



Advocacy and Attitude to Waste Management and Disposal among Residents of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Effective waste management and disposal have become a pressing concern in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, with the city grappling with the challenges of rapid urbanisation and population growth. The role of media advocacy in shaping residents' attitudes towards waste management has gained significant attention in recent times.

Objective: This study investigated the impact of media advocacy on Port Harcourt residents' attitude towards waste management and disposal, with a view to understanding the dynamics of media influence on environmental behaviour.

Method: Guided by the Diffusion of Innovations Theory and the Agenda-Setting Theory, the study adopted descriptive survey research design involving 384 residents of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using questionnaire and analysed with simple percentages and weighted mean scores.

Result: Findings indicate that although residents exhibit some positive personal practices such as properly packaging waste, avoiding indiscriminate disposal, and sensitisation, these behaviours are not driven by media advocacy efforts. There were unfavourable attitudes toward environmental reportage, regarding it as ineffective in influencing or sustaining responsible waste disposal behaviour.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the current media advocacy strategies do not meaningfully influence behavioural change in waste management among residents.

Unique Contribution: This study provides empirical evidence on the impact of media advocacy on waste management attitudes in a Nigerian context, filling a gap in existing literature.

Key Recommendation: Governments and stakeholders should intensify media advocacy campaigns to promote proper waste management and disposal practices among residents, and incorporate environmental education in school curricula to foster a culture of environmental responsibility from an early age.

Keywords: Media advocacy, environmental reportage, waste management, behavioural change, public attitude, Port Harcourt.



INTRODUCTION

Human existence is fundamentally dependent on the environment, just as environmental sustainability relies on responsible human interaction. The environment provides essential life-support systems across land, air and water, yet these same systems are continually threatened by human activities. This paradox underscores the importance of environmental protection and situates the mass media as a critical societal institution in safeguarding ecological wellbeing. Since Harold Lasswell's 1948 articulation of media surveillance as a core function, scholars have emphasised the media's responsibility in monitoring societal issues and alerting the public to emerging threats. Modern media have expanded this surveillance role through diverse platforms and formats, strengthening their capacity to report environmental challenges and shape public consciousness (Reuben & Victor, 2020).

In developing societies, persistent environmental and public health concerns continue to hamper national progress. Issues such as poor waste management have direct implications for population health, economic productivity and overall quality of life. A nation burdened by disease and environmental degradation is unlikely to achieve sustained development. Consequently, governments increasingly rely on environmental and health communication to inform citizens, improve behavioural practices, and support public health systems. Mass media campaigns, designed to alter beliefs, shape attitudes and influence behaviour, have therefore become indispensable tools for promoting environmental responsibility and encouraging healthier lifestyles. When appropriately structured, these campaigns enhance awareness of the connections between environmental stewardship, human wellbeing and long-term development outcomes.

The case of Port Harcourt illustrates the acute environmental consequences of ineffective waste management. Indiscriminate waste disposal remains a major concern, raising questions about public awareness and compliance with sanitation measures (Nsirim, Ochonogor & Nwanchukwu, 2018). Global projections reinforce the scale of the challenge: cities currently generate 1.3 billion tonnes of solid waste annually, with figures expected to rise to 2.2 billion tonnes by 2025, particularly in low-income regions (Hoornweg & Bhada-Tata, 2012). Such realities highlight the need for clear, persuasive and sustained environmental communication. Scholars argue that sound environmental education and effective communication are prerequisites for achieving ecological harmony, as meaningful change depends on how audiences understand and respond to messages about environmental practices (Obuah & Okon, 2017; Ite, 2016). This perspective situates the media as a pivotal actor in mobilising public cooperation and shaping waste management behaviour.



