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Mass Media Effectiveness in the Prevention of Crime in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The mass media is seen as a prime source of information on crime and safety. Despite this important contribution, the mass media if unchecked could destabilize facts about the society through their unethical practices, as the code of ethics designed by media practitioners and associations do not seem to be binding on members, who also seem not to abide by them. This study was conducted to examine students' views on the effectiveness of mass media in the prevention of crime in Akwa Ibom State. To achieve this objective, a survey design was adopted. Three research hypotheses were formulated and tested using Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results of the test showed that mass media in Akwa Ibom State have a significant impact on crime prevention. Social responsibility theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. It was found that problems such as corruption, poor communication channels, illiteracy, inadequate infrastructure, poor implementation framework, political instability, poor leadership, unnecessary pressure on media rights mostly by executives, etc., posed great challenges to the achievement of media objectives. It was concluded that mass media plays significant roles in crime prevention; the government have a significant influence on mass media in preventing crime; there is a significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. It was therefore recommended among other things that the government's influence on the media should be discouraged at all costs. Rather, an independent institution or commission should be established to control and protect media organizations.

Keywords: Crime prevention, leadership, mass media, effectiveness

Introduction

It is apparent that with the increase and complexity of the global scene, meeting/reaching out to a

large and heterogeneous group is still of concern. Notably, the increase in large and heterogeneous groups in modern global society has led to an increase in crime and crime-related issues. With this, the prevention of crime has become the priority of every modern society. It is observed that all modern societies are faced with all sorts of criminal activities which are dysfunctional to their growth. Crime is now seen as a norm of every modern society which cannot be avoided but can be reasonably prevented from not happening. The dilemma each society faces and the question they always ask is what medium or means seems to be the most effective way of preventing crime? The world is now technology-driven, how well and efficiently can the people be sensitive and informed about ways of preventing crime to reduce it

drastically? A breakthrough to help contain this situation has led to the evolution of the mass media and other means of communication.

Mass media refers to a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication. It characteristics of technologies through which this communication takes place include a variety of outlets. The mass media have an objective role to play in the lives of the masses. This is why, unfair news and unbalanced journalism are capable of eroding public confidence in the reporter or the media organization (Barran, 2019). According to Marks and Kalaizandonkes (2021), the media play the role of arbiter facilitating communication among various social stakeholders and providing context viewpoints from different sides of the debate, hence, it can be viewed as vehicles for informing the public on scientific nuances. In every human society, communication, which involves sending out information and receiving information, is required. In crime prevention, the mass media play a central role in providing effective surveillance in critical areas. Surveillance refers to what is popularly known as the news and information role of the media. This points to the fact that the role of the media is usually modelled out both by the media themselves and the society in which they operate.

In Akwa Ibom State, the mass media have played critical roles in informing, educating and entertaining the populace. It is common to hear people in a group discussion refer to what they have read and heard on social media platforms, radio or watched on television and even read in newspapers. The media houses (newspaper and Television houses) gather news on crime and its prevention, yet the issue of press freedom is questionable and the problem of press freedom has a serious effect on the various beats covered by the journalist. Like in the other states in Nigeria, there is in Akwa Ibom state, a proliferation of soft sells or junk journalism whose hallmark is a publication of lurid stories, oftentimes concocted about influential individuals. In such cases, the ethics of the mass media are thrown into the dust bin and stories are reported with bias and as directed (Ekpe, 2019). This is quite worrisome and instigated the desire to examine mass media effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

The current world is undoubtedly, an information society; a society which is mainly based on services and where information of all kinds is the key to well-being and power. Modern societies depend on the complex communication systems in which there is enormous interest and which play a considerable role in political, social and economic life. Complex social structures, both at the national and international level have provided the media with new tasks and challenges; yet, the traditional and social authorities (political parties, the church, the family, the community, etc.) have not provided any remedy. Moreover, public demand has expanded due to the influence of globalization which affects all aspects of everyday life, while individualism, relativism and precariousness make most people more dependent and vulnerable and, therefore, increase their need for information. This causes most media coverage very complex leading to unfair news reporting and unbalanced journalism (Umoh, 2024).

