

MEDIA COVERAGE OF ENTREPRENEUR INNOVATIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This research investigates the media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria, aiming to provide insights into the nature, characteristics, and implications of media representations in shaping perceptions and fostering entrepreneurial growth. Utilizing secondary data sources, this paper explored the Agenda Setting Theory as the theoretical ferment and foundation that underpinned this study. This study found a notable lack of diversity and inclusivity in media representations, with certain industries, regions, and demographic groups being overrepresented, while others are marginalized. Issues of sensationalism, bias, and inaccuracies in media coverage are also identified, which can distort public perceptions and hinder the growth of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. The study therefore recommended that media organizations should strive to diversify their coverage of entrepreneurship innovations. Journalists and media professionals should also adhere to ethical reporting standards, including fact-checking, balanced reporting, and avoiding sensationalism. By addressing these challenges and implementing the suggested recommendations, stakeholders can work towards fostering a more inclusive, accurate, and constructive media environment for entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Keywords: Media Coverage, Entrepreneurship Innovations, Diversity, Inclusivity

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global landscape, the media plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and understanding of various phenomena, including entrepreneurship and innovation. With the rise of digital platforms and the proliferation of traditional media outlets, the coverage of entrepreneurial innovations has become increasingly prominent. Globally, media outlets act as conduits for disseminating information about groundbreaking entrepreneurial ventures, technological advancements, and disruptive innovations. For instance, platforms like Forbes, Bloomberg, and TechCrunch have gained prominence for their comprehensive coverage of entrepreneurial endeavours, highlighting success stories, challenges faced, and emerging trends in various industries (Stokes, 2019).

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the media landscape is evolving rapidly alongside the continent's economic development and technological advancements. Nigeria, as the largest economy in Africa, has witnessed a surge in entrepreneurial activities in recent years, spurred by factors such as demographic shifts, urbanization, and technological innovation (Ojo et al.,

2018). The Nigerian media, comprising a diverse array of newspapers, television stations, online platforms, and social media influencers, plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative surrounding entrepreneurship and innovation within the country. From highlighting the successes of tech startups in Lagos to showcasing the ingenuity of small-scale entrepreneurs in rural areas, Nigerian media platforms serve as vital channels for disseminating information about local innovations and entrepreneurial ventures (Omotayo & Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2015).

The media coverage of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigeria is multifaceted, reflecting the dynamic nature of the country's business landscape and the diverse range of entrepreneurial activities taking place across different sectors. While some media outlets focus on profiling high-profile entrepreneurs and their ventures, others delve into the challenges facing aspiring entrepreneurs, such as access to finance, market dynamics, and regulatory hurdles (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2014). Additionally, the emergence of digital media platforms and social networking sites has democratized access to information, enabling entrepreneurs to bypass traditional gatekeepers and share their stories directly with audiences, thus reshaping the media landscape in Nigeria (Ogundipe & Adebisi, 2019).

In recent years, the landscape of media platforms in Nigeria has witnessed significant transformations, with digital platforms gaining prominence alongside traditional outlets. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have emerged as powerful channels for entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations, engage with audiences, and garner support for their ventures (Akinola & Oyewale, 2020). For example, the success story of Nigerian entrepreneur Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, co-founder of Andela and Flutterwave, gained widespread recognition through his active presence on social media platforms, where he shared insights into his entrepreneurial journey and advocated for technological innovation in Africa (Aboyeji, 2019).

Moreover, the advent of online news platforms and blogs has provided alternative avenues for entrepreneurs to garner media coverage and share their stories with a wider audience. Platforms such as Techpoint Africa, Ventures Africa, and Nairametrics have emerged as leading sources of news and analysis on the Nigerian startup ecosystem, providing comprehensive coverage of industry trends, funding rounds, and success stories (Techpoint Africa, 2022). These platforms leverage digital technologies to deliver real-time updates and in-depth features, catering to the information needs of both entrepreneurs and investors seeking insights into Nigeria's dynamic business landscape.

Despite the opportunities presented by digital media, traditional forms of media, including newspapers, television, and radio, continue to play a vital role in shaping public discourse on entrepreneurship and innovation in Nigeria. Newspapers such as The Punch, The Guardian, and ThisDay feature dedicated sections on business and entrepreneurship, highlighting notable startups, industry events, and policy developments impacting the entrepreneurial ecosystem (The Punch, 2023). Similarly, television programs such as Channels TV's "Tech Trends" and CNBC Africa's "Africa Business News" provide platforms for entrepreneurs to share their stories and insights with a broader audience, contributing to the visibility and recognition of Nigerian innovators on both national and international scales (Channels TV, 2021).

