

Nigeria Mass Media: The Dilemma of Responsibility and Profitability

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ABSTRACT

The role of the mass media in democratic societies, has earned the media a recognition as the watch dog of the society expected to serve public interest but given the fact that establishing a conventional media outfit including radio, television, newspaper and magazine is capital intensive and sustenance is equally demanding in the face of national economic imbalance, fulfilling this responsibility could be challenging. The situation as it is has polarized the media between two priorities of responsibility and profitability for sustenance. Objectives of the study were to determine the primary responsibilities of the mass media, ascertain the priority of the mass media, find out the position of the mass media on media commercialization. The qualitative research method was used in this study with seven respondents drawn from the media industry and the academia. Open ended interviews were conducted to gather data for the study. Study participants agreed that the media primarily exist to serve public interest. The results also indicate that the media exist as business ventures that need fund to survive but not at the expense of the public. The study recommended that the media prioritize public interest which will make it credible and in turn attract advertisers. The BBC, media guru, public tax and democratic participant's models are also recommended as possible solutions.

Keywords: Mass media, Priority, Responsibility, Profitability, Media Commercialization

Journal Reference Format:

Emmanuel, Morka, Kolade, Ajilore & Olusegun, Ojomo (2018): Nigeria Mass Media: The Dilemma of Responsibility and Profitability. Humanities, Management, Arts, Education & the Social Sciences Journal. Vol. 6. No. 2, Pp 13-24

1. INTRODUCTION

The duality of mass media identity has for decades engaged the critical scholarly attention of the most influential communication thinkers of our time. Intellectual figures such as Herbert Schiller, Graham Murdock, Peter Golding, James Curran, Ben Bagdikian, and, a host of others have all invested both time and scholarly ink highlighting the implication of this dual identity. This dualistic nature pertains to the philosophy and operation of the mass media. One ideology describes the mass media as a cultural entity whose responsibility is to promote democratic ideals. Pursuant to this philosophy, mass media proprietors and operators are to eschew whatever engagement will detract the media from the complete and undiluted

accomplishment of this ideal. The media that are responsible for our knowledge of everyday events are expected to concentrate, at the least, more, on content that will enrich the capacity of the public to exercise their political rights and lawfully hold their leaders to account. On the other hand is the philosophy of profitability that simply expects the media to be operated and managed to earn profit for its investors. Undoubtedly, full adherence to any of the philosophy portends danger for the institution of the media, just as a median position carries certain ominous outcome.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and hetero-religious state with a chequered mass media history. The perceived alleged role of the mass media in all Nigeria botched democratic attempts, and its implication for the present fledgling democracy has made this issue more urgent.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study is set to:

- Determine the primary responsibilities of the mass media in Nigeria.
- Ascertain the priority of the Nigerian mass media. (Economic interest or public interest)
- Find out the actual position of the Nigerian mass media on the news commercialization phenomenon.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various scholars have postulated that the media exist to serve the interest of the public. However not much have been said on how to fund the media to make it truly financially independent, free from political and economic elites and government who appear to be the benefactors of the media in Nigeria and as such dictates the tune against public interest. According to Seta, (2006) the media remain the main source of information and education that shapes daily choices in people's life. The media shapes the thinking and the perception of things. Added to this the media is a political power and tool used by big powers, international corporations, global agencies for their political and economic objectives to foster global peace, economic advancement, human knowledge and development as well as achieve political stability among nations (Nasir 2013). He added that the mass media exist because of the people and when there is no society there can be no media. The media have equally been identified as responsible for creating awareness both internally and externally. Other functions of the mass media include information, education, advertising, agenda setting, public debate, promotion of culture, socialization and integration, (Kenechukwu: 2014) .

Alluding to the supremacy of public interest over other interest of the mass media including political and economic interests, Momoh (2008)) in Okhakhu, (2011) describes the press as the protector of the sovereignty that belong to the people. His word "Sovereignty belong to the people and you cannot delegate sovereignty, the protector of that sovereignty is the press and being the protector, it is in a position more than any other group to determine national interest. Sovereignty in this context is related with freedom of expression with the press as a platform of expression. This affords the press the power to determine public interest and preserve it for the development of the citizens and the society at large." (p. 94)

Alozie (2012) aligns with earliest studies that mass media "plays a central role in shaping society, society's habits, attitude, perceptions and opinions of reality." (p. 50) According to him, studies found that many of the influences of the mass media are negative. This alignment means the mass media also has negative influence on the society. In his view, developing nations of Africa and Asia have employed the mass media to promote development hence the concept of development communication.

