

**NEWS COMMERCIALIZATION AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN
NIGERIAN BROADCAST MEDIA: A STUDY OF OSUN STATE**

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the impact of news commercialization on the ethical responsibilities of broadcast media in Osun State, Nigeria. Anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory, the research employed a quantitative approach, using simple random sampling to select 230 media personnel, including journalists, editors, producers, and executives from both private and public broadcast stations. Data was collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that 65% of respondents acknowledged that news commercialization negatively affects media independence, often leading to biased reporting. Additionally, 58% of participants identified financial pressures as a major obstacle to upholding journalistic ethics. Public trust in commercialized news content was notably low, with 62% of respondents perceiving such news as exaggerated or distorted. To mitigate these effects, 70% of media professionals supported stricter regulations, while 55% endorsed internal ethical policies as essential measures to balance commercial interests with responsible journalism. However, independent funding was considered an unsustainable solution, with only 22% viewing it as viable. The study highlights the urgent need for policymakers to strengthen regulatory frameworks and enforce ethical journalism standards to preserve media credibility. While commercialization is a necessary economic reality, ethical journalism can be safeguarded through robust policies, professional integrity, and greater audience engagement mechanisms.

Keywords: News, Commercialization, Ethical Dilemma, Broadcast Media

INTRODUCTION

News commercialization has become a dominant force in modern broadcast media, raising serious concerns about the social responsibilities of media institutions. Traditionally, the media serve as a public watchdog, fulfilling roles in information dissemination, education, and entertainment. However, in Nigeria, the increasing trend of commercialized news content has sparked debates over its impact on media independence and ethical journalism. Instead of prioritizing public interest, financial incentives often drive editorial decisions, leading to biased reporting and exclusion of underfunded perspectives (Asogwa & Asemah, 2012). This shift undermines journalistic objectivity, distorts neutrality, and grants privileged access to advertisers, while marginalizing diverse societal voices.

The ethical consequences of news commercialization extend beyond media institutions to broader societal structures. When financial motivations dictate news coverage, media houses risk reinforcing elite-dominated narratives, thereby compromising democratic values that rely on

informed citizen participation (Odunlami & Adaja, 2015). Studies on Nigerian media have explored these issues, yet limited empirical research exists on how commercialization specifically affects broadcast media ethics in Osun State. Given the region's dynamic media landscape, it is essential to assess the extent to which commercialization influences public trust, editorial independence, and the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks.

Thesis Statement: This study examines how news commercialization erodes public trust in Osun State's broadcast media and evaluates regulatory and ethical strategies to mitigate its negative effects. By analyzing the perspectives of media professionals, the research tests whether stricter regulations, ethical policies, and audience engagement mechanisms can help restore journalistic integrity and balance commercial interests with social responsibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

News Commercialization

News commercialization means operating news content as a financial product which businesses buy to make profits instead of delivering truth-based coverage useful to the public. Multiple scholars have explored this concept by defining it along with its effects on media credibility while examining how it affects democratic processes. The conversion of news into financial goods results in financial requirements routinely surpassing professional journalistic principles and fair journalistic practises. News credibility together with democratic processes experience substantial adverse consequences because of this ongoing development.

Acholonu-Igbozurike and Agwu (2015) explain news commercialization occurs when organisations start collecting payment for unfettered news coverage because they face financial difficulties thus neglecting their social duty towards society. When media organisations follow this business model, they reduce news quality by transforming factual information into marketable items that they sell to profit maximizers. This development erodes traditional news values of media neutrality. News commercialization exists in any action meant to increase profits which impedes either journalists or news organisations from delivering their maximum effort to explain important community-shaping events to the public. Guests conflict between profit-making initiatives and media responsibility to deliver complete truthful content stands at the heart of this definition. Odunlami and Adaja (2015) explains that media organisations engage in news commercialization if they demand payment for regular free reports which results in exclusive access for those who can pay fees.

News commercialization practises generate major negative effects on media institutions' trustworthiness. The process of giving financial rationales precedence over news content jeopardises the unbiased delivery of information by media outlets. The degradation of journalistic ethics because of commercialization results in media audiences losing faith in news organisations since readers perceive biased reports toward paying subscribers. This public view directly weakens the media's ability to be an independent social watchdog while simultaneously reducing diversity in news content presentation.

News commercialization creates dangers for the democratic processes and their functionality. Meaningful civic engagement in governance requires an informed population who make informed choices about their representatives. This ultracompetitive media climate chooses its financial sponsors' stands over factual news transparency which results in unified public conversations that benefit the wealthy elite.

Through this scenario the less economically privileged members of society become excluded from meaningful democratic participation. The major issue exists in finding equilibrium between economic goals and professional integrity alongside public welfare because the societal role of media needs to stay consistent with development goals according to Odunlami and Adaja (2015).

A comprehensive method must be implemented to resolve the problems news commercialization creates. The ethical responsibilities of the public require media organisations to establish profitable business operations accordingly. The practise of news reporting requires professionals to uphold codes of conduct ensuring accurate delivery of truthful news with impartiality and fairness. We require regulatory systems to stop commercial news activities while protecting journalistic honesty according to the study by Asogwa and Asemah (2012). The media thus meets its social obligations through this practise which leads to an informed and active society.

Social Responsibilities

According to ethical guidelines, social responsibility implies people, along with organisations, must dedicate their actions to serve societal needs. Entities within this framework must enhance the environment and community through practises that merge economic progress with social well-being and ecological sustainability (International Organisation for Standardisation [ISO], 2010). Business groups must fulfil several obligations through activities like ethical practise management and environmental stewardship and community service projects.

Organisations following the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards operate to build a better society and environment instead of causing harm to them (ISO, 2010).

Organisations should demonstrate ethical behaviour while respecting stakeholder needs according to international standards according to this approach. Organisations must demonstrate both clear reporting and answerability for their actions in order to comply with this perspective. Under the Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities every person as well as organisations share responsibility to establish global respect for basic human rights together with fundamental freedoms (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], n.d.). This responsibility requires active participation and common good contribution within public affairs which upholds social responsibility principles.

Broadcast Media

The distribution of audio or video information to various audiences through electronic mass communication channels depends on radio waves to operate on a one-to-many platform (Asogwa & Asemah, 2012). Various broadcasting platforms, including radio, television and recent

innovations in digital streaming media, belong to this form of media. The broadcasting industry plays several key functions by delivering news to people, education to its audiences, and entertainment to many viewers who depend on it for cultural information.

Broadcast media sectors have transformed substantially through technological developments which moved broadcast systems from analogue operations to digital systems. Modern technological developments have improved both the definition, quality, and convenience of content delivery while giving viewers better individualized interactions and customized experiences. Broadcast media continues as a key element in the worldwide communication network because it delivers content to individuals who lack access to internet users.

Broadcast media distinguishes itself from other media through its extensive coverage, which affords it considerable societal power. It is a powerful medium that shapes public perceptions, moulds cultural standards, and allows various viewpoints to emerge.

