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## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: MEDIA ROLE IN CREATING AWARENESS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Media is said to be the fourth pillar of democracy. The pivotal role of the media is its ability to mobilize the thinking process of millions. One of the important roles of media is that of raising awareness on some of the burning issues of the world. Environmental issues are numerous and affect all aspects of life. In other words, no one is immune to the effects of environmental issues. This paper examined media's role in creating awareness with regard to environmental education. Three objectives were stated to guide the study and the survey design was adopted. Population of this study were residents of Ogun State which span through three Senatorial Districts, (Ogun Central East and West) Ogun State, Nigeria. -A -total -samples -of -300 -residents -were -selected through multi-stage sampling techniques (Stratified, Simple random and purposive). The instrument for data collection was a research questionnaire with a Likert-type rating scale. Data was analysed using SPSS software 25.0. Findings revealed lack of skills on environmental (X = 2.51, SD = 0.86) and weak government policies (X = 2.13, SD = 0.97) were some of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. The result of the hypothesis revealed a positive significant correlation between environmental education and media awareness (r = .649, p<.05). The study recommended that the media should create more awareness on environmental hazards which can stimulate the public interest on the need to frequently observe governmental policies on environment.

**Keywords:** Media, Awareness Creation, Environmental Education

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### **Introduction**

A section of the earth's natural environment includes all naturally occurring living and non-living things. It is a setting that includes how all living things

interact. Industries and other related industries grew and developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Archana, 2011).

Due to this, the amount of forest cover has decreased and urbanisation has grown exponentially. Large tracts of wood have been lost mostly as a result of tree cutting and forest fires that were started to make room for growing agricultural and industrial sectors (Nzeadibe, Egbule, Chukwuone, & Agu, 2011). The environment, in the opinion of Saikia (2017), is essential for all living creatures. Countries in both developed and developing worlds are struggling with serious environmental issues. While some of the problems may be similar because they are global in scope (such as global warming and ozone layer depletion), others are distinctly local.

If environmental protection is not implemented, life on Earth will eventually become extinct. When used in this context, environmental awareness can be characterised as a strategy for assisting social groups and individuals in acquiring a fundamental understanding of the environment and the problems it is connected with. A section of the earth's natural environment includes all naturally occurring living and non-living things. It is a setting that includes how all living things interact. Industries and other related industries grew and developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Archana, 2011).

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In this perspective, environmental awareness may be interpreted as a strategy for a social group or an individual to develop a fundamental understanding of the environment and the issues that surround it. A political solution is required for environmental awareness. As a result, the importance of the media in spreading awareness of environmental issues is highlighted. The fourth estate of the realm is supposed to be the media. Its capacity to stimulate the minds of millions plays a crucial role.

Of course, one of the crucial functions of the media is to increase public knowledge of some of the most pressing global concerns, like the environment.

According to Ukwela (2017), the goal of media, especially broadcast programming, is to positively affect the audience by providing them with relevant and timely information, entertainment, or education that will cause positive changes in their behaviour and attitudes. As a result of the media's significant contribution to bringing up environmental issues and concerns, along with the expanding significance of environmental education, these topics have received unprecedented global attention. Broadcast media, according to Maidunoma and Falmatani (2018), are effective tools that can depict the real picture for the audience to visualise the various environmental issues like sanitation and hygiene practises, global warming, waste management, safe water, climate change, deforestation, air pollution, and afforestation.

According to Mannar (2014), media play two crucial roles in educating the public about complicated and dangerous topics like environmental challenges. The author makes the case that the media sets the agenda by repeatedly and relentlessly drawing attention to specific events or concerns through newspaper articles, current-issue television debates, and radio awareness campaigns, as well as by informing the public of the gravity of the situation. The vibrant Nigerian media, which consists of over 200 radio stations, 150 television channels, and about 350 print (newspaper) outlets, has, in the opinion of Smith, Smith, and Ajayi (2020), remained a force to be reckoned with and has been obedient to its social obligations as the fourth estate of the realm.

