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## Print media as catalysts for shaping morals and promoting national consciousness in Nigeria: Critical perspectives

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### Abstract

By estimation of its impact, the media is seen as the moral compass of society. Its surveillance role has further pushed its gatekeeping and gate watching potentials making it an institution that is capable of effecting social change. With this motivation in mind, the researchers embarked on a qualitative study titled: "Print Media as Catalysts for Shaping Morals and Promoting National Consciousness in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives" to ascertain the role of print media in shaping morals and creating national consciousness. It was discovered that the print media in the country is dwarfed by challenges such as funding, digitalization, and its elitist nature. Creating a high sense of nationalism, rethinking media content, embracing digitalization, and training young people to appreciate the media were proposed as veritable ways of shaping morals and promoting national consciousness in the country. It concluded that for print media professionals to effect the needed change in Nigeria, adequate funding, as well as training and retraining of journalists are indispensable.

**Keywords:** *Consciousness, Media, Morals, Nigeria, Print*

### Introduction

It is a given that Nigeria is blessed with human and natural resources (Brown, 2017, p.2). However, the country has been dwarfed by the leadership conundrum (Igué, 2010). The divisive tendency of the citizenry has further compounded the problem (Adedokun, 2017). The Executive, Judicial and Legislative arms of government have not provided the needed soothing balm for the country's malaise. The common man has often looked up to the media, the fourth estate of the realm, as well as

academics for a possible solution. Granted that the media often flies on a high pedestal, the country has not gained altitude in terms of good morals and ensuring national consciousness (Gambari, 2008).

Therefore, the researchers sought to demonstrate how the print media in Nigeria can shape the moral compass of society and promote national consciousness. The scope of this study is limited to the evolution of newspapers and magazines and how the two are veritable tools for social change and integral development of

society (Kehinde, Yinusa, Addullateef & Abdul-Rasheed, 2015). Even though it is believed that newspapers and magazines are for the elite in society, the paper aspires to show how the two are catalysts for the advancement of a better Nigerian society.

The qualitative survey aims at:

1. Taking a cursory look at the evolution of newspapers and magazines in Nigeria.
2. Reappraising the role of the print media in returning the country back to democratic rule.
3. Investigating how the print media shapes values and promotes national consciousness in Nigeria.
4. Recommending possible ways in which the media could further shape morals and promote patriotism; and
5. Stimulating further research in the area under consideration towards revamping the print media as a force for unity in the society.

The significance of the study is that since Nigeria is often combustible along ethnic, religious, and political lines (Osinbajo cited in Nwabughogu, 2015), the onus lies on the media to guide the citizenry towards unity, peace, progress, and national integration.

## Elucidation of concepts

### Print media

Print media is the industry that is involved in the gathering, processing, and dissemination of news and information to a heterogeneous or large number of audiences through publications such as books, newspapers/periodicals, and magazines. It is also a collection of all publications such as journals, pamphlets, posters, letters, and any other printed matter. Advertising billboards and other public relations publications are also genres of print media. It has two broad classifications namely traditional and new media: Traditional media comprises of newspapers, magazines, periodicals, radio, and television. There is a perception that radio which has the widest outreach (Mathur, 1990 & Diamundialradio.org, 2019) is for commoners, television is for the middle class, and newspapers, magazines, and periodicals are for the elite. New or social is characterized by speed,

interactivity, and media convergence (combination of video).

### Shaping morals

In this study, we shall conceive shaping morals as the science of right conduct based on a conscience that is formed by parental, religious, and cultural dynamics despite the lure of evil and the choice between right and wrong. It deals with using the media to reawaken the inbuilt cognitive ability to live above board based on a strong conviction otherwise known as principle. Since morals are signposts of life that raise the stakes towards peaceful coexistence and living in a pluralistic society, the shaping of morals is a *sine qua none* for creating national consciousness.