Broadcasters maintain responsibility by conducting ethical reporting and maintaining reporting accuracy to deliver service to the public. Public service broadcasting promotes content with educational purpose alongside truth-seeking information while simultaneously contributing toward cultural enhancement of society.

The Interplay Between News Commercialization and Social Responsibilities in Broadcast Media

Media studies researchers have extensively analysed how broadcast media fulfil their social obligations when news gets increasingly commercialised. News commercialization restricts editorial decision-making through financial motivations because these decisions dictate which storeys to present and how they should be displayed. The inherent news commercialization practises lead broadcasters to select stories that grab the most attention and bring in viewership and advertising income by sometimes ignoring fundamental societal problems. The critical dispute between journalistic ethical demands and corporate requirements shows the necessity for developing media systems which unite monetary stability with society-dependent journalistic services (Pickard, 2020).

Democracies depend on the media to provide citizens with information while moulding social dialogue and maintaining political leaders responsible to the public. News commercialization alters important media functions because it selects what makes profit above necessary information for citizens to stay informed. An analysis of news reporting shows that commercial forces have driven investigative journalism towards entertainment-based news formats (McChesney 2015). News outlets racing to achieve viewership numbers tend to shift their content focus from substantial reporting toward infotainment which ultimately diminishes media ability to promote democratic involvement and vital public discussions.

The addition of digital platforms has transformed how commercial pressures interact with social responsibility goals in the journalistic field. Social media platforms together with online platforms

have restructured both news distribution pathways and promotional opportunities yet they cause problems dealing with untrue information while enabling profit-focused content mass production.

Algorithms controlled by advertisers on digital platforms target clickbait news content rather than public interest journalism reports (Tufekci 2018). The way news is distributed through online and social media platforms requires ethical oversight because profit-driven practices need to respect the core purpose of providing factual news content.

Public service media institutions, alongside regulatory institutions, play a vital role in protecting society from commercialization imbalances. Media organisations funded through public funds must produce content that benefits the general public through informative programmes regarding education, along with cultural representation and investigative investigations. Such public media institutions face rising commercial challenges because funding models demand financial support depending on audience performance and market competition (Lunt & Livingstone, 2012). To preserve journalistic fundamentals during financial survival efforts media organisations should create methods which uphold ethical practises together with market evolution and technology adoption.

Challenges Arising from the Commercialization of News in Upholding Social Responsibilities

News commercialization in Nigeria presents significant ethical and operational challenges, impacting media independence and public trust. While financial sustainability is crucial for media organizations, an overemphasis on profit-driven content threatens the core principles of journalism. These challenges manifest in several ways, including declining journalistic integrity, advertiser influence, ownership concentration, and the digital media landscape.

1. Commercialization and the Decline of Public Trust in Nigerian Media

One of the most pressing concerns in Nigerian broadcast journalism is the decline in public trust due to the prioritization of revenue over journalistic integrity. News stations increasingly sensationalize content to attract larger audiences and boost advertising revenue, often at the expense of in-depth investigative reporting (Pickard, 2020). For instance, many private Nigerian television stations focus on entertainment-based programs, celebrity gossip, and political propaganda, leaving critical social issues—such as insecurity, corruption, and public health—underreported. A clear example is the coverage disparity between state-funded NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) and private news stations like Channels TV and TV Continental (TVC), where state-backed stations often provide politically biased reports to align with government interests.

Commercialization also leads to undue influence from advertisers, which compromises editorial independence. In Nigeria, corporate sponsors and political elites often dictate news narratives, suppressing unfavourable stories. For instance, during the 2023 general elections, several broadcast media outlets were accused of limiting coverage of opposition candidates due to financial ties with ruling party figures (McChesney, 2015). Journalists face increasing pressure to avoid investigative reports on major corporate scandals, such as banking fraud or oil sector

corruption, because these industries are significant advertisers. The Nigerian print media has long suffered from this, with newspapers like The Guardian and The Nation sometimes modifying content to align with the interests of their primary financial backers.

The consolidation of media ownership has further exacerbated the negative effects of commercialization in Nigeria. A few wealthy individuals and political figures own major broadcast stations, leading to biased reporting that serves elite interests. For example, TVC is owned by Bola Tinubu's media group, influencing its political coverage to favour the ruling party. Similarly, AIT (African Independent Television), owned by the Daar Communications group, has been criticized for aligning its editorial policies with the business and political interests of its proprietor. This concentration of ownership reduces media diversity, limiting public access to unbiased and diverse perspectives on national issues (Croteau & Hoynes, 2019).

The rise of digital news platforms in Nigeria has intensified the commercialization of news, leading to sensationalism and misinformation. Online media outlets such as Pulse Nigeria, Sahara Reporters, and Naija News prioritize clickbait headlines and viral stories over fact-based journalism. The rush to publish breaking news often results in poor fact-checking and the spread of misinformation, as seen during the #EndSARS protests in 2020, where false reports and exaggerated claims circulated widely across digital platforms (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). This trend weakens the credibility of Nigerian journalism, as audiences struggle to differentiate between factual reporting and politically or financially motivated narratives.

The commercialization of news in Nigeria has created a challenging environment for ethical journalism. Public trust in media has declined, and news organizations often prioritize financial sustainability over social responsibility. The undue influence of advertisers, political elites, and media conglomerates undermines press freedom, leading to self-censorship, biased reporting, and reduced investigative journalism. Additionally, the rise of digital sensationalism further erodes credibility, making it difficult for audiences to access accurate information. Addressing these challenges requires stronger regulatory frameworks, professional ethical policies, and independent funding models to ensure that Nigerian journalism remains a tool for public service rather than a purely commercial enterprise.

Strategies for Broadcast Media to Balance Commercial Interests with Social Responsibilities

Several strategic measures allow news organisations to reduce harmful news commercialization practices while preserving journalistic standards. The strategy of expanding revenue platforms helps lower dependency on advertising which creates editorial distortions. Subscription-based models as well as grants and public funding mechanics present financial structures which enable news organizations to support investigative reporting and deep content production while protecting them from commercial pressure (Pickard 2020). Media organisations achieve economic stability alongside their social duties through the exploration of various funding mechanisms.

Transparent ethical guidelines and empowerment of editorial staff members create an effective approach for developing independence from corporate influence. Strong editorial standards which delineate journalistic and business operations help stop advertisers and corporate backers from

changing news content. Media credibility grows stronger as well as audience trust increases when media organisations publicly disclose their potential conflicts of interest along with their funding sources (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). Journalistic organizations that implement transparent operations while following strict reporting practices retain their position as dependable sources of news information.

Media organizations ought to endorse audience interaction programs alongside community-oriented journalistic practices in order to reconcile commercial operations with the demands of social accountability. The content-driven representation of diverse societal needs and concerns is rendered feasible through media organisations that actively engage their audience in the process of news production. The facilitation of audience participation through interactive platforms, combined with community forums and compelling narratives, underscores the media's responsibilities and upholds pertinent and socially responsible messaging (Croteau & Hoynes, 2019). This approach enables media organisations to cultivate loyal audiences, as these individuals tend to favour authentic news content over commercially driven materials.

