



Broadcast Media Reportage of Flooding Issues and Viewers' Expectations: Focus on South-South Nigeria

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Abstract: *The general objective of this study was to determine viewers' perception of the angle of reportage of flooding issues by Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and African Independent Television (AIT), focusing South-South, Nigeria. This paper employed quantitative method, and it anchored on the Agenda Setting theory. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using mean scores, percentages, and frequency tables. The first finding revealed that majority of the respondent's under study were frequently exposed to NTA and AIT. Findings further showed that respondents were exposed to the same array of content categories. It equally indicated the various ways the performance of NTA and AIT stations can be improved, from the perspectives of the viewers. Thus, the study concluded that NTA and AIT were credible news sources for residents in the South-South zone of Nigeria. It was recommended that, to maintain a high level of viewership, the television stations should endeavour to constantly raise the standards of their programmes with a view to meeting the expectations of audience members, especially when it concerns flooding that the South-South region is prone to. Also, television stations should report variety of flood stories from different angles, including reporting more from the perspectives of flood victims. Likewise, television stations should deploy a proactive reporting measure by reporting through the flooding circle, report more from victims' experiences, balance reporting, provide in-depth analysis, and report more from the scenes of flooding.*

Keywords: *Audience Expectation, Broadcast Media, Media angle, Media reporting, Flooding, South-South*

I. Introduction

Irrespective of the licensed that defined the nature of operation of a given media in a society, they have a normative responsibility to perform in the society. Whether a media is private/commercial or a public service media, they are expected to play democratic roles within a democratic system. This includes, educating, entertaining and most importantly, informing the society at large while upholding the constitutional policy that defined the country. In the process of dispensing these roles, they are often faced with the issue of fragmentation of media environment which result to struggle with audience loyalty or out-put. Secondly, there is the issue of the influence of political power, which often lead to audience distrust the media institutions. This submission suggests a change in audience behaviour towards the mass media. Klára and Marína (2024) opine that though trust in the media may seem static and high in general, but not to certain groups; group such as the media audience. This is because, media audience interpret news content from different perspectives.

In the discourse of media performance, attention is focused on the product of mass media, its content as sent and received based on the crucial role of these media in the society. This gives rise to the need to constantly evaluate their performance in line with objectivity and professionalism (Aondover et al., 2025). Media performance is a concept used to refer to assessment and evaluation of media content often in relation to social responsibility, public interest or professionalism. Scholars have provided views on the meaning of media performance.

Media performance is defined by Hasebrink and Hölig (2020) as the effect of different forms of media on public discourse in comparison to established standards. Topics covered include the intended communicative roles of the media in fostering informed opinion formation, democratic engagement, and social cohesion (Hasebrink & Hölig, 2020). Media performance evaluations must include the viewpoint of media audiences, in addition to examining the attributes of media content that reflect their prospective performance (Hasebrink & Hölig, 2020).

Norris (2000) argues that in measuring the performance of media institutions, close attention should be paid to issues such as how well the news media perform its function. Specifically, Norris (2000) notes that certain questions about the performance of the media should be answered. The questions should include: How far do media institutions play their role in respect to directing the attention of the general public to issues that affect them? How far do media institutions strive to internalise knowledge about public issues and political debate? How well do the media institutions promote and encourage civic engagement with the political process? When these questions are answered, then it means that the media have done well in performing their functions to the society as the Fourth Estate of the Realm. The views of Norris (2000) are echoed by other scholars (Momoh, 2022; Suleiman & Ojomo, 2019).

Going by the assertion of Norris (2000), the audience plays a major role in determining if the media are actually performing their role in the society. Evidence in literature supports the postulation that the audience can best tell if media outfits are objective and fair, if they promote plurality of ideas, if they educate the general public to take interest in issues that concern them, if they encourage free expression of ideas, if they are balanced in their source selection, if they promote democratic debate, among others (Pepple & Onah, 2022). This underscores the fundamental position of audience members in measuring the performance of television establishments and other media institutions. This invariably means that it is the audience that can tell if media institutions are serving their interest or not. This makes audience members key in the study of media performance, considering the fact that they are the ones who directly consume media content, and can best tell, from the user point of view, if such content meets certain standards or not.

