DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND REPORTAGE OF THE 2022 FLOOD BY ONLINE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

The study, Disaster Risk Reduction and Reportage of the 2022 Flood by Online Nigerian Newspapers assessed the extent to which Leadership, The Punch, and Vanguard reported the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria. Anchored in the framing theory and the psychometric paradigm, the study applied the mixed research methods through the use of content analysis and the structured interview. Findings from the study demonstrated that the frequency of the 2022 flood risk reportage by the Nigerian newspapers was less as it is indicated by *The Punch with* 196 (28.7%) news reports, Leadership with 174 (25.5%) except for Vanguard with an average reportage of 313 (45.8*%)*. Findings also showed that the newspapers performed least at disaster risk reduction which is the pre-disaster stage with 174(25.55%) news reports, 196 (28.7%)) for post-flood, but with more attention to the flood reportage during its occurrence with 313 (45.8%). It was found that the audience has a moderate level of perception of the risks of the flood reported in the newspapers with 14 (40%), 11(31.4%) audience's members having a low level of perception, 5(14%) having a high level of flood risks. It could be concluded that the newspapers appeared to renege on their disaster risk reduction role by paying minimal attention to pre-flood reporting which enhances risk mitigation and prevention. The study recommended, among other things, that Nigerian newspapers should give more attention to reportage at the pre-flood stage to enhance risk mitigation and prevention.

Keywords: Disaster risk reduction, flood, online newspapers, audience's perception

Introduction

The spate and ravages of flood have proven to be colossal. Tellman, Sullivan, Kuhn, Kettner, Doyle, Brakenridge, Erickson and Slayback (2021) submit that the high frequency and magnitude of floods have increased in recent years; moreover, they have had several impacts, both on the national territory and on society. These events affected 1.65 billion people, caused 122,000 deaths and produced 563 billion dollars in damage from 2000 to 2019 (EM-DAT as cited in Fonseca, Silva, & Garcias, 2022).

Nigeria is not immune from flood events; they are a common phenomenon in Nigeria. Floods are the most common and recurring disaster in Nigeria (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). The frequency, severity, and spread of these floods are increasing. While they impact the country each year, the damage and losses from the floods are unprecedented (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013).

Details of the 2022 flood statistics have been indeed concerning. The 2022 flood disaster is reported to have surpassed the 2012 flood which was adjudged the worst then in the history of Nigeria. Alkassim (2022, p. 1) notes that "the Director-General (DG), NEMA, Mustapha Habib Ahmed, has stated that the 2022 flooding was the worst in the history of Nigeria and by far more devastating than the 2012 flood which was hitherto considered unprecedented." The NEMA (2022) reports that in the 2022 flood, a total of 612 persons lost their lives, 3,219,780 persons were affected, 1,427,370 persons were displaced and 2,776 others suffered various degrees of injuries. As a social and developmental problem, stakeholders resolved to work together and find lasting solutions to flooding. Media is recognised as one of key stakeholders. According to Adekunle (2018), through educating people by using communication outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the Internet and other media of communication, people will be less prone to disasters. The media's participation in disaster management especially risk reduction is crucial.

The media's landmark role in responding to flood risks is often undermined by paucity of attention to pre-flood reporting which entails disseminating warnings ensuing from public entities. Unfortunately, the surveillance role of the press is largely dormant before disasters occur (Barnes, Hanson, Novilla, Meacham, McIntyre & Erickson as cited in Adekunle, 2018). Accusations of selective reporting that manifest in focusing on drama, human tragedy, and blame-game, conflicts of interest among the relief agents, victims and community affected are played up by the press during and after disaster occurrences (Ride & Bretherton, 2011).

Audience's perceptions of risks are shaped by the way media present information geared towards flood reduction. When communicating a message, media transmit not only certain content, but also their interpretation of it. They propose a specific image of the world which incorporates a set of meanings, values and social norms (World Meteorological Organisation, 2015). In so doing, they may determine people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviour towards new problems and situations.

This study focuses on warning and education role of the media in disaster. This is because disseminating information about impending disaster or campaigning against activities that could make people vulnerable is a vital way of reducing disaster frequency, impact and lost Adekunle (2018). Warning messages are gathered from official sources such as government agencies (at local, national and international level), planners, policy makers, activists, experts and others. Many disasters happen without warning.