### National consciousness

National consciousness here stands for a patriotic and nationalistic way of life based on one's affiliation to a country either through birth or nationalization. National consciousness is the love for one's country which creates in the person a strong feeling for sacrificing everything for the sustenance and survival of the country. It is a sense of wanting to lay one's life for the country. National consciousness is the medicine for a divisive country which points to the National Anthem, the Pledge, and National Flag as emblems for *Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress* as the motto of Nigeria depicts.

## Literature review and discussion

### A brief history of the newspaper in Nigeria

The development of the movable metal type, printing press by Johannes Gutenberg around 1546 AD in Germany (History.com, 2019) revolutionized the world of print media across the globe. Accordingly, the print media industry picked up as an exciting technology. In Nigeria, the evolution of the press was not anything different from what happened in Germany. Instead of printing to begin on the streets, it had a religious background. That is why it is established that it was the Church that gave birth to printing in Nigeria.

Some scholars are of the view that printing in Nigeria began in the 19th century when two missionaries, Hope Waddel and Samuel Edgerly, established the first printing

press at Calabar, South-Eastern Nigeria in 1846. The press which was used for the mass production of religious tracts and booklets was later named, Hope Waddel Press (Afolabi, 2016). Incidentally too, it was the Presbyterian Church that gave birth to the first newspaper in Nigeria.

The interesting narrative has it that one Rev. Henry Townsend, a Presbyterian Church missionary it was who established the *first printing press* in Nigeria in 1854. While this came to many as a surprise, five years after the establishment of the first printing press in the country, precisely on November 23, 1859, the Presbyterian Church through Rev. Townsend published *Nigeria's first newspaper* known as "Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba." The newspaper which was published every 15 days was sold for 120 cowries; the equivalent of a penny (Daramola, 2013).

Scholars who observed the budding print medium at the time disclose that the newspaper was highly patronized by the few literates of Yoruba extraction. About 3,000 copies were circulated at the time. As regards its content, the newspaper primarily carried news of church activities, arrival, and departure of religious dignitaries, and ordination of members of the clergy. However, we are told that by 1860, "Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba" got advert placements from the government of the day. This helped to keep the newspaper going and also pay staff (Omipidan, 2016).

An intriguing perspective to the first newspaper is that various people had different perspectives concerning its aims and objectives. The first perspective from the founder of the newspaper Rev. Townsend is that its objective was primarily to get the people to read and to beget the habit of seeking information on their own. A second perspective from others was that the paper aimed to foster the outreach of the Christian religion at a time when African Traditional Religion (ATR) was the in-thing (Daramola, 2013).

As if to prove the point that everything that has a beginning has an end, the printing press was razed down in 1867 due to cultural and political clashes which took place between the Egbas and the British that resulted in the expulsion of all Europeans from Egband. With that, the newspaper met its end. It is important

to stress that something that started in the Church was eventually killed by socio-cultural and political factors (Omipidan, 2016). Despite the end of "Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba," the first newspaper played a very significant role in the evolution of newspapers in Nigeria.

While the first newspaper was out of production and circulation, the *Second Anglo-African Nigerian newspaper* was established in Lagos in 1863 by one Robert Campbell. After 17 years precisely on 10th November 1880, the *Third Nigerian newspaper* known as *The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser* was established by Mr. Richard Olamilege, Beale Blaize, and edited by Andrew M. Thomas and Mojola Agbebi.

The newspaper which was sold for six pence was printed every fifteen days. In its editions published in 1888, it became the first to publicly denounce the extravagance of the colonial administration. By 1924, *the Catholic Herald* of Lagos was established as the Fourth Newspaper in the country. It is fascinating to also note that the Fifth Newspaper in Nigeria was *The West African Pilot*. It was launched by Nnamdi Azikiwe "Zik" in 1937 and dedicated to the fight for independence from British colonial rule. We are told that from 1937-1947, Nnamdi Azikiwe edited *The West African Pilot* personally.

