



Perception of editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism for agenda setting: A study of Niger North readerships of Daily Trust newspaper

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Abstract

Editorial cartoons, also known as political cartoons are hand drawn pictures that occupy a single or multiple pictorial frames, frequently complemented by voice bubbles and subtitles referred to as utterances, with written text and serving as an indicator of discussion that the readers are supposed to interpret with the purpose of communicating a message to either a single person, authority or the public. The purpose of this study is to analyse the readers' perception of editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism for agenda setting within Nigeria's one of the mainstream newspapers, the *Daily Trust*. Despite their humorous appearance, editorial cartoons are often overlooked as a significant form of communication that reflects and critiques socio-economic and political issues. The study adopted the survey research methods; while questionnaire served as the research instrument with thirty (30) items on it, in examining the perception of the Niger North *Daily Trust* newspaper readers of editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism and agenda setting. The analysis carried out revealed that cartoons are used to set agenda thereby providing political commentary and debate in humorous and crafty fashion through which social realities are reflected in the nation's wider socio-political arena. The study proposes that print media management and cartoonists should not only see cartoons as an entertaining medium, but should also concentrate on how graphic images and messages can be readily understood with suitable drawings, texts and captions, thus serving as a platform for the dissemination of messages.

Keywords: Agenda-setting, value adding mechanism, editorial cartoon, perception

Introduction

The cartoons are an important content of the mass media, especially the print media. They communicate information through the pictorial depiction of issues. Editorial cartoons focus on events, policies, and programmes, as well as the actions and inactions of individuals, governments, and their agencies, in the hope of engendering actions through satirical representations. Editorial cartoon, is one of the most veritable features in the present-day newspapers as it does not only entertain but educates. It recreates social problems, generates public pathos, and engenders positive corrective measures on the part of those brought to focus. Nwodu (2013, p.25) ^[20] posits that 'the relevance of cartoons goes beyond mere stimulation of humour to entertainment and educating or better still, enlightening the audience, as well as passing comments about an individual, events or state of affairs.' Similarity, Saint Martin (1990, p.36), observes that 'a good cartoon has proven to be a potent tool for diverting and reconstructing the socio-political realities of the society.' According to Daramola (2003) ^[9], the press uses cartoons for various reasons. They create awareness among the populace, in relation to politics, social and economic development of the country. Generally, editorial cartoons in the national dailies (newspapers) are intended to draw the attention of the people toward the happenings or issues in society. According to Okoro & Igbozuruike (2023, pp.4997-5003) cartoons 'they expose social maladies and catalyse remedial actions through sensitization and persuasive communication for national development.' In compliance with the dissemination of information and communication effectively are journalists. Journalists who are professionals trained for the collection, processing, correlation, and dissemination of information, are powerful gatekeepers and actors whose work sustains a

society. The print media journalist through their news stories, editorials, and opinions contained in newspapers and magazines, not only set the agenda for public discourse but also reflect the environment. The audience in this sense is the homogeneous group of people who on regular bases read Newspapers and also perceive the presence of cartoons, especially editorial cartoons in those Newspapers they read. According to Igbozuruike and Ejem (2019^[1], p.49) ... 'audience has come together not in time and space but the common act of reading, listening or viewing.' They are the target of these media content in which cartoon is one of them, the way this audience see or understand the presence of cartoons in the Newspapers they read is what will form the focal point of this study. It can be said with some measures of certainty that reading and understanding editorial cartoons by the audience of the Daily Trust newspaper might not be a problem in a community such as Niger North LGA Headquarters which is also referred to as Zone 'C' LGA headquarters.

Statement of the Problem

Too many newspapers are replete with caricature representations in the form of cartoons which are used to pass across various messages, these cartoons to some people help lighten the mood from stress when going through these newspaper cartoons, giving them a sense of humour and freedom laughing through these caricatures. The import of this study is to analyse the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons among residents of Niger North LGA Headquarters as the population of the study with a view to providing insight, making it a valuable document, especially for language experts, media professionals, future researchers, and the society at large. Regardless of the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons, specifically in which triggers

a sense of reasoning as to what truly motivates the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons among residents and respondents of Niger North LGA Headquarters; probably the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons by residents of Niger North LGA Headquarters help motivate the buying of newspapers. Also, educational advancement on the part of individuals and people might aid a better understanding of newspaper editorial cartoons and probably the effects of gender on newspaper editorial cartoons readership understanding, also about the social classification of individuals this research tends to find out if demographic factors have effects on the understanding of newspaper editorial cartoons on residents of Niger North LGA Headquarters. Hence, this study seeks to address:

