



## AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Environmental sustainability is a critical global concern, and Nigeria, as a populous and ecologically diverse nation, faces numerous environmental challenges such as deforestation, pollution and inadequate waste management. In recent years, mass media campaigns have emerged as powerful tools to raise awareness and promote sustainable practices among Nigerians. It is in the light of this that this study assessed the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria. The researchers embarked on this study with the intent of achieving four objectives, and based on the objectives of this study, four research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study. The researchers anchored this study on the Two-Step Flow Theory. Survey was adopted as the most suitable research design for this study, and data were collected through the use of questionnaire. Findings from this study show that mass media campaigns have had a significant impact on increasing public awareness of environmental issues in Nigeria. These campaigns have successfully communicated the urgency of protecting the environment and the consequences of unsustainable practices. Moreover, they have motivated citizens to take action, with many respondents reporting changes in their behaviour such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting environmental initiatives. This study concludes by emphasizing the importance of continued investment in mass media campaigns for environmental sustainability in Nigeria. This study recommends tailoring campaigns to local context, leveraging new media platforms, and enhancing collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector to create a holistic and impactful approach to environmental education and advocacy.*

**KEYWORDS:** Mass Media Campaigns, Environmental Sustainability, Nigeria



## INTRODUCTION

The last decades of the last century saw the movement of concerns for the human geophysical environment from a subject of social activism to a global agenda. This was as a result of the realization that one of the consequences of human economic activities was the accumulation of Green House Gases (GHG) in the earth's atmosphere and this could lead to climate change and its negative consequences and, the environmental degradation resulting from that could harm humanity, fauna and Flora, biodiversity, ecosystems and many others.

Historically, these growing concerns were galvanized into political action with the organization of the Stockholm United Nations (UN) Conference on Human Environment and the Rio de Janeiro UN conference on Environment and Development - also known as the Earth Summit, in 1972 and 1992, respectively (Osuntokan, 1999 cited in Ajibade, 2013). These conferences did not only signify the growing global concern about the environment but also drew the connections between environmental sustainability and development (Eneh, 2019). This growing awareness was also highlighted when in 1997, the Kyoto protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were adopted with the aim of reversing the industrial activities that contributed to high Green House Gases emissions and the depletion of the ozone layer particularly, by the industrialized nations of the world. While several environment centered conferences have held since then, the Kyoto protocol stands out in its recognition that developing countries contribute the least to climate change but could likely suffer the most from the effects (The Global Climate Change Regime, 2013).

For Nigeria and other African countries, the situation of socio-economic development at the heart of the environmental discourse fell surely in line with what is already considered the main agenda of the African state; development. After all, the post-colonial African state, by its origins and political exigencies, has been forced to assume the image of a developmental state (Egwu, 2016). But beyond the political considerations, the objective realities of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation have already become real issues in Nigeria. Increased problems of water shortages, floods, droughts and desertification which threaten food security and human survival have become symptomatic of the effects of the ailing status of the environment on the Nigerian society. For instance, in the past few years, most urban and rural communities have suffered from floods with the situation in year 2012 being recorded as the worst in recent times (Adejumo & Adejumo, 2014; Odermeho, 2020). This in addition to the continuing herders versus farmers conflict which has resulted in tremendous losses in lives and property, and has been attributed to climate change, albeit indirectly.

In the face of these clear and present dangers of environmental degradation, the Nigerian state has responded through agencies, policies, and programmes aimed at the protection of the environment and to ensure sustainable development. Some of these intentions are clearly evident in a plethora of documents, laws and establishments which traverse the entire Nigerian administrative system. From the 1999 constitution with its provisions for the protection of the environment (Sections 20, 16(2), 17(2)) the National Policy on Environment of 1989, the Millennium Development Goals project; to the many international conventions and summits which the country is signatory to, there have been obvious attempts in the developmental rhetorics of various Nigerian governments to include environmental protection and sustainability in the development agenda. However, the contention remains as to the effectiveness of these various efforts in accomplishing their major objectives of facilitating



socio-economic development while ensuring environmental sustainability especially, when viewed in relations to other sectoral policies which also aim at the same objectives.