Okunnu and Olatunji (2020) claim that the media have remained essential because they act as a strong conduit between the government, society, and the governed as well as perform the watchdog duty that is one of its statutory major responsibilities and functions, supporting the aforementioned assertion. These positions give them the ability to communicate government initiatives and policies. The mass media's surveillance function necessitates that they keep tabs on society and alert citizens about new issues (Oyedele, 2021). This role is an illustration of the media's "watchdog role." This is due to the fact that when a dog watches an area, it tries to alert people whenever there is a perceived risk. When a dog barks, it often draws attention from onlookers and may even prompt them to take precautionary measures. As a result, the mass media's surveillance function requires them to continuously monitor society, assess occurrences, and identify areas that could endanger society's overall well-being.

In this way, it is the responsibility of the media to ensure that the public is appropriately informed about environmental risks. When Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1973), mentioned in Oyedele (2021), said that information is a necessary ingredient for individuals to make informed decisions, they must have

been referring to the mass media's monitoring function. When the media play their part, the public's response to this understanding is another bottleneck to deal with because people respond differently to media messages, which lends more support to the individual difference argument than the bullet theory.

In addition to the fact that knowledge is a crucial decision-making tool, environmental education needs to be requirement at all educational levels, from basic school to postsecondary institutions. When speaking about environmental protection at the World Environmental Conference (WEC) in Bali, Indonesia, in 2017, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon provided evidence of the significance of environmental education. He said that he had proven that carrying on as usual would condemn millions of people. The present situation won't do. Not a sprint race, but a marathon. However, if we band together, we can strive to create a significant long-term response to global warming. To find a solution, every country must contribute. Each country must play a significant part. Political action is necessary to promote environmental awareness. This is an emergency, and emergency situations need quick action (UNEP 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are many environmental challenges that impact every element of living. Or to put it another way, nobody is immune to the effects of environmental problems. However, the level of susceptibility varies by region and sector. For the general people, the media serves as their main information source. Of course, the media must set an agenda for environmental issues and give them priority in order to save lives as well as raise awareness. The creation of awareness about these issues is not properly identified in all media institutions (mass media, institutional media, and conventional media), developmental projects within the various economic sectors, and society at large, according to an overview of environmental assessment documents and annual environmental reports. As a result, information is not being disseminated effectively enough to enable the enormous rise of the fight against environmental degradation. It is important to assess the media's contribution to a favourable movement in public opinion as well as the problems with geographic coverage, accessibility to communities, and audience response to media messages.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The main objectives of the study are:

- To examine media role in creating environmental awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria.

- To investigate challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### Research Questions

- i. What are the roles of media in creating environmental awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria?

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between environmental education and media awareness in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### Theoretical Review

The agenda-setting and individual differences theories are the foundation of this investigation. Thus, Maxwell McComb and Donald Shaw are given credit for developing the agenda setting idea in 1972–1973. According to the hypothesis, the majority of information that people are aware of is provided by the media. Similar to how it is in the media, certain topics of broad interest are given emphasis. Because news is filtered, sculpted, and chosen by broadcasters or editorial staff, media of all kinds do not accurately reflect social reality. This assumes that the media sets the agenda for our collective discourse, thereby influencing what we think (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2008).

Contrarily, the individual difference theory contends that differences in psychographic traits and psychological make-up cause media audiences to respond to media messages in different ways. Because of the way people process information through selective retention, attention, perception, and selective exposure—which helps people choose what they pay attention to and perceive as in line with their person—the impact of media messages on a particular person may not have a similar impact on other people.

Both theories, however, are pertinent to the study because media outlets continue to serve as a main means of environmental surveillance by bringing environmental issues to the forefront of the public conversation. The media should therefore consider the psychographics of the audience while educating the public about environmental consciousness and presenting environmental issues that will elicit similar responses from viewers regardless of demographic.

