



DO CONTENTS OF NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS REFLECT THEIR MISSION STATEMENT?

AWAEZE, Collins Chika, Ph.D

Mass Communication Programme, Rhema University, Aba, Nigeria,

Corresponding author: AWAEZE, Collins Chika, awaezcollins@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study evaluated the mission and vision statements of Nigerian newspapers to find out if what they contain is a true reflection of their contents. Content Analysis was adopted as the research design with five national dailies namely; *Guardian*, *Nation*, *Punch*, *Sun* and *Thisday* selected as sample. The content of 1,825 issues of the newspapers for the year 2013 was analysed. The findings revealed, among other things; that the contents of the five newspapers proved substantial compliance with their mission and vision statements. The Researcher recommends that newspapers should publish their mission statements boldly on their front pages to enable readers identify easily with their goals and objectives.

Keywords: Nigerian Newspapers, Mission Statements.

Introduction

The Nigerian Press is often described as the most vibrant on the continent of Africa. Dare (1997) observes that one measure of this vibrancy is its resilience in the face of daunting challenges which spanned through the colonial and post-colonial period. These challenges ranged from withdrawal of patronage by government through placement of advertisements, promulgation of draconian rules and regulations guiding the operations of the press, confiscation of Newspapers and Magazines as well as harassment, arrest, detention, murder and prosecution of journalists mostly on trumped up charges. These were in addition to poor returns on sales of newspapers occasioned by illiteracy and economic hardship. Adesoji (2013) also agreed that its resilience and vibrancy, obviously, a product of its sustained struggle with colonialism and prolonged military rule, not only marked it out as an important pillar of democracy, but also prepared it for the roles it is playing in the present era of constitutional democracy. Bayo (2013) further observed that through pungent news, editorials, articles and letters to the editor, the Nigerian press has regularly provided information and opinion on issues of the day including politics, education, crime, law, terrorism, agriculture, religion, health, among others.

To understand this driving force behind the Nigerian press and its influence on the readers, it is necessary to look back at their mission statements, that is, what they set out to achieve from the onset. Bart (1998) notes that a good mission statement captures an organization's unique and enduring reason for being, and energizes all stakeholders to pursue common goals. It also enables a focused allocation of

organizational resources because it compels a firm to address some tough questions: what is our business? Why do we exist? What are we trying to accomplish?

Basically, a mission statement is designed to say exactly what the organization anticipates it will achieve. Abraham (1995) then suggested that every company, no matter how big or small needs a mission statement as a source of direction, a kind of compass that lets its employees, customers and even shareholders know what it stands for and where it is heading. Ahead (1998) added that a mission statement gives everyone the opportunity to know that the organization is about and what it is not about.

Newspapers can always meet their societal obligations of providing news and other information, education, discussion and entertainment if each newspaper fully understands its vision, mission, goals and objectives. The major issue facing contemporary Nigerian newspapers, that is, newspapers established after the colonial masters left our shores is; what are their mission statements and how far have they been able to accomplish them. What of newspapers established during and after the prolonged military rule in Nigeria (1966-1978, 1983-2003). What were their mission statements and what did they do to facilitate Nigeria's return to civilian democracy. Equally, what about newspapers that have flourished during these long years of civilian democracy (1979-1983, 2003 till present). What are their mission statements? Are they achieving them? How? What do the readers think?

McQuail (2005) argues very strongly that the issue here is not just criticism of the media for failing in their often self chosen task but the fundamental criticism of the sins of systematic research or the omission of it that may have serious consequences for the media, the society and individuals.

The researcher believed very strongly that the study would discover some emerging facts on this audience – media relationship, that is, the link between Nigerian newspapers and their readers through their mission statements. As Eastman (1998) observed, the history of media research is a permanent tug-of-war between the media industry seeking to manage audience behavior and people seeking to satisfy their media needs.

Statements of the Problem

Many newspapers in Nigeria publish their mission statements as part of their editorial page content. Some do not. Others may have published in the past but have discontinued publication for reasons best known to them. Whether published or not, one readily assumes that no newspaper is established without a mission, often couched in a mission statement, just as it is assumed that no newspaper lacks readership no matter how small.

