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## Evaluation of Media Platforms on Violent Extremism, Conflict Terrorism in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the impact of media platforms on violent extremism, conflict, and terrorism in the Northeastern part of Nigeria. The research was limited to Adamawa States as part of the states that host a quit number of IDPs. Two radio and television stations were used for the study which are; Radio Gotel, Yola, Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation, Yola, Adamawa Television, Yola, and Nigerian TeA, Yola were been selected to determine the role of mass media in fighting terrorism, extremism, and conflict in Nigeria. Social media platforms were sampled. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data.. Findings of the research revealed that the mass media emphasizes practical experiences, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability to resolve the problem of insecurity in the study. Similalry, respondents acknowledged that to some extent the mass media adequately provide information with essential skills, including security knowledge, communication, problem-solving, and leadership abilities. The study recommeds among other things the need to expand the coverage of violent extremism, conflict and terrorism topics. By integrating more content related to mass media that can develop a deeper understanding of media principles and practice.

**Keywords:** Mass Media, Terrorism, Violent, Extremism, IDPs

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, media plays a very important role in the global fight against terrorism (Ngige et al., 2016). It is seen as a medium that promotes peace via reportage that operates within

ethical grounds. Ironically, due to proliferation of media platforms in the last to decades, the role of the media in the promotion of peace is gradually metamorphosing into the negative. For, in the same manner it is used for peace, the mass media is been used to fuel different kinds of terrorism and other criminal activities. This is attributed to the growing access of the world population to internet services. It is pertinent to note that among the 21st century internet inventions, mass media has defined and changed social and political interactions and communication across nations. Terrorist and other criminal groups are using mass media to pass their information to the general public, because the platform is cheap and readily accessible (Ngige et al., 2016). While the general public also uses mass media to understand, and keep in touch with different kinds of socio-economic, political and social events, mass media is no longer a new invention for the Nigerian society, whereby many young, old, private and public organizations make use of the platform on a daily basis. The high level of mass media penetration in Nigeria increased its use in discussing terrorism-related issues and any other form of social, political or religious attacks.

Felson, (2009) describes violence as 'physical aggression, i.e., when people use physical methods to harm others'. However, he continues that 'The harm they produce is not necessarily physical. It could be a social harm or a deprivation of resources. The World Health Organization in 1996 defined Violence as “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, underdevelopment or deprivation.”

Extremism Strategy, (2015) defines Extremism as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. According to Astrid, (2017), Extremism characterizes an ideological position embraced by those anti-establishment movements, which understand politics as struggle for supremacy rather than as peaceful competition between parties with different interests seeking popular support for advancing the common good. (Neumann et al. 2015) defines extremism as political ideologies as well as a method that oppose a society's core values and principles. Violent Extremism: the concept of violent extremism (VE) has played an increasingly prominent role in policies and development programming not only in Nigeria but on a global level.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, Violent extremism is the product of historical, political, economic and social circumstances, including the impact of regional and global power politics. Violent extremism comes in different forms and take different expressions depending on the context where it grows. Matthias et al. (2019) defines this concept as Violent extremism is a violent type of mobilization that aims to elevate the status of one group, while excluding or dominating its 'others based on markers, such as gender, religion, culture and ethnicity. Terrorism is an insidious act common and conducted daily over decades and has been responsible for the physical and or structural violence experienced by many people in Nigeria (Ezemenaka and Prouza, 2016).

The terrorist's acts are spread all over the country, thus; kidnapping by the Niger Delta Militants, bomb attacks by members of the Boko Haram sect and cattle rustling in the north-western part of the country. These acts of terrorism have seriously caused untold hardship to the Nigerian populace. Iraq and Afghanistan are the world most terrorized countries according to the Ibeanu et al. (2016) while Nigeria is ranked third after the upsurge of Boko haram and militancy attacks in the Niger Delta region.

### **1. 1. Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, Nigeria's national security has been threatened by different forms of terrorism challenges, which has affected lives and properties worth billions of Naira. It is observed that one of the main channels used by terrorists to show off their activities to the Nigerian population is the online media. The growing prominence of internet services enabling remote access to various media platforms over the years has made access very cheap and easy for all and sundry Adamu, (2016). It has as a result served as a promoter of all forms of activities. Despite the growing awareness of the impact of mass media in all aspects of human endeavor, yet its impact in the promotion of acts of terrorism though apparent, has not been critically assessed Akov, (2017).

