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UNDERSTANDING RADIO'S ROLE IN RURAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN OGONI LAND

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The study focused on the imminent undermining of the remediation work on oil-impacted sites in Ogoni land in the event of message misinterpretation in the communication process between HYPREP and Ogonis occasioned by negative perception of the radio programme in focus. Hence, this study examined the awareness and knowledge of Eleme people on radio programming about rural environment issues in Ogoniland. The study anchored on the individual difference theory, which added validation to the findings. The study adopted the survey research design and a mixed method to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The population for the study is that part of the active audience of the Ogoni clean-up show on 93.7 FM from which the researcher got data for the research. The population was gotten from the active audience of the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM in Eleme Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The 2006 census figures for Port Harcourt 338,552 (FGN Official Gazette, 2009) and a 2.7% growth rate put the figure at 914,090 as at 2022. A total number of 385 respondents were selected as the sample size for this study using Meyer determinant table. The multi-stage cluster sampling technique was adopted to select the participants for sampling. The quantitative data collated from the questionnaire were presented in a frequency tabular form, whereas, the explanation building technique was used to analyze the qualitative data from the focus group discussion. Findings revealed that Eleme residents were not aware of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM”. This means that the programme’s popularity was not overwhelming among Eleme residents. The study recommended that an aggressive promotion should be done to popularize the programme for audience members to be aware and regularly follow-up the programme; sensitize the audience on the main focus and motif of the programme in order to mobilize audience participation that will make the programme effective and useful for rural development.

Keywords: Awareness, Knowledge, Eleme Residents, Radio Programming, Rural Environmental Issues.

Introduction

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The discovery of crude oil in large commercial quantity in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has resulted into major conflicts rather than wealth creation and development in the region. This is largely due to the damage done to the region's environment resulting from oil exploration activities without proper remediation and commensurate compensation to the people who are badly affected. A report compiled by the World Wild Fund and other partners confirmed that the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria is one of the five most polluted spots in the world (Azaiki, 2003). The major pollutions in the Niger Delta region have been mostly oil spillage and gas flaring by oil companies. These have resulted into loss of soil fertility, depletion of biodiversity, decline of fisheries, among many others. These have made the traditional economic activities of the people which is fishing and farming unprofitable and unproductive thereby, adversely affecting their livelihood. The continuous failure of both the Nigerian state and oil multi-nationals to positively influence the livelihood of the rural dwellers or provide alternative means, especially to the energetic youths of the region has resulted in several violent and non-violent agitations rising out of frustration. These agitations cut across virtually every part of the region and one of such key agitation was the Ogoni Uprising in the 1990s.

Eleme Local Government Area is one of the constituent areas of Ogoni nation where these environmental issues and agitations occur. It stands as the gateway to Ogoni land from Port Harcourt the capital city of Rivers State. The area is host to several multi-national companies such as the Indorama Petrochemical Company Plc, Port Harcourt Refinery Plc, Oil and Gas Free Zone and National Fertilizing Company of Nigeria. The activities of these multi-nationals in one or the other degrade the environment in the area. It mainly impacted vegetation and source of water supply due to the physical characteristics of oil. The 2003 report of the National Research Council (NRC) a Washington DC based organization, estimated that two million tons of oil has been released into the environment annually due to human and natural causes which contaminate the environment. This resulted into adverse long-term effects under particular conditions (Peterson *et al.* 2003).

The media were inundated with several criticisms of the handling of the environmental issues by these multi-nationals. These media offensives against the environmental issues perhaps were largely due to inadequate communication between the companies and the residents of the state. This may be sequel to under-reportage of oil spills and their adverse effects on citizens and environment in Nigeria. According to UNEP (2011) the oil spills occurring in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have not been adequately covered by the media globally, notwithstanding the significant impacts on human health and the local ecology.