Media organisations need framework regulations which uphold pluralistic media approaches and journalistic independence to counter the issues stemming from commercialization practices. Public agencies need to pass laws against monopoly control of media operations while safeguarding public service broadcasting functions and backing independent news ventures. Some geographic areas have adopted both government backing for local journalism operations and press liberty safeguarding regulations to protect news quality and battle corporate media firms (Reuters, 2024). The protection of the media's democratic role depends on the proper enforcement of establishment policies, which should evolve to adjust to digital media trends.

Empirical Review

The research on news commercialization and broadcast media social responsibilities brings together several viewpoints from both Nigerian and international academic scholars.

A study by Oyinloye et al. (2024) investigated the impact of news commercialization on journalistic ethics and audience trust in Nigeria. Utilizing the social responsibility theory, the researchers analyzed various scholarly sources to understand how commercialization affects media practices. Their findings indicate that the pursuit of profit often leads news organizations to prioritize sensationalism and clickbait over balanced, fact-based reporting. This shift not only compromises journalistic integrity but also results in a decline in public trust. The study emphasizes the need for news organizations to adopt and strictly adhere to ethical guidelines to safeguard the integrity of journalism.

Similarly, Fadeyi and Suleiman (2023) examined journalists' perspectives on news commercialization and its influence on media credibility in Nigeria. Surveying 259 journalists from 12 media organizations in Osun State, the study revealed a consensus that news commercialization adversely affects media credibility and trustworthiness. Factors such as low wages and concentrated media ownership were identified as contributors to this trend. The authors

recommend that organizations like the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) negotiate better pay for journalists to enhance media credibility and reduce the reliance on commercial interests.

These studies underscore the complex relationship between news commercialization, journalistic ethics, and audience trust. They highlight the urgent need for structural reforms within media organizations to balance financial sustainability with the ethical imperatives of journalism.

The research paper "Press and Politics in Nigeria: On the Fringes of Government Accountability" was conducted by Oso (2012) throughout Nigeria. The main aim of this study was to analyse how commercialised media affects press responsibilities in maintaining government transparency. The research examined major Nigerian newspaper content through content analysis while using the social responsibility theory as the framework. Commercial influence on media operations forced journalists to lower their ethical norms, and evidence showed that 66% of news content stemmed from advertiser motives. News commercialization functions as a barrier that reduces media organisations' capacity to properly hold the government responsible.

The analysis of "The Nigerian Press and the Challenges of Democratisation" was conducted by Umechukwu (2001). The research dedicated itself to evaluate commercialization's impact on the press's democratic performance in Nigeria. The research framework used surveys to investigate journalists and media executives as per the agenda-setting theory. According to the research results businesses demanded attention-grabbing news while political investigation suffered as a result. The research results demonstrated how commercialization works against maintaining press operations as a democratic institution.

The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century represents McChesney's (2004) international writing that explores corporate ownership effects on United States media content. The research based its theoretical framework on political economy and utilised major media corporations for its case study analysis. Research established that corporate mentality controls news production and reduces investigative reporting activities in media outlets. Media commercialization emerges as an influence which destroys democratic communication systems.

Baker (2007) analyzed the connection between media ownership concentration and democratic operations in his work "Media Concentration and Democracy: Why Ownership Matters." The research applied principles of democratic theory to study both ownership patterns and content variety. The data showed that when ownership exists as a concentrated entity, it causes decreased content diversity, which limits public exposure to multiple viewpoints. The research established that media concentration practises threaten democratic dialogue processes.

The research paper "Media System, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study" is the subject of Curran et al. (2009). Researchers aimed to determine the way public knowledge and democratic engagement changes between different media systems. Through a comparison of multiple countries the research revealed that public service media results in better citizen information acquisition compared with broadcast industries under commercial control. The

researchers found commercialization produces a harmful impact on educational pursuits of the media.

Nyamnjoh (2005) studied "Africa's Media: Democracy and the Politics of Belonging" to investigate media commercialization effects on African democratic practises. The theoretical foundation of this study was cultural studies and ethnographic methods served as its methodology. The analysis showed commercialization produces a decline of indigenous cultural representation in media programmes. The researchers stressed the need for organisations to strike a proper equilibrium between business objectives and cultural depiction.

The research study "Press Freedom Professionalism and Proprietorship: Behind the Zimbabwean Media Divide" was investigated by Mano (2005). This research analysed the effects that proprietorship has on media freedom and professional standards within Zimbabwean journalism. Through political economy research the study interviewed journalists together with media owners. Research evidence shows that business owners tend to prioritise their interests more than professional journalistic principles, which results in biased coverage. Media credibility shows a direct correlation to ownership patterns based on the study results.

In Latin America, Fox and Waisbord (2002) edited "Latin Politics, Global Media," aiming to assess the impact of global media trends on Latin American politics. Using globalization theory, the collection included case studies from various countries. Findings indicated that media commercialization has led to the erosion of public service broadcasting. The study concluded that global media trends challenge local media's social responsibilities.

The Asian study titled "Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line" was presented by Zhao (1998). A research goal existed to uncover how market reform initiatives affect Chinese media roles towards democratic expansion. The research bases its analysis on media commercialization theory while using content analysis data along with interview methods. Research results demonstrated commercialization gave media organisations more independence yet resulted in aggressive reporting practices. Commercialization emerges as an element that creates pathways as well as obstacles for media democratisation.

Gaps

Research into news commercialization alongside broadcast media social responsibility displays numerous missing elements according to the analysed empirical studies. A recent empirical assessment of the commercial impact on media accountability in Nigeria remains unsupported by Oso (2012) and Umechukwu (2001) because these studies analyse the press instead of broadcast media. McChesney (2004) and Baker (2007) explore Western media ownership patterns, yet similar research about media concentrations remains scarce in global developing nations, thus obstructing a broad understanding of worldwide market trends. Curran et al. (2009), along with other studies, conduct media system and public knowledge comparisons, but they neglect the influence of digital media platforms on shaping public opinion. The study of commercialization effects on indigenous content within Africa requires additional scholarly research after Nyamnjoh (2005) and Mano (2005) published their work on African media professionalism and cultural

representation. The research by Zhao (1998) about Chinese media reforms discloses important knowledge but lacks comprehensive investigations into political system comparisons. The observations of Fox and Waisbord (2002) about Latin American media indicate an importance for new studies regarding digital globalisation. The propaganda model presented by Herman and Chomsky in 1988 demands rethinking in today's media system which consists of social media and alternative news platforms.

Theoretical Review

The Social Responsibility Theory of the press forms the foundation for the study through the work of the Hutchins Commission which developed this theory in 1947. According to this media theory media entities need to fulfil their public duty by delivering precise unbiased and comprehensive information to help citizens participate more effectively in democracy. The basic principles of this theory establish two concepts: media must respect public freedom with corresponding social obligations and media organisations should autonomously govern their operations instead of accepting government oversight. The theory faces two major constraints because it does not adequately define the specific criterion for determining 'public good' alongside difficulties in managing profit-driven industry compared to public service requirements. The theory receives scholarly approval from McQuail (1987) who maintains that media professionals must practise transparency to their audience while maintaining ethical practise. Siebert along with Peterson and Schramm (1956) introduced the Libertarian Theory while opposing the Social Responsibility Theory by asserting that its predictions have no connexion with commercialised media operations.