This is especially so with respect to Nigeria where terrorism has become hydra-headed by manifesting as banditry, kidnappings, insurgency and the like. It is now commonplace to find video clips of bandit's attacks, kidnappings, and pillage. What is not known is the variation in the contribution of each media platform and the general impact on the society. Consequently, this study will assess the impact of media platforms on terrorism and other acts of violent extremism in northeast Nigeria.

### **1. 2. Objectives of the Research**

The goal of this study is to examine the impact of media platforms on violent extremism and terrorism in Nigeria; however, the specific objectives are to:

- i) Determine the effect of terrorism, violent extremism, and conflict in northeastern Nigeria.
- ii) Assess the effect of mass media networking stations towards the escalation of security challenges in northeastern Nigeria
- iii) Examine the role of mass media in fighting terrorism, extremism, and conflict in Nigeria.

### **1. 3. Research hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub> Terrorism, violent extremism, and conflict do not have significant effects in Nigeria.

H<sub>2</sub> Mass media network station does not have an effect towards the escalation of security challenges in northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Maiduguri and Yobe)

H<sub>3</sub> The role of mass media does not have an effect in fighting terrorism, extremism and conflict in Nigeria

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2. 1. Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was used to collect data for this study. The survey research design was chosen because it permits the description of conditions as they exist in their natural settings at the time of study, which helps to portray their characteristics that might include their behaviour, abilities, beliefs, opinions and knowledge of a particular situation. A survey research design is one which seeks the opinion of respondents about a given situation using questionnaire and sampling method (Siedlecki, 2020).

## **2. 2. Population of the study**

The populations comprised of Internally Displaced Persons assisted by media stations (Radio and Television) in the state. IDPs constitute about 600 numbers in three North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe).

## **2. 3. Sample size and sampling techniques**

The sample size is the number of people within the respondent group (Brannan, 2008). The sample size has been selected from the total number of IDPs in Adamawa. The total sample size of IDPs stood at 200. Considering that the exact population of the study is not known, the study adopted a snowball sampling technique. According to Oleg (2019), snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in research studies, particularly when studying hard-to-reach or hidden populations. The snowball sampling technique begins with an initial participant or a small number of participants who meet the research criteria. These individuals are typically identified through various means such as personal contacts, referrals, or existing networks.

## **2. 4. Techniques for data analysis**

Data for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistic for hypothesis testing with the help of SPSS version 20. The decision rule for the research questions was based on the real limit of numbers Therefore, any mean of 3.50 and above will be regarded as “Strongly Agree” (SA) while any mean between 2.50 and 3.49 will be regarded as “Undecided” (UD). Also, any mean of less than 2.50 will be regarded as “Disagree” (D). The decision rule for the null hypotheses was that; if  $p \leq 0.05$ ; the null hypothesis is rejected but, if  $p \geq 0.05$ ; then we do not reject the null hypothesis

## **3. RESULT**

The response rate for a questionnaire refers to the percentage of individuals who participate in the survey by providing their answers or completing the questionnaire. It is a measure of the level of engagement and willingness of the target population to respond to the survey. As shown in Table 1, the study had 100% response rate, which was the expected sample size for the study.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire Response Rate

<b>Questionnaire Number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Total Administered	200	100.0
Returned	200	100.0
Not Returned	0	0.00

Source: Researcher’s Compilation

**Table 2.** Examination on the effect of Terrorism, violent extremism and conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Effect of Terrorism	M	S
1.	The relevance of the mass media on terrorism to IDPs	3.46	1.199
2.	Mass media provides opportunities for people to be aware about activities of violent extremist.	3.22	1.093
3.	The current progress on terrorism and conflict is as a result of mass media.	3.13	1.167
4.	Terrorism, violent extremism and conflict have negative effect on people’s wellbeing in Nigeria.	3.65	.751
5.	Mass media adequately prepares information for proper awareness on the activities of terrorism.	3.25	1.313

Source: Field Survey, 2023

M = Mean, S = Standard Deviation.

The assessment of the relevance of the mass media on terrorism among IDPs in Adamawa State, Nigeria, reveals several noteworthy implications. The respondents' perception of the mass media relevance (M=3.46) suggests that there is great relevance of mass media terrorism. The information that is perceived as relevant is more likely to assist the IDPs and provide them with a meaningful information (Rehman & Usman, 2022). Furthermore, the positive assessment of the mass media provides opportunities for people to be aware about activities of violent extremist (M=3.22) highlights the potential for these activities. Such activities are crucial for their survival, as they often encounter complex challenges that require solutions (Dreier et al., 2022). Therefore, the findings suggest that the mass media content is playing a role in creating awareness on the activity’s terrorism and violent extremist.