Radio broadcasting plays a significant role in disseminating information to rural communities including discussions and content related to environmental issues. These broadcasts can serve as vital medium for raising awareness, educating and engaging multi-national companies, as well as rural populations in environmental conservation efforts. Radio programs often focus on discussing specific environmental issues affecting rural areas. According to Omu (2014) documentaries, interviews and call-in shows provide platforms for rural residents to voice their experiences and concerns. These contents help rural populace to understand the importance of resilience, and empower them to make informed decisions (Ayanwale *et al.*, 2014).

Radio broadcast programs can facilitate community engagement and participation in environmental conservation initiatives. This can be done by highlighting local conservation projects, nature reserves and success stories. These programs can engage listeners to get involved in conservation efforts. They may promote activities such as tree planting, habitat restoration and wildlife protection, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among rural communities (Okereke & Madu, 2017). The motivation behind this study is to establish whether these radio

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programs' contents address the concerns of the rural populace affected by these environmental issues and how the Eleme people perceive these contents.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is the devastating effect of possible breakdown of law and order on Port Harcourt residence as a result of continuous agitations against environmental degradation by the people of Eleme Local Government Area. The existing radio programs on rural environmental issues may be limited in scope or fail to address specific concerns and experiences of rural communities, resulting in a lack of engagement and relevance for the target audience. While radio broadcasting serves as a valuable medium for disseminating information, there is need to assess the effectiveness of radio broadcast programs in addressing rural environmental issues and identify potential gaps and opportunities for improvement. Scholars agreed that as much as it is important for broadcast media programmes to reach the largest possible salable audience for the financial health of their stations, there is also need for the broadcast stations to cause positive social change in their environment.

Although, the multi-nationals have continued to maintain through radio programs that the remediation of the environment in Eleme is in progress, stating that they have embarked on the provision of portable drinking water and efforts were ongoing to improve the livelihood of the people through empowerment. This claim notwithstanding, the Port Harcourt audience criticism of multi-national companies' activities and handling of environmental issues, still inundate the media space. This is a clear indication that the peoples' perception about the radio broadcast program on rural environmental issues is different from what the handlers present. This is an issue that has preoccupied public discourse that needs to be managed in order to prevent it from degenerating into full blown crisis that may breach law and order, thereby plunging Eleme a state of anarchy which will not only affect the Eleme populace.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this work is to ascertain the awareness and knowledge of Eleme residents about radio programming on rural environmental issues in Ogoni land. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out whether Eleme residents are aware of the "*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*";
2. Find out Eleme residents' understanding of the theme of the "*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*";

Research Questions

The following research questions helped to provide answers that led to the achievement of the research aim and objectives.

1. To what extent are Eleme residents aware of the "*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*"?
2. What is Eleme residents' understanding of the theme of the "*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*" and the remediation work on oil impacted sites in Ogoni land?

Literature Review

Media Influence

This is referred to as the actual force exerted by a media message, resulting in either a change or reinforcement in audience or individual beliefs. The effectiveness of a media message is largely dependent on several factors, which includes audience demographics and psychological characteristics. Of course, they may be positive or negative, abrupt or gradual, short-term or longterm. Certainly, not all effects conduce in change, some reinforce an existing belief.

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Deragon (2008) posits that the mass media which is a unique feature of modern society bring along an increase in the magnitude and complexity of societal actions and engagements, rapid social change, technological innovation, rising personal income and standard of life, as well as the decline of some traditional forms of control and authority. This position indicates that media influence is the driving force behind the entire complexities of societal actions and engagements as pointed out. In this regard, media influence can also be seen as the force exerted by media contents, programmes or messages to cause societal actions and engagements.

Valkenburg *et al.* (2016) hold that the overall influence of mass media has changed drastically over the years, and will continue to do so as the media itself develops. This position tends to be factual as the new trend of media effect has changed drastically from the hyperdemic syringe or one-flow effect style to a two-way style, where the media do not only influence its audience, rather the audience uses the media contents they consume to gratify their selves. The programme, Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM is a clear example of such, as it is designed as a call-in programme that allows the audience to use the media through the programme to gratify their selves by speaking through the programme to the HYPREP management and the Federal government concerning their plight and experience in the remediation of oil impacted sites in Ogoni land.