### Characteristics of newspaper

The newspaper covers a wide variety of fields such as politics, business, sports, and art. Because they are dailies, newspapers often carry various columns for the reading pleasure of the general public. Although there are specialized newspapers for sports, health, business to mention just a few, the general style of the newspaper is creating columns to meet the needs of readers. Newspaper offers timely ad placements of any of the traditional media through delivering more timely messages to promote current business activities and promotions (Kokemuller, 2019).

It is peculiar to find materials such as opinion columns, weather forecasts, reviews of local services, obituaries, birth notices, editorial cartoons, comic strips, and advice columns in a newspaper. This is to keep the reading public abreast with what is happening in almost every sector of life like education, politics, and the

economy. It is also likely to find information on aviation, science, and technology as well as news on cultural and religious underpinnings. In others, there are “editorials, features, columns, opinions, sports, fashion or health articles to pure news stories” (Ashong & Ogaraku, 2017, p.9).

Newspaper production and distribution is a business. In business, no one wants to run bankrupt. Newspaper firms are business-oriented. That is why they canvass for revenue and also engage in newsstand sales as well as advertising. This is to enable them to run the newspaper house effectively and efficiently by paying their expenses which includes staff salaries. They also engage in Corporate Social Responsibility by way of giving back to society through advocacy or capacity building.

One fundamental characteristic of newspapers is that traditionally, they were published in print (Ashong & Ogaraku, 2017) with the use of cheap or low-grade paper known as newsprint. However, because of the explosion in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) nowadays, newspapers are published digitally on websites and blogs as online newspapers. As a matter of fact, today, some newspapers are online and have no print equivalent. This presents a huge challenge to the existing hard copies on newsprint.

### Magazine in Nigeria: A historic sketch

Magazine journalism in Nigeria has come a long way. History has it that the first publication in the country which can be called a magazine was a government periodical called “The Nigerian gazette” which was published in 1900. It analyzed and interpreted the policies and activities of the colonial regime. However, after the adoption of the Richards’ Constitution in 1947, the British colonial government debuted magazines such as the *Nigerian Review* and the *Children Own Paper* (Daramola, 2008). Accordingly, this was followed by *Drum and Spear Magazine* published by *Daily Times* in the 1960s. Although Nigerians had not developed a magazine reading culture, one Mr. Chris Okolie published *New Breed Magazine* in the 1970s. From the 70s to the mid-1980s, magazines such as *Newswatch* were established by the consortium of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed, and Dan Agbese. These journalists were

columnists and editors in newspapers such as *Daily Times*, *National Concord*, *Sunday Concord*, and *New Nigerian*. It must be said that their editorials and features stories provided a large reading audience thus making the “Magazine culture” part of the print media development in Nigeria.

That is not all, their doggedness in the journalism profession attracted many young graduates who were moved to join the noble profession. The journalistic light of Dele Giwa et al attracted Onome Osifo-Whisky, Nosa Iriabor, Dare Babarinsa and others to come up with *Tell Magazine*, an investigative kind of magazine that sought to unravel corruption in high places. The magazine which engaged in guerilla journalism concentrated on the military junta of Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha by trailblazing accountability reporting and making sure Nigeria returned to democratic rule. Tobs Agbaegbu’s most recent magazine known as *Verbatim* is an offshoot of both *Newswatch* and *Tell Magazines*.

From the 1990s, magazines such as *Street Journal* (a financial publication), *Encomium* and *City People* (soft sells), and *Hints* (woman magazine) also hit the newsstand (Akinsuli, 2010). By this time, the reading population in the country had grown big and people were beginning to be interested in those who rule them. The political awareness and desire for the dividends of democracy created an irresistible “Magazine reading culture.”

### Characteristics of magazine

With the etymology “a store house” coming from the French word *magasin*, a magazine is a derivative of a newspaper. As a child of a newspaper, the magazine is more elaborate and colorful in style and expression. From its face value, the magazine is attractive. One important characteristic of a magazine is that it often contains bigger photos that attract the reader and gives a good feeling to those who are profiled in personality focus.