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Africa Independent Television (AIT) remains the oldest and thriving television stations in Nigeria. They are the two major terrestrial television station with long industry experience and high audience based. NTA is a federal government owned media station which started broadcasting in 1959. Today, NTA operates one of the largest networks in Africa. It has zones in places like Makurdi, Edo, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, and Abuja. The establishment also has offices in all the state capitals of the federation. On the other hand, Africa Independent Television is the first private media station in Nigeria. A subsidiary of DAAR Communications that was setup on August 31, 1998, by Raymond Lawrence-Dokpesi,

and on April 23, 2007, it was converted into a public liability company. The programmes of NTA and AIT are available to people in every part of Nigeria. Programmes from these TV stations can be viewed on most of the cable networks such as GOTV, DSTV, Real Summit, among others, across the South-South region in Nigeria. The South-South part of Nigeria is seen as the oil rich zone of the nation, it is made of six states: Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers.

Balance is a major index for assessing the quality of broadcast media houses. The issue of flooding which affected many states in Nigeria, was covered in the media, but what television viewers in the affected states think about coverage in terms of angle of reporting of the incident remains unknown. Flooding has been a major climate issue across the world. Guanah (2024a) identifies climate change as one of the triggers of flooding, mentioning that its impact are visible South-South region of Nigeria, especially Bayelsa State where rising sea levels, increased flooding, and erosion threaten the lives and livelihoods of the inhabitants.

Nigeria has experienced a series of flooding incidents in the past, including that of 2012 and 2022. In 2022, Nigeria experienced one of the worst incidents of flooding in history, orchestrated by the release of water from the Lagdo dam in Cameroon coupled with heavy rainfall which caused severe flooding that affected many States across the nation, especially southern and central States, including Abuja which is the nation's capital (Vitalis et al., 204). There were injuries and extensive damage as a result of the episodes that started in the first half of August (OCHA, 2022). Southern Nigeria states like Delta, Cross River, Rivers and Bayelsa were among the worst hit states.

According to media reports, as of 18 October, 2022, there were over 2,400 injuries, 603 fatalities, around 1,303,000 displaced persons and over 2,504,000 impacted individuals nationwide. Further reports showed that Bayelsa State was the worst affected in South-South Nigeria, with almost 700,000 people affected or displaced. Of them, about 203,400 homes were damaged, with about 82,000 completely demolished (OCHA, 2022).

How two popular mainstream television stations such as Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Africa Independent Television (AIT) reported the flooding incidents in the South-South provides a good pedestal for analysing audience members' perception of news content of these two popular stations in the country, hence, this research was embarked upon.

Statement of the Problem

The issues of flooding, which affect many states in Nigeria, require adequate coverage from the media. Frequent media coverage of flooding in affected areas is expected to provide citizens with the right knowledge and set agenda that could attract attention of authorities and stakeholders in addressing the crisis. Under-reporting, or unprofessional coverage of such environmental crisis, will not only lead to lack of awareness of the public on the issue, but also affect confidence in the media to perform their social responsibility to the society (Mojaye & Msughter, 2022; Aliyu et al., 2023).

Several studies have focused attention on how the mass media cover issues related to flooding, and how the public perceived such reportage. However, there is limited information on how viewers' evaluation of the angle at which the broadcast media report flooding issues. Thus, knowledge is lacking on the critical factors that shapes public's perception and expectation of the performance of broadcast media in reporting information related to

flooding. It is on this premise that this study set out to ascertain viewers' perception of the angle of reportage of flooding issues among television station in Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Determine the frequency of exposure to news reports about flooding on NTA and AIT among viewers in South-South Nigeria,
2. Ascertain the angle of reports on flooding that viewers' of South-South Nigeria were exposed to on NTA and AIT, and
3. Identify the approaches to be taken to improve the performance of NTA and AIT stations in reporting flooding incident from the perspective of viewers

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on the Agenda Setting Theory. The Agenda Setting Theory was propounded by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. The theory states that the mass media play a major role in determining the reality in the society, by paying much attention to a particular issue than on others. The theory states that the mass media do not just tell the people what to think, but they can successfully programme the mind of the people on what to think about. Practically, if the news media cover flooding issues extensively, there is a tendency that the public and policy makers will respond accordingly with safety and management approach.