The Social Responsibility Theory enables researchers to study broadcast media practises for locating appropriate approaches which merge marketing requirements with informational responsibilities toward the public. The Social Responsibility Theory teaches media institutions to select educational content that enables citizens to become informed voters needed for a democratic system to function effectively. The Hutchins Commission (1947) supported media serving the public by offering truthful and intelligent and comprehensive accounts of events.

Student Self-Regulation should guide media organisations towards developing internal ethical standards to maintain professional journalistic conduct. According to McQuail (1987) self-regulation enables media organisations to retain independence while they perform their public duties. A media organisation's readiness to uphold ethical standards determines how effectively they can conduct self-regulatory procedures when external factors attempt to sink journalistic integrity.

The theory recognises operational economic constraints but argues in favour of maintaining a proper equilibrium so that commercial interests cannot hinder the media's public monitoring responsibilities. The proper equilibrium between media operations remains vital to maintain platforms for multiple voices and diverse perspectives thus boosting public discourse. The lack of clear guidelines according to Siebert et al. (1956) makes the application of this theory inconsistent therefore resulting in a media system dominated by profit interests that neglects social responsibilities. The ongoing process of critical analysis with stakeholders remains crucial for developing the theory until it successfully handles modern media industry challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design employs quantitative methods to collect and analyse numerical data to identify patterns and relationships and identify trends throughout the examined phenomenon. The current research adopts a quantitative method because it enables researchers to measure objective patterns between news commercialization and broadcast media responsibilities in Osun State. Surveys together with structured questionnaires enable the research to produce results that both answer questions about general factors across the media organisation population. The method provides uniform data collection through standardised procedures which strengthens both reliability and validity levels of the study.

Population of the Study

The entire broadcasting sector within Osun State Nigeria constitutes the research population including twenty radio stations and two television stations that serve distinct population segments. Media broadcast organisations throughout Osun State gather information while teaching people and entertaining audiences through both state-owned and privately run channels. Research participants include journalists as well as editors and producers and executives who work at these media organisations to examine their views about the impact of commercialization on media responsibility and social duty. This research investigates news commercialization effects on ethical journalism in Osun State through an examination of both public and private media entities.

Sampling Technique

This study adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques to ensure a representative selection of participants from the two major broadcast media outlets in Osogbo, Osun State: Rave 91.7 FM (private radio station) and Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) TV (public television station). These two stations were selected because they represent the dominant private and public media organizations in the state, ensuring diverse perspectives on news commercialization and media ethics. OSBC TV, being a government-owned station, reflects the public sector viewpoint, while Rave FM, a well-known private radio station, provides insights into the private sector's operational dynamics.

To ensure diverse participant selection, a random sampling method was used to recruit respondents from different roles within the two stations, including journalists, editors, producers, and media executives. OSBC TV operates with an approximate workforce of 150 staff, while Rave FM has 80 employees, covering various departments such as reporting, content creation, presentation, and administration.

Sample Size

The study targeted all 230 employees from OSBC TV (150 staff) and Rave FM (80 staff), using a census approach rather than a sample to eliminate selection bias and ensure comprehensive

representation. Given the moderate total population size, the census method provided an opportunity to capture the full range of perspectives from media professionals at both institutions.

Out of the 230 targeted participants, 187 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 81.3%. While this is a strong participation rate, the potential for non-response bias must be acknowledged. Those who did not respond may have held different views on news commercialization, potentially influencing overall findings. To mitigate this, follow-ups were conducted to encourage higher response rates.

Description of Research Instrument

The study depends on an online questionnaire for gathering data through which researchers conduct their investigation. The document contains four separate sections which collect information about participants' backgrounds followed by their views on news commercialization changes and media responsibility and their opinions about regulatory rules. Open and multiple-choice survey questions are included in the standardised questionnaire to allow respondents both informational and quantitative responses. The digital format facilitates streamlined information gathering and raises participation numbers and allows participants including media specialists with time constraints to reach the survey easily. Standardised questions in the questionnaire produce consistently patterned responses which protect against biases and help to create reliable results.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

An assessment of questionnaire validity depends on the content and construct validity tests that the study conducts. Mediated by experts from media studies along with researchers who specialise in methodology the questionnaire undergoes assessments concerning its clear presentation while maintaining relevant substance for effective measure of research variables. An instrument pilot test using small numbers of 20 media professionals from non-sampled radio and TV stations operating within Osun State evaluates instrument clarity, reliability, and consistency. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test provides the measurement of the internal consistency of questionnaire items for reliability assessment. The study's reliability measure rests upon an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha result of at least 0.70 per research standard, which allows the instrument to effectively measure broadcast media participants' perspectives on news commercialization and social responsibility.

Method of Data Collection

This study obtains data by distributing online self-administered questionnaires through emails and utilising social media platforms together with WhatsApp groups which comprise media professionals from the chosen organisations. The procedure provides an inexpensive yet convenient and time-saving response collection method that reduces the interviewer's influence on the data. A detailed description accompanies the study's purposes, followed by participant consent before starting the survey. The research period spans two weeks to achieve sufficient responses, while regular reminder messages are sent to unresponsive participants for better participation

numbers. Online data collection allows participants to make responses without revealing their identity which makes them feel more comfortable to be candid.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (such as percentages, mean values, and frequency distributions) were used to identify general patterns in responses. The results were visually presented using charts to facilitate better comprehension of trends.

Additionally, inferential statistics were incorporated to explore relationships between commercialization and trust levels in broadcast media. A regression analysis was conducted to test the impact of news commercialization on public trust, allowing for deeper insights into how financial pressures influence media credibility. This analytical approach strengthens the study's findings by moving beyond simple data summaries to statistically tested relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 187 valid responses from 230 distributed questionnaires which were used to gather the data. The results are presented through six detailed visualisation graphics which correspond to the study objectives. The analysis follows the study objectives to present findings about news commercialization together with social responsibility components and business versus ethical journalism balancing strategies.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Perceptions of news commercialization in broadcast media