Thus, if the press has such an awesome and tremendous power, then such power should be effectively and responsibly used to assist in disaster management through information dissemination and making key government agents in the sector and other stakeholders responsible and responsive before disaster strikes. It is how Nigerian media uses its power to contribute to disaster risk reduction that this study examines.

Problem Statement

There are instances of studies carried out on media and disaster risk reduction across the globe with Nigeria inclusive. For instance, Fonseca, Silva and Garcias (2022) did a study with the title "Flood risk communication: A decade debate,' Adekunle (2018) also conduct a study on the title 'Disaster Communication Management: A Study of Nigerian Media and Disaster Managers in Flood Risk Reduction,' and similarly, Oke, Afolabi, Adeyinka and Oluseyi (2018) conducted a study entitled 'Media and disaster management: Analysing communication trends in flood ravaged communities in Benue State, North Central, Nigeria.' Despite the availability of these studies, there appears to be dearth of studies focusing on the influence of online newspapers on flood risk reduction especially during the 2022 flood in Nigeria reported to be one of the most devastating flood in the history of Nigeria. Therefore, this serves as a gap this study seeks to fill by investigating how the media reportage during the 2022 flood in Nigeria enhanced the reduction of risk of the disaster.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to serve as guide for the research:

1.   To what extent did the online Nigerian newspapers report the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria?

2.   To what extent did the online newspapers report the flood risks before the flood occurrence?

3.   What was the perception of the affected people about the flood risks reported by the newspapers?

Literature Review

Newspaper Report of Flood Disaster

The media plays a crucial role in disaster risk reduction. According to the Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) (2016), radio, television, and the Internet are some of the most rapid means of disseminating knowledge and information over vast distances. The media plays a crucial role in empowering communities with pertinent information to impact public opinion and policy around disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Given the significance of media communication, it is increasingly thought that organisations' understanding of and relationships with the media plays a significant role in the success of humanitarian initiatives. To provide early warnings, evacuation preparations, and assistance with post-disaster tasks, a variety of advanced communication techniques can be used (Bansal, 2018). The media may take the lead in transforming society's mentality so that it is more proactive than reactive.

Prior to a flood, actions taken are thought to be of utmost importance because they considerably prevent the loss of lives and property. During a flood, the media promptly reports on the circumstances and requirements of those affected: After the flood, the media may play a role in informing decision-makers about the needs and circumstances of the impacted population (World Meteorological Organisation, 2015).

As the intermediary between the public and flood managers, the media holds a precarious position in society. They may serve as middlemen between the two, sending, filtering, and enhancing communication in both directions. From a different angle, acting as the middleman carries a special responsibility and necessitates a thorough understanding of the other parties, the issues at hand, and the broader context, in addition to possessing personal qualities like diplomacy, intuition, and dynamism (World Meteorological Organisation, 2015).

Frequency of Reportage of Flood Risk Disaster

Newspaper reportage implies the use of mass media to report events and inform the public of what is happening in their immediate surroundings. According to Szabo and Petrovici (2014), newspaper reporting is carried out by processing data gathered from various sources and presenting it to audiences in the form of certain products. Straight news reporting, editorials, features, opinions, photos, cartoons, and interviews are a few examples of these items.

The extent to which, media covers an issue has its own implications on the importance of the event in both public and media agenda. As different scholars contend that the more the media covers or gives emphasis for the certain issue, the more the issue become public agenda (as cited by Price, Tewksbury; Scheufele in Yeshambel & Bayable, 2016). The events which are given high attention and taken as an agenda in the media, became more important and can influence its social, political and economic conditions in one way or another.

There are different events that constitute media reportage. Media has a significant role in awareness-raising activities, informing decision-makers and advocating for institutional action for flood management (World Meteorological Organiation, 2015). The extent to which the online Nigerian newspapers reported the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria may differ across different media platforms. Due to this and other factors, it is crucial for the researchers to look at the extent of reportage and how intense the online newspapers reported the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria.

