	2.1	Rejected
	Weighted Mean Score	196	474	682	188	1540	2.1	Rejected

Items 1-2 presented in Table 4 addressed the research question on the perception of residents on the extent of media coverage of youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021. The perception of residents revealed that the extent of media coverage was low. This finding corroborated the earlier study of Ekeanyanwu and Igbinoba (2007) which showed the infinitesimal items of coverage of cult-related issues.

Research question two: From the perception of the residents, which of the media was mostly used in the coverage of youth restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021?

Table 5: Most Used Media in the Coverage of Cult Killings

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Decision
3	The newspaper was the most used medium that covered the cult killings in Andoni	692	363	42	53	1150	3.2	Accepted
4	The radio was the most used medium that covered the cult killings in Andoni	268	234	244	119	865	2.4	Rejected

5	The television was the most used medium that covered the cult clashes in Andoni	30	59	109	117	315	0.9	Rejected
6	The social media were the most used media in Andoni cult war	98	110	116	79	403	1.1	Rejected

Items 3-6 presented in Table 5 tackled the research question on the perception of residents on the most used medium that covered the youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021. From the perception of the residents, newspaper was the most used medium that covered the youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021.

Research question one: Do residents perceive the media coverage as contributing to the restoration of peace from the youth restiveness and cult-related killings in Andoni?

Table 6: Perception of Residents on Media Contribution to Peace

S/No	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Total	WMS	Decision
7	The media coverage of cult war assisted in attracting the attention of security operatives to Andoni	516	369	78	77	1040	2.8	Accepted
8	The media coverage of cult war in Andoni contributed to restore peace in the area	580	393	54	65	1092	3.0	Accepted
	Weighted Mean Score	1096	762	132	142	2132	2.9	Accepted

Items 7-8 presented in Table 6 tackled the research question on whether the media coverage of youth restiveness and cult killings in Andoni between 2008 and 2021 has contributed to the restoration of peace in the area. The perception of residents revealed that the media coverage contributed to the restoration of peace in the cult-infested area.

Uriah, Egbezo and Ololube (2014) had stated that the mass media have significant influence on the attitude, behaviour and decisions of youth either directly or indirectly. Thus, the media coverage of the restiveness had a way of influencing the attitudes of youths to turn a new leaf from engaging in violence.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that even though the cases of cult clashes and killings in Andoni received little attention in the mass media, the newspaper lived up to its social responsibility in bringing the unusual event to public attention.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations were considered useful:

1. Media organisations should establish more presence in the local areas to cover events in the communities and accord rural dwellers a sense of recognition as part of the larger society. This will boost rural reporting.
2. To easily get the attention of the government and policy-makers, the different media should always beam their searchlight on unusual events happening in the society concomitantly. When different media establishments focus attention on same issues, it will attract public attention swiftly.
3. Media practitioners should always ensure that their reports effect positive changes on the society. Journalism will not be complete without adequate feedback either on the part of the public or policy-makers. Therefore, media organisations should put in place mechanism to monitor feedback.

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