1. Limited understanding of how readers in Niger North perceive and engage with editorial cartoons in Daily Trust newspaper.
2. Uncertainty about whether editorial cartoons effectively add value (inform, influence, entertain) for this specific audience.
3. Need to assess if cultural/contextual factors influence interpretation of cartoons in a region with diverse socio-political dynamics.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study is geared towards understanding the readers' perception of newspaper editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism for agenda setting while the sub-objectives of the study are to:

The study aimed to assess the perception of Niger North readers of Daily Trust newspaper editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism and agenda setting. While its objectives are to:

1. Find out whether newspaper cartoons are read, by residents of Niger North of Niger state.
2. Find out what other value outside humour that Daily Trust newspaper cartoons provide.
3. Assess how demographic factors affect cartoon readership.
4. Ascertain the extent to which readership of cartoon motivates buying of newspapers.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. Do residents of Niger North perceive Daily Trust newspaper editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism?
2. What other value adding mechanism outside humour Daily Trust newspaper editorial cartoons provide?
3. To what extent residents of Niger North demographic factors affect editorial cartoons readership?
4. How readership of residence of Niger North editorial cartoons motivate buying of newspaper?
5. To what extent residents of Niger North readership of editorial cartoons efficient?

Significance of the Study

The import of this study is to analyze the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons among residents of Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau; three LGAs Headquarters within Niger North of Niger state of Nigeria as the population of the study with a view to providing insight, making it a valuable document, especially for communication experts, future researchers, and the society at large. Regardless of the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons, specifically in

which triggers a sense of reasoning as to what truly motivates the readership of newspaper editorial cartoons among residents and respondents of Niger North; probably the readership of newspaper cartoons by residents of Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau help motivate the buying of newspapers.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study was anchored on agenda setting theory which is a theory that explains how the media influences the audience or the public in making some important events a public agenda. The public discuss is the vital issue which the audience as the members of the society place their interest on. The term agenda setting theory was first used by McCombs and Shaw in (1972). This theory elaborates the connection in term of relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put as an issue and the media audience or the public reaction or attributes to such issue (Littlejohn and Foss: 2009) in (Zain, 2014). In this case, the mass media which include the newspaper uses cartoon to talk about important issues in the society in a mild or amusing form which helps to shape the topic of discuss of the public or audience.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on the perception of residents of 3 out of the 8 Local Government Area Headquarters (Niger North) readers of editorial cartoons in the National Dailies; Daily Trust Newspaper to ascertain how their readership of editorial cartoons in Daily Trust keep them abreast with the current affairs of the country and the impact such have on the business of newspaper vendors in the area of coverage. This study tends to cover all the 3 Local Government Area Headquarters out the 8 that made up Niger North. The 3 study areas of this study are: Bargu, Kontagora, Rijau, LGAs. 100 readers of newspapers are sampled from each LGA which will be randomly selected in accordance with the research sampling technique. This is to say that the scope and limitation of the study could be summarised as:

- Focuses on resident readers of Daily Trust newspaper in 3 LGAs Headquarters in Niger North, Nigeria.
- Examines perceptions of editorial cartoons in Daily Trust newspaper.
- Explores interpretation, influence, and perceived value of editorial cartoons.
- Geographically limited to Niger North; findings may not generalize to other regions.
- Perception is subjective; responses may vary based on individual differences.

Definition of Operational Terms:

1. **Editorial cartoons:** also known as political cartoons are hand-drawn pictures that occupy a single or multiple pictorial frames, frequently complemented by voice bubbles and subtitles referred to as utterances, with written text and serving as an indicator of discussion that the readers are supposed to interpret with the purpose of communicating a message to either a single person, authority or the public.
2. **Newspapers:** are publications that provide news, information, and opinions on current events, issues and topics of interest, typically printed on paper and distributed regularly either daily, weekly or monthly.

3. **Cartoons:** are humorous or satirical drawings, often with caricatures that comment on current events, politics, social issues, typically found in newspapers, magazines or online publications.
4. **Niger North:** this refers to the study's subjects that are either residents or indigenes of the study area which involved 3 of 8 the local government areas that made the Zone 'C' Senatorial district of Niger state of Nigeria.
5. **Perception:** refers to how we interpret and understand the world around us, shaping our views and attitudes.
6. **Readerships:** this refers to the people who read a particular publication, like newspaper or magazine. It also refers to a way how many eyes are on the content.
7. **Value adding mechanism:** this refers to a process, tool or strategy that enhances the usefulness, quality or appeal of something that makes it valuable to its users.
8. **Newspaper vendors:** this refers to individuals businesses that sell newspapers, magazines or some other publications, often the street or go-to people for grabbing the latest news.