Flood in Nigeria

The Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency in its annual flood outlook (Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency, 2020) defines the major causes of flooding in Nigeria as follows: soil moisture, extreme weather conditions owing to climate change, how dams are functioning, especially those close to the country's borders, and topography. Adegboyega, Onuoha, Adesuji, Olajuyigbe, Olufemi, and Ibitoye (2018) identify changes in land use, such as urbanisation, as a trigger to urban flooding.

With the outset of the rainy season in Nigeria, varying degrees of damage have been reported all over the country. The most affected areas are in the Northeast states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, Bauchi, Taraba; Benue, Kogi and Nasarawa States in the North-central; Jigawa in the North-west, Bayelsa State in the South-South, and Anambra State in the South-east of Nigeria (IOM, UN Immigration, 2022). Heavy rain falls, accompanied by strong winds alongside over-flooding of rivers and the opening of the dam gates in Cameroon, led to the flooding of communities, causing serious damage to shelter and infrastructures.

The floods destroyed farmlands, shelters, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructures, and sources of livelihood, and caused further displacement of populations. Following the flooding, cases of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) outbreaks were also reported in Northeast Nigeria (IOM, UN Immigration, 2022). The spontaneous nature of displacement sites coupled with existing gaps in humanitarian assistance making individuals extremely vulnerable to a multitude of risks such as disease outbreaks such as AWD, cholera, and other public health issues.

According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flash reports dated September 2022, as well as National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Nigerian Red Cross (NRC) data from October 2022, a total number of 1,664,467 people have been affected in across states, while 60,720 shelters were fully damaged and nearly 33,542 shelters were partly damaged in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Benue, Kogi, Jigawa, Bauchi, Nasarawa, Taraba and Anambra states. Additionally, more than 600 people lost their lives, including children across the country. More than 440,000 hectares of farmland have been partially or totally damaged, leading to a catastrophic loss of food access and livelihoods (NEMA, 2022).

Flood Risk Perception

One of the foundations of social resilience is the perception of flood risk because it influences how individuals and the general public react to flood warnings and attempts to improve community preparation. Risk perception should be a significant social component of flood management plans. To accomplish this, flood managers must first comprehend the factors that influence how people perceive flood danger before developing plans of action that attack the issues at their source (World Meteorological Organisation, 2015).

When implementing flood risk management, it is frequently emphasised that the social environment must be taken into account. It is important because it affects residents of flood lands' attitudes (i.e., their level of flood preparation) and potential behaviours when dealing with a flood society (Lechowska, 2018). Understanding how people perceive danger is intended to increase the effectiveness of flood risk management. It is essential to understand how society views flood risk in order to choose the best strategy for informing the public about flooding.

One of the biggest issues and challenges in managing flood risk is people's underestimation of it. In actuality, perception (the degree of a flood danger perceived by society) frequently differs from the degree of a flood risk established by specialists (Duz, Vikhrov, Kelman, Stojanov, & Juricka, 2014). By encouraging the inhabitants of at-risk areas to take steps to lessen the effects of floods, knowledge of the elements impacting the subjective perception of flood risk can address this issue and reduce the flood risk.

Theoretical Framework

This study has framing theory and the psychometric paradigm as its theoretical foundation.

Framing Theory

The idea of a frame in regard to news has been frequently and informally employed in place of terminology such as frame of reference, context, theme, or even news angle. According to Goffman (as described in Karlström, 2017), frames are storytelling methods used by people to comprehend and translate social reality. He adds that precisely, frames are schemata of interpretation, through which humans find, perceive, identify, and name.

Framing theory focuses on how the media centers on specific events and subjects and frames them inside a field of meaning for public interpretation. Framing has its roots in both psychology and sociology since the notion of framing was introduced by a sociologist, Erving Goffman in 1974 in his work titled Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience (Snow, Vliegenthart & Ketelaars, 2019). This article claims that people deliberately classify, structure and interpret their experiences in order to make meaning in them.