Environmental sustainability has become a global imperative, with nations worldwide recognizing the need to protect and preserve their natural resources for future generations. In Nigeria, a country grappling with various environmental challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, mass media campaigns have emerged as a crucial tool for raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices. One of the greatest environmental challenges facing developing countries is the unhealthy disposal of solid waste which results from human activities of development and survival. It is a problem recognised by all nations at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, and regarded as a major barrier in the path towards sustainability of the environment (Ifegbesan, 2019).

According to Olaniyi (2021), Nigeria has experienced significant deforestation due to activities such as logging, urbanization, and agriculture expansion. This leads to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Nigeria faces various forms of pollution, including air pollution from industrial emissions and vehicular exhaust, water pollution from oil spills and inadequate waste management, and land pollution from improper waste disposal. These pollutants have detrimental effects on public health, ecosystems, and natural resources.

In agreement with the view of Olaniyi, Njoku (2022) noted that Nigeria is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. These changes pose risks to agriculture, water resources, and coastal communities. Nigeria is home to diverse ecosystems, including rainforests, savannahs, and wetlands. However, habitat destruction, unsustainable hunting, and invasive species threaten the country's unique biodiversity, including endangered species, such as the Nigerian chimpanzee and Cross River gorilla.

The mass media plays a pivotal role in the promotion of environmental sustainability. Through various channels such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and online platforms, the media disseminates relevant information and educates the public about the need for environmental conservation. The media not only brings environmental issues to the forefront but also influences public perception and attitudes towards these issues. They are instrumental in encouraging responsible behavior and promoting initiatives, policies, and practices aimed at preserving the environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The issue of waste disposal and management are still problems to cities in the south-south region of Nigeria, and they hinder environmental sustainability. With the growing population at an alarming rate coupled with technological advancement over time, waste disposal and management began to constitute serious problem even in cities. Indiscriminate dumping of household solid wastes on our streets, rivers and drainages has contributed in no small measure to drainage blockage, flooded road and the spread of offensive odors and diseases. Many households are struggling with how to manage their waste. Waste is accumulating day-in day-out, as there is no waste management. The methods of solid waste disposal in some parts of the region include dumping of refuse to gutters, drains, roadside, unauthorized dumping sites and stream channels during raining season and burning of wastes on unapproved dumping sites during the dry season.



The problem of waste management in this region, when combined with rapid urbanization and unplanned development is expected to be of such magnitude that significant reasons exist to initiate immediate action for improvement of this appalling situation. It was on this note that the different governments in the south-south states establish Ministry of Environment and other related agencies. Awareness and attitude of people in the community appear to be crucial as their points of understanding of household solid waste management ultimately play an important role in providing answer to environmental problem.

However, there have been various mass media campaigns on environmental sustainability in Nigeria; the effectiveness of these campaigns have been questionable due to the fact that improper waste disposal and management are on the increase; therefore, this study intends to fill this research gap.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The researchers embarked on this study with the intent of achieving the following objectives:

- i. To evaluate the reach and audience engagement of existing mass media campaigns focused on environmental sustainability in Nigeria;
- ii. To assess the behavioral changes and practices related to environmental sustainability that has been influenced by mass media campaigns among the Nigerian population;
- iii. To analyze the key factors contributing to the success of mass media initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability; and
- iv. To provide recommendations for improving the design and implementation of future mass media campaigns aimed at enhancing environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study;

- i. What is the reach and audience engagement of existing mass media campaigns focused on environmental sustainability in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the behavioral changes and practices related to environmental sustainability that has been influenced by mass media campaigns among the Nigerian population?
- iii. What are the key factors contributing to the success of mass media initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability?
- iv. What are some of the recommendations for improving the design and implementation of future mass media campaigns aimed at enhancing environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Nigeria?