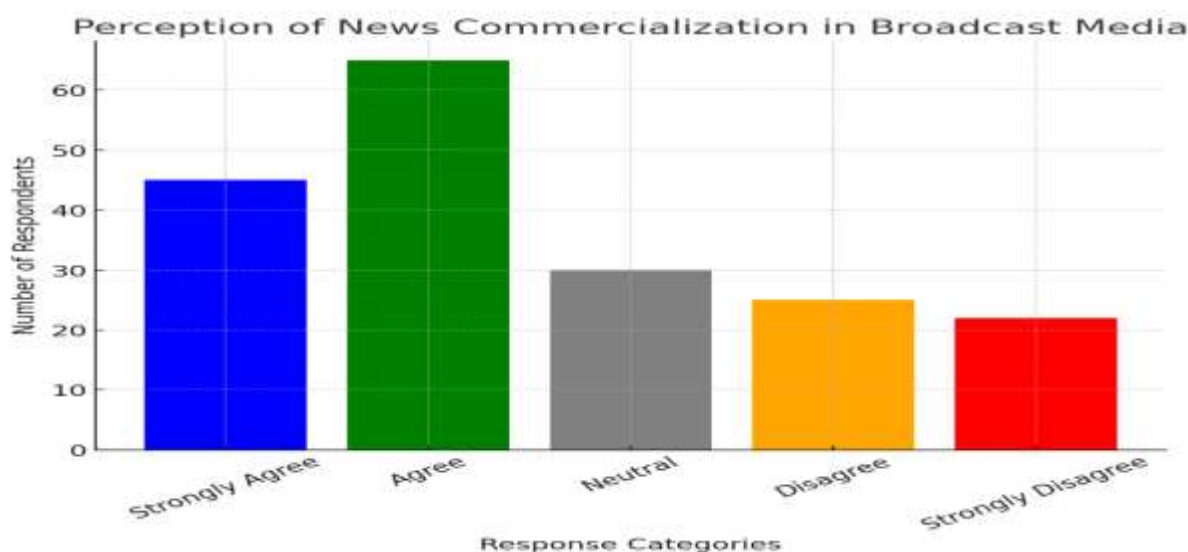


Fig 1: Perceptions of news commercialization in broadcast media

The research data shows that 65 respondents (34.8%) strongly agreed that news commercialization significantly impacts media operations. 45 participants (24.1%) agreed, reinforcing the notion that financial incentives often dictate content selection in broadcast journalism. 30 respondents (16%) remained neutral, suggesting some media professionals do not perceive commercialization as a dominant force shaping editorial decisions. 25 individuals (13.4%) disagreed, arguing that commercialization does not significantly affect journalistic independence. 22 respondents (11.7%) strongly disagreed, believing that news commercialization plays a minimal role in shaping media content. The majority (58.9%) of respondents agreed that commercialization affects editorial decision-making and media ethics, highlighting its influence on journalistic integrity. However, the neutral and disagreeing segments (41.1%) suggest that not all media professionals perceive commercialization as a direct challenge, possibly due to different newsroom policies or financial strategies.

Broadcast media operators consider social responsibility as an essential part of their operations.

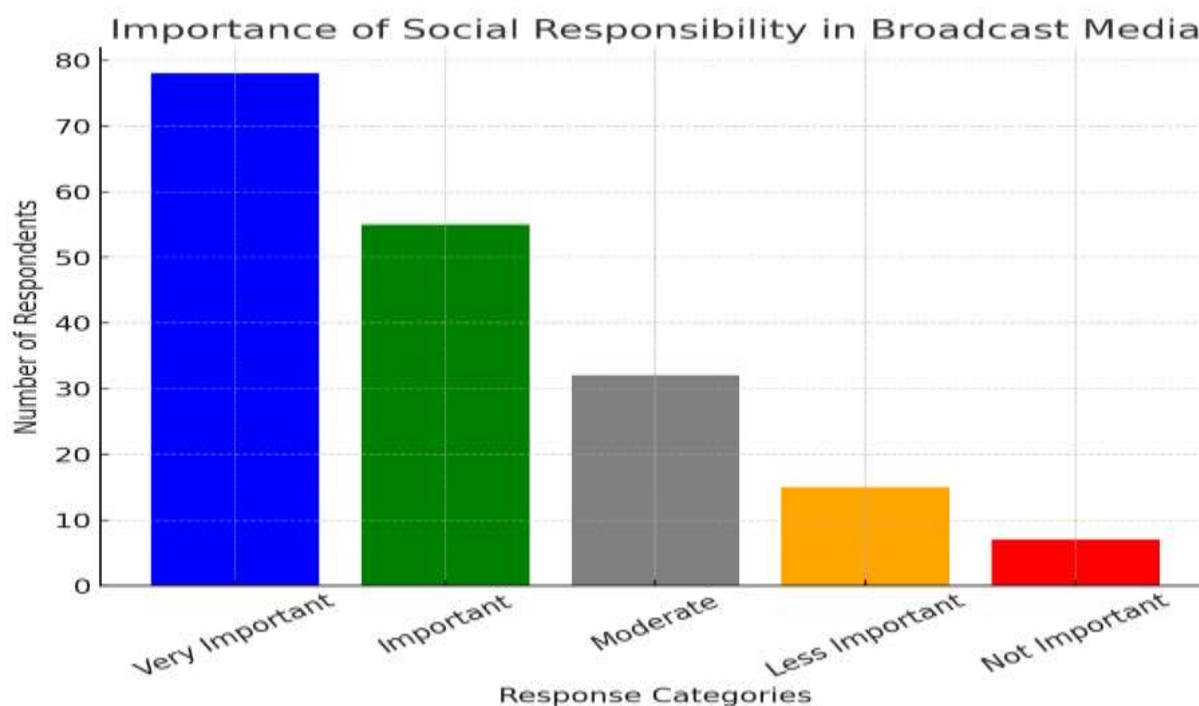


Fig 2: Importance of social responsibility in broadcast media

This graph illustrates how journalists and media professionals perceive social responsibility within commercialized news environments. 78 respondents (41.7%) rated social responsibility as highly important, emphasizing the ethical obligation of journalists. 56 participants (30%) considered it moderately important, acknowledging its value but recognizing financial constraints. 32 respondents (17.1%) held a neutral stance, implying that economic factors sometimes override ethical concerns. 14 individuals (7.5%) found it less significant, indicating that financial sustainability might take precedence over ethical concerns. 7 participants (3.7%) viewed social

responsibility as unimportant, reinforcing the idea that profit motives dominate newsroom decisions. With 71.7% of respondents rating social responsibility as moderately or highly important, it is clear that most media practitioners acknowledge the need for ethical journalism. However, the presence of 10.2% who deem it unimportant or less significant suggests that some professionals prioritize financial sustainability over ethical responsibilities.