By way of conception and design, the magazine is meant to further investigate, interpret and correlate the news which must have been reported by newspapers (Akinwalere, 2013). This is a necessary feature of magazine production because editors give time to “magazine stories” not only to lure prospective readers but to keep them on their feet by way of exploring developing stories.

## The essential difference between newspaper and magazine

Characteristics	Newspaper	Magazine
<b>Content</b>	Content in newspapers is current news and developments on ongoing issues in the world, with short articles.	Have specific content such as fashion, medicine, and sports, with long articles.
<b>Target audience</b>	Have a broad audience as they provide information on current matters	Target a specific audience based on the information being provided
<b>Design</b>	Have a simple layout and design	Have a complex design with an aim of catching the readers' eye.
<b>Pricing</b>	Are generally affordable	Are more expensive
<b>Article length</b>	Contain short articles	Contain longer articles
<b>Paper quality</b>	The quality of the paper used is poor which makes them affordable	Uses high-quality paper which is more durable and also appeals to the target audience
<b>Pictures</b>	Offers on more information as opposed to pictures	Contains a lot of pictures such as celebrities, fashionable wear, and latest cars and devices.
<b>Language used</b>	Use formal language	Use informal language
<b>Frequency of publication</b>	Are published more frequently, with most being daily or weekly	May not be published frequently, with some being published after a span of even six months or a year
<b>Entertainment</b>	Are not fun to read as that is not their scope	Is fun to read as they aim to attract more readers
<b>Number of staff</b>	Employ a large number of staff in terms of reporters, writers, and editors,	May not employ a large number of workers and may rely on freelance writers

Figure 1 Comparison table between newspaper and magazine. Source: differencebetween.net

First, newspapers are published daily while magazines are published weekly (Njogu, 2019 & White 2019), monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly. It is noticeable that there are more newspapers on the newsstand than magazines. The timeliness of newspapers enables it to be produced more often than the magazine. Therefore, newspapers are called dailies while

magazines are referred to as periodicals because they are not published daily.

Second, newspapers are less attractive, appealing, colorful, and glossy than magazines. Perhaps that is why magazines are called “the gloss and the glitter of the print media” (Akinwalere, 2013). Because newspapers come out more often, they have limited time for fanciful columns. Besides, since by its nature newspaper is simpler, it makes do with black and white coloration. However, magazine handlers take their time in decorating their content to attract prospective readers.

Third, newspapers cover more stories while magazines carry more articles. Newspapers have more volume with charts and graphs (White, 2019) because they carry more news and information than a magazine. What is more, newspapers touch on almost everything newsworthy for the benefit of the reading public. Being more elitist, the magazine features more features-stories and long intellectual articles which are decorated in columns. Some readers buy magazines because of the cover story or certain columns. This is why the magazine style of writing is called “articles” or features while than of newspaper is straight forward news style.

Fourth, the newspaper carries editorial while magazine goes with “from the Editor’s desk.” It is necessary to make this difference clear because sometimes, some editors mistakenly pen their name at the end of an editorial. In modern newspaper journalism, the editor does not write his or her name at the end of the editorial because the editorial does not carry an opinion. On the contrary, the editorial is the policy thrust of the newspaper concerning a burning issue, like the recent ban on open grazing by some governors, which is already in the public domain.

The newspaper must state its position concerning the matter. For a magazine, the editor can append his name in the preceding pages to which he signs “From the Editor’s Desk.” Usually, apart from giving readers highlights of the issues raised in the magazine, the editor lures them through the personal opinion that puts them in the mood to read the entire content of the magazine.

Fifth, magazines deal with investigative, interpretative, analytical and correlative stories but newspaper deals with fresh facts. Perhaps it

is good to emphasize that investigative, interpretative, analytical, and correlative stories often concern high-profile corruption, abuse of power, and other such human rights' abuses. Most times, cover stories of magazines deal with these issues by creating in the minds of readers a sense of suspense leaving them with the desire to seek more information in subsequent editions where the developing story is fully unraveled.