2.2 Normative Media Functions, Audience' Expectations and Evaluations of Media Performance

Given the pivotal role the media play in shaping public discourse in contemporary democracies, professional journalism is required to uphold high normative standards, predicated on the media's primary public service functions (Fawzi & Mothes, 2022). Depending on the particulars of the democratic system in place, the functions that the media and journalism play are given varying importance (Strömbäck, 2005). In a democracy, the media's primary duty is to inform the public about events in politics and society. This is done in accordance with normative standards for reporting quality, which include accuracy, balance, and completeness (Jandura & Friedrich, 2014; Urban & Schweiger, 2014).

Closely related to the function of keeping the society updated with current information, the mass media are also expected to facilitate the creation of a public forum to make it possible for deliberation in public discourse to take place (Fawzi & Mothes, 2022; Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024). They can do this by involving all segments of society and actively mediating in an active way between political institutions and citizens. The media's watchdog duty includes monitoring society's leaders and holding them responsible for adhering to moral and legal norms. The media's analytical role in society is meant to assist people in understanding the intricacies of social and political changes in a meaningful way (Fawzi & Mothes, 2022). Journalists are expected to provide an interpretation of current issues and provide reports on suggestions over problems in the society can be solved (Schudson, 2008; Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2006). The media are also saddled with the responsibility of promoting social empathy by creating a sense of community and this includes making it possible for citizens to identify with the society they live in. This means that the media are expected to make citizens to become aware of the experiences and interests of other people they live with in the same society, especially less privileged groups.

Likewise, the media is supposed to encourage politically engaged and active citizenry by carrying out its mobilization role, which includes educating the public about democratic norms and principles (Schudson, 2008; Msughter, 2019). Furthermore, Schudson (2008) notes that it is required of the media to spark public interest in political matters and inform the public on ways in which they can participate meaningfully in political life.

The press's normative functions are not set in stone, and there has been skepticism among certain scholars regarding the media's ability to uphold and carry out these functions (Chomsky, 2002; Graber, 2003). The pertinent question has always been, however, whether citizens who make up the audience base and are the main addressee of journalistic content, and thus normative ideals that are related to journalistic media, also share these same expectations from the media, and this includes how well they see these functions being performed by the media (Peifer, 2018; Aondover et al., 2024).

Research examining public expectations and assessments of media performance are typically predicated on journalistic roles or quality standards, which are again frequently drawn from normative media functions (Idris & Msughter, 2022). The individual and overall social importance of six media functions- information, watchdog, and mobilisation, for example- were measured on a 15-item scale of expected news media importance in a study by Peifer (2018). Examples of these functions include "provide me with a daily account of what is happening in the world" and "provide analysis and interpretation of the complex problems around me" (p. 23).

Van der Wurff and Schönbach (2014) found that citizens constantly demand different journalistic functions and ideals, like the information and watchdog responsibilities. This was based on a study conducted in the Netherlands. This is also true for quality standards like objectivity, balance, or factual accuracy, according to research conducted in the US, Sweden, and Israel (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019; Tsfati, Meyers, & Peri, 2006; Msughter & Pate, 2021). The results also demonstrate that while audience members and other professional stakeholders, including journalists, have similar needs and expectations from media, there are differences in the weights they assign to different roles, such as the watchdog or mobilizing role (van der Wurff & Schönbach, 2014; Vos, Eichholz, & Karaliova, 2019).

The refugee crisis is one example of a topic that has received a lot of attention in recent news reports (Arlt & Wolling, 2018), while studies examining the quality of different news outlets (Arnold, 2009) or individual programmes (Heise, Loosen, Reimer, & Schmidt, 2014) have also been the subject of quality perception analysis. Very little study has directly compared individuals' expectations with their judgments of comparable aspects. Researchers Donsbach, Rentsch, Schielicke, and Degen (2009) found that journalists are less tolerant of opposing viewpoints and don't seem to stand up for the socially disadvantaged as much as their audience would have them believe. On the other hand, media consumers have a tendency to underestimate the strength and impact of journalists and believe that they are more prone to loudly expressing their own desires (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019, p. 71-73).