### **Environmental Awareness: The Role of Media**

Mass media's influence on social evolution and change over time has barely ever been contested. The way news is communicated across many spectrums has been significantly influenced by various media formats, including print, broadcast, and online media. In support of this, Aparna (2021) asserts that it is indisputable that the media has had a significant influence in raising public awareness of a variety of environmental challenges. Journalists have been writing on environmental issues for decades to serve as a crucial conduit between field personnel, decision-makers, and the general public (Bavadam, 2010; Bhattacharyya & Jana, 2015; Jana, 2016). This is especially true when it comes to promoting environmental education and increasing environmental consciousness. Different informational media, including radio, television, and newspapers, are playing an admirable part in raising awareness of climate change and environmental conservation, particularly in rural areas. Books, magazines, and other printed materials aid in the general transmission of knowledge and information.

As noted by Edubirdie in 2021, humans are creating artificial man-made environments by overusing natural resources for economic and social development. In this situation, the media can inform the public about certain forces and actions that hurt our environment. Saikia (2017) claims that the environmental catastrophe, which has the potential to exacerbate already fragile economic and social conditions in many nations, is one of the most concerning issues they face. To successfully solve environmental concerns, there is a critical need to increase environmental awareness. It has to do with teaching about the environment.

Offering sociological and economic diversity through the media serves as a crucial tool for everyone's education. The widespread mass media provides a wealth of information for mankind. Comprehending geography is crucial for understanding and effectively reacting to daily news reports from newspapers, radio, television, and the internet around the world. Frequently, it is more important for geographers to consider what has been published, which locations have been overlooked, and how the media might deliver this news differently in a different location (Nandita, 2001). Offering sociological and economic diversity through the media serves as a crucial tool for everyone's education. The ubiquitous mass media provides a wealth of information for mankind.

Existing work has looked at a related issue and discovered a substantial role of media in environmental consciousness. For instance, Maidunoma and Falmatani (2018) discovered that Yobe State Broadcasting Cooper's environmental programme has to include the voices of the people, volunteers, and grassroots

producers who have close ties to environmental issues. Additionally, a variety of sources should be used by the media to create more trustworthy and fair news. Saikia (2017) also demonstrated the importance of the media in raising public awareness of environmental issues. The media is the most innovative tool for raising awareness about environmental conservation because it has always addressed social and environmental issues.

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have been noticed in the positions of number one, two, three, and four, respectively, as per the level of priority of environmental concern among students, according to Rahim & Jalaladeen's (2016) description of social media communication platforms. Saneh (2018) researched to understand how the media can help create a sustainable society. The study stressed that because the media can convey targeted messages to each individual and every doorway, it could be crucial in causing individuals to become more active. In addition, it examined how the media has helped to protect the environment. It found that climate change issues are receiving the most attention and dominating electronic media.

### Research Methodology

The study used a survey-design methodology. The researchers were able to concentrate on the study's population and sample thanks to this methodology. - The study's design enabled the researchers to draw conclusions about population parameters using sample statistics for a quantitative study. Residents of Ogun State, which is located in Nigeria and is divided into three senatorial districts (Ogun Central, East, and West), made up the study's population. - Through the use of multiple-stage sampling procedures (including stratified, quota, and purposive sampling techniques), 300 residents in total were chosen as samples. The residents engaged in different occupations that might contributed to environment in one way or the other. The -data -collection -instrument -was -questionnaire. Data were analysed with Inferential -and -Descriptive -statistics using -the -Statistical -Package -for -Social -Sciences -(SPSS). The -descriptive -statistics -were -used -because -it involves simple percentages, frequencies while hypothesis was-tested using -Pearson Correlation Moment.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	91	46.4
Female	119	53.6
Age (Years)		
18-25 years	54	26.4

<b>26-35 years</b>	60	31.8
<b>36-45 years</b>	45	22.7
<b>46-55 years</b>	41	19.1
Education		
<b>No Formal Education</b>	19	8.2
<b>SSCE/GCE</b>	54	21.9
<b>NCE/OND</b>	95	59.1
<b>First Degree</b>	32	10.9
Religion		
<b>Christianity</b>	111	55.5
<b>Islam</b>	73	39.1
<b>Traditional</b>	16	5.5
Total	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 showed that 53.6% of the respondents were female while 46.4% were male. For the age category of the respondents, 31.8% were within the age category of 26-35 years, 26.4% were within the age category of 18-25 years, 22.7% were within the age category of 36-45 years while 19.1% were within 46-55 years. Based on educational qualification, 59.1% had NCE/OND qualification, 21.9% had SSCE/GCE while 10.9% had First degree. Based on religion, 55.5% were Christians, 39.1% were Muslims while 5.5% practiced Traditional religion.