Sixth, while magazines provide information for the leisurely and critical readers, newspaper creates short stories for commoners as they unfold. Again, the elitist dimension of the magazine is the point being made here. While magazine audiences are more educated, newspapers can be read by less literate people. Though not exhaustive, the essential difference between newspapers and magazines prepares us for the role of the print media in Nigeria. Overall, both "Magazines and newspapers provide a good read for vital information" (Njogu, 2019).

### **Highlights on the role of the print media**

Generally, the media are considered as the Fourth estate of the realm (Thomas Carlyle, British House of Commons, 1841) (Dyikuk, 2017) which ranks after the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature (Dyikuk, 2017). This draws attention to the noble role of the media in society some of which are highlighted thus:

#### **Agenda-Setting**

By deciding what people should talk about in society, the media stimulates discussion to get different perspectives about those issues towards the transformation of society. In that way, the media not only fulfills its agenda-setting role but serves as a gatekeeper of news and information (Mccombs, 2011).

#### **Surveillance**

When the media like a hawk hovers around society to ensure that those who do right are commended and those who act evilly are exposed to reform, it is fulfilling its surveillance role. The surveillance role of the media reveals it as a vanguard and a gadfly that stings to consciousness (Bøge, Albrechtslund & Lauritsen, 2017).

#### **Information and education**

Without media, it would have been difficult to access news and information. A well-informed person can be described as a well-educated person. Thanks to the media, the populace can know what is happening both far and near to them (Nayak, 2018).

#### **Entertainment**

Another essential role of the media is entertainment. While providing information, the media can keep their listeners or readers entertained in a media phenomenon called infotainment – a combination of information and entertainment (Theonlinemedia.blogspot.com, 2012).

#### **Social change**

In media studies, media-for-change is a new area that the media uses to create social change in the country. The media uses its platforms to mobilize the citizenry through well-informed commentaries on what is happening across the country towards social and economic transformation (Encyclopedia.com, 2002).

### **How print media shapes morals and promotes national consciousness in Nigeria**

#### **Facilitates attitudinal and behavioral change**

Over the years, the print media in Nigeria has distinguished itself as a medium that facilitates attitudinal and behavioral change. It would be recalled that it was *Premium Times* Newspaper which exposed the National Youth Service Corps certificate forgery of the former Minister of Finance, Mrs. Kemi Adeosun. This investigative story eventually forced her to resign from her office (BBC, 2018). Since her resignation, other people who were taking the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for granted began to have attitudinal and behavioral change towards the scheme.

#### **Controls and manages society**

Based on the provision of law in the country that: "...The mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people," (1999 Constitution, Chapter II, Section 22) the

print media in Nigeria controls and manages society.

### **Forms agenda for public opinion**

The gatekeeping and gate-watching the role of the media enables it to form agenda for public discussion and opinion. For instance, if the economy is bad, the media can decide to focus on the war on terror in the northeast. The current focus of the media on insecurity is a case in point. It would be recalled that it was the print media that helped to bring back the democratic process Nigerians are enjoying. According to Dare Babarinsa, back in the days, *Tell Magazine* was seen an authority in the political transition program of the country (Kukah, 2011).

### **Exposes heinous crimes/political corruption**

As part of specialized reporting, journalists in the country have contributed in no small way to uncovering crime through investigative journalism. The death of journalists like Dele Giwa and Bagauda Kalto who met their end in an attempt to unravel corruption in high places is worth recalling. Also, in 1999, *The News Magazine* uncovered the certificate forgery scandal of Salisu Buhari, former Speaker of the House of Representatives which led to his exit from office.

That is not all, a former Senate President, Evan(s) Enwerem was exposed by *Tell Magazine* for using the credentials of his sibling hence the confusion about his true name between “Evan” and “Evans” which led to his impeachment. This was at a time when people in such positions were seen as gods. In like manner, the media exposed a onetime Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Patricia Etteh for corruption which led to her impeachment by her colleagues.