The Concept of Cartoon

The word cartoon is often used as an umbrella term for a number of art forms consisting of drawings with or without words. Coming under this broad generalization are caricatures, cartoons, comic strips, and animations. While the first three come under the print media, the last refers to drawing made lively through the electronic process and hence, possibly only in the television and film media. Before the introduction of the term cartoon in its modern sense in the 19th century, satirical and humorous drawings of all kinds were referred to as caricatures. Today caricature is used mostly to refer to distorted portraiture that emphasizes the characteristic traits of an individual; it may either stand on its own or form part of a cartoon.

Beyond these central forms, the term cartoon has also been applied to comics, television and film animation, multi-frame jokes published in newspapers, continuity strips, graphic novels, humorous advertising, humorous book and magazine illustrations, and satirical puppetry. Cartoons are said to be slightly distinct from caricatures and comic strips in that they are drawings with or without captions that make a point in an amusing, satirical, or humorous way. Usually, their targets are political and public affairs but they focus on other subjects. Ahuja, and Chhabra, (2002) ^[3], define a cartoon as a forceful idea quickly expressed in a few strokes of the pen, explosive enough to catch the eye, but sufficiently stylized and disguised in such a way that the target figures should not recognize themselves, or if they did, would be unable to prosecute the cartoonist for having depicted them with too much realism.

A cartoon is, therefore, the modernized, economical, straightforward, and more direct version of the old lampoon or humorous drawing that was used during the 19th century. According to Jegede (1999^[16], p.183), the cartoon may be described as a conundrum, a graphic phantom that does not always signify what it implies, a medium that at once affirms and denies. It possesses pictorial qualities that

facilitate the codification of messages in succinct, subtle, or hidden forms.

Generally, one might say that a cartoon refers to any drawing that through the use of humour, satire or caricature provokes a response in an audience. Cartoons (humorous drawings), pictorial sketches, or caricatures, by implication humorous or satirical, are usually published in a newspaper, magazine, or periodical. In spite of the slight difference, cartoon seems to be inseparable from caricature. Newspaper Cartoons and the Reading Audience Reading helps to sharpen our vision and our memory. A beautiful piece of writing, they say, is an inspiration, a lifelong friend, and something very special. Reading involves sharing in the world of others; anyone that aspires to be a leader must be a reader. Hence, the extension of newspaper reaches to the masses, beyond the circle of an educated elite or business class which is a familiar picture of press history, is very laudable, although the reasons are disputed. Improved technology, rising literacy level, commerce, democracy, and popular demand all played a part, and they largely coincided with their timing.

There has been a significant rise in the popularity of newspapers (Anyanwu, Ejem & Nwoga, 2017; Leane, 1991) ^[6, 17]. In examining the upward spiral in the popularity of newspapers, the growing market penetration of the commercial press (as a medium for advertising and amusement) and the reading of the newspaper for mainly political goals are obvious. Raufu (2003) ^[24], feels that reading newspapers and reading, in general, is contagious, produces loads of pleasure, and brings distinct satisfaction that nothing else can equal, adding that newspapers and books help in building children's vocabulary and ultimately their communication abilities. He even makes a more profound point. He claims that research conducted by a group of experts shows that Nigerian youths prefer to watch cartoons over reading books at all times, stressing that the research necessitated the establishment of 'The Comic Hut' in order to encourage children to read and develop a positive attitude toward books, even if they are books about cartoon characters. Nigeria has been characterized as having a business market where only cartoon periodicals may thrive. After graduating from university, Nigerians lose their reading habits, viewing the credential as a goal in itself. Cartoons, on the other hand, can rekindle the art of reading when they are incisive and didactic. Cartoons have the potentials to invite Nigerians back to their books. Raufu also emphasizes the importance of educational, colourful, and very amusing cartoons in newspapers and books in order to improve the reading culture of Nigerian children and make reading a less dull pastime. While school encourages everyone to read, it is unable to promote the desire to read, instead of imposing a sense of obligation.