Research evidence demonstrates that audience perception and assessments of the media, which are analysed within the framework of quality perceptions, either lay emphasis on news coverage of particular subjects, like the refugee crisis (Arlt & Wolling, 2018; Oreoluwa et al., 2024), an analysis of the quality of certain news media outlets (Arnold, 2009), or particular programmes (Heise, Loosen, Reimer, & Schmidt, 2014). Few studies have examined individuals' expectations in direct comparison to their assessments on related variables.

According to a 2009 study by Donsbach, Rentsch, Schielicke, and Degen (2009), journalists are less likely to support socially disadvantaged individuals than the public would have them do, and have a tendency to be more intolerant of differing viewpoints. On the other hand, media consumers tend to underestimate the strength and influence of journalists, who are also thought to be more likely to insist on voicing their own requirements (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019).

Moreover, research has shown that media expectations influence media evaluations (Lambe, Caplan, Cai, & Signorielli, 2004; Wolling, 2004), and media evaluations influence more general assessments of media trust (Schielicke, Mothes, & Donsbach, 2014). The literature on media trust primarily discusses the relationship between expectations, evaluations, and media trust. This is because media users' (disappointed) perceptions of how relevant media functions are met in actual media coverage are the basis for the conceptualization of media (dis)trust (Hanitzsch, van Dalen, & Steindl, 2018; Müller, 2013). Media trust is also gauged by audience assessments of media performance (Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Owens-Ibie & Aondover, 2024). This underscores the relevance of a study on viewers' assessment of media performance such as this current work especially in establishing how media users rate the media as it has to do with meeting expectations of the users

3.3 Media Framing of Flooding in Nigeria

Framing of flooding by the media has generated diverse studies around especially focusing on flooding incidents in relation to policy formulation (Devitt & O'Neill, 2017; Escobar & Demeritt, 2014). The majority of these studies, however, concentrate on cities in affluent nations, and little is known about how local and national media in developing nations interpret issues related to flooding and the ensuing policy consequences. While the literature on media and climate change in Nigeria has been relatively limited (Nwabueze & Egbra, 2016; Omoera & Guanah, 2022; Guanah, 2023), there is a dearth of data on how the Nigerian media frame issues of urban flooding.

Very little has also been done on how the audience perceive media coverage of flooding in the South-South region of Nigeria, to the best of these researchers' knowledge. Insufficient examination has obscured the image of the policies and tactics being employed, including the way these are designed and what underlying guiding assumptions/principles are directing flood management decisions in the present and future (Adekola & Lamond, 2018). Knowledge of and how to challenge these assumptions could provide insight that ensures flood management strategies are sustainable and do not further degrade infrastructure, further worsening poverty and social unrest in affected cities (Eriksen et al. 2011; Yar'Adua et al., 2023).

The Nigerian news media began covering flood-related stories more frequently after the 2012 flood. As a result of this, the news media focused their efforts on not just educating the public but as well as offering fora for discussion and a way to contextualize and comprehend flood occurrences (Bohensky & Leitch, 2014; Hansen, 2010). The message content in the media does affect public perception and the policy-making process; it is not value-free (McNair, 2009; Doulton & Brown, 2009).

Similarly, scholars have provided empirical evidence to show that policy actors can make use of the media to (in) directly shape policy processes and outcomes (Crow & Lawlor, 2016; Robinson, 2001; Maradun et al., 2021). Therefore, examining public perception of the angle of media coverage of flooding provides insights not only into how this environmental challenge

is reported by the media but also likely reasons why government and other stakeholders have not shown intensive interest in tackling this flooding crisis (Msughter et al., 2023).

Framing of flooding therefore simplifies the discursive space and are the medium through which audience members construct their narratives about the incident (Msughter et al., 2023). As Müller (2017, p. 55) observes, “Frames form narratives.” The crux of this discussion is that audience members’ and stakeholders’ narratives often hinge on the construction of their frames, and the media play crucial roles in determining these frames.