Media values are geared at defining truth and truth-finding, humanness, justice, freedom and stewardship to the society. Despite their vibrant contributions to society, the mass media if unchecked could destabilize facts about society through their unethical practices, as the code of ethics designed by media practitioners and associations does not seem to be binding on members, who also seemed not to abide by them (Umoh, 2024). Barran (2019) posits that the media simply holds a mirror to society and reflects the status quo, showing people and the world as they are. Understanding Barran's position simply identifies media as holding a selective mirror for the

world to see how they are, but in all its vastness and complexity, the world cannot possibly be represented, so media practitioners must make choices and as such media content must vary.

In Akwa Ibom State, both government and privately owned media play the role of watchdog to the society. Factors of effective news reporting include prominence, significant fairness, proximity and timeliness. The mass media can influence action ideally, change the course of events and even destroy the community based on the information carried (freedom of the press). Being an integral part of the social system, the mass media is a major stakeholder in the prevention of crime. Media is supposed to serve as an attitude modifier by reporting news that would help in the prevention/curbing of crimes and maintenance of public order. Unfortunately, it appears that media houses in Akwa Ibom do not give prominence to this kind of news reporting (Senam, 2022). However, several factors like side-lining of media houses by the government, illegal arrest and detention of journalists/reporters/editors, a threat to life, brutality by security operatives, buy-over of papers from the public stand, seize of certain editions, denial of journalists, access to information/crime scene, attack on the journalists/media house by criminals, etc. have continued to pose great challenges to the achievement of media objectives in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It is the gap between the ideal functions of mass media that this research work was conceived to assess the major challenges facing mass media and their practices in reporting information about crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effectiveness of the mass media in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the roles of mass media in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine the influence of the government on mass media in Akwa Ibom State.
3. To discuss the challenges to mass media effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Research hypotheses

1. The mass media plays no significant role in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.
2. The government does not have any significant influence on mass media in preventing crime in Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is no significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept of Mass Media

Mass media are the channels used for mass communication. They include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the message (TV cameras, radio microphones, printing presses) but also the institutions that use these machines to transmit messages. They are means of communication (Newspapers, radio, or television) designed to reach the masses. It could also be defined as the channels used in instituting mass communication. They are a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication. The technologies through which this communication takes place include a variety of outlets (Don, 2021).

According to Anonymous (2023), mass media is a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication; the technologies through which this communication takes place include a variety of outlets. The broadcast media transmit

information electronically via media such as films, radio, recorded music, or television. It comprises both internet and mobile mass communication. Internet media comprises such services as email, social media sites, websites, and Internet-based radio and television. Many other mass media outlets have an additional presence on the web, by such means as linking to or running TV ads online, or distributing QR Codes in outdoor or print media to direct mobile users to a website. In this way, they can utilize the easy accessibility and outreach capabilities the internet affords, thereby easily broadcasting information throughout many different regions of the world simultaneously and cost-efficiently.

Byant and Zillman (1985) defined mass media effectiveness as the social, cultural and psychological impact of communicating via the mass media. Perse (2001) stated that mass media effectiveness researchers study how to control, enhance or mitigate the impact of mass media on individuals and society. Mass media effects are measurable effects that result from media influence or a media message. These effects can be positive or negative, abrupt or gradual, short-term or long-lasting. Not all effects result in change, some media message reinforces an existing belief (Anonymous, 2023).