As per the media psychology, the effect of mass media on the actions, manner, and contemplation of individuals and audiences is called mass media influence (NIMCJ, 2019). Going by this, media influence may be negative or positive. The negative effects of mass media on society may lead people towards poverty, crime, nudity, violence, bad mental and physical health disorders and others as such severe outcomes. In the case of the remediation of oil impacted sites in Ogoni land, the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM may influence its audience to perceive the actions of HYPREP negatively, thereby instigating violence and restiveness to protest what the Ogoni people may term as marginalization.

Broadcasting and Promotion of Development

Over the years, the state of human existence has given rise to concerns about issues of national and human developments. These issues are presently topical in all spheres of human endeavour. However, the issues should be articulated, and communicated in order to enlighten the people concerned about developmental activities. Also, the people should be made aware of what is expected of them in the developmental efforts. These bring to the fore, the need to consider the underpinning factors that are supposed to be in place for the enhancement of development, especially in the countries of the world that are still developing. Further, the mass media are generally known as agents of development. This notion is embedded in the agenda-setting role of mass media and their functions of surveillance, interpretation, linkage and transmission of values (Dominick, 2009). But the developing countries are faced with so many problems that deter maximum utilisation of the mass media's contributory roles.

On this note Mboho (2005) says: "One of the greatest challenges facing developing nations is the ability to use mass media effectively, especially, in countries where rural development has become the focus of attention." Similarly, most governments in Africa have policies and practices which militate against optimal embracement of the dividends of the mass media. As a result, the regulatory provisions, ownership structures and other control measures weaken the supposed functions. There are several development projects and programmes in the continent which are geared towards creating an enabling environment. It has also been observed that the broadcast media create programmes while at the same time perform other functions that promote the developmental efforts of governments and concerned individuals and organisations.

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According to Ojo (2003) the role of the mass media in any developing society is to keep the citizenry well informed. Unless citizens have adequate and accurate information on all the issues and problems confronting them, they will be unable to take enlightened decisions on them. Without such information, they will be unable to comprehend the day-to-day working of the government and to participate in it. It has to be recalled that every developmental effort is people oriented. Therefore, the people have to be adequately aware of the development problems, actions and inactions so that they can make required contributions. As pointed out earlier, the remote nature of most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa make broadcasting appropriate for creating the desired awareness and motivation. In essence, the attributes of broadcasting place radio and television at a position where they can conveniently promote development in the region. Expatriating on the above points, Nwanwene (2007) states: Broadcasting is primarily a medium for prompt delivery of information through designed and selected programmes covering news, information, music, etc. It is essentially to inform, educate and entertain and to project culture, break down barriers...broadcasting has become singularly powerful medium...while its persistent command of air of attention tends to make it an important creator of our values, desires and tensions.

Addressing Environmental health challenges in Ogoni land through UNEP report recommendations

Many years of struggle between Ogoni communities and Shell to clean up oil spills from their operations have brought practically no change—of the 27 United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) specific recommendations including change in regulatory framework, monitoring, operational, technical, and public health, only three have been partially implemented (Fentiman & Zabbey, 2015). Of utmost importance, were the eight emergency measures requiring urgent necessary action, and for which UNEP specifically assigned priority framework for redress. They were meant to address such matters as immediate supply of drinking water especially for people of Nsisioken Ogale community, whose drinking water supply was detected to have been contaminated with benzene at levels 900 times above World Health Organization's (WHO's) recommendation (UNEP, 2016). Although a 2013–2014 study suggests that provisions for portable water were made at certain locations, supply was however epileptic and short-lived. Community members resorted to purchasing water from retailers and using rainwater. For the poor who could not afford it, they resorted to use of the polluted water, seeing they had no alternative. In fact, at some point the water tankers responsible for dispensing drinking water to Ogale and Obolo communities were observed to be empty. Some of them were perpetually parked at some other locations within Eleme (Platform, 2016).