In response to increasing pressures from urbanisation and population growth, the Rivers State Government has undertaken several initiatives to address escalating waste problems, including the establishment of the Rivers State Waste Management Agency in 2013 (Reuben, 2018; Reuben & Victor, 2020). As environmental challenges intensify, citizens naturally turn to societal institutions particularly the mass media for information, guidance and accountability. The media, through radio, television, print and digital platforms, remain central to educating the public, framing environmental issues, and promoting behavioural change. Radio, with its broad reach, has been noted for its unique capacity to shape opinions and introduce new ideas even in remote communities (Ochonogor, 2016). Strategic media campaigns, when properly designed and consistently delivered, can shift attitudes, enhance knowledge and influence practices over time (Ihejirika & Mbazie, 2007). Ultimately, sustained media engagement in environmental and health communication plays a crucial agenda-setting role and supports the adoption of healthier, more environmentally responsible lifestyles.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Human existence is fundamentally dependent on a healthy and sustainable environment. Yet, in a profound paradox, the most significant threats to environmental integrity often stem from human activities themselves. This dynamic is starkly evident in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, a city now confronting an acute and worsening waste management crisis. Once celebrated as the “Garden City of Nigeria”, its environmental landscape has deteriorated drastically due to widespread improper waste disposal. Residential areas, major roads and drainage systems are routinely clogged with discarded plastics, food waste and sachets, resulting in blocked waterways, heightened flooding and increased exposure to disease-causing vectors. These conditions pose grave risks to public health and undermine urban liveability, despite the efforts of government and civil society to promote more responsible waste practices.

A key institutional actor in this effort is the Rivers State Waste Management Agency (RIWAMA), which has introduced measures such as terminating non-performing contractors and proposing new waste receptacles and disposal sites. Simultaneously, the city is inundated with media campaigns across radio, television and other platforms—Nigeria Info 92.3 FM, Rhythm 93.7 FM and Channels TV among them—broadcasting jingles, discussions and documentaries aimed at reshaping public attitudes. However, a persistent contradiction weakens these interventions: although residents express high levels of awareness and acknowledge the benefits of proper waste disposal, this awareness has not translated into substantive behavioural change. Research confirms this widening “attitude–behaviour gap”, revealing that the problem is not simply a lack of information but a deeper failure of motivation, opportunity and systemic support (Augustine, Longe & Akpe, 2021).



The widening disconnects between awareness and action reflects significant structural constraints. Deficiencies in waste collection systems, the scarcity of functional disposal bins and weak enforcement mechanisms undermine the impact of even the most well-designed media messages. When citizens possess the requisite knowledge yet lack the infrastructural means or institutional encouragement to act, communication campaigns risk fostering frustration, cynicism and apathy. Consequently, the central problem this study interrogates is the misalignment between media-driven awareness and actual waste disposal practices in Port Harcourt. As Augustine, Longe and Akpe (2021) emphasise, high awareness has not produced a cleaner city; bridging this gap requires synchronising strategic communication with effective infrastructure and robust regulatory enforcement. Only through this integration can knowledge be converted into sustained behavioural change.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the influence of media advocacy on Port Harcourt residents' attitude to waste management and disposal. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. Investigate the influence of Media Advocacy waste disposal among Residents of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
2. examine behavioral changes linked to media advocacy for waste disposal among Residents of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
3. investigate the effectiveness of media platforms such as radio, TV, social media platform in conveying actionable messages to Residents of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on two theories: The Diffusion of Innovation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, originally articulated by Rogers (1995; 2003), traces its intellectual roots to the work of French sociologist Gabriel Tarde. Rogers conceptualises diffusion as the process through which an innovation is communicated over time through specific channels within a social system. Central to the theory are concepts such as relative advantage, trialability, opinion leadership and interpersonal networks, which influence how individuals move through the stages of adopting a new idea or practice. Although widely applied, the classical diffusion paradigm has been criticised for privileging expert-driven, top-down approaches and undervaluing local knowledge and solutions (Singhal & Dearing, 2006; Papa, Singhal & Papa, 2006). Nonetheless, the rise of modern communication technologies has revitalised diffusion studies, with scholars noting the unprecedented speed at which innovations such as the Internet and mobile phones have diffused, blurring the boundaries between mass communication and interpersonal exchange (Rogers, 2003; Morris & Ogan, 1996).



Over several decades, researchers across fields such as political science, public health, communication, economics, technology and education have employed Rogers' framework to examine innovation adoption (Dooley, 1999; Stuart, 2000; Sherry & Gibson, 2002). The theory is particularly prominent in studies involving technological innovations, and Rogers frequently used the terms "technology" and "innovation" synonymously. He defines technology as a design comprising hardware—the tangible tool—and software—the information base that guides its use (Rogers, 2003). Because software innovations are less observable, their adoption often progresses more slowly. Rogers further distinguishes between adoption, understood as the decision to fully embrace an innovation, and rejection, which reflects the decision not to adopt it.