McQuail (2005) is of the opinion that the entire study of mass communication is based on the assumption that the media have significant effects, though; there is little agreement on the nature and extent on these assumed effects. He adds that much money and efforts are also spent on directing the media to achieve the intended effects. However, he quickly points out that, this notwithstanding, considerable doubt still remains. This doubt stems from the fact that there can be many effects without an overall pattern or direction. To him, the media are rarely likely to be the only necessary or sufficient cause of an effect as other contributors to these media effects such as the society also come into effect. McQuail (2005) concluded and reminded us that we have to be careful not to accept the claims and counter claims of the sources of media power too readily, that we should discriminate carefully between types of effects and different situations. Mostly importantly, we should give due weight to the fact that the effects are determined as much by the receiver as by the sender.

A cursory look at the published mission statements of some Nigerian newspapers seems to indicate that they usually focus on platitudes rather than specifics and rarely provide insight into the organization behind the newspapers, what it does or the impact it intends to make. They rarely tell us anything useful and do not help to establish the notability of the company or organization behind the paper. Such mission statements suggest that they generally suffer from some fundamental problems, may

contain vague unsubstantiated claims, flowery in language, boastful and puff-up, promotional in tone and purpose, and above all, may not be verifiable and measurable.

Some newspapers may not even have or stated mission statements at all and one cannot say why. Furthermore, some are merely slogans, just easy to remember and intended only to reader's attention. They do not point to any particular goal or objective that the newspaper intends to achieve.

The following newspapers are worthy of mention. *Vanguard* established in 1983 has as its mission statement "Towards a better life for the people", the *Guardian* (1983), "Conscience nurtured by truth (2001), *Thisday* (1995) Not Stated. *The Nation* (2006), "Truth in Defence of Freedom". *Daily Independent*, (2001), "We shall be independent in all matters, but shall never be neutral on any matter especially those concerning the well-being of Nigerian people".

The issues arising from the above claims and presumptions are numerous. What do they mean to the newspaper organizations and reader? Are they verifiable? What do readers think and do they read and understand them. Do the newspaper organizations keep to them and how? These and many more were what the study tried to discover through a proper and scientific evaluation of the mission statements of Nigerian newspapers.

Objectives of Study

- To find out the extent which Nigerian newspapers namely; *Guardian Nation, Punch, Sun and Thisday* conform with their mission statements.
- Evaluate the rate at which newspaper mission statements conform with Nigeria press laws.
- Ascertain the extent to which Nigerian newspapers go outside their mission statements.
- To find out how many Nigerian newspapers conform to their mission statements and how many that do not.

Research Questions

- To what extent do Nigerian newspapers namely; *Guardian, Nation, Punch, Sun and Thisday* comply with their mission statements?
- How much do newspaper mission statements comply with Nigerian press laws?
- How much do Nigerian newspapers publish outside their mission statements?
- How many of Nigerian newspaper make efforts to conform with their mission statements?

Operational Definition of Terms

Nigerian Newspapers: Publications that contain news, articles, advertisements and other information, published daily or weekly that circulate in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Mission Statements: Statements by Nigerian newspapers whether published or not that state the purpose, goal or objective, what the newspaper in tends to achieve in the course of its operations.

Literature Review

Evaluating the mission statements of contemporary Nigerian newspapers appears to be more complex than those of the earliest newspapers. The early newspapers from 1859 up to independence in 1960 emerged at a period of time the mission of the proprietors was well articulated and their target defined. The British colonial administration was their target, while their mission was to put enough pressure on the British to allow Nigerian citizens greater political participation in their own affairs. Of course, some of

the principal agitators for this political emancipation such as Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Ikoli, KitoyeAjasa, Adeyemo Alakija had rich experience to draw from their sojourn in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Some were opportuned to have studied in the United States of America and must have assimilated a lot of American political history especially the role of the press in American civil agitations such as abolition of slavery, attainment of political independence from Britain, the American civil war and subsequent reunification, racial discrimination, etc. Equally, most of the proprietors of pioneer newspapers in Nigeria between 1959-1914 such as Henry Townsend, Robert Campbell, Andrew Thomas, J. B. Benjamin, Adolphus Mark, Chris Johnson, Emmanuel Johnson, G. A. Williams, John Payne Jackson and Horatio Jackson were all freed slaves from America who settled in the Carribbean and other African countries. This was why a lot of inferences and comparisons were drawn from their rich American experience on the concept of responsibility of the press in the sustenance of democracy.