### **Uproots Oppressive Regimes**

At a time in the history of Nigeria, the military juntas in a place shut everyone up including the media. From General Buhari’s Degree 4 through Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha’s repression of the press, the media singled itself as an institution that spoke truth to power. For example, in 1993 *Tell Magazine* set up what it called, an *Adversary Press* during the Babangida administration to taunt the regime. Between the

70s to the mid-1980s, it took the resilience and doggedness of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed, and Dan Agbese to front *Newswatch* as an investigative magazine that kept the military junta on its toes. This continued until the return of Nigeria to civil rule on May 29, 1999.

### **Curbs immorality and upholds human rights**

No institution has helped in the creation of awareness about human rights abuse in the country like the media. It has always upheld the dignity of the human person by advocating for the fundamental human rights of the oppressed in society. The case of Ese Duru, a minor that was abducted from Bayelsa in lieu of forceful Islamization made headlines in national dailies. Similarly, the case of the late Ochanya Ogbanje, in Benue State who was serially molested sexually by the male child and husband of her aunty leading to complications and eventual death caught the attention of the media demanding justice for the deceased and her family (Dyikuk, 2019).

We cannot forget the gruesome murder of Saifura Khorsa and Hauwa Liman, aid workers with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by suspected Boko Haram Islamists (Dyikuk & Kanu, 2018). Newspapers and magazines rose in condemnation of the gruesome acts while demanding the security agencies to do the needful in providing security for other vulnerable groups in the area. The case of Leah Sharibu and other Chibok abductees has gained media traction and saturation. The media has been at the forefront of advocating for their unconditional release and the protection of women and children who are often soft targets that are used as suicide bombers.

### **Engenders social interaction and unity**

The “global village” (Nwabueze, 2014) philosophy has been glamorized by the media. This is because the media engenders social interaction and unity. For example, when various media groups were reporting the activities of the *Bring Back Our Girls Campaign* who were advocating for the release of the Chibok schoolgirls, both the conveners who are drawn from different ethnic groups across the country and the media did not see the issue as an isolated one. This is why the argument is sustained that

the media engenders social interaction and unity in the country.

### **Increases knowledge-creation/sharing and national consciousness**

Its informative and educating role places the media in a position to create awareness and promote national consciousness. For instance, it is the Nigerian media that brought to the consciousness of the citizenry concepts like the doctrine of necessity, budget padding, and postponement of elections.

#### **Doctrine of necessity**

On February 9, 2010, the phrase “Doctrine of Necessity” which means “Making lawful by necessity that which was otherwise not lawful” was added to the political history of Nigeria. The concept was first applied in Pakistan on October 24, 1954, and Grenada in 1985 (Saharareporters.com, 2010).

#### **Budget padding**

In 2016, the National assembly added a new phrase to the political dictionary of Nigeria namely, “Budget Padding.” Budget padding which is an artificial inflation of a proposed national budget was all over the news at the time.

#### **Postponement of elections**

On February 8, 2015, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) postponed the February 14 presidential election by six weeks citing insecurity. History repeated itself on February 16, 2019, when the Presidential and National Assembly elections were shelved about four hours to the time by a week on grounds of logistics.

### **Downsides of the print media in Nigeria**

Since we have highlighted the positive contributions of the print media to shaping morals and promoting national consciousness, it is equally important to enumerate some challenges militating against the print media in Nigeria. These are:

#### **Story-telling challenge**

The impression that Africans are storytellers than readers presents a cultural challenge. If this perception is anything to go by, it limits the

explosion of a “thorough reading culture” and where this is lacking, newspapers and magazines cannot flourish in terms of production and patronage. The saying, “if you want to hide something from a black man, put it in a book” has painted the black race in a bad light. Truth be told, the Global South has produced academics beyond reckoning. What is playing out is the challenge of bad leadership and limited infrastructure which has brought about brain drain. The educational tourism we see today is not far-fetched.