To Umoh (2024), mass media is communication whether written broadcast, or spoken that reaches a large audience, which includes television, radio, advertising movies, the internet, newspapers magazines, and so forth. He goes further to state that mass media effectiveness is a significant force in modern culture, particularly in America. He noted that sociologists refer to this as a mediated culture where media reflects and creates the culture; communities and individuals are bombarded constantly with messages from a multitude of sources including TV, billboards, attributes and a sense of what is and is not important. Throne (2018) technically defined mass media as any transmission of information that reaches a large number of people, usually within a short time frame in a one-to-many communication flow. It can also be referred to as mass Communication; the information transmitted could be news entertainment, advertising, crime or Public Service Announcements.

Concept of Crime

Crime is a specific act committed in violation of law in the state (Akwa Ibom). It is an act punishable by law, and also as a generic term given to all in unlawful acts or commonly perpetuated against the state (Senam, 2022). The crime rates in the state have been unceasing and recent happenings recorded have threatened the security and lives of some part of the people in the state. Crime is an act harmful not only to some individuals but also to a community, society or the state (Anonymous, 2023). Crime is the commission of an act that is forbidden or the omission of a duty that is commanded by public law and that makes the offender liable to punishment by the law. Section 2 of the Criminal Code Act (1990) defines crime as "an act or omission which renders the person doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment under this code (Criminal Code), or under any Act or law. It is also described as an activity that is against the law and illegal acts in general (Senam 2022).

Ninmalak and Zegeye (1999) stated that there are no easy explanations for the phenomena collectively called crime. Thus, crime is a deceiving concept because it covers an enormous range of human behaviour. They further state that crime may be associated in the public mind with pickpocketing, robberies, housebreaking and riots, but crime also involves a businessman placing a bribe to win a city contract. According to Section 2 of the Criminal Code Act (1990), a crime is an act of making the omission liable to punishment under this code (criminal code) or under any act or law. The idea of the need for punishment is a common element in defining

crime, however, it may also include any action or omission which causes harm to a person or property or in any way violates the criminal law.

The concept of crime often but not necessarily involves violations of moral codes followed by some level of social disapproval but is it important to recognize that not all crimes are disapproved of by all people (Sammons, 2018). These highlights are of the difficulties associated with defining crimes as smaller incidences such as stealing office stationer winning would not be objected to by the majority of the population and would often not result in legal action. However, by law, this is still considered a crime despite not having such qualities. In addition, crime is often seen to be of random hatred and committed by those with no connections to the victim. Therefore media plays a large part in shaping the public's definition of crime, ignorant to the differences between this view and the real nature of crime. Crime is also an agent that disrupts public order because it dwells among the people.

The Mass Media and Crime Prevention

Crime has tormented the civil society for centuries. The media's arrival in this regard can be seen as a blow to criminal organizations and syndicates. Often media has been successful at reaching the corners where the police and other crime control institutions have failed. Several cases have been discovered and successfully solved because of the media's efforts and contribution. Media is also credited for serving an important role in the collective war against terrorism and other evils that are known as the biggest plagues for civil society.

According to Morrison (2019), one of the major objectives of mass media within a specific society is that it helps to create public awareness of crime. This is mostly gained through the electronic and print media. Apart from bringing fresh news from several sources, it is also seen as a guardian of peace and public order. Media's role is not limited to just that but it is also recognized for its creative input into the making of a civil society. According to Umoh (2024), the media helps in bringing up cases of corruption into the public's eye and covers cases that require the public's attention in the state. This justifies the impartial contribution to peacekeeping and the maintenance of order across nations. Several times media has been able to successfully bring the deficiencies of the public agencies into light and raise the level of social awareness. Social awareness has been recognized to be the best weapon to fight against crime and this role cannot be played alone by government agencies. Apart from the news media, the role of social media must be also recognized in this area. However, while the news media has often been criticized for churning dissatisfaction against the government agencies, still its role in fighting corruption and crime has been strongly felt by the society.