Oyovbaire (2001) had observed that the role of the modern press pioneers was to push forward and entrench the role of the press as “the watchdog” of Nigeria’s nascent democracy. In the period leading to independence, the watchdog enterprise was against the British colonial masters and colonialism. After independence that enterprise logically shifted focus away from the perniciousness and arbitrariness of colonial rule to the inadequacies, factitiousness and excesses of the Nigerian political class which had replaced the British colonial masters. Media historians and lawyers had blamed the early media travails on the colonial government but recent studies (Okoye, 2003: Ewekhare, 2011) have shown that after independence, the media in Nigeria have suffered more humiliation, degradation and closures than during the colonial era which lasted between 1859 (when the first newspaper was established) and 1960.

Inspite of this, the ordinary Nigerian still expected the media to report accurately and fairly, the political firmament of the country so that the citizens would be properly informed, to enable them take independent actions and decisions on how they were to be governed; and besides to use the fora provided by the media to air their opinions on issues of governance. It is considered therefore that these and many other factors informed the mission of contemporary Nigerian newspapers.

Nigerian Newspapers and Press Laws

Chapter II, Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which deals with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy defines the obligation of the mass media to the society as follows:

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.

These objectives were listed by sections 14-21 as political, economic, social, educational, foreign policy, environmental and cultural objectives. However, unlike the First Amendment to the United States Constitution which expressly prohibited any law that would abridge the freedom of the press, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution simply made a general provision for freedom of expression and of the press.

Specifically, Chapter IV (Fundamental Rights), sub-sections 1-3 provides as follows:

1. Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of sub-section 1 of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinion, provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a state or any other person or body authorized by the President on the fulfillment of conditions laid down by an

- Act of the National Assembly, shall own, establish or operation a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purpose whatever.
3. Nothing in this section shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society;
 - (a) For the purpose of preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, maintaining the authority and independence of courts or regulating telephony, wireless broadcasting, television or the exhibition of cinema tograph films.

Despite these provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression and of the press, Nigerian governments right from the colonial period have enacted various laws that inhibit the press from discharging its constitutional obligations to the society and fulfill its mission. These laws were as old as 1903 during the British colonial period and as recent as 2011 under democratic governments.

However, research has shown that there were also an array of political restraints and pressures (called extra-legal restrains) that have crippling effects on the press in Nigeria and many African countries (Hatchen, 1971, Wilcox, 1975, Barton, 1979, Okunna, 2003). These refer to those actions outside constitutional legal provisions taken against journalists and the media by the governments or their agents or by powerful individuals in the society to prevent the press from carrying out their lawful duties or to punish them without due process of the law. Despite the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999, the clampdown, assault, beatings, unfair arrest and police raids against the press have continued. Between June 2002 and September, 2003, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), a Lagos based non-governmental organization which promotes press freedom and freedom of expression recorded more than 50 cases of reported abuses against journalists and other violations of freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the press still insists and struggles with the government to be allowed to discharge its constitutional responsibility to make government accountable and responsible to its citizens.

Empirical Review

Studies have been carried out periodically by scholars to evaluate Nigerian newspapers in order to establish a possible link between their content and their mission statements. Some of these studies focused on the success or failure of their mission/objectives, others analyzed the contents of the newspapers as they relate to any subject matter, while others merely surveyed newspaper readers. Some of these studies are hereby reviewed.

Soola and Alawode (2017) did a content analysis of newspaper coverage of agribusiness in a democratic Nigeria (1999-2007). The researchers isolated agribusiness in order to determine the amount of attention and space devoted to the industry by newspapers. The assumption is that the press which is freer and thrives better under democratic rule is at liberty to initiate news coverage and decide what to report. Therefore, the evaluation of newspaper coverage of a matter not usually on the media performance in calling attention to specific items and institution the Agenda-setting Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. Three national dailies namely: the *Guardian*, *Punch* and *ThisDay* were randomly selected and their contents analyzed. The analysis was restricted to news pages of the newspapers while a 12-item content category listing variables for the study was developed. These included agricultural subject, amount of space, pagination, major character, type of news story, direction, coverage and main source of story. Result of the study showed that a total of 44 stories only on agribusiness was reported by the three sampled newspapers between 1999 and 2006. From the result, it was certain that agribusiness was grossly under-reported by newspapers in Nigeria during the period of study (1999-2006). This revealed that the democratic government the period of study covered did not do enough in the area of agriculture and agricultural business to generate enough news report for the dailies.