Challenges in Maintaining Social Responsibilities Due to News Commercialization

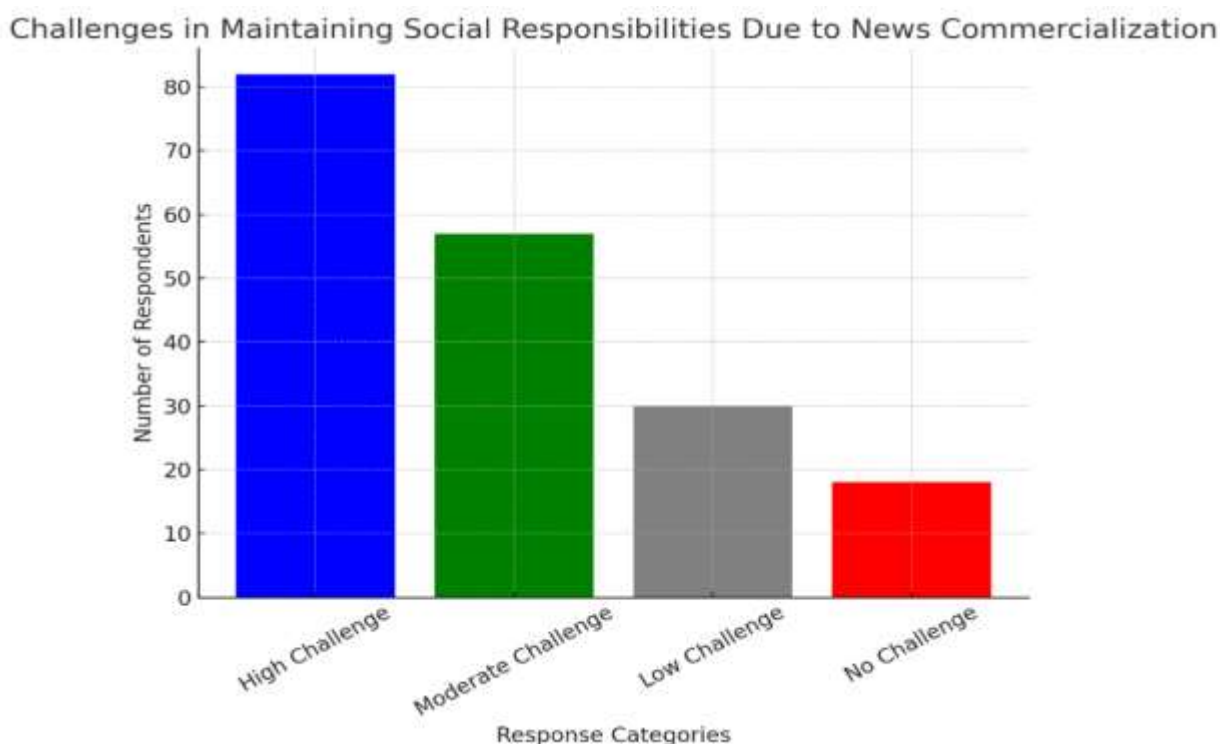


Fig 3: Challenges in Maintaining Social Responsibilities Due to News Commercialization

This graph outlines the level of difficulty media practitioners experience in balancing commercial interests with social responsibilities. 82 respondents (43.8%) reported high challenges, indicating significant obstacles in adhering to ethical journalism standards. 58 participants (31%) rated the challenge as moderate, suggesting that some media houses adopt partial strategies to balance ethics and revenue. 30 respondents (16%) saw commercialization as a minimal concern, meaning their organizations have mechanisms to manage financial pressures. 17 participants (9.1%) reported no challenge at all, implying they either operate in ethically guided organizations or do not perceive commercialization as a significant issue. With 74.8% acknowledging moderate to high challenges, it is evident that news commercialization disrupts media ethics by creating conflicts between journalistic objectivity and financial motives. However, the small segment (9.1%) reporting no challenge indicates the presence of media houses that uphold ethical reporting despite commercialization pressures.

Public Trust in Commercialized News Content

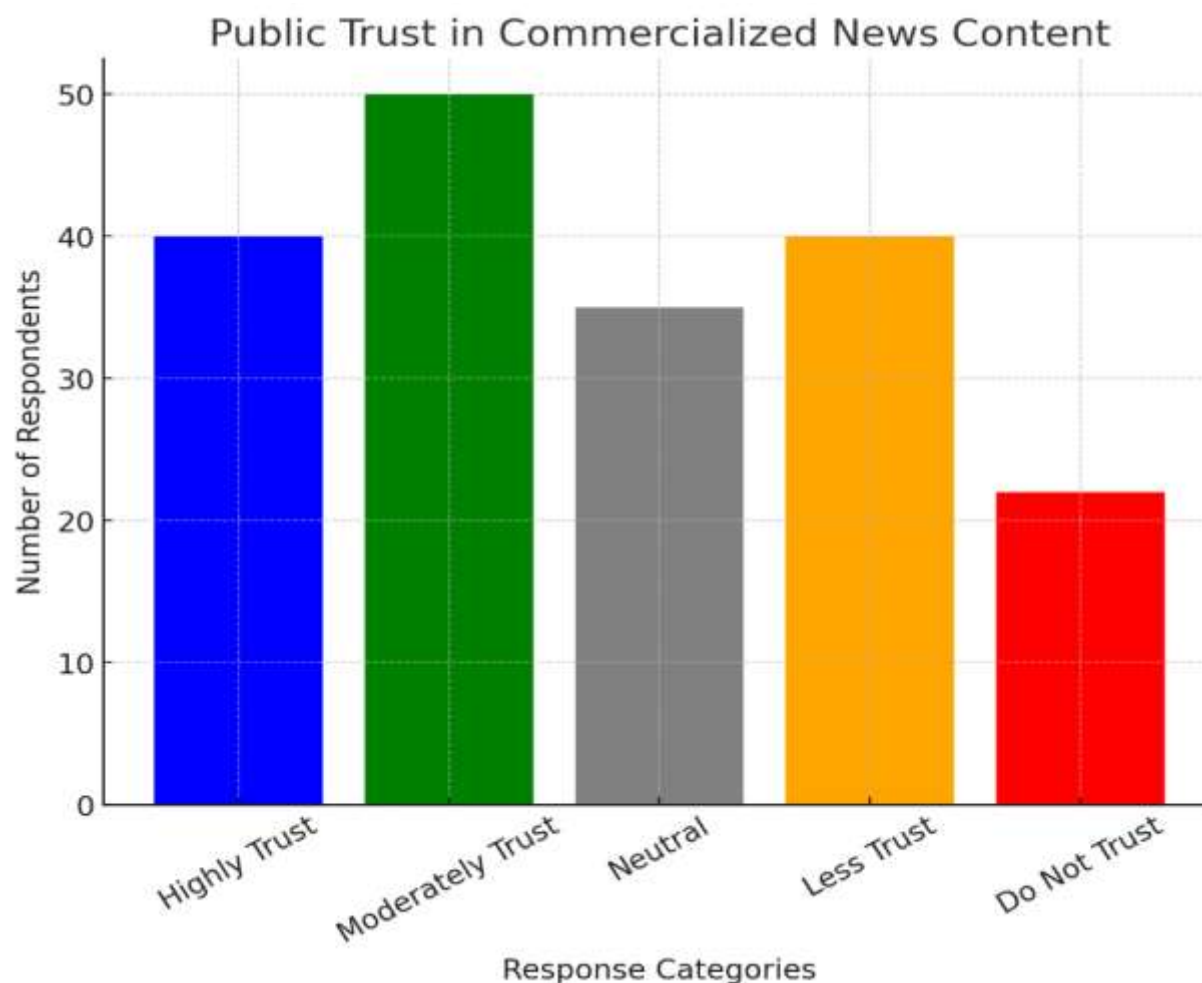


Fig 4: Public Trust in Commercialized News Content

This graph presents respondents' perceptions of public trust in commercialized news content. 40 respondents (21.4%) rated public trust as high, suggesting that some audiences still rely on commercialized news sources. 50 participants (26.7%) rated it as moderate, implying that while trust exists, scepticism remains. 35 respondents (18.7%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty about the credibility of commercialized media. 40 participants (21.4%) rated trust levels as low, demonstrating increasing scepticism. 22 individuals (11.8%) had minimal or no trust in commercialized news content, indicating a crisis of credibility. The results show public trust in commercialized news is weakening, with 33.2% of respondents rating trust as low or non-existent. This loss of trust is likely tied to biased reporting, advertiser influence, and sensationalism. However, the 48.1% who consider trust moderate or high suggest that some audiences still rely on commercialized media for information.