According to Akinfeleye (2008, p.127), research investigations show that the type of medium via which a message is transmitted influences our ability to recall it. This does not entirely support Marshall McLuhan's medium is the message argument. According to Akinfeleye, research studies have revealed that humans have the ability to remember: a third of what we read (i.e. newspapers, magazines e.t.c); we hear 40% of what we hear (i.e. radio); and we see and read 50% of what we see and read (i.e. graphics, photos) This indicates that the humour and satire cartoons used to illustrate articles and news stories in newspapers help people remember them better. A well-crafted cartoon, whether it's pure humour or a satirical take

on a socioeconomic or political issue, has a way of striking a chord with readers and leaving a trail of thought-provoking messages filled with sober reflection and introspection in its wake. The newspaper's expanded involvement in the country's political landscape, particularly during times of national crisis, is unusual and noteworthy in press history. Sales of Newspapers and Cartoons According to several cartoonists, cartooning has sparked a lot of reader interest in newspapers, which has had a direct impact on sales. Cartoons, according to Cheche Egbunne of The Daily Sun Newspaper in Babalola (2007), assist increase newspaper sales. According to him, the Daily Sun has utilized the ability of cartoons to captivate readers and raise sales. Every edition of the Daily Sun includes cartoons. Egbon (1994) ^[11], validates this indicating that Daily Sun leverages cartoons as a reader magnet to enhance sales. Every year, we conduct a study at the Daily Sun to see which items our readers enjoy the most, and it was discovered that our cartoons are the most popular, followed by sports. For the past five years, the cartoon section has contributed the most to sales, with around 60% of readers purchasing The Daily Sun because of our cartoons.

There has been a slight change, according to Egbon. However, while interest in sports has shifted in recent years, the cartooning department has consistently ranked first or second in terms of contribution to sales. The Guardian also backed up the theory that cartoons have helped increase newspaper sales. After buying a paper, some people read the cartoons first to unwind before doing the serious editorial and news story reading. Sales are boosted by cartoons, and we receive emails and comments from readers in response to our cartoons. Yes, cartoons help sales, according to Didi Onu, also of The Guardian, in Jegede (2008, p.185). There have been numerous studies on readership, and it has been discovered that cartoon pages are often the first pages that people flip to in newspapers.

The Concept of Newspapers

Newspaper is a printed unbound paper that contains news about current political, economic, socio-cultural, educational, environmental, scientific-cum-technological and sundry affairs as well as other relevant sales information. However, the evolution of electronic communication and migration of newspapers onto websites and blogs has rendered this term obsolete. Although the political cartoon belongs to the editorial pages of the traditional newspaper, nowadays the vast majority of political cartoons can be found on the internet. Newspaper refers to a daily or weekly publication used to disseminate news to a mass audience. This is why it is defined as an unbound printed publication issued at regular intervals which presents information in words, often supplemented with pictures (Adetola and Abioye, 2020) ^[2]. However, the implication is that a typical newspaper is characterizes as follows:

1. Unlike most bounded publications, newspapers are hardly bounded.
2. Like all other print media modes, the content of newspapers is usually permanent to the extent that you can enjoy repeated exposure as long as you can preserve a specific edition of a newspaper.
3. It includes a wide range of political, financial, social, environmental, scientific, technological and multidisciplinary interests. Periodically available that could be daily, weekly or bi-weekly.
4. It is widely covered (Adetola, 2019) ^[1].

The function of the media is to help individuals uncover the truth by teaching them on public problems and presenting all kinds of proof as background to expose wrongdoing in society, hoping to make it a better place to reside in. The press adopts the use of cartoons as one approach to encode and convey meanings to promote this function. In relation to other communicative types, the Nigerian press seems to favour the use of cartoons as its approach to disseminate information about politics. That almost every Nigerian newspaper and magazine has allocated space for cartoons is a testimony to how significant they are perceived. Because political cartoons are images that challenge the intellect, they are thought to have the authority to enhance and explain meaning. (Agba, 2014).

The cartoonist uses various icons which are symbols representing objects within a bordered object called a panel, or frame. These panels represent a single moment in time: a slice of life caught in mid- pose, much like a photograph. Unlike comic strips or comic books (mediums that have multiple panels), all information is found within the single image, thus they may be complicated and difficult to decipher at first glance. Cartoons also utilize specific visual elements in order to replicate human communication. Sound (dialogue, self-talk, music, etc.) is created using words and symbols. Cartoonists lampoon politicians on burning issues in newspapers or magazines. Such cartoons always come out in editorial pages, thus their name, editorial cartoons (Adetola and Abioye, 2020) ^[2].