Galadima and Soola (2013) in their study entitled, “the Press and Group Identity Politics in Nigeria: A Study of Newspaper Framing of the 2003 and 2007 Presidential Elections” sought to relate the contents of Nigerian newspapers with their mission statements. Their research was premised on their

previous study of the mass media coverage of national elections in Nigeria which showed that Nigerian newspapers often promoted ethnic, regional and religious interest of certain groups (Nnoli, 1978; Omu, 1978; Kukah, 1993, Ige, 1995; Adebani, 2002, Mohammed, 2003; Agbaje, 2005). The main objective of Galadima and Soola was to find out how Nigerian newspapers reported the campaign activities of the presidential candidates in the 2003 and 2007 elections and to identify the type of reports that dominated the coverage of those elections. The sample size comprised eight national newspapers namely; *Vanguard*, *Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Champion*, *Daily Trust*, *New Nigerian*, *Sun* and *Daily Independent*. The study considered ownership, among other things, very important because previous studies (Agbaje, 1990; Ekuma, 2007) discovered that ownership pattern often influenced the content and direction of news reports in the newspapers. The study discovered that the news coverage of the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections by Nigerian newspapers was dominated by the conflict category among ethnic groups in the country than other categories namely; human interest, morality, economics and social responsibility.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored mainly on two theories of mass communication: the Agenda Setting Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory. These core theories were considered significant because they dwelt mainly on the essential parts of the research work – the media and media audience respectively.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media – the ability to tell us what issues are important. The proponents of this theory included: Walter Lipman (1922), Max McCombs and Donald Shaw (1968, 1972). The core assumptions of the agenda-setting theory are:

1. That the press and the media do not reflect reality, rather they filter and shape it.
2. That the media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.
3. That different media have different agenda setting potential.

The theory has many uses. First, it gives the media power to establish what news we see or hear and what part of the news is important to see or hear. Second, in the political arena, agenda setting is important because the public agenda influences the policy agenda. Agenda setting therefore involves not only active role of media organizations, but also participation of the public as well as policy makers. Invariably, when newspapers set out to state their mission statements, they inadvertently subscribe to the theory that they have power to influence public opinion or the opinion of their readers.

Uses and Gratification Theory

This theory regards the audience as active, which means that they actively seek out specific media and content to achieve certain results or gratifications that satisfy their personal needs. The proponents of the theory include; Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch (1959, 1974), S. A. Lowery and Nabila (1983), Denis McQuail (1983), and LaRose, Mastro and Eastin (2001). The theory posits that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media. These basic assumptions provide a framework for understanding the exact correlation between the media and the audience. In addition, it provides a distinction as to how the audience is more or less active and the consequences of their involvement in the media as a whole. The theory was applied usefully to this research based on the fact that mission statements of newspapers must carefully balance them with the correlation between the medium and the audience, so as to be conscious of what they are to do for the society to protect their interests and needs.

Methodology

Content Analysis was adopted for the study. Content analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages. It is a social science research method by which texts are studied as to authorship, authenticity and meaning. It was adopted as a method to analyse the contents of newspapers and use the data so gathered to draw inferences on the mission statements of newspapers.

Population of Study

The population of study was the entire national newspapers in circulation in Nigeria as at January, 2013. A survey by the Association of Advertising Agencies in Nigeria (AAAN) in 2009 listed 15 of such publication's categorized as national newspapers. They are; *Business Day, Business Hallmark, Compass, Daily Champion, Guardian, Daily Independent, Leadership, Mirror, Nation, Punch, Sun, ThisDay, Tribune, Daily Trust and Vanguard.*

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of five national newspapers was drawn from the accessible population and sampling frame of 15 national newspapers. They are; *The Sun, Guardian, Thisday Punch and Nation.* The size of five was based on Cochran's (1977) sample size formula which states that sample size is proportionate to five percent of the population. Stratified random sampling method was adopted to select 300 issues from 5,475 editions of the five newspapers. Each newspaper published 365 issues for the study year 2013.