Shafer (1987) in Alozie (2012) asserted that development communication help to relay information that could be useful to the masses in their daily activities and decision making. Development communication from the perspective of third world government is primarily tied to the acquisition, establishment and control of the mass media for the purpose of mobilizing the citizens to key into government development programmes in all facets of nation building including social change in terms of value, belief and ideology, as well as in the area of agriculture for food security, health, education and technology (Moemeke (1994) in Alozie (2012).

Development communication as employed by the mass media as part of its responsibility is also aimed at: “promoting national unity and survival, maintenance of law, order and peace, observance of fundamental human right; probity in public and private life as well as commitment to the promotion of governance,” Koroma (1987) in Alozie (2012 p. 51)

Emphasizing the responsibility of the media in the society, Soola, (2003) identified development as being interlinked with communication to the extent that nation building is as realistic as the citizenry are mobilized for development in all areas including health, agriculture, education, positive social change, accepting technology, economic reforms and progressive political ideologies. According to him, scholars, practitioners, development experts, and policy makers have identified information communication as critical resources needed for economic transformation of any society. Okigbo (1991) cited by Soola (2003 p.120) itemized the role the mass media should play to bring development, as follows:

- Promoting access to a wide variety of the people
- Determining the people’s need for development information and programming for these needs
- Supporting horizontal and vertical flow of information
- Supporting cultural communication
- Raising the people’s awareness and adoption of new methods that promote development

At the global stage, the media have focused more on telling stories of worries including the war in Iraq, killings in places such as Sudan, terrorist activities in Israel, Palestine and the Middle East, proliferation of nuclear weapons, diseases and poverty in Africa. It appears the global media relish the coverage of these scenes particularly now that technological advancement has shrunk the world into a global village. War and sex have dominated media activities to the point that they now have economic gains at both ends primarily to sell weapons and lure human beings into the sex industries that has debased humanity (Fladeshina : 2006).

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) rising from the 2000 celebration of world press freedom day recognized free and open media as one of the tools necessary to achieve democracy and participatory governance. According to UNESCO, vibrant democracy work side by side with independent media with freedom from government, political and economic control. Free from control of materials and infrastructures needed for the industry. The UNESCO position is that it is when journalists are free to perform their duties can good governance take hold. Explaining what a well-governed society should be , UNESCO says it is difficult to speak of governance when journalism is being attack adding that journalism practiced in an atmosphere of access to reliable information in which reporters can access varieties of sources with freedom to work is a key to good governance in any society.

Ojo (2005) writing for the UNESCO 2005 World Press Freedom Day, identified the existence of free and independent press as a key element of governance in any country. He says that a well governed society creates the kinds of economic, social, political and legal environment that pave way for the media and other institutions to operate freely. To him, the media include different organizations that serve as channels for news on issues and are in competition with one another.

This aptly identifies the media as a market place of ideas. The media from this point of view, performs the primary role of setting agenda for public discuss as it performs its primary role of dissemination of information and educating citizens about government policies and programmes thereby mobilizing them to participate in planned development activities .

Okhakhu (2011) believes that the media has responsibilities to the masses by way of identifying and patronizing public interest. According to him, public interest is that which benefits the larger part of the society which in his words continues to be central as the soul of governance. He listed other terms for public interest as public trust, public service; public concern, public affairs, public virtue and national interest.

The submission of scholars that the mass media exist to serve public interest may not foreclose the fact that it takes huge amount of money to establish and run media organizations. This may account for the commercialization of mass media in Nigeria. According to Ehiwario (2011), the 1987 privatization and commercialization decree accounts for the commercialization of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN) operators of Radio Nigeria which resulted from the dwindling economic fortune of the country and high cost of running media organizations.