Meanwhile, it is vital to emphasise that framing is a key aspect of human communication and activity. The media through it presentation and other agents of socialisation contribute in developing and setting up this frame (Entman as cited in Adekunlea, Mohammed & Ismail, 2016). In reporting disaster, media may frame its report in pro- active, warning and education frame or reactive frame wherein it covers the disaster occurrence while it is happening and its occurrence. Flood tragedy is prevalent in Nigeria and how the online Nigerian newspapers portray it may influence the lowering of the flood risks or escalate it.

The Psychometric Paradigm

The psychometric paradigm is a major theory in the field of risk perception, which aims to explain discrepancies in risk perception across different hazards. This paradigm envisages risk as a psychological construct, drawing on many features significant in affecting risk perception and acceptability (Etkin, 2016).

It is vital to keep in mind that the model was largely meant to explain risk perception in laypeople, because they assign relatively little weight to genuine risk assessment (Covello, von Winterfeldt, & Slovic, as cited in Bodemer &

Gaissmaier, 2015). Based on the idea that risks are quantifiable and predictable, the psychometric paradigm combines psychophysical scaling and multivariate approaches to explain laypeople's reactions to hazards.

The Psychometric Paradigm—Paul Slovic's research on risk perception discovered a variety of elements that contribute to varying perceptions of risk, which differ by hazard (Bodemer & Gaissmaier, 2015). The psychometric paradigm is identified with various aspects responsible for determining the individual perception of risk, including fear, newness, stigma, and other characteristics. Since audience does not respond directly to the hazards they are exposed to but their perceptions of those risks, the audience's response to flood risk messaging from the online newspaper could be reliant on how they perceive the risk of the flood

Methodology

Research Design: This study utilised a mixed method design. Mixed methods research focuses on a set of designs and processes that entail the integrated use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study or continuous programme of enquiry (Fetters, 2020).

Research Method: The study employs a mixed research method; content analysis and the structured interview. This sort of interview consists of a set of questions designed to elicit specific reaction or answer from respondents (Rashidi, Begum, Mokhtar & Pereira, 2014). The content analysis is used to analyse how the online versions of *Leadership, The Punch* and *Vanguard* reported the 2022 flood threats. Parveen and Showkat (2017, p.1) perceive content analysis as "the study of recorded human communications such as diary entries, books, newspaper, videos, text messages, tweets, Facebook updates, and others." Interview is utilised to investigate the audience impression of the flood dangers reported by the media.

Population: According to Dailytipsfinder.com (2023), there are 51 online newspapers published in Nigeria. Three newspapers are purposively picked for the study. The newspapers are *Leadership, The Punch* and *Vanguard* with a total of 1,095 editions/issues which then serve as the population. The

population is within the 12 months of 1st of January, 2022 and 31st of December, 2022 which flooding is reported by the newspapers in three phases; pre-flood, during flood and post-flood. Each of the three newspapers issued on a daily basis amounted to 365 editions/issues throughout the study period. The Nigerian Communications Commission (2022) asserts that Nigeria's mobile internet users climbed to 154.28 million in 2022. This, therefore, forms the population of the interview method for the study.

Sample Size: An online electronic sample size calculator programme by the Survey System retrieved at https://www.surveysystem.com/ sscalc.htm produced the sample size of 285 editions of online newspapers. So, when the population of 1, 095 is divided by 285 editions, the interval is 4 days between editions (population/sample size = interval). Individually, each newspaper has a sample size of 95 when the overall sample size is split with the number of newspapers (285/3=95).

Therefore, for the structured interview, the researcher purposively selected 30 interviews out the population of internet users in Nigeria that read the online newspapers in some of the areas affected by the 2022 flood in a cross section of the states in Nigeria worst affected by flood which include Anambra (South-east), Bayelsa (South-south), Benue (North-central), Borno (North-east), and Jigawa (North-west). The most affected states by the 2022 flood according to NEMA (2022) are Borno, Adamawa, Yobe , Bauchi, Taraba, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Jigawa, Bayelsa, and Anambra. In each of the five states, 6 residents of the affected communities were administered the structured interview. Moreover, there are no general numerical directions in qualitative research, clear rules or methods guiding the researcher how to obtain a properly sized sample (Kindsiko & Poltimäe, 2019).

Sampling Technique: In the first step, the judgemental or the purposive sampling technique was asdopted to pick the online newspapers for content analysis, systematic selection for days/editions/issues of the newspapers.