Investigations revealed that some households spent about 150–200 Naira to get daily clean water supply. This constitutes a substantial strain particularly in a country where approximately 60.9 percent of the population lives in “absolute poverty”, and about 100 million live on less than a \$1 a day (BBC News, 2017). Much worse for Ogoni and other affected communities, is the fact that dwellers suffer heightened deprivation of livelihood means due to severe oil pollution and associated consequences.

Both the Nigerian government and Shell have paid little attention to the cry of these people whose ecosystems, ecology, and consequently, means of livelihood have been severely impacted (Platform, 2016). The relentless efforts channeled towards environmental justice by the impoverished Ogoni people culminated in the birth of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP-led protests sustained the continued struggle to end the prevailing environmental degradation in the Niger Delta. The complicatedness of issues entrenched in the disagreement among people, politics, and the MOCs severely hindered the successful furtherance of MOSOP's principal goal of ending further ecological damage, and the revitalization of the polluted

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environment—years of negotiations and protests failed to bring about the desired solutions (Frynas, 2000). Finally, in July 2006, with a view to progressing from decades of standstill, the Nigeria federal government invited the UNEP to conduct an environmental assessment (EA), and propose lasting solutions to the environmental problems created by Shell, thereby ending the prolonged feud among involved parties (UNEP, 2016 and Platform, 2016).

Meanwhile, as part of its undying relentlessness to pursue environmental justice in the Niger Delta, and ultimately, the restoration and sustainability of the environment, on 19 January 1993, MOSOP joined the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). The UNPO is an international democratic organization whose membership includes indigenous peoples, minorities, and isolated or uninhabited territories. Their central goal is to assure and uphold cultural and human rights, as well as to safeguard their environments by way of applying nonviolent conflict resolutions. MOSOP faced horrendous challenges meted out by the military dictatorship, including various degrees of mistreatment, arrests, detention, and even killing of its members, including the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, MOSOP founder. Nevertheless, their unswerving efforts facilitated the eventual ejection of SPDC from Ogoni in 1993, enhancing the popularity of the entire Ogoni situation within the international community (Agbonifo, 2011, SaroWiwa, 2017, Frynas, 2001, Manby, 1999 and Pegg, 2015). The Ken Saro-Wiwa-led MOSOP peaceful protest involving approximately 300,000 Ogoni people brought about this successful eviction on 4 January 1993. Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed on 10 November 1995 (Pegg, 2015).

Ogoniland

Ogoniland has a population of close to 832,000 (UNEP, 2016), and a population density of 1250 km² (Balouga, 2009). The region administratively has four LGAs, namely: Eleme, Gokana, Khana, and Tai (UNEP, 2016). Covering around 100,000 km² in Rivers State, Ogoniland is one of the prominent areas in the Niger Delta region, and has been the site of oil industry operations since the late 1950s. It has a calamitous history of pollution from oil spills, gas flares, and oil well fires. The area is naturally endowed with an abundance of rivers, creeks, and streams. Consequently, it has predominantly traditional fishers and farmers. In the past, it was referred to as the “food basket of the Niger Delta” because it produced cash crops for neighboring Niger Delta regions as well as subsistence agriculture. This traditional practice enhanced sustainable management of the abundant natural resources (UNEP, 2015).

Ogoni land, located in Rivers State, has a complex history of oil exploration fraught with environmental, social and political problems. While the region doesn’t currently produce oil, incessant spills from the pipelines running through it and looming plans by the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company to resume operations threaten any hope of long-term restoration. Most oil extraction from the sensitive ecological area of Ogoni land stopped in the early 1990s. But despite subsequent clean-up efforts, the region is constantly set back by spillages from pipeline sabotage, theft, artisanal refineries and pipeline corrosion. This has caused conflict between local communities and multinational oil companies such as Shell, ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, TotalFina Elf and Agip, which engaged in petroleum exploration for decades.

Empirical studies

Chioma *et al.* (2015) carried out a study on “An evaluation of radio audience satisfaction with programming on inspiration 92.3 FM, Lagos.” The study sought to investigate the listening pattern of Inspiration 92.3 FM listeners in Maryland, Lagos, and their level of satisfaction. The essence of this research is to find out: the listening pattern

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of listeners in Maryland, Lagos, the factors that influence their listening pattern, as well as the level of satisfaction they derive from the programming of Inspiration 92.3 FM.