Furthermore, collaborations between media organizations and entrepreneurial support initiatives have facilitated greater visibility for innovative ventures and contributed to ecosystem development. For instance, partnerships between media outlets and startup incubators/accelerators have resulted in special features, competitions, and events aimed at showcasing and supporting promising entrepreneurs (Pulse Nigeria, 2020). These initiatives not only provide valuable exposure for startups but also foster a culture of entrepreneurship by inspiring aspiring innovators and fostering connections within the ecosystem.

However, amid the proliferation of media coverage of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigeria, there remain challenges related to accuracy, credibility, and diversity of perspectives. Instances of sensationalism, biased reporting, and lack of fact-checking pose risks to the integrity of media narratives and may perpetuate stereotypes or misinformation about entrepreneurship (Adebisi & Afolayan, 2021). Additionally, the dominance of certain narratives or voices within the media landscape may marginalize underrepresented groups, hindering efforts to foster inclusivity and diversity within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Olasupo, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from media practitioners, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to uphold journalistic standards, promote diverse voices, and ensure equitable representation of entrepreneurship across various sectors and regions in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Despite the increasing visibility of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigerian media, several challenges and gaps persist, necessitating a comprehensive examination of the media landscape's shortcomings. Firstly, there is a notable lack of diversity in media coverage, with certain sectors and regions receiving disproportionate attention while others remain underrepresented (Ogunleye & Adenuga, 2020). This imbalance not only skews perceptions of entrepreneurship but also hinders the discovery and recognition of innovative ventures operating in overlooked areas.

Secondly, the quality and accuracy of media coverage vary widely, with instances of sensationalism, misinformation, and lack of in-depth analysis prevalent across different platforms (Okoli & Ohara, 2016). This phenomenon undermines the credibility of media narratives and can lead to misconceptions about the challenges and opportunities facing entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Furthermore, there is a disconnect between media representations of entrepreneurship and the realities experienced by entrepreneurs on the ground. While media coverage often focuses on success stories and high-profile individuals, it may overlook the everyday struggles, failures, and systemic barriers faced by aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly those from marginalized communities (Adebisi & Afolayan, 2021). This gap in understanding between media portrayals and lived experiences underscores the need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to media coverage of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigeria.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to explore the intricacies of media coverage of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigeria, examining the impact of different media platforms,

narratives, and stakeholders on shaping perceptions and outcomes within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Literature Review

Concept of Entrepreneurship Innovations

Entrepreneurship innovations represent the dynamic process through which entrepreneurs identify, develop, and implement novel ideas, products, services, or business models to create value and address unmet needs in the market (Shane & Venkataraman, 2018). This concept transcends mere business ventures and encompasses a broader spectrum of entrepreneurial activities aimed at driving societal change, economic growth, and technological advancement (Minniti et al., 2016). In the context of Nigeria, entrepreneurship innovations play a crucial role in driving innovation, job creation, and economic development, particularly in sectors such as technology, agriculture, and healthcare (Ojo et al., 2018).

Entrepreneurship innovations are characterized by their novelty, feasibility, and impact on addressing societal challenges or seizing emerging opportunities (Bosma et al., 2018). These innovations can take various forms, ranging from disruptive technologies and business models to social enterprises and grassroots initiatives aimed at addressing local needs (Rothaermel & Thursby, 2015). In Nigeria, examples of entrepreneurship innovations abound, including fintech startups revolutionizing financial services, agro-tech ventures leveraging technology to enhance agricultural productivity, and social enterprises addressing healthcare disparities in underserved communities (Olasupo, 2022).

The relevance of entrepreneurship innovations to the study lies in its central focus on exploring the media coverage of entrepreneurial endeavours in Nigeria. Understanding the nature and dynamics of entrepreneurship innovations is essential for contextualizing media representations, identifying emerging trends, and assessing the impact of media narratives on the entrepreneurial ecosystem. By examining how entrepreneurship innovations are portrayed and perceived in the media, this study aims to shed light on the role of media in shaping public perceptions, influencing policy decisions, and fostering a conducive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Akinola & Oyewale, 2020).