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Environmental Sustainability

The environment refers to both the physical and social circumstances which surround people and have influence on them. It is both objective and subjective. This is because it includes water bodies and the life there in, land mass, forests, grasslands, deserts, animals and man himself and all the interactions that take place (Gana and Toba, 2015). It also refers to: all the natural endowment and those provided by man in his efforts to make life meaningful and comfortable. This means everything that affects man in anyway- land, water, air, trees, grasses and houses (Nwanne, 2013).

The environment is basically, an aggregate of the physical and biological entities which support the existence of man in all ramifications (Nwanne, 2013). This encompassing importance of the environment is further underscored by the fact that it provides all life support systems with air, water and land as well as the materials for fulfilling all development aspirations of man. Relating it to sustainability is the recognition that the environment represents a wealth of resources which must be protected. This recognition as an aspect of current development agenda can be traced to the 1987 Bruntland Commission of the United Nations which ascribed sustainability to development and defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Comprehensively therefore, environment sustainability refers to the conservation, management and rational utilization of natural resources in such a way to maintain the integrity of each ecosystem, support all life, ensure the preservation of biodiversity and prevent environmental degradation. Environmental sustainability forms one of the pillars of sustainability development, the others being social sustainability and economic sustainability. It is an aspect of the development process which emphasizes the harnessing of natural and social resources with major considerations for continuity and the future.

The concept 'environmental sustainability' is important within this century where the effects of environmental degradation stares us in the face as the earth is currently experiencing in global warming due to depletion of the ozone layer, expansion of the universe due to electromagnetic aggravated effect, deterioration of agricultural and agro-based productivity, environmental initiations and reduction in the healthy state of individuals resulting from reduced functionality of the immune system (Offiong & Dibia, 2020).

Environmental sustainability entails consciousness, an attitude, behaviour or character approach towards the self and one's environment (Adebimpe, 2019). It takes cognizance of population, sustainable yield, sustainable waste disposal, and competitive development and industrialization. Ugboma (2020) averred that environmental sustainability allows for the needs of man to be met without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Moreso, it is the responsible interaction with the environment to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources and allow for long-term environmental quality. The practice of environmental sustainability helps to ensure that needs of today's population are met without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their need. Environmental sustainability takes cognizance of the health of the eco-system in the long run and aims at protecting and preserving the eco-system. This is achievable through the following;





- Protecting and preserving resources of health and health productivity.
- Consideration of renewable resources by diversifying into energy sources that are non-renewable but consistently potent and effective e.g. solar and wind energy, which will reduce global warming etc.
- Ensure the production of factors of environmental reification especially on species diversity and ecological structure to give the opportunity for further innovation in technology medicine/medical improvements.
- An interaction with the environment, bearing in mind its rights and values, for example, the right for the existence of forests, for the existence of co-habitats and protection of rainforests.
- National policies and decisions on economic and infrastructural development should highly take ‘environmental preservation’ into integral consideration. Temperature, harsh weather conditions, water shortage, disease vulnerability, and agricultural productivity should strictly be put into consideration during economic and infrastructural decisions as it affects the environment.

### **Government’s Efforts towards achieving Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria**

Environmental sustainability is a critical concern for governments worldwide, and Nigeria is no exception. In recent years, the Nigerian government has taken several measures and initiatives to address environmental challenges and promote sustainability across various sectors. Here are some of the key efforts made by the Nigerian government towards achieving environmental sustainability as enumerated by Adebajji (2022):

- **National Environmental Policy:** Adebajji (2022) noted that the Nigerian Government developed a National Environmental Policy (NEP) that provides a framework for sustainable development and environmental management. The NEP outlines strategies, guidelines, and regulations to address environmental issues and promote sustainable practices.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** The Nigerian Government has mandated the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments for projects that may have significant environmental impacts. This ensures that potential environmental consequences are identified and appropriate mitigation measures are implemented before projects are approved.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Gbile (2021) noted that Nigeria has ratified the Paris Agreement, demonstrating its commitment to combating climate change. The government has developed the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes increasing renewable energy generation, promoting energy efficiency, and implementing sustainable land use practices.