Four core elements underpin diffusion: the innovation itself, communication channels, time and the social system (Rogers, 2003). An innovation is any idea, practice or object perceived as new by a potential adopter, even if it has existed for some time. Rogers emphasises that innovation adoption is strongly influenced by the stages of knowledge, persuasion and decision, as well as by the structure of technology clusters—interrelated innovations that are perceived as connected. A major challenge in the adoption process is uncertainty, which arises from the potential consequences of adopting or rejecting an innovation. These consequences may be desirable or undesirable, direct or indirect, anticipated or unanticipated, and individuals must be adequately informed of these outcomes to reduce uncertainty and support informed decision-making (Rogers, 2003).

Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting is a postulation of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. The theories remains one of the most used and popular theories in the field of mass communication and media. Although, the theory has its root or origin in the works of Walter Lipman an, an American journalists entitled "the world outside the pictures in our heads". The focal point here is that the media create mental pictures in our head. The theory also derive its idea from Bernard Cohen's conclusion that the mass media may not be successful in telling people what to think but are stunningly successful in telling them what to think about. Baran and Davies (2004) and Nwachukwu, Asadu and Asak (2012). The theory simply posit that the media determine the importance placed upon particular issues. That is, the amount of attention placed or given to a given issue in the media affects the level of importance assigned to it.

Lang and Lang (1959) area in concord to the position that not only to audience of people acquire factual information about public affairs from the media, readers, viewers also learn how much importance given to the topic or issue in discourse on the basis of the attention given to it in the news. Acknowledging Baran and Davies (2004), Nwachukwu, Asadu&Asak (2013) assert that it is from the above situation that the world looks different to different people, not only based on their personal interest, but also the layout or map drawn for the by the writers, editors and publishers of newspapers they read. McCombs (2004) described two levels of agenda setting, namely: priming and framing. At the primary stage/level, he maintains that the mass media emphasize certain issues over the other that people consider important. The concept of priming



was further developed by Iyenger and Kinder (1987). Priming takes place when the content of news suggests to the audience that they ought to use specific values as benchmarks for evaluating an issue Scheufele and Tweesksbury (2007). In Framing, McCombs (2004) brings to bear, two general groups of attributes cognitive or substantive attribute and affective attribute. Cognitive attribute according McCombs deal with definition of issues or objects in general in the media whereas affective attributes involves the tone of media presentation in the evaluation of issues that is positive, negative or neutral. In this case, it is a notion that how an issue is presented in the media to a great extent affect the understanding of such issue by the audience members of the society.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Media Campaign

Nation building, modernization and politicization of the masses cannot take place without the cooperation of the people and a mobilization of the human resources of society which are achieved through the instrumentality of the media Orlu-Orlu (2013). The media are used by leaders, government and agencies to increase awareness, focus attention on national problems, and build a sense of national unity and rally support for national leaders, policies and programmes. The media are often used in most civilized and democratic societies as vehicles for involving the people in a process, for facilitating public debate and decision and reaching consensus on important issues Okunna (1994).

The media are also used to motivate, sensitize and mobilize the audience members of the society towards the achievement or attainment of desirable societal objectives. The media remains an integral part of societal fabric. The availability of information and accessibility of media is an important parameter of development of a society Hassan (2010). Vareba (2012) argued that the media through persuasion convince the audience members of the society through logical reasoning and argument to accept a new innovation or action. Persuasion according to Vareba (2012) is activated by a continuous bombardment of a particular message from the media to adopt or embrace a new life style or behaviour by detaching oneself from the former. It is aimed at changing people's behaviour and thinking from a negative way of life.

The media as a tool for social mobilization involves the process of bringing together all feasible and practical cross-sectoral allies to raise people's demand for a particular programme of development, to assist in the delivery of resources and services and to strengthen community participation sustainability and self-reliance. It could also be perceived as the act of canvassing or rallying together varying social sectors-government, leaders, civil society, and business sector to won, support and partake in a programme that enhance the development of the society McKee (1992), Ongkiko&Flor (2006).