The respondents' evaluation of the current progress on terrorism and conflict is as a result of mass media (M=3.13) indicates a moderately positive perception. This assessment is of particular importance given the global emphasis on fostering a media mindset in the region to promote peace and development (Ezemenaka, and Prouza, 2016). While the score does not surpass the threshold of 3.00, the finding still implies that the government is making some effort to incorporate elements relevant to mass media. To enhance this aspect further, media institutions might consider introducing more practical strategies experiences and projects, thereby strengthening awareness on various IDPs camp. By bridging the gap between the general public and people living in IDPs camp, people can be better equipped to apply their knowledge in practical settings in other to be aware on the activities of these hoodlums.

The Terrorism, violent extremism and conflict have negative effect on people’s wellbeing in Nigeria. (M=3.65) underscores the potential of the mass media to provide knowledge and awareness to the general public. These suggests that such information and awareness enhance readiness for any eventualities that may occur (Smith et al., 2013). Furthermore, the perception that the mass media adequately provides on the negative effect of terrorism and violent extremism among people (M=3.25) signals a positive outcome. This aligns with the broader understanding that education should facilitate a smooth transition from academia to the

workforce (Jackson et al., 2013). By fostering a connection between the curriculum and industry demands, graduates are more likely to possess the relevant skills and knowledge sought by employers, which can be especially important in an entrepreneurial context where graduates may choose to start their own agricultural businesses.

**Table 3.** Assessment of mass media towards security challenges

S/N	Mass Media on Security Challenges	M	S
1.	Mass media contributed greatly in escalating security challenges.	3.20	1.245
2.	I am confident that various news displayed on social media trigger security challenges in the region.	3.46	1.199
3.	There should be proper communication and interpersonal skills required for assessing the security challenges via mass media.	3.06	0.714
4.	There should be problem-solving and critical thinking abilities necessary for mass media.	3.76	0.85
5.	Terrorist and bandit also benefit from the information displayed on mass media which also escalates the security challenges.	3.45	0.834

Source; Field Survey, 2023

M = Mean, S = Standard Deviation.

The findings of the study reveal valuable insights into the relationship between mass media and security challenges in north eastern Nigeria. The respondents' perceptions of their view on how mass media escalate the security challenges showcase a generally positive outlook, as indicated by their mean scores consistently exceeding the threshold value of 3.00. This suggests that mass media platforms in Adamawa State have been to some extent effective in fostering various security challenges in the region. These findings align with previous research that highlights the significance of mass media on security challenges (Sholpan T, 2022).

One noteworthy implication of these results is the recognition of the mass media in equipping people with problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, which are crucial attributes for curtailing terrorism. The mean score of 3.76 in this dimension signifies a strong competency level, indicating that mass media platform also contributes in escalating security challenges, therefore there should be problem-solving and critical thinking abilities necessary for mass media develop innovative solutions. This finding reinforces the idea that mass media enriched with practical problem-solving strategies and case studies can significantly contribute in reducing security challenges (Hunter et al., 2022). Moreover, the positive perceptions regarding the mass media (M=3.76) suggest that there should be problem-solving and critical thinking abilities necessary for mass media. This underscores the importance of incorporating proper way of disseminating information to simulate real-world scenarios (Oswald et al., 2023).

While the study highlights the strengths of the mass media, the moderate mean scores in areas such as the information displayed on mass media also benefit the terrorist and bandit (M=3.45) and adaptation of communication strategies (M=3.06) indicate potential areas for

improvement. These findings suggest that there is room for enhancing the integration of good mass media and exposure to dynamic information dissemination. By doing so, terrorist and bandit could difficult to upgrade their strategist (Hunter et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the study's outcomes underscore the crucial role of mass media in shaping the security challenges in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The positive perceptions of mass media regarding their problem-solving and information dissemination in fostering awareness on security issues. However, the findings also highlight the need for proper channeling of information, particularly in areas related to terrorism, bandit, and another criminal act. These insights are valuable for educational policymakers, security agencies, and mass media avenues such as TV stations, Radio station, newspapers and social media and other online platforms.

**Table 4.** The role of mass media in fighting terrorism, extremism and conflict

S/N	The role of mass media in fighting terrorism, extremism and conflict	M	S
1.	The communication avenues are adequately utilized.	3.16	1.167
2.	The TV and radio stations provides practical experiences and active method of information dissemination.	3.96	0.781
3.	The social media and other platforms content helps in providing positive mindset.	3.45	0.834
4.	The awareness content aligns with the current requirements and trends in mass media	3.34	1.136

Source: Field Survey, 2023

M = Mean, S = Standard Deviation.