#### **Challenge of many hands**

It is almost impossible to run a print media industry with few hands. This is why most communications medium specialize in a functional division of labor and synergy (Nossek, Adoni & Nimrod, 2015). To counter quackery in the industry, print media demands many hands for efficiency. Because of the paucity of funds, many newspaper and magazine corporations employ few people and belabor them with tasks that were meant for three to four people. One could be an advert and distribution manager and sales agent at the same time. This affects the staff in question and the general output. Because print journalism is a pretty serious business, the challenge of recruiting many hands due to a lack of funds is huge. This limits the industry.

#### **Challenge of time**

The nature of print media makes it time-consuming and “time is the most egalitarian of all human resources” (Nossek, Adoni & Nimrod, 2015, p.369). For instance, the reporter would need to go to the field to get the raw data, come back, and report to his or her beat editor who in turn edits and submits the story to the sub-editor until it gets to both the deputy editor and editor-in-chief. This process takes time because the editors must ensure that what comes out of their medium is factual and confirmed. Therefore, because print journalism involves processes namely gathering, processing, and dissemination of information to heterogeneous audiences, it is nonetheless impeded by the challenge of time.

#### **Challenge of funding**

The point has been made that print media operation is expensive. The media industry in

Nigeria faces the serious challenge of funding (Nwogwugwu, 2015). The gathering, processing, and dissemination of news and information by journalists require money. Without funds, journalists may not be able to have the required gadgets like midgets or travel far for assignments. The printing and distribution of newspapers and magazines across the 36 states of the country equally require funding because at the end of the day, if the vendor is not given some stipends, he or she may not sell the newspaper or magazine.

#### **Challenge in limitation of circulation**

Print media does not enjoy wide outreach compared to the radio (Mathur, 1990 & Diamundialradio.org, 2019). Its expensive nature which relates to distribution to all the states of the country presents a problem as those entails spending huge sums of money. Therefore, the challenge in limitation of circulation short-changes the newspaper or magazine industry compared to broadcast which though has its challenges such as electricity and lack of penetration to rural areas, has the advantage over the print media industry.

#### **Challenge of digitalization**

Despite the sudden increase in embracing the rudiments of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) especially among the young, most newspaper and magazine operators have not seen the need for going digital. This becomes a huge challenge for the media industry in the country because young people prefer to browse news online than buy what is on newsprint. As such, print media in Nigeria is constantly being challenged by the digitalization process in place (Mishra, 2017) because “Nigerian newspapers have failed to recognize the importance of online content” (Ogunlesi cited in Olatunbosun, 2017).

#### **Elitist challenge**

Newspaper and Magazine are said to be elitist because only those who read and write could access them (Merrill, 1968 & Peterson, 1981). The elitist nature of the print media militates against its penetration across the length and breadth of the country especially in rural areas where the literacy level is low. For instance, in northern Nigeria, it is most likely to find five people listening to the radio in the morning than

seeing someone reading a newspaper. Despite the availability of some Hausa newspapers and magazines, most people in the region prefer watching and or listening to the news.

### **Recommendations and conclusion**

#### **Recommendations**

##### **Instilling a high sense of nationalism**

Growing up in a country that is polarized by ethnic, religious, and political differences could impinge on the national consciousness. Chances are that some print media houses serve political, religious, sectional, and ethnic interests. Since the newspaper and magazine reading culture is currently high as earlier observed, it behooves on print media firms to ensure that they do not serve parochial or vested interests. Therefore, creating a high sense of nationalism and patriotism in young people remains sacrosanct (Negedu & Atabor, 2015,p.79). This means that the media ought to work towards national integration, peace, unity, and progress.

##### **Rethinking media content**

Media content is crucial to either nation-building or setting the country ablaze. This is why journalists and indeed other professionals in the media industry ought to rethink the newspaper and magazine content they publish for the reading pleasure of their teaming readers. If for instance a newspaper or magazine publishes content that supports the Biafra agitation or downplays the role of the Nigerian Army in the present fight against Boko Haram in the North-East, it is likely going to affect the psyche of the nation as well as give way to hate-speeches along regional lines. Rethinking media content and development (Obalanlege, 2015) towards objective reportage which leads to national building is not negotiable.