The study adopted the survey quantitative research design. 250 questionnaires were purposively distributed among listeners of Inspiration 92.3 FM in Maryland Lagos, Nigeria. The data from the responses to the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), while the result was presented and discussed aided by descriptive statistical tool of pie chart. Findings that despite the fact that Inspiration 92.3FM is a family oriented radio station, majority (60%) of its listeners in Maryland, Lagos are students; Majority (70%) of Inspiration 92.3FM listeners in Maryland, Lagos are active listeners who tune in daily, and have their radio sets permanently tuned to the station. The gap in this study is that it failed to study if the power of radio was explored in shaping the perception of audiences in relation to development, the current study intends to cover this gap by investigating the perception of audiences towards radio programmes and how their perception influences message interpretation.

Theoretical framework

Individual Differences Theory

The individual differences theory in mass communication was derived from differential psychology which is concerned with the study of how individuals differ in their behavior and the processes that underlie it. The discipline of differential psychology is different from other aspects of psychology, rather develops taxonomies of psychological individual differences. Fisher (2018) puts it clear that although psychology is basically the study of individuals, modern psychologists most times study groups or attempt to discover general psychological processes that apply to all individuals. This particular field of psychology was first named and still retains the name of differential psychology by William Stern in 1900. According to Cohen *et al.* (2013) although Stern and other prominent psychologists have been widely credited for the individual differences concept, historical records have it that Charles Darwin was the first to spur scientific interest in the study of individual differences in 1859. That, his interest was further developed by Francis Galton in his attempt to quantify individual differences among people.

This theory would greatly contribute to explaining phenomena in this research, particularly as it relates to the differences in perception of same media content by different individuals. The theory will explain why individual Eleme residents may perceive the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM and the remediation of oil impacted sites in Ogoni land differently. Just as the psychological needs of the individuals differ, so also their reactions towards the media messages of the clean-up show concerning the remediation work may differ. And it would help to explain how they consume the media messages to satisfy their psychological needs concerning the remediation work. In essence the individual differences theory will be very useful and appropriate in considering phenomena in this research which seeks to determine how the different perception of the audience of the Ogoni clean-up show impact on the remediation of oil impacted sites in Ogoni land.

Methodology

The survey research design was deployed in this study. The survey design was chosen for this study because of its main strength which is the finding out of opinions, attitudes, preferences and knowledge levels of people; this enabled the researcher to carryout indebt investigation as regards the theme of this study. The study used quantitative and qualitative research which employed the use of numbers, statistical methods and persuasive discussions to measure the perception of Eleme residents of Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM for the

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remediation work on oil-impacted sites in Ogoni land. The population for the study is that part of the active audience of the Ogoni clean-up show on 93.7 FM from which the researcher got data for the research.

The population was gotten from the active audience of the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM in Eleme Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Since the nature of these active audiences are heterogeneous and cannot be easily verified or attained, a 2.7% annual growth rate from the 2006 National Population Census figure was adopted for Port Harcourt metropolis covering Eleme Local Government Areas. The 2006 census figures for Port Harcourt 338,552 (FGN Official Gazette, 2009) and a 2.7% growth rate put the figure at 914,090 as at 2022. This, therefore, is the population of the study from which the sample size of the study was got. A total number of 385 respondents were selected as the sample size for this study. This is in line with the recommended sample size necessary for a 5% error margin and 95% confidence level by Meyer determinant table.

The multi-stage cluster sampling technique was adopted to select the participants for sampling. This refers to the method the researcher intends to deploy to collect data from the research participants for processing to find answers to the problem of this study, trends and possibilities. With regards to the design and strategy of this research, the questionnaire and focus group discussion methods were used to collect data for this study. The quantitative data collated from the questionnaire were presented in a frequency tabular form, whereas, the explanation building technique was used to analyze the qualitative data from the focus group discussion. Here, the responses and observations from the focus group discussion were grouped according to themes and analysed.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic data analysis

Table 1 Eleme Residents Awareness of Ogoni clean-up show.