The results of the study examining that the communication avenues are adequately utilized in Adamawa State, Nigeria, reveal several noteworthy implications for both academia and the workforce. The respondents' positive views on the emphasis of mass media within the communities ( $M=3.19>3.00$ ). This finding aligns with the broader communication paradigm shift towards producing journalist equipped with practical skills that can drive proper information dissemination. This implication resonates with research by Oswald et al. (2023), which emphasizes the significance of mass media into various TV and Radio stations.

Furthermore, the high mean score indicating that the mass media content provides practical experiences and hands-on information dissemination ( $M=3.96>3.00$ ) underscores the effectiveness of the mass media in reducing security challenges. This hands-on approach is crucial in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, a pivotal aspect in curtailing the activities of terrorism, bandit etc. This result supports the findings of Hunter et al., (2022).

Additionally, the respondents' perception that the awareness content aligns with the current requirements and trends in mass media ( $M=3.34>3.00$ ) has significant implications for the employability and relevance of mass media in awareness creation. The alignment with industry trends ensures that journalist possess skills that are not only academically sound but also tailored to the needs of the current trend. This result resonates with the work of Oswald et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of mass media with community needs to enhance

people's readiness for any eventuality. The finding suggests that the mass media in Adamawa State are responsive to the dynamic demands of the people, a positive sign for fostering a symbiotic relationship between mass media and terrorism.

Therefore, the results of this study underscore the positive relationship between terrorism, banditry, conflict and mass media among people in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The findings suggest that the mass media is effective in creating awareness, providing practical experiences, cultivating a positive mindset, and aligning with industry requirements. These implications highlight the importance of mass media in preparing the general public who can not only contribute to the development of the region but also effectively address the security challenges.

#### **4. DISCUSSIONS**

The study evaluates the impact of media platforms on violent extremism, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; Determine the effect of terrorism, violent extremism and conflict in Nigeria, Assess the effect of mass media networking stations towards escalation of security challenges in north eastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Maiduguri and Yobe) Look at the role of mass media in fighting terrorism, extremism and conflict in Nigeria, Examine the connection between mass media, violent extremisms and terrorism.

The results of the study indicate that the respondents generally perceive the content of mass media as relevant and effective in reducing violent extremism, conflict and terrorism among IDPs and citizens of Nigeria. The mass media emphasis on practical experiences, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability to resolve the problem of insecurity. Respondents acknowledge that to some extent the mass media adequately provide information with essential skills, including security knowledge, communication, problem-solving, and leadership abilities.

Furthermore, respondents view the mass media as aligned with media requirements and trends in curtailing security challenges. However, there is an observation that more strategies need to be adopted by all the TV, Radio and any other platform in reduce the activities of these violent extremism, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria. The findings suggest that the mass media in the North Eastern Nigeria can improve from stronger collaborations between the TV stations, Radio stations, other media platforms with the aim of reducing the security challenges in Nigeria. Overall, the study underscores the positive relationship between violent extremism, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria and the mass media, while also pointing out potential areas for enhancement to better equip the media platforms for proper dissemination of information among IDPs and general public.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the findings of this comprehensive study shed light on the intricate relationship between mass media and violent extremism, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria among IDPs and general public in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. The assessment of the mass media highlighted its relevance and effectiveness in eradicating violent extremism, conflict and terrorism in Nigeria. The positive views regarding mass media, practical experiences, and alignment with humanity needs reinforce the potential of the existing media



platform in nurturing people's mindset and capabilities. However, the study also identified areas for improvement, emphasizing the need for more hands-on experiences, targeted violent extremism, conflict and terrorism topics, and enhanced collaboration among security agencies, IDPs, academia, industry, and government stakeholders. These insights provide valuable guidance for mass media enhancement to better equip IDPs and general public for a proper awareness about the security challenges in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i) There is the need to expand the coverage of violent extremism, conflict and terrorism topics. By integrating more content related to mass media that can develop a deeper understanding of media principles and practices.
- ii) Strengthen Practical Experiences: Further promote media base experiences and field-based activities. This can involve partnerships with the communities and the different security agencies in curtailing such challenges.
- iii) Regular Updates: Establish a mechanism for continuous information review and updates. Collaborate closely with security and media experts, to ensure that the violent extremism, conflict and terrorism issues are tackled.
- iv) Cross-Sector Collaborations: Foster increased collaboration between the media platforms such as TV stations, radio stations and other media avenues, academia, industry, and government. Establish forums, workshops, and partnerships that encourage regular dialogue and knowledge exchange. This will facilitate the sharing of insights, resources, and trends, leading to a more relevant and responsive outcomes.

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