Oso, (1991 p. 42) in Ehiwario (2011p.84), believes that the commercialization of the mass media in Nigeria is driven by financial motif. According to him, the commercialization of the Nigerian press is traceable to the establishment of Daily Times with a board that incorporated both private and national interest having a mind set for both financial success and profit making. He explained that the newspaper being driven by financial motive depended on advertisement and with most of the advertisers then being expatriates were not sympathetic to the nationalist interest. Similarly, the unfavourable economic environment in Nigeria has compelled privately own media organizations to redouble their efforts on revenue generation to sustain their operations. Notwithstanding, some media organizations have gone into extinction. The situation as it is may have placed the media between serving public interest and the struggle for self sustenance.

Identifying a relationship between the media and the economy, Daramola (2005) cited in Okhakhu (2011), expressed fear that without the media oiling economic activities, the society may suffer economic setback. This is added to the fact that the media are expected to play key role in the interpretation of economic policies and add value to the nation's economy in different ways contributing to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to him, the media owe her survival to revenue accruing to her from advertisement; and thus by multiplier effect impact advertising agencies and related business outfits.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Media Accountability Model

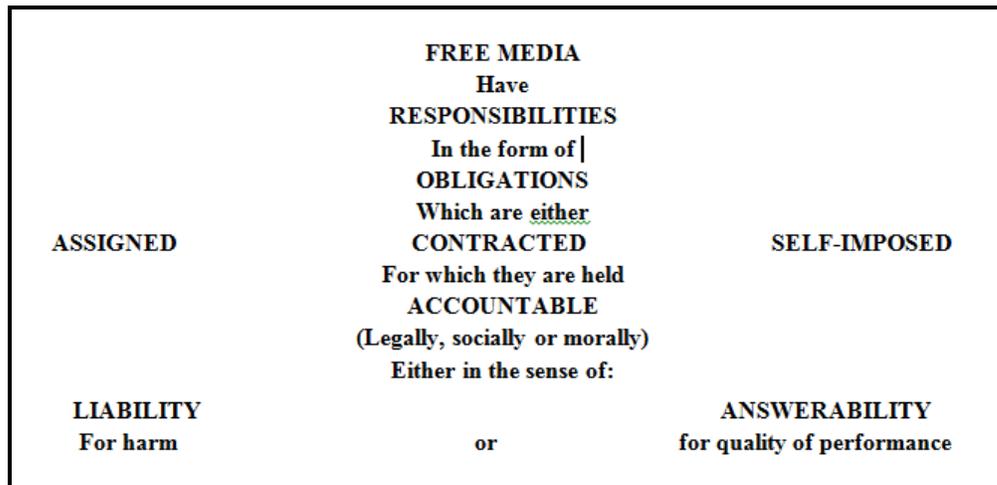


Fig. 1: The Media Accountability Model

This model says that free media have responsibilities in the form of obligations which are assigned, contracted or self imposed for which the media is held accountable legally, socially or morally. According to Watson & Hill (2006), the model underpinned the principles of public service which implies that media obligations should be in the best interest of the public in its broadest sense. McQuail as pointed out by both scholars believes there is a dilemma in reconciling the interest of society with other interest that the media have, explaining that presently, the media are less committed to the society, have less relationship with the audience and others that are affected and less ready for dialogue. To him, media accountability to the society remains in a state of crisis.

The model as published considered possible ways of reconciling the principles and practice of media accountability for the future development of the media. He cautioned against overbearing demand of accountability from the media adding that free media has the right to be irresponsible. McQuail's model in relation to the study shows that the media through the free media is accountable to the society, it equally reserve the right to do otherwise for other advantages other than public interest. From his position, there is the indication that there are no hard stands on mass media responsibility and profitability dilemma.

2.2 Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory is one of the normative theories formulated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) according to Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto (2010) in Nwabueze, (2012). Normative theories explain the operation of the media in the society indicating relationship among a social matrix of the government, the media and the public. Media system in any society is defined by the activities of these stakeholders in governance in shaping the society by the nature of media ownership, control and regulation, (Nwabueze, 2012). The tenet of the theory is that the freedom of the press should go with certain obligations that make it responsible to the public as a public trust institution.