S/N	ITEM	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	AGGREGATE	MEAN	DECISION
1.	I am aware of the Ogoni clean-up show.	60		70	80	150 760	2.1	Disagree
2.	I am not aware of the Ogoni clean-up show	210		70	60	20 1,340	3.7	Agree
3.	I am aware but do not listen to the Ogoni clean-up show	80		60	150	70 870	2.4	Disagree
	Cumulative	350	200	290	240	2,970	2.7	Agree

Table 2 – Follow-up of Ogoni clean-up show among Eleme Residents

S/N	ITEM	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	AGGREGATE	MEAN	DECISION
1	Eleme residents up the programme regularly	100	40	120	100	740	2.0	Disagree
2	Eleme residents did not follow-up the programme regularly		200	100	50	10 1,210	3.4	Agree
3	Eleme residents did not follow-up the programme at all.		50	60	150	100 780	2.2	Disagree

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Cumulative 350 200 320 210 2,730 2.5 Agree

Data collected to answer research question one was to find out to what extent are Eleme residents aware of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM”, were presented in two tables. Table one showed data collected to address Eleme resident’s awareness of the Ogoni clean-up show, while Table two show data collected to address the follow-up among Eleme residents of the Ogoni clean-up show. These to a great extent adequately addressed research question one. In table one, from the data presented it is evident that Eleme residents were not aware of the “Ogoni cleanup show on Rhythm 93.7 FM”. This means that the programme’s popularity was not overwhelming among Elelme residents. It would be expected that a programme of this nature with the attendant issues of public interest should attract very high popularity and awareness. More so, with a frontline radio broadcast station in Eleme, the clean-up show’s level of awareness, without contest should be very high. From the presentation in table 2, the respondents were of the view that the programme was not regularly followed up, even by those who were aware of it. This appears worrisome in the sense that, the main purpose of using the programme may have been defeated as the target audience did not follow-up the programme. The implication here is that; audience participation may be impeded or the overall objective of the programme may be frustrated. Judging from the data presented in tables one and two as regards research question one, it is evident that the awareness of the Ogoni clean-up show in Rhythm 93.7 FM among Eleme residents was not sufficient enough and not too encouraging for an issue of this magnitude which bothers on the livelihood and environment of Ogoni people and their land. It is also clear that Eleme residents are not aware of the programme and follow-up not regular, hence its unimpressive popularity.

Table 3 – Respondents Understanding of the Theme for Discussion on the Ogoni clean-up show

S/N	ITEM	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	AGGREGATE	MEAN	DECISION
1.	The theme of promoting awareness of HYPREP was understandable.	50	70	120	120	770	2.1	Disagree about
2.	The theme of encouraging understanding of the need for the clean-up was clear to me.	80	100	80	100	880	2.4	Disagree
3.	The theme of promoting acceptance of participation of Ogoni people to ensure the success of the clean-up project was not clear enough to me.	250	60	30	20	1,260	3.5	Agree and
	Cumulative	380	230	230	240	2,910	2.7	Agree

Data collected to answer research question two which seeks to know Eleme residents’ understanding of the theme of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM” for the remediation work on oil impacted sites in Ogoni land were presented in table 3 above. Table 3 specifically showed data of responses to the question - if the themes of the programme were clear enough to understand. This is important because, one may be aware of a programme, yet do not understand what the programme is intended for. From the responses it is obvious that the themes of the

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programme were not clearly understood by the audience. Some of the respondents opined that the themes were not properly explained, while majority held that even when they were explained, the themes were still not clear enough for them to understand.

The table clearly showed that themes of promoting awareness about HYPREP and encouraging understanding of the need for clean-up exercise in Ogoni were not understood. The table further affirmed that the theme of promoting acceptance and participation of Ogoni people to ensure the success of the clean-up was not clear to the audience. The implication is that, the

“Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM” may not fully achieve its goal of effective communication between the operators of the remediation work of oil impacted sites in Ogoni land and the audience of the programme (Eleme residents) who are critical in ensuring success in the remediation work. The interpretation of meaning in the communication process may be complex since the themes of the programme were always confusing to understand, thereby making understanding of the theme complicated and not clear.