III. Research Methods

The study adopted the survey research design. The survey research design enabled the researchers to garner respondents’ views in South-South Nigeria as it concerns broadcast media angle of reporting flooding incident in Nigeria. The study population includes all residents in the three capital of the states selected for this study. These include in Bayelsa State- Yenagoa, Delta State- Asaba, and Rivers State- Port Harcourt.

Using the National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics Estimates 2016, the population of these cities are: Yenagoa: 352,282, Asaba: 147,603 and Port Harcourt: 1,481,000, giving a sum total of 1,982,888 to represent the population for this study. Cozby’s (2004) table of sample determination was used to arrive at the sample size of 384. The formula states that, at +/- .05 error of margin, a population beyond 100,000 will have a sample size of 384. Hence, the sample size of this study is 384 respondents.

The study used multi-stage sampling techniques. In the initial stage, the cluster sampling was used to map out the South-South zone into three States, and these States were segmented into the States’ capitals. The purposive sampling technique was further used to pick out the actual samples for the survey method within the selected States’ capitals. This technique enabled the researchers to issue the research instrument to only those who were exposed to NTA and AIT news stories about flooding, and who can best understand the study. NTA and AIT were purposively selected from the numerous broadcast media in Nigeria because they are the two major terrestrial stations with long industry experience and high audience base. Structured questionnaire was used to generate data for the study.

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents across the three cities from which 339 were retrieved and found usable for the analysis in this study. The study was saturated by male showing a respondent of 204 or (60%) while 135 (40%) were female. The majority (37%) of the respondents in this study were within the age bracket of 26-35 years. This insinuate the fact that young people are more concerned and recent about happening in their environment. For marital status, 182 (54%) of the respondents were married, while 157 (46%) were single. This implies that the majority of the respondents understudy were married. Finally, the majority of the respondents had a tertiary education. The data collected were presented, analysed, and interpreted using mean scores, percentages and frequency tables for easy comprehension and clarity. In response to the thematic questions, the result is as shown below.

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1. Viewers' frequencies of exposure to NTA and AIT

Rows	Items	Media Stations	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Mean	S.D.
Row 1	I am exposed to news report about flood	AIT	138	188	13	-	3.4	0.55
Row 2		NTA	104	127	99	9	2.9	0.84

Source: Field work 2024

The data on Table 1 connote that the majority of the respondents in this study were frequently exposed to news report about flooding on NTA and AIT. This revealed that these two channels are apt for this study, as it shows the respondents are likely to be exposed to news about flooding in the South-South zone aired by the NTA and AIT.

Table 2. Angle of reports about flooding that residents of South-South Nigeria were exposed to on NTA and AIT

S/N	Items	NTA						AIT							
		SA	A	D	S	Mea n	S.D	SA	A	D	S	Mea n	S.D		
1	Compensation for flood victims	20	12	-	4	3.6	0.56	14	17	1	3	3.4	0.6		
		9	6					7	3	6			1		
2	Destruction of property	16	16	1	-	3.5	0.55	14	18	5	5	3.4	0.5		
		4	5	0				0	9				9		
3	Protest by flood victims	20	11	1	4	3.5	0.62	13	18	1	-	3.4	0.5		
		5	7	3				8	8	3			5		
4	Visit to flood areas by government officials	16	14	1	4	3.4	0.65	10	19	2	7	3.3	2.3		
		8	9	8				7	9	4			7		
5	Warning about flooding	13	17	2	7	3.2	0.69	10	19	3	-	3.2	0.6		
		6	1	5				9	2	8			2		
Grand Mean								3.4	0.61					3.3	0.9
														4	

Criterion mean = (2.5)

Source: Field work 2024

The implication of Table 2 is that the respondents were exposed to varied types of reports on flooding on NTA and AIT, as indicated in items 1-5.