**Figure 1: Media Channel Frequently used in Reporting Environmental Issues**

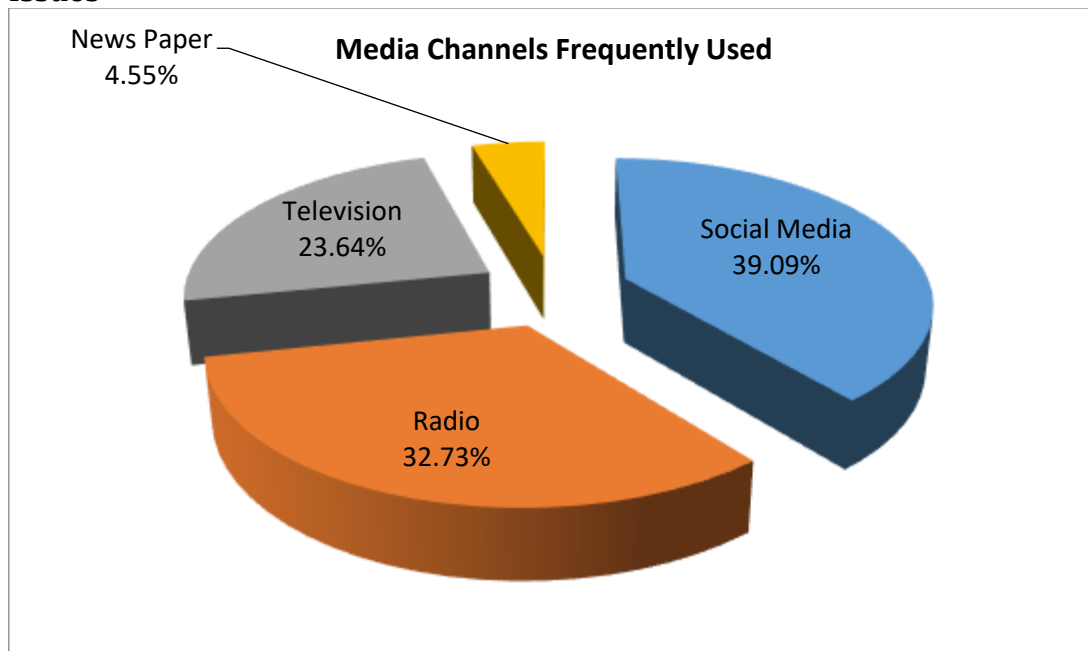


Figure 1 showed that 30.09% of the respondents claimed that social media is one of the media channels frequently used in reporting environmental issues, 32.73%



claimed that radio is one of the frequently used media, 23.6% of the respondents claimed that the Television is one of the frequently used media while 4.55% claimed that News Paper is one of the frequently used media used in reporting environmental issues. This implies that the most frequently used media used in reporting environmental issues are social media platforms, radio and Television.

**Research Question One:**

***What is the role of media on environmental awareness?***

**Table 2: Role of media on environmental awareness**

S/No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand. Dev
1.	Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts	59 (53.6%)	45 (40.9%)	6 (5.5%)	-	2.13	0.97
2.	Media advertises ways of protecting the environment	60 (54.5%)	43 (39.1%)	7 (6.4%)	-	1.95	0.68
3.	Media provides articles on environment	25 (22.7%)	69 (62.7%)	13 (11.8%)	3(2.7%)	1.52	0.62
4	It announces government laws on environment	16 (14.5%)	84 (76.4%)	5 (4.5%)	5 (4.5%)	1.42	0.94

Table 2 showed that 59 (53.6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 45 (40.9%) while 6 (5.5%) disagree that Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts, 60 (54.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 43 (39.1%) agree while 7 (6.4%) disagree that Media advertises ways of protecting the environment, 25 (22.7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 69 (62.7%) agree, 13 (11.8%) disagree while 3(2.7%) strongly disagree that Media provides articles on environment. Furthermore, 16 (14.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 84 (76.4%) agree while 5 (4.5%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively that it announces government laws on environment. The Media usually hold talk shows with environment experts has the highest mean score ( $X = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) followed by Media advertises ways of protecting the environment with a mean score ( $X = 1.95$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ).