Qualitative data presentation

The data received from the various group discussions after recording, where transcribed and presented below in a tabular form and analysed according to the various themes that were discussed during the sessions.

Focus group 1 discussion of the theme on awareness of Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM.

The first respondent said the programme in his opinion is not known, it is rather strange. The second respondent said the Ogoni clean-up show was popular when it was on air. The next respondent argued that the programme though was popular but when they stopped airing people forgot about it. For the fourth respondent people are aware of the programme, though not very much. The fifth respondent said that the popularity level of the programme was on the average. In the view of the sixth respondent the programme is popular among people in Port Harcourt. Another respondent was of the opinion that the Ogoni clean-up show was to some extent popular, but more needed to be done.

Focus group 1 discussion on understanding of the theme of the programme

The first respondent insisted that the theme of promoting awareness about HYPREP was not well articulated. Another set of respondents opined that the theme of understanding the need for the clean-up was not well explained for people to understand. Another respondent said the theme of promoting acceptance and participation of Ogoni people to ensure the success of the clean-up project was not clear to many to understand. Some of the discussants were of the view that it was always very difficult to understand the theme of the programme due to the inability of the presenters to present them clearly. A respondent said the theme is clear to understand because it is always explained as it relates to the remediation work. Another respondent said that most times the discussion deviates from the theme for the day and makes it difficult. Again, another respondent also said that the theme in some editions were clear and in some cases confusing. Some other respondents held that the theme of the programme always appear complicated to understand mostly due to poor presentation

Focus group 2 discussion of the theme on Peoples’ perception of the programme.

One respondent perceived the programme as ineffective and not viable enough to canvas their opinions. Some of the respondents perceived the programme as a creation of HYPREP to convince them on the things they are not doing. Another set of respondents said that the programme was not encouraging. Whereas, for some the perception of people was to some extent effective, though not very effective. Another respondent perceived the programme as average in terms of communication. The respondent didn’t see it as poor, or very good. Another respondent

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said that the programme was good but not very impressive. Another respondent also said that the programme can influence them to do things that can obstruct or undermine the remediation work. The respondent said the remediation work can be adversely affected due to the perception of people on the Ogoni clean-up show. This is because they may respond negatively to any information they perceive to be from the programme.

Discussion of Findings

The presentation and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed findings which adequately provide answers to the objectives of this research. These will be discussed in details below based on the research questions of the study:

Research Question 1 – To what extent are Eleme residents aware of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM”?

In dealing with research question one, the data presented and analysed found that Port Harcourt residents were not aware of the programme, the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM” and as such follow-up was not regular. This obviously indicates that the popularity of the programme was not impressive, particularly considering the fact that the Ogoni environmental issue attracted global attention. One would naturally expect that a media programme created to serve as a communication platform to address and canvas opinions for solution on the Ogoni environmental issue should gain very high popularity. This unfortunately was not the case with the “Ogoni cleanup show on Rhythm 93.7FM”. Baran (2012) even acknowledged that people always wanted to know what was happening and that others have helped them to do so. Further still, Reuben in Udoudo, Bashir and Batta (2019) refers to “others” as journalism (the media), while “them” refers to the public (audience).

It is instructive to note that for the media to effectively perform this role of helping the people to know what is happening, popularity of the media among the people counts. The people need to be fully aware of the media (as the source) to know what is happening and follow-up appropriately to satisfy their needs. This study aligns to these assertions accordingly. Perhaps, it’s unimpressive popularity became as a result of its failure to disseminate information to its targeted group of audience. Every broadcast organization exists with the objective of disseminating information in form of entertainment, information, and education to a group of targeted individuals referred to as broadcast audience (Chioma *et al.*, 2015).