Table 3. Approaches to improve performance of NTA and AIT in reporting various angles of flooding.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Increasing the frequency of reports on flooding	182	143	11	3	3.4	0.60
2.	Reporting more from the perspectives of flood victims	98	172	50	19	3.0	0.81
3.	Balancing their reports from both government and flood victims' angle	97	169	60	13	3.0	0.78
4.	Providing more analysis on flooding incidents	102	176	42	19	3.0	0.80
5.	Reporting more from the scenes of flooding	90	176	57	16	3.0	0.79
Grand Mean						3.1	0.75

Criterion mean = (2.5)

Source: Field work 2024

Table 3 shows that there are many ways through which NTA and AIT stations can improve on flood reporting, taking into consideration the perspectives of the viewers.

IV. Results and Discussion

Three research questions were developed from the objectives of this study to enhance a robust discussion of its findings. Data gathered from the field were analysed here based on the objectives of study.

Research Question One: What is the frequency of exposure to news reports about flooding on NTA and AIT among viewers in South-South Nigeria?

The first research question aimed at ascertaining the frequency of exposure to NTA and AIT among residents of South-South Nigeria. It was designed to know how often respondents watched NTA and AIT. This was measured by asking the respondents to choose from a list of options indicating how often they consume the media. The finding showed that majority of the respondent's under study were frequently exposed to NTA and AIT. This confirms that these two television stations are popular among residents of the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria, and that they are very apt for this study.

This finding is based on the data from Table 1 (row 1) which showed that 138 of the respondents watched AIT very often, 188 of the respondents watched AIT often, while 13 of the respondents watched AIT sometimes. The Table 1 (row 2) showed that 104 of the respondents watched NTA very often, 127 of the respondents watched NTA often, 99 of the respondents watched NTA sometimes while 9 of the respondents watched NTA rarely.

Despite the competition from private television stations in Nigeria's competitive television industry, NTA and AIT remain the biggest and most viewed stations in the country (Afolabi, 2022; Nwaoboli, 2023). These stations are still popular, especially when audience members want to get reliable information, or when they want to confirm suspected fake news flying around the social media. After a quantitative and qualitative study of digital and mainstream media relevance, Salaudeen and Onyechi (2020) found that the mainstream media

in Nigeria, such as NTA and AIT, were deemed more reliable despite growing reliance on digital media, especially social media, for information.

Frequency of media exposure and information preferences played crucial role on respondents' credibility evaluation, and this is a factor that makes the mainstream media preferable among the audiences. Further, as Salaudeen and Onyechi (2020) point out, audience credibility judgments are based on their understanding of the implicit nature of media platforms, and are predicted by frequent exposure and content consumption choices. When it comes to politics, for instance, Guanah (2024b) asserts that viewers are motivated to watch the television of their choice for various reasons, and these include the fact that these television stations cast news predominantly about their political parties; for the stations' analysis and commentaries; and for enabling them make voting decisions.

This probably explains why viewers in the South-South are frequently exposed to NTA and AIT despite the growing trend in audience attention shift to the social media. Furthermore, Tsfati (2010) argues that there is a strong association between trust in a particular medium and exposure to such medium. Following his study, Tsfati further disclosed that whilst intake of nonmainstream news was associated with media skepticism, exposure to mainstream media was strongly correlated with confidence in the media.

Moreover, exposure to more established and professional media sources is positively correlated with increased media trust and viewers' favourable perceptions of the media (Gil de Zúñiga & Hinsley, 2013; Idakwo & Oloruntola, 2020). Idakwo and Oloruntola (2020) also did a study which found a higher preference for mainstream media among audiences, and that their anonymous sources were trusted more than those of online media. These are among studies which explain why exposure to NTA and AIT is still frequent among viewers in South-South Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the angle of reports on flooding that viewers of South-South Nigeria were exposed to on NTA and AIT?

The second research question aimed at identifying the type of reports on flooding that residents of South-South Nigeria were exposed to. This was measured by providing a list of possible content categories, and asking the respondents to choose those that they were exposed to. Data in Table 2 showed that the NTA grand mean (3.4) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5) while for AIT grand mean (3.3) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5).