In Akwa Ibom State, the media has played a very strong role as a vigilante where the level of political and bureaucratic corruption/crime is high. The media has played the role of a social representative in combating this kind of crime. In recent years, while the anti-corruption struggle kept growing stronger and produced mixed results, the role of media in helping people fight the war is highly appreciable.The existence of mass media helped in building a progressive and globalized society whereby people become easily familiar with the laws of the government. Even the media houses are subject to several kinds of pressures. The government and law have subjected them to limitations and these limitations stop them from playing as openly as they can. This has been done because the media's influence can torment civil unrest. If media agencies were not there, the situation of crime and public disorder would have been worse.

In social situations such as domestic violence, health crises, and early warning signs of conflicts, the media has helped people and made them aware of sources from which they can find help and

pub li c' s reaction ha s been able to bring out

public's eyes. Media has always brought the most troublesome is sues to everyone ' s not i ce. In thi s regard

influence on society and people's minds in terms of the knowledge of crime and deviance Most people ' s knowledge of crime and crime patterns i s derived from

gove rnme nt, people' s contribution to the preservation of law and orde

busi ness With this, the gove rnme nt ' s ability to influence becomes unavoidable. In addition to the entertainment med ia getting some of its story ideas from the government'

we are raised, where we come from, and/or our religion but the media ultimately plays the role of crafting and redefining that base.

Elections are an important aspect of any democratic system, citizens vote for a candidate that they believe holds the most similar political interests to themselves. Candidates have the responsibility to protect their views on certain issues and to get as many voters as possible on their side. In theory, the media is responsible for bringing accurate information about candidates and their ideologies to the general public; that is not always the case. The reality is; candidates that who pay the most money get the most coverage and those who do not contribute as much to the media financially, find themselves climbing an endless ladder (Nwosu, 2015).

Challenges to mass media effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State

There are several challenges currently facing media organizations working to report all events. The first is leadership influence. Despite the role of the mass media in exposing government activities, political elites control power beyond the influence of the majority of people. So, instead of more democracy, there is less; instead of more participation, there is more exclusion; and instead of the rule of law, there is insecurity, impunity and lack of accountability on the part of leadership. With this, mass media and organizations are not given the required freedom to operate while some are politicized. This is one reason why media organizations are facing many challenges, especially in reaching the consent of governments who see clearly that independent media will not only inform the public but will also question their position (Umoh, 2024). The second is media rights under pressure. Umoh (2024) observed that media regulations become tougher and journalists who are not in line with mainstream elites become more and more endangered and face possible censorship and intimidation and even arbitrary arrest and torture. In these situations, the protection of reporters, editors and journalists becomes an important task for media support organizations and the close monitoring of the development of media freedom becomes more relevant.

The third is the lack of adequate financing. The economic sustainability of media outlets continues to be a major challenge. This is especially valid for smaller, local media outlets, such as local or community radio stations, which are often supported by media development funds. Many media development organizations are managed by journalists, most of whom are not fond of media economics, profit and business. But financial sustainability is a precondition for media outlets' independence from the undue influence of others, be they governments, big corporations or senior politicians (Osondu, 2018). The fourth is poor media users' assessment. User research has the potential to meet advertisers' interests when it provides sound data. But this should not be limited to reach, scope and basic media users' characteristics such as age, gender and education. Rather, audience research should be more advanced and also include media users' assessments of specific media programs and the quality of reporting. This broader understanding of audience research is not only a means for media managers to boost their advertising business; it can also be useful for editors and journalists to learn about their readers, listeners and viewers (Udensi, 2018).

The fifth is poor reporting quality. Currently, there is no comprehensive study on the quality of journalism in Akwa Ibom although bits and pieces of research here and there confirm there is still much room for improvement. Unfortunately, efforts in training and capacity building do not automatically lead to better quality. However, given the current political situation and the disrespect for democratic inclusion often displayed by some government officials, those who want to practice better journalism need to be supported (Umoh, 2024). The sixth is lack of monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation still lack internal support within mass

media development organizations. Although some media organizations are conducting more serious evaluations of media work and the acceptance of evaluation has considerably improved, they are still facing methodological problems. The seventh is the lack of proper implementation. It is largely agreed that sound analysis of the media and its environment is needed before planning a project and long before the project starts. So then why is it not done more often? And even if sound analysis is done before the project starts, why is it often not reflected in the project design and its activities? The same implementation gap can be seen in the evaluation. Consultants are still being confronted with the usual tenders, asking them, for example, to evaluate a media program which took place in 10 different places in 12 days. That again contradicts standards. It is important to identify the reasons for this implementation gap and to learn from other fields in development cooperation (Scharticles, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