Cartoons can either be black and white or coloured, but the editorial cartoons considered in our study are both while the main thrust of this study is the editorial cartoons. It is important to distinguish why this paper embraces the term 'editorial cartoon' instead of other derivatives such as newspaper cartoon or political cartoon. In preferring the term 'editorial' Adetola and Abioye (2020) ^[2] asserted how the medium of publication is not the cartoon's defining adjective. Rather, its expression of argument or opinion becomes its primary descriptor. The acceptability of an editorial cartoon relies on the purpose behind it, its background and the behaviour of those on the receiving end (Pitcher, 2016). For the most part, political cartoons aim to preach to the converted but their derogatory and visual nature often fuels audiences to believe that the cartoonist has overstepped the mark, generating more discussion about an issue than would otherwise have been possible with a written editorial (Adetola, 2019) ^[1].

The capacity to read an editorial cartoon, along with chart and graph reading, is regarded a fundamental skill. Importantly, if the reader is to grasp their full meaning, they must be read in conjunction with the news of the day, and generally consist of a one-panel illustration aimed at visually depicting and commenting on a specific social event or issue in the news. The news of the day is distorted by political cartoonists to convey what they see as the reality about someone or something. As a result, editorial cartoons are often regarded counter-discourses aimed at undermining and challenging dominant ideologies permeated by traditional news reports by leaders. In doing so, cartoonists are anticipated to be aggressive, often requiring widening of the boundaries of excellence and often leading readers to doubt the validity of the pictures depicted (Pitcher, 2016). The final element that needs to be present in order for political cartoons to flourish is the audience.

The cartoonist needs readers that are savoir-faire and politically mindful. Without an audience that understands

the conventions of political cartoons, such as satire and caricature, the messages that are contained therein can be lost, and the message is often not interpreted in the correct manner. In addition, audiences also need to have a clear understanding of political and social issues. Each of these factors plays an important role in determining how a reader decodes the messages contained within a particular cartoon. Irrespective of the status of the audience, these cartoons provide comic relief like any other comic strip, except they raise an issue that is relevant, and run a commentary on the lives of the millions of readers, hence, the synergy and the attributes these cartoons possess just like the editorial (Adetola and Abioye, 2020) ^[2]. Each of these variables plays a significant role in determining how a reader decodes a specific cartoon's messages. Media audience are the receivers of communication messages. The term audience (or readers as in the context of this study) is very familiar as a collective term for receivers in the simple sequential model of mass communication (Okoro and Onakpa, 2016) ^[21].

Mass media audience are large, anonymous, scattered, heterogeneous, and active. The mass media audience are large because they are many, they cannot be easily counted. They are anonymous because they (the audience) are not known to the communicator. The audience members are scattered across different areas and they are made up of different demographics like religion, educational level, and sex, among others (Asemah, 2011). Regardless of the audience's status, these editorial cartoons provide comic relief like any other comic strip, except that they raise a specific issue and comment on the life of millions of readers, hence the synergy and qualities that these cartoons possess just like the editorial (Adetola, 2019) ^[1] while the media audiences stand a better chance to assess newspaper's editorial cartoons because they are consumers of media messages.

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Empirical Review

In recent years, there have been considerable studies in literature which investigate the nature and functions of newspapers' editorial cartoons. Several studies of editorial cartoons also known as political cartoons look at their capabilities to effectively communicate social and political messages to mass audience. These studies have been synthesised and grouped into related variables based on their overall findings:

Victor (2019) analysed media representations of Joyce Banda, Malawi's first female president, by newspaper editorial cartoons. In her study, a total of 50 cartoons were analysed, comprising Point of Order and Puludzu, from The Nation and The Daily Times newspapers, spanning the period 2012 to 2014. Using theories of feminism and representation, the editorials, using unique visual forms of communication, offered an opportunity for deep reflection

on attitudes concerning female and presidential leadership. His findings suggested that both cartoon series depict President Banda as an indecisive, inefficient, clueless and weak politician based on ingrained gender stereotypes of women, rather than on her actions as a president governing the country.

Darryl (2020) in his work *Constructing Myths via Art of Controversy: A Semiotic Analysis on Political Cartoons*, analysed the different ways of expressing opinions by utilising Philippine editorial cartoons and argued how humour in the political cartoons served to present crucial issues and criticise political leaders and their contemptible practices.