While it is necessary for the press to be free, the public also has the right to a free press and the right of the public takes preeminence (McQuail, 2005) in Nwabueze, (2012). “Simply put, press freedom does not mean the press should do as it pleases, it should operate in recognition of societal needs and aspirations. Much as the press, should be free to operate in any society, the freedom should carry certain obligations” (p. 95). In relation to this study, the position of the theory leaves the press with the responsibility of prioritizing public interest, and not commercial interest in its operations.

3. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research design was used in this study. The qualitative research design is a flexible method of study that emphasizes multiple realities that makes a study robust and rich in context. Base on the theoretical construct sampling method where the manifestation of a construct is the bases for selecting a sample unit, seven media professionals from both media field and the academia were purposively selected for this study. The reason for this is to give room for experts’ opinions from a multi-dimensional perspective to largely enrich the study judging from their academic and professional pedigrees. Interviews were conducted using the informant interview method and interview guide as instrument to gather data which were thematically analyzed in text and the findings reported. While some of the interviews were interpersonal, most were conducted electronically.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Seven media professionals were interviewed for this study. Their professional profiles range from the Deputy Provost of a monotechnic, a Chief lecturer in Mass Communication department of a polytechnic, two media consultants out of which one is equally a columnist, one online media proprietor to two general managers, one of a newspaper and the other of a television station. Responses from the seven respondents are thematically analyzed to establish the positions of the respondents on issues raised in the study. To conger some anonymity on the respondents, their identities have been disguised using codes of the alphabets.

4.1 Primary Responsibility of the Media

There is a convergent view among the respondents that the mass media primarily exist to serve the interest of the public. From the submission of **A**, the primary responsibility of the mass media is to serve public interest. He pointed out that the 1999 constitution as amended made provision for the role of the media in the society. His submission: “The media plays the role of watch dog and safeguard the interest of the public. The constitution has placed the responsibility of serving public interest on the lap of the mass media. The media is first and foremost a representative of the people. It is the voice of the voiceless; it is a platform where people can share their views, their opinion, their grievances, their fears, their anxieties, their demands and expectations from the government and from members of the society.” To **B**, the primary responsibility of the mass media is to educate and inform the public by publishing credible stories. This boarder on the credibility of the media which according to him is the basis of their functionality and acceptance by the public whose trust the media holds.

In the views of **C**, for the media to be ideal, it must serve public interest. “Public interest should over ride every other interest including ownership and economic interests” he asserted. His argument: “More preference should be given to public interest. If this is not done, the media loses credibility. It is important to note that without readership the media cannot get advertisement and without advertisement the media cannot sustain its operations.”

Similarly, **D** submitted that the media has one basic function of being the voice of the voiceless and the watch dog of government activities and help to check issues that affect the general public. To him, the media holds the government accountable to the people by providing a platform for public discourse for or against the government. “A people oriented media, through editorial contents speaks for the people who have no access to the corridors of power; it thus serves as the voice of the voiceless” he explained. In the opinion of **E**, the media exist to serve public interest which include public trust, public service; public concern, public affairs, public virtue and national interest. Ideally public interest should govern the operation of the press according to **F**. The media in **F**'s opinion is responsible to the masses to create an informed public in terms of facts; knowledge and information to enable them take informed decision.

In the views of th **G**, the media is to serve as a watch dog in the society and midwife between the government and the governed. He believes the mass media should not be driven by financial motif but be driven by credibility which according to him will attract public funding by members of the society in terms placing advertisement in the media. He cited Channels television as an example of a private media that is benefiting from public funding by way of advertisement, because the station has been adjudged to be credible by the same public

4.2 Priority of the Media: Responsibility or Profitability?

Should the media be classified as business venture established primarily to make profit like any other business venture? Or do we classify the media as a charitable organization meant to serve public interest at its own expense? If the rich, government, politician and advertisers fund the media does it not naturally align with the maxim that he who pays the piper dictates the tune? Does this not imply that the media will primarily serve the interest of its benefactors? If this should be the case, how can the media play the watch dog role and be the voice of the voiceless? What should be the priority of the media? responsibility or profitability?