- **Renewable Energy Development:** The Nigerian Government has implemented several initiatives to promote renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. The Renewable Energy Master Plan aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Reforestation and Afforestation:** The Nigerian Government has recognized the importance of forests in mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity. Efforts have been made to implement reforestation and afforestation programs, including the Great Green Wall project, which aims to restore and protect degraded lands in the Sahel region.
- **Waste Management:** The Nigerian Government has implemented policies and regulations to improve waste management practices. This includes promoting waste segregation, recycling, and the establishment of waste management facilities. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program holds manufacturers responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, including proper disposal and recycling.
- **Conservation and Protected Areas:** The government has established national parks, wildlife reserves, and other protected areas to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems. These areas are managed to ensure sustainable use of natural resources and protect endangered species.
- **Environmental Education and Awareness:** The Nigerian Government recognizes the importance of education and awareness in promoting environmental sustainability. Efforts have been made to integrate environmental education into school curricula and raise public awareness through campaigns, workshops, and seminars.
- **Pollution Control Measures:** According to Adebajji (2022), the Nigerian Government has implemented regulations and standards to control air and water pollution. Efforts are being made to reduce emissions from industries, promote cleaner production processes, and improve water quality through wastewater treatment.
- **International Cooperation:** Nigeria actively participates in international environmental conventions, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through these platforms, Nigeria collaborates with other nations to address global environmental challenges and share best practices.

### Strategies for achieving Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

Achieving environmental sustainability in Nigeria is crucial for the well-being of its people and the preservation of its natural resources. To address the complex challenges faced by the country, several strategies can be implemented. According to Kabiru (2019), one of the most effective strategies that can be adopted in achieving environmental sustainability in Nigeria is the adoption of renewable energy. Kabiru noted that the transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power can reduce Nigeria's dependence on fossil fuels, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.



Afforestation and reforestation is another way of achieving environmental sustainability in Nigeria. Initiatives to plant trees and protect existing forests can help combat deforestation and soil erosion, enhance biodiversity, and absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Also, improved waste collection, recycling, and disposal systems can reduce environmental pollution. Encouraging recycling programs and promoting responsible waste disposal practices are essential. Access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities is vital for both human health and ecosystem sustainability. Ensuring access to clean water sources and managing wastewater is essential.

According to Olubukola (2022), one of the ways a nation can achieve sustainable environment is the introduction of biodiversity conservation. Protecting endangered species and their habitats through conservation efforts and the establishment of protected areas is crucial for maintaining ecological balance. Also, promoting the use of public transport, electric vehicles, and non-motorized modes of transportation can reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector which can aid in promoting environmental sustainability. Also, efficient agriculture practices can help promote environmental sustainability. Adeolu (2021) noted that encouraging sustainable farming methods, crop rotation, and reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides can improve soil health and reduce negative environmental impacts.

Raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting eco-friendly behaviors among citizens can foster a culture of environmental responsibility. Strengthening environmental laws and regulations and enforcing them effectively is essential to deter activities that harm the environment, such as illegal logging and pollution.

### **Challenges of Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria**

The Nigerian environment has been bedeviled by a multiplicity of challenges and issues which range from poverty, pollution, deforestation and desertification, population growth and urbanization among others. An attempt is made here to provide an overview of some of these environment problems and the implications they portend for socio-economic development. Some of the challenges of environmental sustainability in Nigeria are as follows;

- a. **Poverty:** This represents one of the most daunting challenges undermining environmental sustainability in Nigeria. This is because it encapsulates most of the activities which undermine people's ability to uphold environmental protection goals. As a condition, poverty puts individuals in states of want and lack which do not only affect their physical wellbeing but also impact on their access to information and so on. Unfortunately, the poverty situation in Nigeria is such that official figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that in 2021 alone, over 50 million Nigerians were unemployed. This represented a 20% increase in the unemployment figures of the previous years, and 31% of the entire population. Such high unemployment figures imply high poverty levels among the population. Currently, according to ActionAid, poverty levels have so worsened since 2021 from a range of 54-60% in 2022; about 133 million Nigerians now live below the poverty line of 1.9 dollars a day (NBS, 2022). This also means that, with such basic survival needs, a very substantial proportion of the Nigerian population can hardly be bordered with issues of the environment or, even the future.