Nindya and Didin (2020) described Anies Baswedan's political cartoons on his first 100 days as a governor. They employed a qualitative research approach, and analysed the data dealing with the relationship between the utterances and Anies cartoons on his first 100 days as Jakarta's governor. Using different steps; by categorising the sign into icon, symbol, index using a typology of signs and interpreting the meaning of the political cartoons, the researchers found that the signs in those political cartoons had powerful meanings to convey the aspiration of Indonesian people freely towards Anti- government. Also, the fact that the cartoons were in the forms of images eased the readers in understanding the meanings behind them, and the political cartoons deal with the relationship between visual and verbal signs of cartoons because it also helps the researchers know about events depicted in those cartoons. Their study also offered some potential use of cartoons for language teaching, even though the challenges of employing them are evident.

Felicia (2021) ^[13] examined the ideological underpinning of cartoons in Nigeria's socio-political context. She unveiled cartoonists strategic moves to (MIS) represent Nigerian women by using data that comprise 10 political cartoons which she selected using a purposive-sampling method in line with the thematic concern of the study using Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach to the analysis of multimodal text along with insight from discourse analysis (CDA). Her findings revealed that semiotic resources, such as pronominal choices, speech acts, labelling, visual metaphorization, salience/emphasis and framing play significant roles in cartoonist's commentaries on gender related issues in Nigeria's socio political domain. Through view against the United Nations global goal of gender equality by 2030, she concluded that Nigerian newspaper political cartoonists represent (UN) equal gender relations among Nigeria.

Zinah, Muslim and Al-Ghabra (2022) ^[28] conducted a semiotic analysis on cartoons using qualitative and descriptive methods identifying the positivity and negativity of the verbal and visual-verbal signs, and deciphering the non-verbal signs in two of the selected episodes of Tom and Jerry. The researchers adopted Peirce's theory in analysing and categorising signs into icons, indexes, and symbols. They depended on the universal six pillars of Character Counts as the criteria of positivity and negativity to tabulate the product of categorization. They found that the negativity is the dominant aspect in the two episodes.

Research Design

A survey research design will be adopted as an appropriate research design to carry out this study. Survey is a quantitative type of research design which is said to be a

popular design in education. Creswell (2012, p. 376) states, 'Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population.' It means that a researcher collects the data usually from the large sample to talk about trends, opinions or attitudes. The result of this design is based on the quantitative or numbered data obtained from questionnaires or interviews. It statistically analyses data and describes the trends about responses to questions. It also tests research questions or hypotheses.

Therefore, this study adopted survey method to investigate the Perception of Editorial Cartoons as Value Adding Mechanism for Agenda Setting of Niger North Readerships of Daily Trust Newspaper.

Population

The population of this study was the literate residents of Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau local government areas of Niger north of Niger state which cut across different professions or field of endeavours. Thus, the study population included civil/public servants, artisans, students, retirees, etc. with varying degrees of educational exposures. These three towns which served as area of coverage are a typical cosmopolitan societies of which people from all kind of works reside. The Taro Yamane sample size formula $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ was used to determine the sample size using the above stated population figure to arrive at the sample size of 310.

Sampling technique

The sampling technique used in this study was the simple random sampling since it allows for random selection of respondents from the entire population. Structured questionnaire copies were distributed to respondents of Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau local government areas of Niger north of Niger state. The total number of questionnaire copies administered was 310. However, the number of questionnaire copies duly completed and returned was 300, representing to 97% of the original size and that served as the sample size for this study.

Method of data analysis

The study adopted descriptive statistical analysis of the study's data. This involves tables, percentage distributions and frequency patterns were used to analyze the outcome of the responses. The descriptive approach is not about the relationships between variables, but about the description of individual variables (Gravetter and Forzano, 2009) [14].

Data Presentation and Analysis

Information presentation made from the questionnaires was simple descriptive and inferential method of information analysis. The information were gathered and presented on tables and each variable calculated using percentage scores, contingency cross tabulation using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). And each table is discussed beneath the tables accordingly.

Table 1

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Newspaper cartoon readership in the study areas (Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau LGAs)	Yes	189	75
	No	96	25
	Total	300	100

The table above shows that the majority of residence of the study areas respondents read newspaper cartoon, however 75% of the respondents read newspaper cartoons, while 25% do not read newspaper cartoons. This implies that newspaper cartoon is not a strange feature among newspaper readers in the study areas as this is widely read by vast majority of the respondents.