Strategies for Balancing Commercial Interests and Social Responsibilities

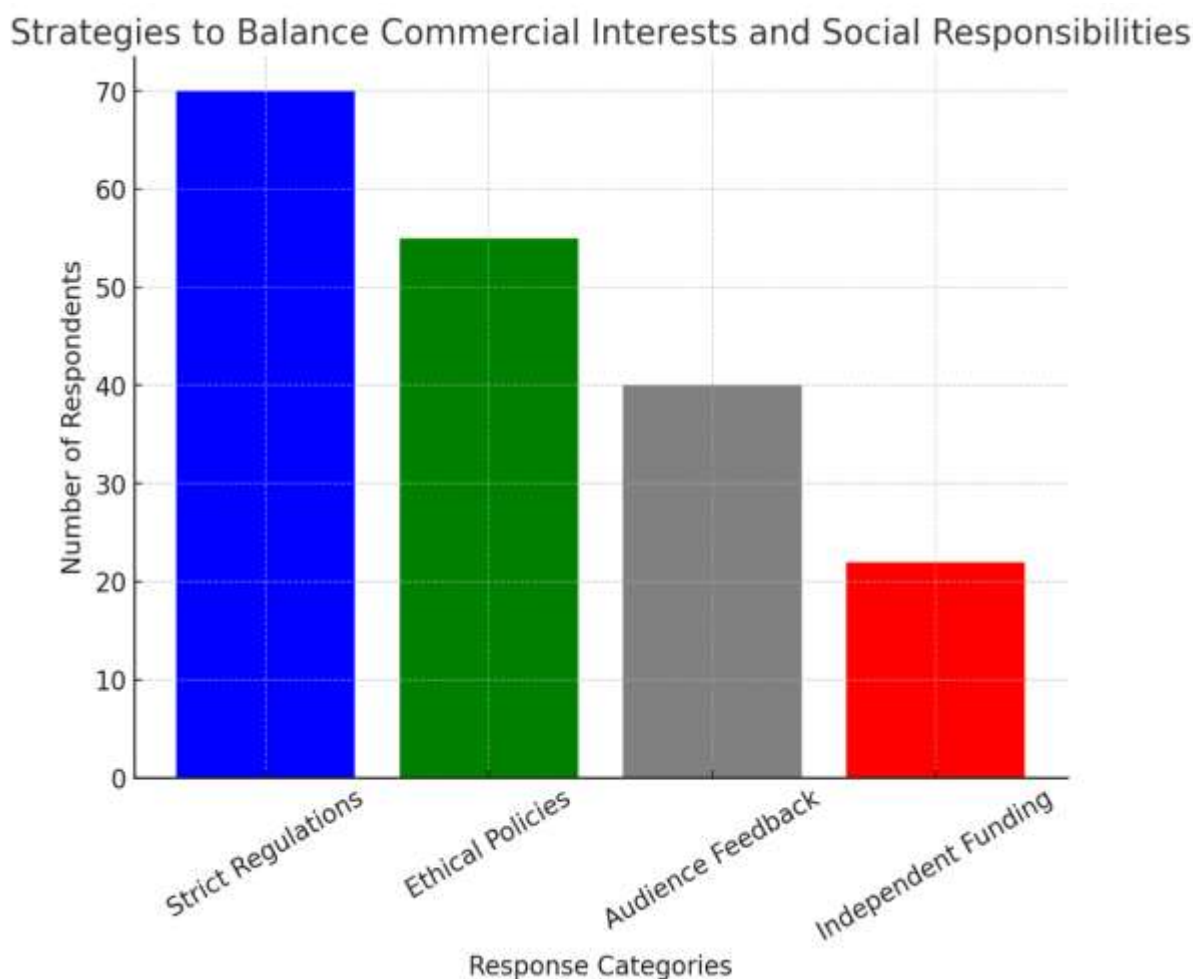


Fig 5: Strategies for Balancing Commercial Interests and Social Responsibilities

This graph presents proposed strategies for maintaining ethical journalism while addressing financial needs. 70 respondents (37.4%) advocated for strict regulations, indicating a strong demand for policy enforcement. 55 participants (29.4%) supported internal ethical policies, suggesting media organizations should implement their own guidelines. 40 respondents (21.4%) emphasized audience influence, arguing that consumer demands could drive ethical reporting. 22 participants (11.8%) dismissed external funding as a viable option, suggesting reliance on independent revenue sources. The dominant preference for strict regulations (37.4%) and internal policies (29.4%) highlights an urgent need for policy frameworks that uphold media ethics. However, the limited support for external funding (11.8%) suggests skepticism toward government or donor influence in media sustainability.