- b. **Deforestation and desertification:** Deforestation is the conversion of forested areas into something different while desertification is a type of land degradation in which a relatively dry land region becomes increasingly arid, typically losing its bodies of water as well as vegetation and wildlife (Geist, 2015). As problems of environmental and ecological degradation, human activities have been very pivotal in their occurrence especially in Nigeria. As implied under the discussion on poverty, a very high proportion of the Nigerian population lives directly off the natural environment. For instance, over 95% of the rural and poor communities in Nigeria use firewood as the major source of household energy (Nathaniel & Nathaniel, 2011). This is in addition to the number of those who fall trees for the purpose of income generation. Other human activities like traditional slash and burn subsistence farm methods and open range animal grazing have continually contributed to the clearing of forest areas thereby exacerbating the problems of deforestation and desertification in Nigeria.
- c. **Population growth and urbanization:** With a population of over 200 million people, Nigeria is no doubt the most populous black nation on earth. Furthermore, according to the database website, Trading Economics, the Nigerian population constitutes 2.35 percent of the world's total population and that; one person in every 43 human beings on earth is a resident of Nigeria. The existence of a large population clearly means the occurrence of greater human needs and a higher dependence on the environment. This has clearly been the case in Nigeria; increased population has led to increased needs for agricultural lands, industrial and infrastructural development as well as new human habitation which have resulted in a high urbanization rate. With an annual urbanization change rate of 4.66%, urbanization constitutes about 47.8% of the Nigerian dwelling space. This widening phenomenon has seen the clearing of forest areas as more people congregate to form new urban centres in the search for jobs and other life opportunities. Unfortunately, a combination of failed urban planning and poverty has implied woes for the Nigerian environment. The Nigerian environment has been left at the mercy of human attitudes especially as there exists an absence of political will by policymakers to reflect the growing needs of the ever increasing population. This combination of high population growth and rapid urbanization has become the root cause of high rates of environmental degradation, social delinquency, poverty, industrial decay and pollution.
- d. **Pollution:** Estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that about a quarter of the diseases facing mankind today occur due to prolonged exposure to environmental pollution. Also, that while some of these diseases could be detected within short periods of infection, most of the environmental pollution related diseases are not easily detected and may be acquired during childhood but only manifested later in adulthood (UNEP Report on Environmental Pollution and Impacts on Public Health). This reference to human health clearly captures the true nature of the consequences of environmental pollution; the ability to have immediate as well as far reaching effects). In Nigeria, problems of environmental pollution range from poor urban planning and lack of essential waste management facilities to inefficient industrial practices which put the environment in harm's way. A combination of related factors such as poverty, population growth and rapid urbanization and, the inability of governments to provide effective housing schemes has given rise to cities with high number of slums in which there are no waste management systems (Ezeabasili, 2013). Under such conditions,



citizens especially the slum dwelling poor and vulnerable have become increasingly exposed to communicable diseases and other health endangering circumstances.

### **Mass Media Campaign in Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria**

An organized, systematic, and effective utilization of the mass media for the purpose of ensuring environmental sustainability has remained topical in policy, practice and scholarly circles and will probably remain so for some time in future. This is because there has not emerged a reliable body of knowledge and tested practical strategies that can be applied to sustain the environment with relatively high degree of assurance for success than the effective use of the mass media of communication.