Instruments of Data Collection
The study uses the coding sheet and the structured interview guide to acquire data.

Units of Analyses
The units of analysis included direct news reporting, features stories, editorials/opinions, interviews and photos/illustrations.

Data Presentation and Analysis
The data presentation and the analysis for the study are based on 285 editions/issues of three online newspapers and the 30 interviewees sampled. The presentation and the analysis are to unravel how the coverage of the 2022 flood by the online versions of *Leadership, The Punch* and *Vanguard* within the period of one year (12 months; January 1-December 31, 2022) was capable of reducing the risk of the flood risk disaster. The following research questions guide the analysis.

Research Question One: To what extent did the online Nigerian newspapers covered the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria?.

Table One: Extent of Reportage of 2022 Flood Disaster by Online Nigerian Newspapers

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
Leadership	174	25.5
The Punch	196	28.7
Vanguard	313	45.8
Total	683	100

Source: *Field work, 2023*

It is observed that Vanguard had the most frequent of the reports on the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria, followed by The Punch, and Leadership.

Table Two: Journalistic Genres of Reportage of the 2022 Flood in Nigeria

Type/Genre of Coverage	Newspaper				
	Leadership	*The Punch*	*Vanguard*	**Total**	
	N	**N**	**N**	**N**	**%**
Straight news story	114	129	164	407	59.6
Editorial	12	14	16	42	6.2
Feature	14	13	17	44	6.5
Opinion/Column	23	21	25	69	10.1
Interviews	10	13	15	38	5.5
Illustration	26	27	30	83	12.1
Total	**199**	**217**	**267**	**683**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2023

It is evident that the straight news story recorded the highest frequency by followed by illustration, and opinion/column.

Research Question Two: To what extent did the online newspapers report the flood risks reduction before the flood occurred.

Table Three: Extent of Reportage of the 2022 Flood by Online Newspapers Before the Flood

Month	Newspaper	Flood Stages			
		Pre-flood	During Flood	Post-flood	Total
		N	**N**	**N**	**N**
January	*Leadership*	0	0	0	0
	The Punch	0	0	0	0
	Vanguard	2	0	0	2
February	*Leadership*	1	0	0	1
	The Punch	1	0	1	1
	Vanguard	2	0	0	2
March	*Leadership*	1	0	1	2
	The Punch	2	0	0	2
	Vanguard	3	0	1	4
April	*Leadership*	3	0	1	4
	The Punch	4	0	1	5
	Vanguard	5	1	3	9
May	*Leadership*	5	1	2	8
	The Punch	6	1	1	8
	Vanguard	6	2	2	10
June	*Leadership*	7	2	2	11
	The Punch	7	3	1	11
	Vanguard	9	7	3	19
July	*Leadership*	7	4	3	14
	The Punch	8	5	4	17
	Vanguard	11	7	9	27
August	*Leadership*	6	17	10	33
	The Punch	7	20	12	39
	Vanguard	9	25	17	51
September	*Leadership*	5	28	13	46
	The Punch	7	30	16	53
	Vanguard	9	45	20	74
October	*Leadership*	4	24	13	41
	The Punch	6	27	15	48
	Vanguard	8	34	19	61
November	*Leadership*	4	7	11	22
	The Punch	5	8	5	18
	Vanguard	7	10	4	21
December	*Leadership*	1	1	1	21
	The Punch	2	2	2	6
	Vanguard	4	2	3	9
Total		**174 (25.5%)**	**313 (45.8%)**	**196 (28.7%)**	**683 (100%)**

Source: Field work, 2023

It is clear from the data that the online newspapers gave more attention the flood during its occurrence, followed by post-flood reportage, and leas attention to pre-flood reportage.

Research Question Three: What was the perception of the affected people about the flood risks reported by the newspapers?

Table Four: Readership of Flood Pre-flood Warnings by the Audience

Flood Warnings	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2023

It is lucid that all those contacted for the interview agreed reading pre-flood warning messages in the newspapers under investigation.