There are certain key elements in social mobilization which include: Advocacy, information, education, persuasion and other communication strategies. These elements are employed according to Ongkiko and Flor (2006) in social mobilization to generate knowledgeable supportive environment for decision-making. Through advocacy, information are organized into arguments used to persuade or convince a specific group of people to take necessary action on a specific just like the HYPREP goal to enhance youths and Gokana residents to make positive decision that will lead to the avoidance of artisanal refining and other related offences. This process involves pleading, defending, recommending and supporting policy.

Awareness

The Cambridge English dictionary describes awareness as the knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation or subject at the present time based on information. That is to say that awareness is concerned with a state of consciousness where sense data can be confirmed by an individual. In other words, it is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel or to be cognizant of events. Some other definitions sees it as a state where in a subject has a knowledge about some information when that information is directly available to bring to bear in the direction of a whole range of behavioral actions. The states of awareness are also associated with the states of experience so that structure represented in awareness is mirrored in the structure of experience (Chalmers, D.(1997).

Qutin and Greenberg (1999) in a work titled “A framework of awareness for small groups in shared work space groupware” defined awareness by breaking it into a set of characteristics which include: It is a knowledge about the state of some environment, Environments are continually changing and evolving, therefore awareness knowledge must be constantly maintained, Individuals interact with the environment, and maintenance of awareness is accomplished through this interaction, That it is generally part of some other activity-generally making it a secondary goal to the primary goal of the activity.

Huemer (2001) as cited by Nwala (2017) opined that awareness presupposes that there is a relation between one who is aware and the object of which he is aware of. This brings to fore that there is something for which one must be aware of if there is no object present, then there cannot be actual awareness. Huemer maintains that awareness must include a state of apprehension is characterized by actualized representation.

Attitude

The concept of attitude is referred to as the predisposition of the individual to evaluate some objects in a favorable or an unfavorable manner. When the opinion is unfavourable, it is equally enforced and maintained. (Birabil, 2001). Kendra, Gans and MD sees attitude as a set of emotions, beliefs and behaviours toward a particular object, person, thing or event. They further maintained that attitudes are often a product of experience or upbringing and can have a powerful influence over behaviour. (www.verywellmin.com. retrieved 2020).

In psychology, attitude is defined as a learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way which include the evaluations of people, issues, objects or events. These evaluations are often positive or negative and can also be uncertain at some points in time.



Birabil (2001) identifies three main components of attitude, they are: The cognitive component, the affective component and the behavioural component. Cognitive Component of attitudes is concerned with our thought and beliefs about the subject. In other words, the cognitive component deals with individual interpretations, understanding and thoughts concerning the environment and oneself. A cognition represent a distinct bit of knowledge and element of understanding. Summarily, the cognitive component of attitude is concerned about process of learning and understanding objects and ourselves.

The Affective Comment of attitude is concerned about the individual's feeling towards object. Or how the object, person, issue or events. An individual's emotion towards a particular object based on past experience and learning is the affective component. We react naturally towards people or things based on our favourable or unfavourble feeling toward the person or things. For instance, dislikes driving because you were taught, told and believed that the possibility of a driver's survival in an accident are usually slim which now create a phobia in you. The development of irrational fear about driving becomes the cognitive component while developing unfavorable feeling towards cars becomes the affective component.

The Behavioural (Overt) Component deals with how attitude formed affects behaviour. That is the individual reactions towards an object in certain ways. It can be described as the action orientation. Behavioural component is the activity of an individual as a whole which is directly observed and submitted to systematic analysis based on cognitive and affective components. The perceptions, beliefs and experience of an object subsequently lead to the development of a favourable and unfavourable feelings towards the object and subsequently it leads to an overreaction or behaviour towards the object. As earlier mentioned in hitherto example, you dislikes driving because you were taught that drivers has slim chances of survival during accidents and you are now suffering from some sort of phobia therefore developing negative or unfavourable feelings towards driving based on what you were told or taught. Finally, your behaviour reaction towards driving cars, drivers, roads is very unfavourable or negative based on the cognitive and the affective component.