This research w ork adopts the "social responsibility theory". The origin of this theory is traceable to the Hatchings Commission on the Freedom of the Press (1947). Mcquail (2007) observed that the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press was set up in the United States of America to examine areas and circumstances under which the press was succeeding or failing. This was to discover whether freedom of expression was or was not limited. The findings from the commission re-examined the concept of press freedom as educated in the theory. The social responsibility theory holds the position that one has the right to freely express his opinion on issues, but he does not have the right to libel. Freedom of the press is to be guarded as a vital right of humankind. It is the unquestionable right to discuss what the law does not explicitly forbid. It allows a free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panels and the media should accept any obligation from public interference professional self-regulations or both. The theory gives total media freedom on the one hand but the external controls on the other hand. It propagated the right of the press to criticize any institutions and even government but must be responsible enough to maintain the stability of the society (Daramola, 2003).

For this research work, the social responsibility theory informs and maintains that all media houses in Akwa Ibom State should maintain neutrality and avoid manoeuvring in crime reporting. This way, the maintenance of peace and order will be guaranteed. This theory is relevant to this work because it emphasizes that the media houses in the state have a vital role to play in discharging their duties as it concerns crime prevention in the state. The masses will be provided with appropriate, adequate and accurate information on issues of relevance concerning their safety and precautions. Thus, in the prevention of crime in the state through the mass media, the social responsibility theory allows: Everyone to say something or express their opinion about crime prevention; community opinion, consumer action and professional ethics since crime activities affect all; serious invasion of recognized private rights and vital social interests; private ownership in media may give better public service unless government has to take over to assure the public to provide better media service; and media must take care of social responsibility and if they do not, government or other organization will do.

Methods and Materials

This research employed the survey design to collect primary data through the questionnaire. The population of the study is four hundred and eighty six (486) comprising students in public higher institutions in Akwa Ibom State such as University of Uyo 2023/2024 final year students of Communication Arts Department, Akwa Ibom State University 2023/2024 final year students of

Mass Communication Department, Federal Polytechnic Ukana, Akwa Ibom State 2023/2024 ND 2 students of Computer Science Department, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic 2023/2024 ND 2 students of Mass Communication Department, Akwa Ibom State College of Education 2023/2024 NCE 2 students of Computer Science/Mathematics Department as well as Akwa Ibom State College of Art & Science 2023/2024 final year students of Mass Communication Department. However, since it was difficult for the researcher to access the entire population, the researcher adopted the simple random and cluster sampling technique to select three hundred and sixty (360) students in the selected institutions. The breakdown of the population and sample are seen in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration and Degree of Response

S/N	Respondents	Total Population	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Returned
1	University of Uyo 2023/2024 final-year students of Communication Arts Department	127	90	90
2	Akwa Ibom State University 2023/2024 final year students of the Mass Communication Department	78	60	60
3	Federal Polytechnic Ukana, Akwa Ibom State 2023/2024 ND 2 students of Computer Science Department	44	30	25
4	Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic 2023/2024 ND 2 students of Mass Communication Department	96	80	77
5	Akwa Ibom State College of Education 2023/2024 NCE 2 students of Computer Science/Mathematics Department	73	50	50
6	Akwa Ibom State College of Art & Science 2023/2024 final-year students of the Mass Communication Department	68	50	49
	Total	**486**	**360**	**351 (97.5%)**

Source: Field survey, 2024

Out of the three hundred and sixty (360) questionnaires distributed, three hundred and fifty-one (351) questionnaires, which represent 97.5%, were correctly filled and returned. The data was used to test the hypotheses formulated.