**Research Question Two:**

*What are the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness?*

**Table 3: Challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Stand. Dev.
1.	Lack of skills on environmental issue	21 (19.1%)	63 (57.3%)	20 (18.2%)	6 (5.5%)	2.51	0.86
2.	Journalists lack access to understandable information on environment issue	31 (28.2%)	53 (48.2%)	14 (12.7%)	12 (10.9%)	1.86	0.63
3.	Weak government policies	42 (38.2%)	53 (48.2%)	13 (11.8%)	2 (1.8%)	2.13	0.97
4	Low funding of the media	37 (33.6%)	54 (49.1%)	19 (17.3%)	-	1.52	0.62

Table 3 showed that 21 (19.1%) of the respondents strongly agree, 63 (57.3%) agree, 20 (18.2%) disagree while 6 (5.5%) strongly disagree that Lack of skills on environmental issue is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness, 31 (28.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 53 (48.2%) agree, 14 (12.7%) disagree while 12 (10.9%) strongly disagree that journalists lack access to understandable information on environment issue, 42 (38.2%) of the respondents strongly agree, 53 (48.2%) agree, 13 (11.8%) disagree while 2 (1.8%) strongly disagree that weak government policies is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. Furthermore, 37 (33.6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 54 (49.1%) agree, 19 (17.3%) disagree that low funding of the media is one of the challenges faced by the media in creating environmental awareness. Lack of skills on environmental issue has the highest mean score ( $X = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) followed by Weak government policies with mean score ( $X = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ).

**Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness

**Table 4: Pearson Correlations of the relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness**

		Environmental education	Environmental awareness
Environmental education	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	110	110

<b>Environmental awareness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	110	110

The result of the hypothesis revealed a positive significant correlation between environmental education and environmental awareness ( $r = .649, p < .05$ ). This indicates that there is a positive relationship between environmental education and environmental awareness which implies that high level of environmental education increases environmental awareness.

### Conclusion

After examining all the pertinent evidence, it is clear that the media significantly influences how people view and are aware of environmental issues. The study's findings showed a substantial positive association between media awareness and environmental education ( $r = .649, p .05$ ). This result supports Maidunoma and Falmatani's (2018) argument that media outlets should use a variety of sources to create more trustworthy and fair stories. According to Saneh (2018), the media has always addressed social and environmental issues, making it the most innovative tool for raising awareness of environmental conservation. Saneh's (2018) findings concur with the findings of this study, which showed that the media is essential for rousing individuals from inactivity because it has the capacity to communicate certain messages. Similarly, Saikia (2017) discovered that since the media has always covered social and environmental issues, it is the most innovative tool for raising awareness about environmental conservation. The findings are also supported by PMC (2006), which stated that some of the difficulties in reporting on environmental issues include a lack of information, a lack of editorial support, community ignorance of and misunderstanding of environmental issues, pressure from industry and environmental groups, and a lack of skill and training. The agenda for environmental discourse and decision-making is created by journalists and broadcasters along with government officials, environmental activists, scientists, and industrialists.

The media gives readers and viewers in-depth front-page coverage of environmental issues. Not to mention the efforts for awareness that the government and other governmental organizations have launched. The formal environmental science and politics and the realities of how people experience and interact with their environments are vitally linked by media portrayals, from news to entertainment. Integrating the environment into development strategy and using communication and education as a tool of policy is a major concern for many nations throughout the world. In all of their incarnations, broadcast media have proven to be one of the most influential and potent means or prospective sources of environmental education in existence today.

They serve as a significant means of communicating environmental information to the public. While some organizations use it to chronicle cases of environmental crimes and degradation, the majority of organizations utilize it to promote environmental action and awareness. This study suggests that the media raise public awareness of environmental issues by informing them of the importance of regularly monitoring weather predictions and other weather conditions.

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