The Environment

Different scholars have given multiple interpretations and definitions to the concept of environment based on their perceptions and perspectives. Nevertheless all points to the fact that the environment is the natural habitat in which man lives with other creatures and carries out his activities otherwise; the environment could be simply referred to as the entire universe. Nwabueze (2007, P 2) sees the environment as: "any natural or artificial habitation in which people co-exist with plants and animals. It includes the totality of activities, actions and situations that shape the existence of man or any organism in a given habitation". Similarly, Anayato (2004) cited in Nwabueze (2007) defined the environment as: "a collection of natural and artificial arrangements in which humanity is completely dependent for survival and sustenance through food, water and the trees for shelter" In his own definition, Maier (1998) sees the environment as " the conditions, circumstances and influences surrounding and affecting the development of an organism and group of organisms", while Olatunji (2002) says " the environment is all embracing concept, involving all the facets that comprise the planet earth and its surroundings".



Environmental Coverage

Drawing from the above definition of journalism and reporting, we can now see environmental journalism as journalism geared towards reporting environmental issues and problems that affect the environment. The fact that the study of the environment is multidisciplinary and that each field tends to generate and adopt definitions in line with its interest is a key factor in the diversity of definition and conception of the environment. However, regardless of the perspectives within which environment is underpinned, it simply describes our immediate surroundings.

Social scientist, Bain (1973), defines environment as all of the external, impersonal conditions that affect how well a population in a certain location is doing. In the view of Hagget (1975 cited in Anijah-Obi, 2001), environment is referred to as the totality of all circumstances in which a person lives on the earth's surface at any given time. According to Miller (1975 cited in Ityavya & Thomas, 2012), environment can be understood as the collection of external factors that have an impact on the lives of a person or population, notably the lives of people and other surface-dwelling living things. Bankole and Surajudeen (2008) asserts that the environment gives support to the existence and survival of human by supplying oxygen, water, food, raw materials, shelter, sink for wastes created by humans, and his fundamental needs for progress and technological advancement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. As noted by Cozby (2007), a survey design is instrumental for identifying relationships among variables and understanding how attitudes and behaviors evolve over time. This approach provides a structured avenue to elicit information directly from individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, and practices. The choice of this design was predicated on the study's objectives, which aimed to evaluate the influence of media campaigns on waste disposal by measuring the level of awareness, attitudes, and behavioural practices among the residents of Port Harcourt. The survey method is particularly suited for studying large populations, as it allows for the selection of a representative sample to discover the incidence, distribution, and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Okwachime, 2016). In line with this design, the research employed a mixed-methods approach for data collection, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data and an interview schedule to capture qualitative insights, thereby ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised residents of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State. According to the 2006 National Population Census, the population of Port Harcourt City, Local Government is 538,588 with a growth rate of 3.5.



Population projection

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{3.5}{100} \times 538,588 \\ & 0.035 \times 538,588 \\ & = 18,850 \longrightarrow \text{Increase per year} \\ & 18,850 \times 2006 - 2024 \\ & 18,850 \times 18 \\ & = 339,300 \longrightarrow \text{Increase over eighteen years} \end{aligned}$$

Projected Population

$$\begin{aligned} & 339,300 \text{ plus } 538,588 \\ & = 877,888 \end{aligned}$$

Based on this, the Projected Population of Port Harcourt City Local Government is 877,888.

Sample Size

A sample size of 384 was drawn from the population using the Krejcie and Morgans (1970) research bulletin on table for determining a sample from a given population. See appendix

Sampling Procedure

The study adopted a multi-staged sampling technique, first, the cluster Sampling technique was adopted. Port Harcourt city local government was subdivided into clusters. The twenty electoral wards of Port Harcourt city local government which include: Abuloma/ Amadiama, Diobu, Elekahia, Mgbundukwu I, Mgbubndukwu II, Ochiri/ Rumukalagbor, Ogbunabali, Oroabali, Orogbum, Oromineke, Ezimgbe, Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt Township, Port Harcourt Township VI, Port Harcourt Township VII, Rumuobiekwe, Rumuwoji I, Rumuwoji II, and Rumuwoji III.

Primary Clusters - Wards: All 20 electoral wards within the Port Harcourt City LGA served as the primary clusters, ensuring comprehensive geographical coverage of the entire study area.

Secondary Clusters - Streets: From each of the 20 wards, one street was selected using the Simple Random Sampling SRS technique (e.g., a lottery method). This ensured an unbiased selection of the secondary sampling units. Tertiary Units - Compounds: From each of the 20 selected streets, five (5) residential compounds were chosen using Systematic Sampling to guarantee an even spatial distribution.