Data Presentation and Results

The responses (data) obtained from the field survey using the questionnaire are analysed and used to test the hypotheses in this section.

Test of Hypotheses

The three null hypotheses formulated are tested in this section.

Hypothesis 1: The mass media plays no significant role in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Data obtained from the responses to question one (1) of the questionnaire with the use of Regression Analysis are used to test this hypothesis as seen in Table 2

I Y=330 (94%)	**I X=21(6%)**	**I = 229**	**I = 3592**	**I = 37.5**

Source: Researcher's computation from questionnaire (2024)

I (X
I(X

To test for the significance of the " b" value of a regressi on equation, we u se the formula

t=b X-X2oyt=6.10 37.5210

=I Y-Y2 N = 3 59 26

Table 3: Contingency Table for Hypothesis Two

Responses		XY	x2	y2
SA/A (X)	**SD/D (Y)**			
17	3	51	289	9
10	2	20	100	4
70	4	280	4900	16
28	5	140	784	25
18	3	54	324	9
180	11	1980	32400	121
∑x= 323 (92%)	**∑y= 28 (8%)**	**∑xy= 2525**	∑x2= **38797**	∑y2= **184**

Source: Author's computation from the questionnaire (2024)

"r" formula = $N\sum XY - \sum X (\sum Y)[NX2 - (X)2][N\,y2 - (y)2]$

$r = 6\ 2525 - 323\ (28)6\ 38797 - (323)2\ [6\ 184 - (28)2]$

$r = 610612845\ x320 = 61062027.4 = 3.0$

To test the strength of the relationship, t-statistics is applied as follows;

$t = rN-21-r2$

$t = 3.06-21-3.02$

$t = 62.2 = 2.7$

From the computation, r is 3.0 which indicates a strong positive relationship between government influence and mass media effectiveness. However, the computed t-value of 2.7 is greater than the table value of 2.13 at a five percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means the government have a significant influence on mass media in preventing crime in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Data obtained from the responses to question two (2) of the questionnaire with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) are used to test this hypothesis as seen in Table 4

Table 4: Computation of Correlation Coefficient (r) for Hypothesis Three

Responses		XY	X_2	Y_2
X	**Y**			
46	3	138	2116	9
34	2	68	1156	4
28	3	84	784	9
10	2	20	100	4
14	6	84	196	36

18	2	36	324	4
179	4	716	32041	16
∑x= 329 (93.7%)	**∑y = 22 (6.3%)**	**∑xy= 1146**	**∑ X^2= 36717**	**∑ Y^2=82**

Source: Researcher's computation from questionnaire (2024)

"r" formula = N∑XY-∑X (∑Y)[NX2- (X)2] [N y2- (y)2]

r = 7 1146- 329 (12)7 36717- (329)2 [7 82- (22)2]

r = 8022-3948257019-108241 [574- 484]

r =40743659.2 r = 1.11

To test the strength of the relationship, t-statistics is applied as follows;

t = rN-21-r2

t = 1.117-21-1.112

t = 2.50.5 = 5.0

The computed t-value of 5.0 is greater than the table value of 2.13 at a five percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion and Findings

From the research analysis and test of hypotheses, findings from the study have been summarized as follows: Firstly, the mass media plays a significant role in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. From the study it was found that the major roles which mass media have played effectively towards crime prevention in the state are as follows: creation of public awareness on crime, vigilante role, creation of awareness on public order maintenance techniques, whistle-blower role, as well as help to bring corruption cases to the public. These findings collaborate with the views of Watson and Hill (2016), Umoh (2024), Senam (2022) and Morrison (2019). Secondly, the government has a significant influence on mass media in preventing crime in Akwa Ibom State. It was found from the data obtained from the questionnaire that the major areas in which the government influences mass media are press releases/conferences/interviews/press events which are tailored mostly towards government events, use of some journalists as spies, license regulation which cause media houses to hoard most information for fear of revoke of license, broadcast government programmes mostly as well as advertise only the activities of elites they are faithful to. These findings collaborate with the views of Nwankwo (2013), Umoh (2024), Nwatu (2018) and Nwosu (2015) who all argued that some policies of government influence mass media effectiveness to a significant extent.