Table 2

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of newspaper cartoon readership by study areas (Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau LGAs)	7 days a week	30	10
	6 days a week	36	12
	5 days a week	53	17.7
	4 days a week	52	17.3
	3 days a week	38	12.7
	2 days a week	30	10
	Once a week	26	8.7
	Rarely	19	6.3
	Never	16	5.3
	Total	300	100

The above table shows that, 17.7% of respondent accorded the highest frequency of those who read cartoons 5 days a week, while 17.3% followed with those who read cartoons 4 days a week, 12.7% also read cartoons 3 days a week, 10% each read cartoons 7 and 2 days a week, 8.7% read cartoons once a week, while 6.3% of the frequency distribution in the table of respondents read cartoons rarely, This shows that majority of the residents of the study areas who read newspapers also read the cartoons in the newspaper.

Table 3

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Reasons for reading newspaper cartoons among Enugu metropolis residents	Humour	111	37
	Message	125	41.7
	Entertainment	64	21.3
	Total	300	100

The able above revealed the most popular reason for reading newspaper cartoons by residents of study areas is the message which represents 41.7% of the entire respondents. 37% of respondents read newspaper cartoons for the humours which the newspaper provides, while 21.3% of the respondents read newspaper cartoons solely for entertainment. This shows that cartoon as one of the emerging features in newspaper is no longer regarded as a joke rather a light strategy for passing important messages to the public.

Table 4

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Editorial cartoons as one of the motivations for buying newspaper	Yes	189	63
	No	111	37
	Total	300	100

The table above clearly shows, reading cartoons was one of the motivations or reasons for buying newspapers among most residence of the study areas respondents by as many as 189 which represents 63%. While 111 respondents which represents 37% indicated that reading cartoons is not one of the motivating factors for which they buy newspapers. This implies that majority of newspaper readers in study areas were not motivated to buy newspaper because of cartoon and this outcome concords with the view of Babalola (2007) as he opined that cartoons assist increase newspaper sales.

Table 5

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of cartoon readership on the age of the respondents	16-20	36	12
	21-25	54	18
	26-30	48	16
	31-35	55	18.3
	36 and above	107	35.7
	Total	300	100

The above table revealed most of the respondents whose age had an influence on cartoon readership in Study Areas, 12% represents the age bracket of 16 – 20, closely followed by those in 26 – 30 age brackets, representing 16%. The 21 – 25 age brackets had 18% readership base while, 18.3% of respondents were between 31- 35 years of age. As many as 35.7% which represents 35 years and above read newspaper cartoon more. Hence, it appeared that older people were more interested in reading cartoons than their younger counterparts.

Table 6

Statements	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of cartoon readership on the gender of the respondents	Male	267	89
	Female	33	11
	Total	300	100

The table above shows the extent different genders in study areas residents were being influenced by cartoon readership. Data collated revealed that over two-third of the respondents which represents 89% were of the view that male adults were more influence with as many as 267 responses as against the female adults being influenced by cartoon readership which stood at 11%, representing 33 responses which is less than one-third of the entire respondents. This implied that on the issue of gender having influence on cartoon readership, male adults are by far more influenced to cartoon readership than the female adult as can be seen in the table above.

Table 7

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of cartoon readership on the Respondents' Educational Qualifications	WASC/SSCE/NECO	28	9.3
	OND/NCE	54	18
	HND/BA/ BA ED/B. Sc.	164	54.7
	M.Sc. /M.A./MPhil.	42	14
	PhD	12	4
	Total	300	100

The table above shows the respondents' educational qualification 164 (54.7%) first degree, 54 (18%) OND/NCE, 42 respondents (14%) have their higher degrees (M.Sc. / M.A. / MPhil.) while 28(9.3%) respondents secured O'level qualification WASC/ SSCE/NECO and four (12) respondents (4 %) have PhD. From the result above, we can deduce that the respondents sampled are literates and qualified enough to understand the questionnaire.

Table 8

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents' efficiency on the reading of Daily Trust Editorial Cartoons.	Very high	164	54.7
	High	54	18
	Moderate	42	14
	Low	28	9.3
	Very low	12	4
	Total	300	100

The above table shows the results of the respondents' efficiency on the reading of d editorial cartoons

Table 9

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents' perception on the value adding mechanism of Daily Trust newspaper editorial Cartoons.	Positive	254	84.7
	Negative	46	15.3
	Total	300	100

The result in the above table reveals that residents of Niger North Daily Trust readerships have very high positive perception on editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism as reported by majority of the respondents 254 (84.7%), while 46 (15.3) did not see any value adding mechanism in the Daily Trust editorial cartoons they read. This result literarily implied /answered the Research Question 1 of the study. Do residents of Niger North perceive Daily Trust newspaper editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism?