Final Respondents - Individuals: Within each of the 100 selected compounds (20 streets \times 5 compounds), four (4) individual respondents were chosen using Simple Random Sampling, yielding a target sample of 384 respondents. From this target, a total of 350 completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved and used for data analysis.

Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach, comprising a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule. Prior to fieldwork, two trained research assistants were engaged. They underwent a detailed orientation session that covered the objectives of the study,



the structure of the instruments, ethical protocols, and techniques for effective respondent engagement and accurate data recording.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents by the research assistants, who diligently followed the sampling procedure and ensured a high retrieval rate through persistent and respectful follow-up. The interview schedule was used to gather qualitative insights from a subset of the sampled population. All data collection activities were conducted in strict adherence to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of the participants.

Method of Data Analysis

The data from respondents were presented in tables of frequencies mean value were used to determine the respective values of each. The weighted Mean Score (WMS) was analyzed based on the formula.

$$\frac{\sum fx}{fx}$$

$$fx$$

∑ = summation

fx = frequency of score

Decision rule was established based on the sum of four-point Likert Scale of n :

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points

Agree (A) = 3 points

Disagree (D) = 2 points

Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Based on the above, any response that falls on 2.5 and above is classified after weighted and tabulated and are considered accepted while below is rejected.

RESULT

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	161	46
Female	189	54
Total	350	100

The result shows that majority of the respondents constituting 54% are female.

Table 2 : Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25	57	16
26-35	77	22
36-55	115	32
55 and above	101	30
Total	350	100



The table reveals that majority of the respondents falls between the age bracket 36-55 constituting 34% of the total respondents.

Table 3 : Occupational Distribution of Respondents

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Civil servants	118	34
Business/farming	134	38
Clergy	62	18
Applicants and unemployed	36	10
Total	350	100

The table shows that a majority of the respondents constituting 35% are business men and women.

Table 4: Environmental reportage and attitude Port Harcourt residents in terms of adopting recommended waste disposal practices

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	\bar{x}	Remarks
5	You no longer Z dump waste indiscriminately	110	120	70	50	2.9	Agreed
6	I ensure my waste is properly bagged and packaged	129	101	72	48	3.0	Agreed
7	you now treat the environment knowing that my life depends on it	100	120	80	50	2.8	Agreed
8	You also educate others on the need to protect the environment	119	111	69	51	3.0	Agreed

Analysis: judging from the above table, it is revealed that Port Harcourt residents have negative attitude toward media reportage on waste management pattern.



Table 5: Environmental reportage effectiveness in conveying messages related to waste disposal?

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	A 2	SD 1	\bar{x}	Remarks
9	The reports has been very effective in controlling unlawful disposal of wastes	140	100	140	100	2.1	Rejected
10	The awareness level is high	70	94	56	130	2.4	Rejected
11	Encourage participation from the beginning to end	80	90	120	60	3.3	Rejected

Analysis: from the above table, findings showed that environmental reportage has not been very effective in conveying messages related to waste disposal.

Table 6: Environmental reportage behavioural changes among residents in terms of adopting recommended waste disposal practices

S/N	ITEMS	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	\bar{x}	Remarks
12	There is no consistency in the reportage of the environment	70	94	56	130	2.4	Disagreed
13	The reportage are often ad hoc in nature	130	100	70	50	3.0	Agreed
14	There is less amount of time and attention to the campaign	120	110	70	50	3.0	Agreed

The above table shows that the challenges bedeviling environmental reportage are the lack of consistency, time and attention as well as the ad hoc nature of the various reportage of it.

DISCUSSION

Waste disposal is a major environmental challenge in Port Harcourt, where improper management of solid and liquid wastes poses serious threats to public health, safety, and



aesthetics. Before now, Port Harcourt was referred to as the “Garden City of Nigeria”. This was however due to the aesthetics, neatness and overwhelming presence of vegetation and flowers all over the city. The glory seemed to have been lost, especially in recent times as the once garden city could be likened to a “garbage city” as a result of the improper waste disposal system by residents of the city. It is not difficult to see left-over foods, fruits that are left spoilt, plastic bottles, sachets water sacks, no-longer-needed clothes, among others, indiscriminately disposed within residential areas, major roads and drainages. These, most times result in drainage blockage leading to flooding and serving as suitable breeding ground for mosquitoes and unending malaria attacks. This is so despite concerted efforts by both government and non-governmental organizations in raising awareness and promoting good practices of waste disposal among the residents. In promoting such campaigns, the media occupy a prominent position in its sphere of influence. The results of the study as revealed are hereby discussed following literatures.