Concept of Media Coverage

Media coverage refers to the representation and dissemination of information about events, issues, or individuals through various media channels, including newspapers, television, radio, and digital platforms (McQuail, 2016). It encompasses the process of selecting, framing, and presenting news stories or content to audiences, influencing public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (Galtung & Ruge, 2017). In the context of the study on entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria, media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping the narrative surrounding entrepreneurial activities, influencing investor sentiment, policy decisions, and the overall perception of entrepreneurship within the society (Ogunleye & Adenuga, 2020).

Media coverage serves as a lens through which entrepreneurial innovations are showcased, celebrated, and scrutinized within the public domain. It acts as a platform for entrepreneurs to gain visibility, attract potential investors, customers, and collaborators, and contribute to the discourse on innovation and economic development (Okoli & Ohara, 2016). Moreover, media coverage can also impact the trajectory of entrepreneurial ventures, influencing their reputation, credibility, and market viability (Akinola & Oyewale, 2020).

Quality and Accuracy of Media Coverage

One of the primary issues identified in media coverage is sensationalism, where certain media outlets prioritize sensational or attention-grabbing headlines over accuracy and depth of reporting (Okoli & Ohara, 2016). For instance, Akinola and Oyewale (2020) argued that instances where media coverage exaggerated the success of certain startups, portraying them as overnight sensations while overlooking the years of hard work and challenges behind their achievements. Such sensationalist reporting can create unrealistic expectations among aspiring entrepreneurs and investors, leading to potential misallocation of resources and disillusionment.

Furthermore, bias in media coverage can distort perceptions and perpetuate stereotypes about entrepreneurship in Nigeria. For example, Ogunleye and Adenuga (2020) noted a bias towards covering tech startups in urban centres like Lagos, while overlooking entrepreneurs in other sectors or regions. This bias can create a skewed representation of the entrepreneurial landscape, reinforcing the notion that only certain industries or locations are conducive to entrepreneurial success.

Inaccurate or misleading information in media coverage can also undermine the credibility of entrepreneurial narratives and erode trust in the media. For instance, instances of plagiarism or unverified claims in news articles can damage the reputation of both the media outlet and the entrepreneurs featured in the coverage (Stokes, 2019). Additionally, lack of fact-checking and verification processes can result in misinformation being disseminated to the public, leading to confusion and misinformation about entrepreneurial innovations.

Instances of biased reporting or agenda-driven coverage can also influence public perceptions and attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Nigeria. For example, media narratives that focus solely on the success stories of a few high-profile entrepreneurs may create an unrealistic portrayal of entrepreneurship as glamorous and effortless (Omotayo & Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2015). This can deter aspiring entrepreneurs from pursuing their ventures or lead to misconceptions about the challenges and sacrifices involved in entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the dominance of certain narratives or voices within the media landscape can marginalize underrepresented groups and perspectives in entrepreneurship. For instance, studies have found that women, youth, and minority entrepreneurs are often underrepresented or misrepresented in media coverage, perpetuating stereotypes and biases (Ojo et al., 2018). This lack of diversity and inclusivity in media representations can hinder efforts to foster a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nigeria.

Addressing the challenges of quality and accuracy in media coverage requires a multi-faceted approach involving media organizations, journalists, entrepreneurs, and policymakers. Media organizations can implement rigorous editorial standards, fact-checking processes, and diversity initiatives to ensure accurate, balanced, and inclusive coverage of entrepreneurship innovations (Bosma et al., 2018). Journalists can undergo training and education on ethical reporting practices, data analysis, and entrepreneurial ecosystems to enhance the quality and depth of their reporting.

Finally, policymakers can support efforts to improve media coverage through incentives, regulations, and capacity-building initiatives. Measures such as tax incentives for media organizations that prioritize accurate and inclusive reporting, funding support for investigative journalism, and training programs for journalists on entrepreneurship and innovation can help raise the quality and accuracy of media coverage (Akinola & Oyewale, 2020). Additionally, media literacy programs aimed at educating the public about critical thinking, fact-checking, and media consumption can empower citizens to discern accurate information from misinformation in media coverage.

Diversity and Inclusivity in Media Representations of Entrepreneurship

Diversity and inclusivity in media representations of entrepreneurship are crucial aspects that reflect the breadth and depth of entrepreneurial activities within a society. Examining these dimensions reveals how different voices, perspectives, and experiences are portrayed in the media, influencing public perceptions and shaping the narrative surrounding entrepreneurship.