Environmental sustainability is a global concern, and Nigeria, as one of Africa's most populous countries, faces a myriad of environmental challenges. To address these issues and promote environmental sustainability, mass media campaigns have emerged as a powerful tool. Mass media, comprising television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, and other digital platforms, plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and behavior. In the context of environmental sustainability, mass media campaigns are essential for several reasons. Okoro (2021) noted that mass media campaigns serve as powerful platforms for raising awareness and educating the public about environmental issues, their causes, and potential solutions. They help bridge the information gap between experts and the general population. These campaigns can influence individual and collective behavior by promoting eco-friendly practices, conservation efforts, and responsible consumption.

Also, mass media campaigns can advocate for policy changes and reforms that support environmental protection and sustainability. They can put pressure on governments and corporations to adopt greener policies and practices. Effective mass media campaigns in Nigeria employ various strategies to engage and educate the public on environmental sustainability. Using compelling narratives, these campaigns share stories of environmental challenges and success stories to evoke emotions and connect with the audience. Utilizing images, videos, infographics, and animations, campaigns convey complex environmental issues in an accessible and engaging manner.

Mass media campaigns have demonstrated significant impacts in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria. These campaigns have successfully raised awareness among Nigerians about environmental issues, such as deforestation, air pollution, and waste management. They have influenced individual and community behavior, encouraging practices like waste recycling, water conservation, and reduced carbon emissions. Mass media campaigns have contributed to policy changes, including stricter regulations on pollution and the promotion of renewable energy sources. By engaging local communities, campaigns have empowered citizens to take ownership of environmental initiatives, fostering a sense of responsibility for their surroundings.

Mass media campaigns have emerged as vital tools in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria. They have the power to raise awareness, drive behavioral change, and advocate for policy reforms. However, challenges such as funding and regional diversity must be addressed for these campaigns to continue making a positive impact on Nigeria's environmental future. By harnessing the influence of mass media, Nigeria can move closer to achieving a sustainable and healthier environment for its citizens.



According to Odufuwa (2005), environmental education should be able to create awareness about environmental problems, motivate people to devoid from extravagance, conserve resources and protect environment; facilitate understanding and co-operation among people toward sustainable environmental issues; conserve indigenous knowledge, traditions and culture friendly to the environment. Such will inspire widespread public participation on all fronts and enable all, from the grass roots, through the relevant agencies to the leaders to understand the stakes, the urgent need for action and the necessary steps that must be taken towards sustainable national environmental protection.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Two-Step Flow Theory. The two-step flow theory, first proposed by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in 1948, posits that media influence often occurs in two stages. It suggests that media content first reaches 'opinion leaders' who process this information and then pass it on to their followers or 'opinion followers.' The theory emphasizes the role of interpersonal relations in the process of media influence, suggesting that people are more likely to be influenced by these opinion leaders within their social circles than by mass media directly.

In the context of mass media campaigns for environmental sustainability, the two-step flow theory implies that the effectiveness of these campaigns often hinges on the influence of opinion leaders. These could be community leaders, influential bloggers, celebrities, or any individuals who have the power to sway public opinion within their circles. When these individuals endorse or promote sustainable practices, their followers are more likely to adopt these behaviours.

Implementing the two-step flow theory in Nigeria's context involves identifying and engaging with opinion leaders within various communities and social groups. These opinion leaders become the primary target audience for mass media campaigns on environmental sustainability. Once these leaders are informed and persuaded, they can then relay the information to their followers, thereby promoting a ripple effect of influence and action. In Nigeria, for example, religious leaders wield considerable influence. Engaging with these leaders to endorse and promote environmental sustainability can potentially have a significant impact. Similarly, popular celebrities, social media influencers, and even local community leaders can be utilized as opinion leaders to amplify the message of environmental sustainability.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted survey research design. Survey is highly useful in the field of social and behavioural sciences and indeed, in any study that has to do with human action and studies that have individual as unit of analysis. This method was considered appropriate for this study since, it provided all demographic and psychographic information, judgmental views and opinions from respondents on the topic that was investigated.