The data show that, for both NTA and AIT, respondents were exposed to the same array of content categories which are compensation of flood victims, destruction of property, and protest by flood victims, visits by government officials, and warning about flooding. These content categories dominated media content during the period of flooding. Studies show that the major issues reported in the media during the period of flooding are destruction of properties, extent of damage done, visit by government officials, and compensation of flood victims (Ajaero, et al., 2016; Nwabueze, 2021; Shittu, 2021). These are also among the basic information needs people seek to gratify during the period of flooding.

The Audience Reception theory receives support from this finding. Just like the reception theory suggests, viewers of television programmes in the South-South states of Nigeria are active interpreters of media text messages, and they look out for messages that explain the flooding situation to them. Since media texts gain their complete meaning

throughout the audience's reception process, the audience's interpretive involvement is crucial (Idakwo & Oloruntola, 2020; Aminudin, 2018; Griffin; 2012).

Research Question three: What approaches should be taken to improve the performance of NTA and AIT stations in reporting flooding incidents from the perspective of viewers?

The third research question aimed to suggest how to improve the performance of NTA and AIT stations in reporting flood incident from the viewer's perspective. This was ascertained by asking viewers to provide information on how best to enhance the performance of NTA and AIT in reporting flood issues. Data showed that the various ways the performance of NTA and AIT stations can be improved from the perspectives of the viewers, these include: increasing the frequency of reports on flooding, reporting more from the perspective of flood victims, balancing their reports from both government and flood victims' angle, providing more analysis on flooding incidents, and reporting more from the scenes of flooding.

From Table 3 used for analysis, item 1 showed the increasing the frequency of reports on flooding with a mean score of 3.4; items 2-5 showed reporting more from the perspectives of flood victims, balancing their reports from both government and flood victims' angle, providing more analysis on flooding incidents, and reporting more from the scenes of flooding, with a mean score of 3.0 respectively. Table 3, therefore showed that items 1-5 have mean values that are above the criterion mean (2.5). More so, the grand mean (3.1) is greater than the criterion mean (2.5), which showed that items 1-5 are the various ways the performance of NTA and AIT stations can be improved from the perspectives of the viewers.

Despite that the viewers' gave a positive assessment to AIT on their coverage of flooding, they still agreed that the same suggestions for improvement of content quality should apply to both stations studied. As (Steppat, et al., (2020) state, media consumers possess the capacity to distinguish between news reports of varying quality, and assess media materials to determine whether they meet specific normative standard. Research evidence has also shown that a large number of audience members' expectations for news media performance aligned with the opinions of experts and journalists regarding the same issue (Van der Wurff & Schoenbach, 2014). This further underscore why the findings of this study on audience suggestion on how NTA and AIT can improve content quality is very crucial to growth of the stations.

Evaluations of media performance by the audience play crucial role in determining media trust (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). This is why suggestions on how to improve media content quality from the perspectives of the audience are very essential for media growth. Also, research has revealed that media expectations influence media evaluations (Lambe, Caplan, Cai, & Signorielli, 2004; Wolling, 2004), and media evaluations influence more general assessments of media trust (Schielicke, Mothes, & Donsbach, 2014).

IV. Conclusion

Based on the results, the study concludes that NTA and AIT were credible news sources for residents in the south-south zone of Nigeria this is because residents are highly exposed to these stations. While evaluating the angle of reportage, the two media aired same types of news report on flooding, this conform to the Agenda setting theory where a particular news

item is aired across multiple news media at a particular time and period. However, the study observed that audience expect the media to report flooding issues more from the perspectives of flood victims, balancing their reports from both government and flood victims' angle, provide more analysis on flooding incidents and reporting more from the scenes of the flooding.

Recommendations

To this end, the study recommended the following:

1. To maintain a high level of viewership, the television stations should endeavour to constantly raise the standards of their programmes, with a view to meeting the expectations of audience members, especially when it concerns flooding that the South-South region is prone to.
2. Television stations should report variety of flood stories from different angles, including reporting more from the perspectives of flood victims. This is necessary because flood affects different victims in different ways.
3. Television stations should deploy a proactive reporting measure by reporting through the flooding circle, report more from victims' experiences, balance reporting, provide in-depth analysis, and report more from the scenes of flooding.

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