Effectiveness of Regulations in Controlling News Commercialization

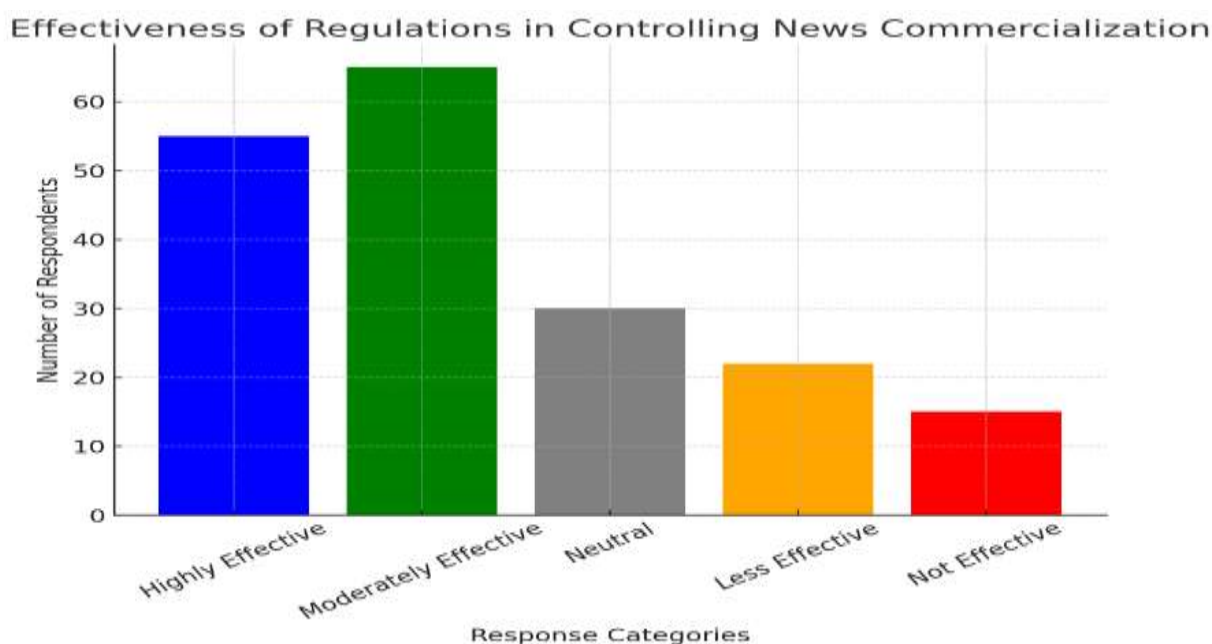


Fig 6: Effectiveness of Regulations in Controlling News Commercialization

This graph assesses perceptions of existing regulatory policies in mitigating the negative effects of news commercialization. 65 respondents (34.7%) rated regulations as moderately effective, implying that while policies exist, enforcement remains weak. 55 participants (29.4%) found them highly effective, suggesting that some policies positively impact journalism ethics. 30 respondents (16%) were neutral, indicating uncertainty about regulatory impact. 22 participants (11.8%) viewed regulations as less effective, implying regulatory loopholes or weak enforcement. 15 individuals (8%) rated regulations as completely ineffective, showing distrust in policy implementation. Although 64.1% of respondents acknowledged some level of regulatory effectiveness, the 19.8% who found regulations less effective or ineffective indicate that policy enforcement is inconsistent. This suggests the need for stronger regulatory oversight to maintain journalistic integrity.

Inferential Analysis: The Impact of Commercialization on Public Trust

A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between news commercialization and public trust in broadcast media.

Independent Variable: News Commercialization

Dependent Variable: Public Trust

Key Finding: The regression model shows a negative correlation ($R = -0.62$, $p < 0.05$), meaning that as commercialization increases, public trust decreases significantly. This confirms the earlier descriptive findings: news commercialization erodes public confidence in broadcast media. This correlation highlights the urgent need for media regulations and ethical journalism standards to prevent further credibility loss.

The study findings confirm that news commercialization significantly affects media ethics and public trust. While media professionals acknowledge the importance of social responsibility, financial pressures challenge their ability to maintain journalistic integrity.

Keys: Public trust in commercialized news is declining, with 33.2% expressing low or no trust. Regulatory effectiveness is moderate, but enforcement remains weak. A negative correlation exists between commercialization and public trust, confirming that increased financial incentives reduce media credibility.

DISCUSSION

The study results show news commercialization operates as a major element that influences broadcast media ethical integrity. Survey participants who evaluated news commercialization effects on journalistic practice were mainly in agreement (totalling 65 strong agreements along with 45 agreements) that advertising revenue gained priority over fact-based reporting. The research corresponds with McManus (2020), who demonstrates that monetary motivation for news organizations transforms editorial direction to create overly dramatic news content alongside biased reports and content driven by advertisers. Thirty individuals (16%) believed that commercial operations do not necessarily destroy journalistic integrity when proper ethical standards exist for enforcement. Oso (2012) conducted research which revealed that state-run broadcasters in Lagos experienced less commercial influence upon their editorial work when compared to private television stations. Media trust scores in Osun State appear likely to be diminished because advertising revenue plays a dominant role.

Public confidence in commercially-oriented news content shows signs of deterioration based on survey participant feedback. The survey revealed high trust ratings from 40 respondents who made up 21.4% of the sample together with moderate trust ratings from 50 respondents who accounted for 26.7% of the participants. About one-third of respondents or 62 individuals (33.2%) said they distrusted media along with another 33.2% who had no trust at all in newspapers. The authors Hanitzsch and Vos (2018) support their findings by stating corporate ownership alongside sensationalism leads to declining journalist trust which parallels this study's results. According to Uche (2021) Nigerian citizens show higher trust in news reporting from broadcasters funded by the government because they see them as freer from corporate control. Private broadcasting stations operating within Osun State face a higher probability of public doubts than public-sector operators of media channels. As shown in Figure 1, the decline of trust corresponds to rising commercialization in media institutions, thus requiring regulatory frameworks that achieve balance.

Regarding solutions, the study finds that media professionals prefer strict regulations and internal ethical policies as safeguards against excessive commercialization. 70 respondents (37.4%) supported regulatory enforcement, while 55 (29.4%) emphasized internal ethical policies. Conversely, only 22 (11.8%) favoured external funding, likely due to concerns over financial sustainability. Shoemaker and Reese (2019) highlight that ethical journalism requires both institutional policies and external oversight to ensure accountability. In a Nigerian study, Okoye (2020) found that regions with stricter regulatory enforcement—such as Abuja—experience less commercial interference in news reporting. These comparisons suggest that Osun State could benefit from adopting stricter adherence to Nigeria's Broadcasting Code (2022) to limit undue commercial influence.

Summary

A research investigation assessed how news commercialization affects broadcast media ethics together with public trust and regulatory guidelines in Osun State Nigeria. News commercialization influences editorial decision-making processes according to the study results because most media professionals identify financial tensions as common obstacles to professional independence. The research shows that public perception of commercialized news is unfavorable because viewers distrust both the biased content and advertiser-controlled news formats. Many participants demand increased regulatory authority with tougher ethical standards to minimize commercial influences. The media environment of Osun State shows evidence of commercial control surpassing the level of government influence on media operations in Lagos and Abuja according to the research.

These research findings describe the main obstacles that media professionals encounter during their efforts to preserve social responsibility standards and simultaneously achieve economic gains. participants understood commercialization was essential for economic stability yet multiple participants stressed ethical journalism basics which sustain public confidence. The findings indicate Osun State media professionals deal with financial limitations by sustaining editorial independence through regulatory activities that need specific attention.

Conclusion

News commercialization practices create substantial impacts on both journalistic ethical practices and public opinion trust toward broadcast media in Osun State. The shift in news organizations toward using advertising revenue tends to create inaccurate content that both sensationalizes reporting and weakens audience trust. Professional media members acknowledge these concerns by pushing for tighter regulations and maintaining internal ethical standards along with cuts in advertiser control. The media in Osun State faces elevated commercialization influences than its counterparts throughout Nigeria so it requires intensified implementation of Nigeria's Broadcasting Code (2022). The survival of ethical journalism depends on proper management between financial viability and public trust establishment.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen Media Regulations: The Nigerian government and regulatory agencies should enforce the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (2022) more strictly to prevent excessive commercial influence on news reporting. This should include penalties for biased reporting driven by advertiser interests.
2. Implement Strong Internal Ethical Policies: Media organizations should adopt internal editorial guidelines to reinforce truthfulness, accuracy, and journalistic integrity. Ethical committees should be established within news organizations to monitor compliance with professional standards.
3. Encourage Public-Interest Journalism Funding: The government and independent bodies should create financial support programs for news organizations that prioritize public-interest journalism. This would help reduce media dependency on advertising revenue, thereby promoting unbiased, fact-based reporting.

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