The population of this study comprises of residents of Auchi, headquarters of Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State. The projected number of this population is 500,000 (NBS, 2022). Also, the sample size for this study is 400 which were drawn from the population. This sample size is made up of individuals who have been selected randomly from the



population. In getting the sample size of 400, the researcher employed the Taro Yamane's formula.

### Findings

During the course of this research, 400 copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, 20 copies were wrongly filled and 380 copies were returned. Therefore, the data collected is shown in the tables below

**Research Question 1:** What is the reach and audience engagement of existing mass media campaigns focused on environmental sustainability in Nigeria? Item 1, 2 and 3 were used to answer this research question.

**Table 1: Are you aware of mass media campaigns on environmental sustainability in Nigeria?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	380	100
No	0	0
Undecided	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Table 2: Which of the following mass media do you use to access information related to environmental sustainability?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio	19	5
Television	108	28
Newspaper/magazine	6	2
Online media	247	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Table 3: How will you rate the reach and audience engagement of mass media campaigns on environmental sustainability in Nigeria?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	104	27
Very good	76	20
Good	93	24
Moderate	71	19
Poor	26	7
Very poor	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)



**Research Question 2:** What are the behavioral changes and practices related to environmental sustainability that has been influenced by mass media campaigns among the Nigerian population? Item 4 and 5 were used to answer this research question.

**Table 4: Have you made any changes in your behaviour or daily practices related to environmental sustainability as a result of mass media campaigns?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	287	75
No	78	21
Undecided	15	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Table 5: Which of the following environmental sustainability practices or behaviours have you adopted or modified due to mass media campaigns?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recycling or proper waste disposal	101	27
Conserving energy	18	5
Using public transportation or carpooling	41	11
Planting of trees	89	23
Supporting eco-friendly products	11	3
Participating in clean-up or conservation activities	27	7
None of the above	93	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Research Question 3:** What are the key factors contributing to the success of mass media initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability? Item 6 and 7 were used to answer this research question.

**Table 6: Which of the following factors do you believe contribute most significantly to the success of mass media initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Clear and compelling messaging	172	45
Consistent and widespread media coverage	69	18
Effective use of visual and graphics	52	14
Involvement with local communities	87	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>





**Table 7: How do you perceived the impact of mass media initiatives on your awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability?**

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Positive	254	67
Negative	61	16
Neutral	65	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Research Question 4:** What are some of the recommendations for improving the design and implementation of future mass media campaigns aimed at enhancing environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Nigeria? Item 8 and 9 were used to answer this research question.

**Table 8: Which of the following do you recommend for improving the design and implementation of future mass media campaigns focused on environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Nigeria?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Enhancing the use of local language and cultural references to increase accessibility	111	29
Collaborating with local communities and grassroots organizations for wider impact	107	28
Conducting regular follow-up and impact assessments to measure campaign	98	26
Partnering with industry and businesses to promote eco-friendly products and practices	64	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

**Table 9: How important do you think it is for future mass media campaigns on environmental awareness to involve active participation and feedback from the Nigerian population?**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very important	198	52
Moderately important	55	15
Slightly important	127	33
Not important	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)



## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Environmental sustainability is a pressing global issue, and Nigeria, with its diverse ecosystems and growing population, faces unique environmental challenges. To address these challenges, various mass media campaigns have been launched to promote environmental awareness and sustainable practices across the country. Television remains one of the most influential mass media platforms in Nigeria. Environmental sustainability campaigns on television reach a broad and diverse audience. Programs like “Eco-Watch” and “Green Nigeria” have successfully brought environmental issues into living rooms, reaching urban and rural populations alike. Radio campaigns have proven effective in reaching remote and underserved areas. Local radio stations broadcast programs and jingles that educate listeners about sustainable practices. The “Radio for the Environment” initiative, supported by NGOs, has amplified environmental messages across Nigeria’s regions.