To **A**, it is a dilemma. His position is that the media first and foremost exist as a public interest organization and at the same time a business because it employs people, but balancing the people's interest with the commercial interest of media owners is the question begging for an answer. However, the media according to him, exist to give voice to the voiceless, to give power to the powerless, and as he asked, if the control of public discourse, giving to the masses as a platform to express their views belong to the rich, how would the interest of the common man be served? In his view, the media should not be left in the hands of the rich and influential people or entrepreneurs so as not to manipulate and control the media. Suggesting the way forward he said “BBC operates on public trust model that is financed and funded by the public,. This is a template that VOA operates on. The radio tax that is paid for should go to National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and not local government so that at the end of the year, the NBC will give a certain amount of money to radio and TV stations as grant base on their audience rating. It is a kind of model that can secure the independence of the media from private owners that have business and political interest, however you cannot rule it out that those with political and economic interest will always want to shape public discourse but when the media leave its primary responsibility and begin to attend to commercial interest, the value and kind of respect the public have for the media will be eroded.”

B, is of the view that the media need to adopt a new business model that require shifting attention from advertisement in the hard copy to advertisement on-line as most newspapers now have on-line presence. His argument is that “the media cannot survive without money, they have to pay salary, they have to buy equipment, and they have to buy raw materials. They have to source for money through advertisement which should not be at the expense of public interest.

The problem we are having today is that many mass media houses have over enriched themselves, they have to strike a balance between their responsibilities and profitability.”

B further argued that: “some newspaper pages which were regarded as hallowed pages are now being used for advertisement, this is not ethical. Even a leading magazine in this country did that sometimes ago when it converted its front page to advertisement page. They even wrapped the entire publication with advertisement. Some pages that were meant for editorial materials were converted to advertisement. All the hallowed or reserved pages are now being sold for advertisement., There is also the use of editorial or special project all because they want to make money. You cannot make a clear distinction between advertisement and editorial. Indirectly news content has been diluted by advertising motives, There is wide spread use of adjectives in news stories today, especially when they are talking about politicians”

As **C** puts it, “when top politicians and businessmen own the media, what suffers is objectivity and public interest. What you will have in this case is private interest and subjective stories.” According to him people respect the media because of credibility but where and when private interests rob on media credibility, people will no longer believe the media and when and where this is the case, the media will lose credibility and the end result will be extinction. **C** added that any media organization that wants to remain in business should prioritize public interest while at the same time map out effective strategies to pay bills and remain in business. He advised that ethical considerations and professionalism should not be sacrificed on the altar of profit motives. “There are pages that advertisement doesn’t normally displace including front page, jump page, editorial page, opinion page and back page. But during political campaign most newspapers sell some of those pages including the front page and wrap around the newspaper. Normally the front page is reserved for serious news and it is seen as the face of the newspaper, but when you have a wrap around, it is like a newspaper wearing a mask. Ethically it is wrong” **C** explained.

At any point where economic interest crosses public interest, it is advisable that the media should go for the news. **D** puts it this way: “Go for the killer, go for the news”. He added that: “what is important is the readership, why the advertisers are coming is because of the readership. If you lose the readership and get an advertisement slot, you have lost all. So as a professional, you go for the news so you can remain in business. For example, *The Punch Newspapers* will tell you that you cannot place advertisement on some pages. They do that because they want to sustain their readership. Lose the readership and the advertisers will not come again. So if you don’t have that experience as a media manager, you will go into extinction. Management should find a middle point. It should be the case of I need the money, yet I don’t want to lose my readership.”

D equally believes that the media is a business and as such, there should be a balance between media responsibility and survival which is very important particularly when most media organizations in Nigeria are privately owned. “The skill and ingenuity of media managers is highly essential in determining the priority of the media. Where an economic interest will destroy or deplete their readership, professionally it is advisable that responsibility take the front role” he added.

He believes that the issue of wrap around is not an everyday thing pointing out that even the very rigid newspapers compromise this at the front of economic benefit, but noted that where it becomes a regular thing, then it is unethical for any media organization to subject or throw its pages to cash and carry. He however noted that it is equally unethical for the media not to be able to pay its bills and pay staff salary. To him if for once a media house has such opportunity to get a huge sum of money from wrap around to keep the business running, “it is just being economically wise, media manager should do that.”