In line with the postulations of the individual differences theory which hinges on the fact that media users with different characteristics are affected in different ways by the mass media, this study is of the opinion that audience members of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM” may have reacted negatively to its messages for not satisfying their psychological needs. This invariably affected the listenership and consequently its popularity. This also explains why the different users of the programme Ogoni clean-up show rate its awareness differently. Some held that people are aware of the programme, while majority held that people are not aware of the programme.

Focus group one discussions show qualitative data on Port Harcourt residents’ awareness of the “Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM”. Dealing with the theme of awareness among Port Harcourt residents the respondents expressed their various opinions that the programme was not known and as such not popular. Another viewpoint was that the programme was popular when it was on air. This implies that these respondents were not fully aware of the programme and its content. Perhaps, because the programme is not one of those political or current affairs programme that they may be used to. It was expected that a programme of its magnitude talking about a popular issue in the country such as environmental pollution and remediation work in Ogoni land should be well known

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and popular among Port Harcourt residents. From the foregoing, the totality of the discussions also conduces to one point that Port Harcourt residents were not aware of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*” and as such follow-up was not regular. It should be pointed out that if this fact was otherwise, follow-up would be very regular and would have recorded high popularity score.

Research Question 2: What is Eleme residents’ understanding of the theme of the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM for the remediation work on oil-impacted sites in Ogoni land?

The analysis of the various data received and presented in this study show clearly that the theme for discussion on the programme was not very clear for the audience to understand. In some cases, the theme for discussion will appear confusing and in other cases complicated. In all, the audience find it very difficult to clearly understand the theme of the programme that would have enabled them to follow-up adequately and make meaningful contributions. Communication according to Asemah (2022) is the process of passing understanding messages between people using previously agreed codes, signs and symbols. This implies that the codes, signs and symbols used to transmit the messages must be clear and understandable for effective communication. Effective communication according to Unogu in Ella and Onwochei (2005) “is the transfer of understandable information. It is on these premises the study agrees that the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*” fell short of the essence of communication.

Here, again the individual differences theory provides explanation for the non-clarity of the theme in the audience. As the theory postulates, the audience of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*” have different characteristics which influence their understanding of things and information. Also, just as the theory held that some media users may be susceptible to some types of media messages than others, so did majority of the audience members of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*”. To this end, the study agrees to the finding that Port Harcourt residents’ understanding of the theme of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*” was not clear. This is very worrisome and may lead to misinterpretation of information from the media.

Responses to focus group one discussion on understanding of the theme of the programme, respondents overwhelmingly held the view that the various themes for discussion on the programme Ogoni clean-up show were either not properly explained, not well articulated or not well presented, as such impedes better understanding.

Some were of the view that the themes were always complicated and difficult to understand, whereas others held that it is sometimes confusing. To this end, it can be concluded that Port Harcourt residents’ understanding of the themes of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7 FM*” were complicated and not precise, hence not understood.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the investigation, the study concludes as follows:

Based on objective one that, Eleme residents are not very much aware of the Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7FM. This no doubt is as a result of the majority of the respondents who are males as derived from the demography of the study. They were not predominantly farmers that would have suffered huge losses; hence, the programme did not accommodate their interest in the discussions which would have prompted them to be aware. In consideration of objective two it is concluded that, Eleme residents’ understanding of the theme of the “*Ogoni clean-up show on Rhythm 93.7FM*” was not very clear, complicated, confusing and not precise. The theme of promoting acceptance and participation of Ogoni people to ensure the success of the clean-up which ought to be

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the motive of the programme was not clearly presented for the audience to understand. To this end audience member gave different interpretations to information shared during discussion in the programme.

Recommendations

1. An aggressive promotion should be done to popularize the programme for audience members to be aware and regularly follow-up the programme; sensitize the audience on the main focus and motif of the programme in order to mobilize audience participation that will make the programme effective and useful for rural development.
2. The theme of the programme should be well explained in a language that will be easily understood by the audience, void of ambiguity, be precise and communicated with simplicity in order that the audience would contribute meaningfully to the discussions and make positive imputes for rural development.

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