##### **Massive funding**

The media often survives on the two lungs of finance and professionalism. This is why newspaper and magazine media firms ought to get finances and fully trained people to serve the society and pay to staff their remuneration as at when due. We earlier mentioned that many media corporations do not pay their workers promptly which gives room to the “brown envelop” syndrome and compromising the ethical standards of the journalism profession

(Dyikuk, 2015). Therefore, if the print media sector must survive in Nigeria, it requires massive funding from adverts, crowdfunding, subscriptions, and philanthropists to keep its head high in the eyes of the international media.

### **Embracing digitalization**

Whereas newspapers and magazines in most countries have gone digital, many print media houses in the country are battling with newsprint. Although the advent of the computer in the 1980s and 90s (Afolabi, 2016) signaled elements of a future digitalization, the phenomenon was not fully embraced. As a consequence, most of the media houses suffer losses because their products are returned due to low patronage. In line with other international media, the print media industry in Nigeria ought to start digitalizing its newspaper and magazine contents. Currently, what *Premium Times* is doing is commendable.

### **Training of journalists**

The need to train and retrain journalists can never be over-emphasized (Dyikuk, 2017). Since the point has been made that newspapers and magazines are elitist in terms of patronage, managing its content based on gathering, processing, and dissemination of information for the consumption of a large number of audiences requires well-trained personnel. This means that “owners of the media” ought to as a matter of urgency engage in capacity building to update their staff on the latest technology in the media world. Journalists themselves could cash in on fellowships such as British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) training programs for journalists. Government can also give a subscription to media firms to help train staff through capacity building.

### **Revamping the reading culture**

In a society where the culture of reading has not reached its full potential, all stakeholders need to do the needful. What is important to this study is the promotion of morals and national consciousness. If institutions such as families, schools, and the government revamp the reading culture across the country, patriotism would be better appreciated by all. The Ministry of Education, National Orientation Agency (NOA), as well as the office of the Minister of

Information, should do the needful in creating and sustaining reading culture among our people especially children (Saka, Bitagi & Garba, 2012).

### **Training the young to appreciate the media**

In line with restoring the reading culture is the training of the young to love and appreciate the media. Framers of the country’s education curriculum failed to include media studies in primary and secondary schools. What this implies is that children who are supposed to develop careers and test-run what they would encounter in tertiary institutions are not allowed to fall in love with journalism. As against the practice of meeting with journalism for the first time at the tertiary level, it behooves those responsible for the country’s education curriculum to do what is required so that the young are trained to appreciate the media (Onumah, 2008). This would help in the shaping of morals and promotion of national consciousness.

### **Conclusion**

At the heart of this discussion is employing print media to shape morals and promote national consciousness. The researchers had argued that print journalism in Nigeria facilitates attitudinal and behavioral change, controls and manages society, forms agenda for public opinion, exposes heinous crimes like political corruption in high places, uproots oppressive regimes, curbs immorality, and upholds human rights, engenders social interaction, and increases knowledge-creation and sharing even as it engenders national consciousness.

Without prejudice to the lofty ideals of print media journalism which have been highlighted, the study observed some down sides of the print media in the country such as the story-telling challenge, the challenge of employing many hands, time, and funding as well as the challenge of limitation of circulation, digitalization and elitist nature of the industry. If the print media industry is to make headway, it is essential that these challenges are surmounted.

Therefore, the work suggested instilling a high sense of nationalism, rethinking media content, massive funding, embracing digitalization, training of journalists, and training the young to appreciate the media as veritable ways of shaping morals and promoting national

consciousness in Nigeria. In a country where people are likely to be divided based on vested interests, both academia and the media ought to show the way. This is where the words of the Indian scholar and journalist, Seno Gumira Ajidarma come to the fore: “When journalism is silenced, literature must speak because while journalism speaks with facts, literature speaks with the truth” (Miller, 2018).

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