Table 10

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents' perception on the Daily Trust newspaper editorial cartoons setting agenda for public discuss.	Yes	261	87
	No	39	13
	Total	300	100

The above table shows that the study respondents selected yes response with 261 (87%) as against no response which has 39 (13%) of the total number of the study's population; 300. This result implied that over whelming respondents belied that editorial cartoons usually set the turn for public discuss, especially on national issues such politics, economy, etc. This is contrary to the submission that some people are of the view that cartoons do not play any significant role in the society because it is a phenomenon of educated people and of those people who have awareness and knowledge of the situations and issues that are portrayed in the cartoons (Ashfaq and Hussein, 2013) ^[7].

Summary and Conclusion

Summary of the study

1. This study focused on perception of readership of editorial cartoons as value adding mechanism for agenda setting: A study of Daily Trust Newspaper for residents/ indigenes of Niger north of Niger state. The researchers analyzed the newspaper cartoon readership of the average residents of Bargu, Kontagora and Rijau LGAs using the survey method. It examined the extent and frequency of newspaper cartoon readership and its effect among residents of this study areas respondents. This study also investigated what motivated readers to read Daily Trust newspaper cartoons as well as the demographic nature of the readers.
2. This study, based on the sample population, found out that majority of the residents read Daily Trust newspapers but not all of them read its editorial cartoons. All the age categories studied in this study read editorial cartoons of Daily Trust newspaper as revealed, most of the respondents whose age had an influence on cartoon readership in Study Areas, 12% represents the age bracket of 16 – 20, closely followed by those in 26 – 30 age brackets, representing 16%. The 21 – 25 age brackets had 18% readership base while, 18.3% of respondents were between 31- 35 years of

age. As many as 35.7% which represents 35 years and above read newspaper cartoon more. Hence, it appeared that older people were more interested in reading cartoons than their younger counterparts.

3. Apart from humours, the study revealed that the inherent messages in the cartoons were the primary reasons Enugu metropolis residents adduced for reading cartoons. Other reason mentioned for reading newspaper cartoons includes a source of fun and relaxation; which gives analytical and humour skills, a mode of expression, providing information that is vital and current that may not be expressly stated.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated how cartoons are used to accomplish communicative tasks in Nigerian print media and how the cartoons are creatively used to set agenda thereby providing political commentary and debate in witty and artful fashion through which social realities are mirrored in the nation's wider socio-political arena. Therefore, the study has shown that the cartoon genre constitutes a formidable medium of communication through which the media set social agenda by attaching relevance to importance of issues and events through recurrent coverage aimed at shaping the people's understanding of the issues to bring positive change in society. Thus, Nigerian political cartoons serve as agent of setting social agenda used by the media specifically to build up public attention, reorient people and initiate social and political reforms in Nigeria (Adetola and Abioye, 2020) ^[2]. It is evident that cartoons published in newspapers are critical of the present situation's problems, personalities and institutions, as it can be said that cartoons are the chronicle of current history. This study sees cartooning as a valuable tool for setting agenda for public discussions and a strategy that reflects the intention of cartoonists to present current issues that affect society in a subtle way in order to find a panacea for political and social ills. Hence, there is no doubt that there is more to give than entertaining readers in editorial cartoons. Editorial cartoons are therefore intended to instigate a reflection on what is happening in a society (Adetola and Abioye, 2020) ^[2]. Although not a necessarily reason to buying the newspaper that contains it. The study choice of Daily Trust newspaper is on the basis of its availability in the selected study areas and is also rated as Nigeria's National Dailies.

Recommendations

Though the use of cartoons in newspaper publications was efficient, as really was there any published edition without editorial cartoons as it was very unusual, but not many print organizations leverage their use for information dissemination as most published editorial cartoons focused more on politics than other social issues. In addition to politics, cartoonists should also examine social problems because it is a light medium and it is easier to highlight people's voices as compared to columns or other newspaper articles. Meanwhile, the newspapers readers understood what editorial cartoons are to a great extent and they read editorial cartoons for different purposes, the most reoccurring of which is for entertainment, besides information, education and political awareness, however, print media should also concentrate on how graphic images can be read and understood for messages dissemination.

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