Thirdly, there is a significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. From the data obtained and the test of hypothesis, it is found that the major challenges facing media functionalities and development in

the state are poor leadership, unnecessary pressure on media rights mostly by executives, lack of adequate financing of media organizations, poor media users' assessment, poor reporting quality as well as lack of monitoring and evaluation of the activities of media organizations. These findings collaborate with the views of Scharticles (2014), Osondu (2018), Umoh (2024) and Udensi (2018) who, in their literature, pointed those variables as challenges to mass media effectiveness.

Conclusion

Although several factors continued to pose great challenges to the achievement of media objectives and functionalities such as side-lining of media houses by the government, illegal arrest and detention of journalists/reporters/editors, threat to life, brutality by security operatives, buy-over of papers from public stand, seize of certain editions, denial of journalists, access to information/crime scene, attack on the journalists/media house by criminals, etc., public patronage and demand for mass media continue to expand. Based on what has been found, it is safe to conclude that mass media plays significant roles in crime prevention; the government have a significant influence on mass media in preventing crime; there is a significant relationship between mass media challenges and their effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

By implication, this paper has contributed greatly to knowledge in the area of mass media effectiveness and crime prevention by establishing the fact that, reports from media have a positive impact on crime prevention. For instance, the broadcasting of news items about the effectiveness of security agencies, techniques of crimes or the speed and timeliness of deterrent sentences certainly discourages potential offenders and may even force them to abandon crime altogether. It is particularly important to gain people's trust in the fight against organized crime as this can help break the conspiracy of silence imposed by criminal gangs and encourage people to give evidence or make a complaint against a crime mostly through mass media, especially through theinternet, which can be disseminated quickly to the seeing of many people.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. For mass media organizations to significantly play their roles in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State, there should be regular orientation and comprehensive training for media personnel on reporting crime-related news and other news. Also, the management of media organizations should regularly conduct more serious evaluations of media work since it has been observed that monitoring and evaluation still lack internal support within media development organizations.
2. The government's influence on the media should be discouraged at all costs. Rather, an independent institution or commission should be established to control and protect media organizations. This will minimize problems such as illegal arrest and detention of journalists/reporters/editors, threat to life, brutality by security operatives, buy-over of papers from public stand, seize of certain editions, denial of journalists, access to information/crime scene and attack on thejournalists/media house by criminals.
3. To eliminate or significantly reduce mass media challenges hindering their effectiveness in crime prevention, the government should establish and foster a formal collaborative relationship with media houses, stakeholders, and law enforcement agencies in the state. This collaboration should go a long way in creating targeted campaigns that raise

awareness of crime prevention strategies, encourage the reporting of suspicious activities, and promote safety initiatives.

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APPENDIX

Administered Questionnaire

QUESTION NO.	VARIABLES	RESPONSES			
		SA	A	SD	D
1.	**The major roles of mass media in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State are:** a. Create public awareness on crime b. Vigilante role c. Create awareness on public order maintenance d. Whistle blower role				
	e. Help bring corruption cases to the public f. All of the above				
2.	**Major challenges of mass media effectiveness in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State are:** a. Poor leadership b. Media rights under pressure c. Lack of adequatefinancing d. Poor Media User's assessment e. Poor reporting quality f. Lack of monitoring and evaluation g. All of the above				
3.	**The major areas of government influence on mass media include:** a. Press releases/conferences/interviews/press events b. Use of journalists as spies c. License regulation d. Broadcast government programmes mostly e. Elites that pay much during the election, get advertised mostly f. All of the above				