Firstly, it is imperative to acknowledge that media representations of entrepreneurship often lack diversity, with certain sectors, regions, and demographic groups receiving disproportionate attention. Ogunleye and Adenuga (2020) highlights this disparity, noting that media coverage tends to be concentrated in urban areas and industries such as technology and finance, while overlooking entrepreneurs in rural areas or non-tech sectors. This imbalance perpetuates stereotypes and biases, reinforcing the notion that entrepreneurship is primarily the domain of a select few.

Moreover, the underrepresentation of women, youth, and minority entrepreneurs in media coverage exacerbates the lack of diversity in entrepreneurial narratives. Adebisi and Afolayan (2021) and Ojo et al. (2018) underscore this issue, revealing that media portrayals often skew towards male, older, and affluent entrepreneurs, neglecting the diverse contributions and challenges faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups. This narrow depiction not only distorts perceptions but also undermines efforts to foster an inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Addressing the lack of diversity and inclusivity in media representations requires a concerted effort to amplify diverse voices and stories. Initiatives such as media training programs, diversity quotas, and inclusive storytelling campaigns can help broaden the scope of entrepreneurial narratives and challenge existing stereotypes (Akinola & Oyewale, 2020). For example, media organizations can collaborate with grassroots initiatives, community

organizations, and diverse entrepreneurs to co-create content that reflects the richness and diversity of the entrepreneurial landscape.

Furthermore, digital platforms and social media offer opportunities to democratize access to media representation and amplify underrepresented voices. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube enable entrepreneurs to bypass traditional gatekeepers and share their stories directly with audiences, thereby diversifying the media landscape and challenging mainstream narratives (Bosma et al., 2018). Leveraging these platforms can empower entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds to shape their own narratives and challenge stereotypes perpetuated by traditional media outlets.

However, achieving genuine diversity and inclusivity in media representations requires a systemic shift in media practices, norms, and values. It necessitates a commitment from media organizations to embrace diversity as a core principle and embed inclusive practices throughout the content creation process (Adebisi & Afolayan, 2021). This includes diversifying newsrooms, fostering inclusive editorial policies, and providing training and resources to Journalists to sensitively cover diverse stories.

Moreover, media regulators and policymakers play a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusivity in media representations through policy interventions and incentives. Measures such as diversity mandates, tax incentives for diverse media production, and funding support for minority-owned media outlets can incentivize media organizations to prioritize diversity and inclusion in their content (Stokes, 2019). Additionally, education and awareness campaigns aimed at media consumers can help foster a more critical and discerning approach to media consumption, encouraging audiences to seek out diverse perspectives and challenge biased narratives.

Theoretical Framework

In understanding the dynamics of media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria, one theoretical framework that can provide valuable insights is Agenda-Setting Theory. Proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, Agenda-Setting Theory posits that the media has the power to influence the public agenda by determining what issues and topics receive attention and how they are framed in news coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The theory assumes that the media play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes by highlighting certain issues while downplaying or ignoring others.

The Agenda-Setting Theory's contribution to the study lies in its explanation of how media coverage influences the public agenda and shapes perceptions of entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria. By examining the prominence and framing of entrepreneurship-related topics in the media, researchers can identify the issues and narratives that receive the most attention and analyse how they impact public discourse and decision-making (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Additionally, agenda-setting theory can help elucidate the factors that influence media agenda-setting, such as editorial policies, media ownership, and audience preferences, thereby

providing a comprehensive understanding of the media's role in shaping perceptions of entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Moreover, agenda-setting theory provides a useful framework for understanding the mechanisms through which media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations influences public discourse and policy agendas. By highlighting certain aspects of entrepreneurship while downplaying or ignoring others, the media can shape public perceptions of entrepreneurship as well as policymakers' priorities and decisions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). For example, media narratives that focus on success stories and innovations may contribute to a positive perception of entrepreneurship and foster support for policies that promote entrepreneurial growth and innovation.

By examining the interplay between media agendas, societal values, and entrepreneurial dynamics, researchers can provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between media coverage and entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Secondary data was used to gather the materials used in this study. Sources from research conducted by other scholars and newspaper publications were used.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has conducted a comprehensive investigation into the media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations in Nigeria.