E submission on media priority is that the scale of advertisement and public interest cannot be balanced, in the sense that the media organization is in business to make profit. “Public interest can only be maximized to the extent at which the media is running on profit” he asserted. According to him, many newspaper houses have collapsed, because they can no longer run economically. However, he advocated that where there is a story of public interest the media should go for it first as this is its primary responsibility and why it exists. On the other hand according to him, the economic survival of the organization is also important as no media business will run without money. **E** explained that advertisement is of public interest given the social and economic information and education derivable from it. “The media will make money, satisfy the interest of advertisers and meet the awareness need of the audience, so advertisement is equally informative and educative,” he added.

F believes that dynamism and the principle of viament is a way out of media priority dilemma. According to him, where and when you are faced with a choice between wrap around and a front page story of interest you can apply the principle of viament which is acceptable since it is not an everyday occurrence. To him the wrap around is very expensive and no newspaper wants to miss it. For *The Pointer Newspaper* it is eight million he disclosed and wonders why a media organization should miss such money? “All you need to do is to come up with two front pages one is wrap around the other one is for the newspaper. This is something you did not envisage and it is an act of God. Dynamism is the keyword at this point. You may have to scale down one for the other,” **F** explained.

On his part, **G** says the priority of the media should be to serve the interest of the public as a matter of principle against any commercial interest. Serving the interest of the public will as he submitted earn the media the credibility needed to earn public trust and consequently public funding by way of placement of advertisement. A reverse order where the media pursue economic interest at the expense of credibility by prioritizing public interest, he opined will lead to lose of public trust, credibility, public funding by way of advertising and consequently extinction.

4.3 Media Commercialization

Since the commercialization of government owned media organizations, media and news commercialization has become a phenomenon. It is a situation where media houses demand for money to report news events. An incident which occurred at Asaba, Delta State capital will help to explain this. About a year ago, storm removed the roof of a widow’s house and the researcher invited his professional colleagues (journalists) to report the incidence. The two state owned media outfits: radio/television and the newspaper never showed up neither did the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). One of them plainly demanded for money if the incidence must be reported. This practice has equally been reported to be common to some extent in private owned media organizations especially the broadcast stations. Where can one place this practice in journalism?

In the views of **A**, virtually everything has been commercialized particularly in broadcast journalism. He advocated that the media should balance between commercial interest and public interest, because the media is there to serve the public adding that journalism is not a cash and carry business neither is it a trade company. According to him if pages of newspapers are taken over by economic and political interest, what will be the hope of the common man and how can the media play its watchdog role as he who pays the piper dictates the tune? “The trust and the confidence of media organization must not be eroded. If that happens, the media will no longer be the voice of the voiceless” he added. In **F**’s view, virtually everything has been commercialized particularly by radio and television stations. He cited two incidences in relation to the issue of media commercialization

“The last time our Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) chapter chairman appeared on a TV in Lagos, he was asked to pay N250,000. It took intervention for them to accept about N100,000. The last time he had to appear on a TV station in Abeokuta, we had to pay. Ethically it is not right but economically it can help the media to survive”. Mr. **C** says news commercialization is allowed in radio and TV. In his opinion if you bring news with public relations interest, you should pay but if it is a story with public interest you will not pay. To **D**, if the news is of public interest nobody will ask you to pay for that but if the news has promotional items, it should be paid for. “Media is also a business venture, media need to pay its bills, media also need to buy materials, it needs machines, and it needs money for all these.” He noted.

E, explained the news commercialization phenomenon to mean that for the media to be in business, they have to pass the burden to the public who want their services. To him news commercialization is not good for journalism as it is a negation of the right of the people to know. In this case, it is only those who have the money to pay that can be heard. In his submission, news commercialization negates the principle of journalism of making the mass media a market place of ideas. However **F** believes that media commercialization is justifiable on the bases of the reality of the operational circumstances of media houses. He explained that “since advertisements are not regular because the organized private sector is no longer functioning properly, the media houses have adopted commercialization as a survival strategy to earn a little more so as to remain in business.” **G** describes media commercialization as offering media product for money. To him where and when there is media commercialization media audience is meant to pay for public issues they want to be aired. This he said is not ethical but remains an option for government owned media where the government cannot provide fund.