Mass media campaigns focused on environmental sustainability in Nigeria have made significant strides in both reach and audience engagement. These campaigns have become instrumental in raising awareness, fostering environmental consciousness, and encouraging sustainable practices among the Nigerian population. However, continuous efforts are needed to ensure the long-term impact of these campaigns, including regular assessments and adaptation to changing circumstances. By combining the power of mass media with active audience engagement, Nigeria can work towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future.

Again, mass media campaigns have heightened awareness about waste management and recycling. Nigerians are now more conscious of separating recyclables from non-recyclables. Communities have initiated recycling programs, and individuals have started composting organic waste, reducing the volume of waste sent to landfills. Energy conservation campaigns, promoted through television, radio, and social media, have encouraged Nigerians to adopt energy-efficient practices. Many households now use energy-saving appliances, switch off lights when not in use, and take advantage of natural lighting to reduce electricity consumption.

Mass media campaigns have played a pivotal role in transforming the behavior and practices of the Nigerian population toward greater environmental sustainability. These campaigns have heightened awareness, educated citizens, and inspired action at the individual and community levels. While significant progress has been made, ongoing efforts to reinforce these positive changes, measure their impact, and adapt to emerging environmental challenges are essential for Nigeria to continue on the path toward a more sustainable future.

The success of mass media initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability hinges on a combination of factors that include effective messaging, influential spokespersons, media coverage, interactivity, cultural sensitivity, partnerships, timeliness, community involvement, measurement, and youth engagement. By strategically incorporating these elements, mass media campaigns can inspire meaningful change and contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.



## CONCLUSION

The assessment of the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria reveals both notable achievements and areas for improvement. Over the years, mass media initiatives have played a pivotal role in raising awareness, educating the public and inspiring action towards a more environmentally conscious society. Mass media campaigns have successfully raised awareness about critical environmental issues in Nigeria, ranging from deforestation and waste management to climate change and water conservation. They have educated citizens about the consequences of unsustainable practices and the importance of adopting eco-friendly behaviors. These campaigns have influenced behavioral changes among the Nigerian population. Individuals and communities have embraced sustainable practices, such as recycling, energy conservation, and tree planting. The adoption of these practices represents a positive shift towards more responsible environmental stewardship.

Mass media initiatives have not only engaged the public but have also influenced policy discussions and advocacy efforts related to environmental sustainability. They have empowered citizens to voice their concerns, support eco-friendly policies, and hold government and industry accountable for sustainable practices. Initiatives targeting youth have been particularly impactful. They have instilled a sense of environmental responsibility among the younger generation, who are passionate advocates for sustainability. Youth engagement initiatives have the potential to shape a more sustainable future for Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. It is essential to conduct comprehensive evaluation studies to assess the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria. These studies should include pre- and post-campaign surveys, focus groups, and interviews with target audiences to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This evaluation will provide valuable insights into the impact of the campaigns and help identify areas for improvement.
- ii. Collaboration and partnerships between media organizations, environmental NGOs, government agencies, and private sector entities need to be strengthened. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of mass media campaigns by pooling resources, expertise, and knowledge. Working together can ensure the development of impactful content, wider reach, and better coordination for a more cohesive and consistent messaging strategy.
- iii. To maximize the reach and impact of mass media campaigns, it is important to utilize diverse media channels. While traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers remain influential, the growing popularity of digital platforms, social media, and online streaming services should not be overlooked. Integrating these channels into campaign strategies can effectively target different demographic groups and reach audiences in both urban and rural areas.



- iv. Mass media campaigns should aim to foster long-term engagement and encourage sustained action among the audience. This can be achieved by providing practical tips, resources, and tools that enable individuals and communities to translate awareness into tangible environmental actions. Campaigns should also emphasize the importance of collective responsibility and community participation in achieving environmental sustainability goals. Regular follow-ups, interactive platforms, and the use of storytelling techniques can help maintain engagement and inspire long-lasting behavior change.

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