This study has explored the various dimensions of media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations. The findings shed light on the dominant narratives, themes, biases, and challenges present in media representations of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The study also discovered that media representations of entrepreneurship in Nigeria have evolved over the years to become more diverse and inclusive, reflecting the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship in the country. Here are the ways by which the media representations of entrepreneurship in Nigeria have evolved:

1. **Representation of Different Sectors:** Nigerian media increasingly cover entrepreneurs from various sectors, including technology, agriculture, fashion, entertainment, and more. This diversity showcases the breadth of entrepreneurial opportunities in the country.
2. **Gender Diversity:** Efforts have been made to highlight female entrepreneurs and their contributions to the economy. Women-led startups and businesses are gaining more visibility in the media, although there is still room for improvement in achieving gender parity in coverage.
3. **Regional Diversity:** Nigeria is a country with diverse cultures and regions, and media representations of entrepreneurship are starting to reflect this diversity. Entrepreneurs from

different regions of Nigeria are being featured, showcasing the variety of business ideas and innovations across the country.

4. **Youth Entrepreneurship:** With Nigeria's youthful population, there has been increased media coverage of young entrepreneurs and their ventures. Platforms dedicated to youth entrepreneurship have emerged, providing a space for young Nigerians to share their experiences and insights.

This study has also revealed that media coverage of entrepreneurial innovations in Nigeria face several challenges and shortcomings, which affect the quality, accuracy, and credibility of the information presented. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Sensationalism:** In pursuit of higher viewership or readership, media outlets usually sensationalize stories, focusing more on dramatic narratives rather than providing accurate and balanced reporting on entrepreneurial innovations. This usually distort the perception of the entrepreneurship landscape and overshadow important but less flashy stories.

2. **Lack of Investigative Reporting:** Comprehensive and investigative reporting on entrepreneurial innovations may be lacking in Nigerian media. Due to resource constraints or other factors, journalists may not have the time or resources to delve deeply into stories, leading to surface-level coverage that fails to capture the nuances and complexities of entrepreneurship.

3. **Bias and Influence:** Media coverage in Nigeria is influenced by biases, including political affiliations, corporate interests, or personal preferences. This has led to selective reporting or the amplification of certain entrepreneurs or innovations over others, regardless of their actual significance or impact.

4. **Limited Access to Information:** Nigerian Journalists face challenges in accessing accurate and reliable information about entrepreneurial innovations, because entrepreneurs are hesitant to disclose sensitive details about their ventures. This results in incomplete or speculative reporting that undermines the credibility of the coverage.

6. **Lack of Expertise:** Journalists covering entrepreneurship may lack specialized knowledge or expertise in the field, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of complex business concepts or technological innovations. This can result in inaccuracies or inaccuracies in reporting, undermining the credibility of the coverage.

7. **Ethical Considerations:** In some cases, some media outlets prioritize commercial interests or engage in unethical practices, such as accepting payment for favorable coverage or engaging in click bait tactics. These practices erode trust in the media and compromise the integrity of the reporting on entrepreneurial innovations.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Enhance Diversity and Inclusivity:** Media organizations should strive to diversify their coverage of entrepreneurship innovations by amplifying diverse voices, stories, and experiences. This includes actively seeking out and featuring entrepreneurs from underrepresented sectors, regions, and demographic groups.
2. **Promote Ethical Reporting Practices:** Journalists and media professionals should adhere to ethical reporting standards, including fact-checking, balanced reporting, and avoiding sensationalism. Training programs and guidelines on responsible reporting of entrepreneurship innovations can help improve the quality and integrity of media coverage.
3. **Foster Collaboration and Engagement:** Media organizations, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders should collaborate to co-create content that accurately reflects the realities and challenges of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Platforms for dialogue and engagement, such as workshops, forums, and online communities, can facilitate constructive interactions and mutual understanding.
4. **Increase Transparency and Accountability:** Media organizations should be transparent about their editorial processes, funding sources, and potential biases. Accountability mechanisms, such as ombudsmen or public editors, can provide avenues for addressing concerns and complaints about media coverage.
5. **Promote Media Literacy:** Efforts to improve media literacy among the public can empower citizens to critically evaluate media coverage of entrepreneurship innovations and discern reliable information from misinformation. Educational campaigns, workshops, and resources on media literacy can equip individuals with the skills and knowledge to navigate the media landscape effectively.

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