Content Analysis Coding Procedure

The following steps were adopted in coding the contents of the five sampled newspapers namely: Guardian, Nation, Punch, Sun and Thisday.

1. The coding units adopted were the news stories and feature articles.
2. Fifteen concepts were coded for namely; crime/justice/law, Education, Science and Technology, Business/Economy/Finance, Environment, Politics/Government Affairs, Health, Foreign Affairs/International Events, Human Interest/Social Issues/Entertainment Sports, Labour/Industry, Media Rights/Infringement, Military/Defence/ Security, Agriculture and Religion.

Content Categories of Mission Statements

The following content categories of mission statements of newspapers were developed.

1. Professional interest
2. Legal interest
3. Business interest
4. Societal interest

Variables of Analysis of Mission Statements

For the *Professional Interest*, the following variables of analysis were developed: accuracy, objectivity, balance, fairness, truth. For the *Legal Interest*, the variables were: social justice/justice, and rule of law.

For the *Business Interest*, the variables were: profit making and returns to stakeholders. For the *societal interest*, the variables were political service and social service.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section contains data generated through field survey and content analysis. It showed results (responses) from the questionnaires administered on newspaper readers and organization's as well as data generated from the content analysis of the five selected newspapers.

Table 1: Respondents Affirmation of Publication of Mission Statements by Newspapers

| Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Yes | 285 | 82.8 |
| No | 56 | 16.2 |
| Don't Know | 3 | 0.8 |
| Total | 344 | 100(99.8) |

Source: Field Survey 2014.

Table 1 indicated that 285 (82.8%) of the respondents confirmed the publication of mission statements by the newspapers they were exposed to while 56 (16.2%) of the respondents suggested the contrary, 3 (0.8%) were undecided. This confirmed what was stated in the statement of problem that while some newspapers publish their mission statements, others do not.

Table 2: Respondents Exposure to Published Mission Statements of Newspapers.

| Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Yes | 258 | 75.0 |
| No | 77 | 21.8 |
| Don't Know | 11 | 3 |
| Total | 344 | 100(99.8) |

Source: Field Survey 2014.

Table 3: Respondents Rating of Clarity of Mission Statements of Newspapers.

| Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Clear and unambiguous | 246 | 71.5 |
| Confusing | 81 | 23.5 |
| Undecided | 17 | 4.9 |
| Total | 344 | 100(99.9) |

Source: Field Survey 2014.

Tables 2 and 3 which dwelt on readers' exposure to published mission statements and rating of clarity of mission statements respectively seemed to have answered the question that came up in the statement of

problem – what do readers think about newspapers mission statements and do they read and understand them?

Table 4: Respondents Rating of how content of Newspapers Reflect their Mission Statements

| Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 99 | 28.7 |
| Agree | 137 | 39.8 |
| Don't know | 12 | 3.4 |
| Strongly disagree | 58 | 16.8 |
| Disagree | 38 | 11.0 |
| Total | 344 | 100(99.7) |

Source: Field Survey 2014.

Table 4 used 5-point likert scale of ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘don’t know’, ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ to measure readers’ rating of how content of newspapers reflect their mission statements.

From the table, 99(28.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that content of newspapers were a reflection of their mission statements. 137(39.8%) also agreed while 58(16.8%) strongly disagreed. 38(11%) disagreed while 12(3.4%) were undecided.

Table 4 threw light on one of the objectives of the study, that is, to find out to what extent through their content, if the newspapers conform with their mission statements, according to the opinion of their readers. From the readers perspective therefore, newspapers’ content reflected their mission statements.