Research Question 1: What attitude do Port Harcourt resident's take towards environmental reportage on best waste disposal practice ?

Judging from the answers by the respondents on the above research question, finding revealed that Port Harcourt residents have negative attitude towards media reportage on waste management pattern. This finding corroborate the positions of Second and Backman (1981) in Briabil (2001) states that attitudes are formed based on our perception, beliefs, stereotypes, feelings etc and that when they are deep seated in an individual's, attitude formation is established.

According to them, attitude represents a major determinant of our orientation toward our social and physical environment including ourselves. Having an attitude implies a readiness to response in a given consistent manner to a social object. An attitude implies that motives are aroused and action mobilized to approach or avoids the object. Attitude formation is a learning process; as such one of the societal variables which determine attitude is membership of group.

Research Question 2: To what extent does environmental reportage result in actual behavioural changes among residents in terms of adopting recommended waste disposal practices?

Finding to the above research question showed that environmental reportage has not caused any behavioural change among Port Harcourt residents regarding waste management in the area. This result further affirms the views of Akpoghiran Patrick Idamah (2015) that: irregular and poor enlightenment campaigns by the broadcast media on solid waste management in all these states affect the success of the campaign and reportage. This resulted to poor attitude to waste management by inhabitants. The result also showed that positive attitude towards solid waste management depended on regularly media enlightenment campaigns. However, responsible environmental behaviour remains the best approach to solid waste management and other environmental problems.



Research Question 3: How effective are the various environmental reportage in conveying messages related to waste disposal?

The responses to the above research question shows that environmental reportage has not been very effective in conveying messages related to waste disposal. This result vindicates the assertions that the environmental journalist has the responsibility to engage in effective communication of environmental related information to the public. Unfortunately environmental problems and issue have not been receiving the required attention from the media for one reason or another.

Corroborating this situation, Moeti et al. (2011) observed that "information about environmental issues hardly ever reaches many people through the mainstream media such as newspapers, radio and television in Africa because of a number of problems among which are the complexity of the presentation language, lack of interest by media personnel and other factors influencing production of media publication". The author quoting the work of Shawa and Mapura says one of the possible cause for the media to be snubbing environmental issues is that journalists do not easily understand some of Environmental journalism and sustainable national development in Nigeria: an analysis 166 the environmental terminology To this, Nwabueze (2007) lamented that "this is a worrisome development because the mass media shape social norms and value systems and also influence people's decision-making in ways that foster a more environmentally sustainable and acceptable society."

The environmental journalist has both print and electronic media as a channel of disseminating information to the audience. The print media comprises newspaper, magazine and lately the internet which shares dual attributes of print and electronic while the electronic media is made up of radio, television, firms and the internet. All have the ability to take the message to a large diverse audience but each has a unique attribute of disseminating information to the audience. The radio for instance deals with sound that is audio. It is regarded as the most popular medium as breaks the barrier of illiteracy. This means that the message can be communicated to the audience in the native dialect. It is also relatively cheap as many families have access to it even as the message can be received while the audience engages in other activities.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of media advocacy on Port Harcourt residents' attitudes towards waste management. The findings reveal that despite residents' awareness of media reportage on waste management, they have a negative attitude towards it. Furthermore, environmental reportage has not led to behavioral change among residents, and its effectiveness in conveying waste disposal messages is limited. The challenges facing environmental reportage, including lack of deliberate effort, inconsistency and lack of sponsorship, hinder its potential to promote positive change.



RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Media outlets should adopt more engaging and effective strategies to report on environmental issues, including waste management.
3. Government and private organizations should provide funding and support for environmental reportage initiatives to ensure consistency and quality.
4. Community-based initiatives, such as clean-up campaigns and waste management workshops, should be organised to promote behavioral change and environmental awareness.
5. Regular evaluation and monitoring of environmental reportage and its impact on residents' attitudes and behaviours should be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Cecilia Osilaobe Olukanwi, conceived and conducted the study under the supervision of Professor Fred Amadi and Professor Barigbon Gbara Nsereka. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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