4.4 The Way Forward

Notwithstanding the dilemma, there should be a way forward for the media to continue to serve the interest of the public. What is the way forward? **A**, advocates that if wastages are reduced and duplication of roles are avoided the media will survive. “The real business model is to look inward and manager their resources judiciously,” he said adding that “the radio (broadcast media) tax that is paid for should go to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and not local government so that at the end of the year, the NBC will give a certain amount of money to radio and TV stations as grant base on their audience rating to secure the independence of the media from private owners that have business and political interest.” **B**, advocated for the democratization of media ownership. “Anybody who wants to establish a mass media must have a very strong capital base by way of recapitalization through sales of shares to members of the public. This apart from advertisement will be a major source of income for the mass media and provide a strong capital base for media organizations” he suggested. This model according to him will ensure democratic participation in media ownership adding that the media can survive with credible stories. From **C** point of view, the ultimate solution is credibility. “When the media is credible it will have readership and with readership it will have advertisement.”

To **D**, the way out of the dilemma is what he described as absolute dependent on management skill and leadership. The way out from the submission of **E** is permanent financial autonomy by an act of legislation. In his view, this is a situation whereby it is binding by law for the government to make budgetary provision for the press as it is done for the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government. This provision from his explanation does not give the government an overriding interest or power in the media as the fund is a public fund manage on trust by the government. Adding that this is the model of the BBC, **E**, further explained that the law will ensure that the media is run professionally, independently and objectively. Resuscitating our reading culture is another way out according to **F**.

“With an encouraging readership base on the credibility of the media, advertisers will patronize the media.” He also advocated for dynamism and the application of the principle of viament as a way forward. Professionalism and psychological orientation are solutions proffered by **G**. He believes that the presence of none professionals including people with academic background other than journalism has contributed to the unethical practices in the profession and this has depreciated the value of the media. Against this development, the media manager advocated for restriction of none professionals from practicing journalism. According to him none professionals do not have the orientation of journalism being a public interest oriented career. Against this background he called for re-orientation of upcoming journalists particularly mass communication undergraduates against greed and get rich syndrome which he said has been associated with the profession as some journalist run after appointments as media aid to political office holders. “They should follow the tenets of the profession, the money will come later; the positions will come later” he advised.

Similarly he called for a model that will allow media gurus to own and operate media organizations than the present situation where according to him we have more of media barons owning the media. He explained that the media guru model is a situation where media professionals own and run the media from a professional perspective with credibility as the main objective against the economic and political interests of media barons. This he said will earn the media credibility, public trust and consequently public funding by way of advertisement thus ensuring the independency of the media. This suggests that the media guru model will put in place a group of professionals with a public interest motif as different from the media baron situation with economic and political motives.

5. CONCLUSION

Both sides of the divide are essential for the sustenance of the media: Without the audience there will be no media and without profit the media cannot serve public interest. However a logical consideration shows that the credibility of the media is a key factor in the sustenance of the media as noted by the participants in this study. When the media is credible, it will enjoy public trust and consequently public funding by way of advertisement. *The Punch Newspaper* and *Channels Television* models which give priority to satisfying the audience as cited by **D** and **G** should be the role model. This may account for the reason why *The Punch Newspaper* has been consistence in the news stand for decades and *Channels Television* winning the best television station in Nigeria award for many years. However the democratic participant model where members of the public own shares in media organizations and the BBC model which requires the government to finance media organizations with public fund as suggested by **B** and **E** respectively may equally be a way forward as this will put members of the public at the driver’s seat of media business in Nigeria. Added to this is the radio/TV tax that should be paid to NBC for onward allocation to radio and TV stations according to their ratings.

The call for restriction of none professionals from practicing journalism and a re-orientation of upcoming journalists against greed and get rich syndrome are equally worthy of note as these will help to check against unethical practices and put journalism in a proper perspective as a public trust, public interest and more of humanitarian service oriented career than a profiteering business venture. In the same vein, **G** media guru model where media professional of like minds own and operate the media should equally be considered as a possible way forward out of the priority dilemma. The principle of viament as advocated by **F** in relation to the contingency theory could be a relief for the media where and when it has to take a decision on what should be its priority: responsibility to the masses or financial profitability

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