Table 5: Measures taken by Newspapers Organizations to Ensure Conformity with their Mission Statements

| Newspaper Organization | Measures |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Guardian | (a) Reporting news without bias (b) Balancing of report (c) Investigative |
| Nation | Journalism (a) Published in handbook for staff. (b) Printed in a photo frame and displayed conspicuously at reception. (c) Re-emphasized during staff training sessions’ |
| Punch | Published on the back page of the newspaper to warn readers and customers from offering bribes and gratification’s to get their stories published. |
| Thisday | (a) Ensuring high standard of reporting. (b) Focusing on African issues. |

- (c) Expanding to other spheres of news frontiers.

Table 5 contains the various measures adopted by the select four newspaper organizations namely: *Guardian, Nation, Punch and Thisday* to ensure conformity with their mission statements.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Nigerian Newspapers Mission Statements and their Content

Results from the study showed that there was a clear link between what the five newspapers said were their mission statements and what their contents actually conveyed, according to readers.

The Agenda Setting Theory which directly relates with mission statements of newspapers describes a powerful influence of the media i.e. the ability to tell us what issues are important. It therefore describes the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda and this is what mission statements of newspapers normally set out to do and eventually achieve.

The outcome of the study agrees with Bayo (2013) who observed thus:

Both pre and post independence newspapers in Nigeria have performed well in informing the Nigerian populace and even foreigners by providing useful discussion and debate in all spheres of human existence. They therefore remained one of the most vibrant in nationalists press through pungent news, editorials, articles and letters to the editor.

Readers Perception of Newspapers Mission Statements

The data from the tables revealed that 82.5% of readers confirmed the publication of mission statements by the newspapers they were exposed to, 75% actually read the mission statements, 71.5% said the mission statements were clear and unambiguous, while 68.5% said the content of the newspapers were a true reflection of their mission statements.

Thus, the outcome of the study suggested that the contents of newspaper mission statements were in consonance with what newspaper readers think.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

Since 1859 when the first newspaper was established in Nigeria, every newspaper found thereafter appeared to chart a course for itself through a mission statement. The aggregate intentions of these mission statements were to safeguard the right of Nigerian's to freedom of thought, opinion and expression, to ensure good governance and accountability of government to the people, and to give the citizens the right to choose for themselves who shall govern them at each point in time.

This thesis took us through this history of the mission statements of Nigerian newspapers from colonial period to the present era of constitutional democracy.

The findings revealed the following:

1. That all the sampled newspapers in Nigeria had mission statements though only 75% actually publish their mission statements in their editions.
2. That all the newspapers made conscious and extra efforts through their publications to conform with their mission statements by carrying news, editorials, articles, cartoons and photographs on various content areas.
3. That 68.5% of newspaper readers actually read the published mission statements of newspapers and adjudged them to be clear and unambiguous.

4. That 75% readers believed that the contents of newspapers were reflective of their mission statements.

Conclusion

The study had shown that contemporary Nigerian newspapers have a bond of reciprocal relationship with readers, i.e. to disseminate news and information and in return receive support, patronage and loyalty to withstand the uncertainties which led to the demise of pioneer newspapers.

Thus, to a large extent, accounts for the resilience, vibrancy and consistency attributed to the Nigerian press especially Nigerian newspapers in their onerous task of disseminating information, expressing divergent voices and news, helping to form public opinion on issues and facilitating debate.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations.

1. Since the study had established that all Nigerian newspapers had mission statements, such statements should be boldly published and highlighted in their daily editions preferably in the front pages. This will enable the reading public to easily identify with the goals, aspirations and objectives of the newspapers.
2. Nigerian newspapers should conduct periodic survey of the readers to ascertain the following:
 - (a) Their knowledge of their mission statements.
 - (b) Their assessment of the newspapers content as a true reflection of their mission statements.
 - (c) Other views that may be canvassed by the readers towards improving the quality of their content.
3. Newspapers should periodically review their mission statements in order to meet the expectations of the reading public.
4. Nigerian newspapers should continue to support democratic institutions of the society in order to promote responsible government which serve as a guarantee for stability and growth in the society. It should be noted that such democratic environment ensures the survival of newspapers.
5. Nigerian newspapers should within a particular year stage numerous events to attract more publicity to themselves. The study revealed that newspapers promote institutions and people in the society but they are scarcely reported themselves. Such events should include: annual media awards, press briefings and media charts, promotion of sports, award of scholarships, donations to charitable organizations, endowments in higher institutions of learning, among others.

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