Table Five: Pre-flood Warning Messages Read by the Audience

Messages on Pre-flood	Frequency	Percentage
Stop dumping refuse in water channels	10	33.3
Stop building on waterways	4	13.3
Relocation from flood-prone areas	7	23.4
Construction of water channels	4	13.3
Draining of major rivers	2	6.7
Construction of dams	3	10
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2023

Most of the interviewees said that the pre-flood warning they read discouraged them from dumping refuse in water channels, followed by the ones that advised them to relocate from flood-prone areas to safer ones, and the messages that forbid them from building on waterways and encouraged the constructions of water channels.

Table Six: Audience's Level of Understanding of the Pre-flood Messages

Level of Understanding of the Messages	Frequency	Percentage
No	0	0
Low	10	33.3
Moderate	13	43.1
High	7	23.3
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2023

It can be noticed that most of the respondents said that they have moderate understanding of the pre-flood messages in the online newspapers, followed by audience which said they have low understanding, and those who said they have high understanding of the pre-flood messages by newspapers.

Level of Perception of the Pre-flood Risks	Frequency	Percentage
Low	11	31.4
Moderate	14	40
High	5	14.2
Total	**30**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2023

It is manifest that most of the respondents said that they have a moderate perception of the effects of the pre-flood risks messages in the online newspapers, followed by audience which said they have low perception, and those who said they have high perception of the pre-flood messages by newspapers.

Table Eight: Level of the Effects of the Pre flood Messages on the Online Newspapers by the Audience

Effects of the message	Frequency	Percentage
Low	11	36.6
Moderate	13	43.4
High	6	20
Total	30	100

Source: Field work, 2023

It can be seen that a preponderant number of the interviewees said the level of the effects of the pre-flooding risks messages by the newspapers on the audience is moderate, this is followed by audience who said they messages have low effects, and those who said they have high level of effects.

Discussion of Findings

Response from the research question that seeks to assess the extent to which online newspapers reported the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria have shown that they reported less frequently. As it is proven, the The Punch had 196 (28.7%) news reports, Leadership 174 (25.5%) except for Vanguard with an average reportage of 313 (45.8%). According to Adekunle (2018), media organisations worldwide reported the happenings in the devastated areas on regular interval on some recent large scale disasters like floods in Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Malawi 2017, among others, became instant major media events.

In response to the research question that sets out to investigate the extent to which the online newspapers reported the flood risks before the flood occurred, it was shown that the newspapers performed least at disaster risk reduction which is the pre-disaster stage with 174(25.55%) news reports, 196 (28.7%)) for post-flood, but with more attention to the flood reportage during its occurrence with 313 (45.8%). Findings from the current study have reflected that of a similar study conducted by Adekunle, Mohammed and Ismail (2016) on the participation of Nigerian newspapers in flood disaster risk reduction with a focus on 2022 flood

in Nigeria which revealed that though Nigerian media was involved in disaster management, it performed least at disaster risk reduction. Adekunle (2018) contends that efforts being made by key disaster managers and government to increase awareness through education and early warning still receive inadequate media attention. Considering the findings of the study in line with the tenets of the framing theory, it could be observed that media framing of the 2022 flood have appeared to be predisposed to the reactive frame other the pro-active, warning or education frame that has the potential for lowering the flood risks.

To address the research question that sought to examine the perception of the audience about the online newspapers' pre-flood information, it was found that the audience has a moderate perception of the effects of the pre-flood messages. A preponderant number of the audience has a moderate level of perception of the risks of the flood reported in the newspapers with 14 (40%), 11(31.4%) audience's members having a low level of perception, 5(14%) having a high level of flood risks. Those having little knowledge about the causes of floods have lower risk perception providing the public with information about the flood risk usually increases its perception (Lechowska, 2018). The low perception of the flood risk seems to be in consonance with the psychometric paradigm may be contingent on various factors including fear, newness, stigma, and other characteristics. Since audience does not respond directly to the hazards they are exposed to but their perceptions of those risks.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that the newspapers appeared to renege on their disaster risk reduction role by paying minimal attention to pre-flood reporting which enhances risk mitigation and prevention. The frequency of the 2022 flood risk reportage in Nigeria 2022 by Leadership and The Punch as compare to Vanguard was tremendously low. It could be noticed that the online newspapers gave more attention to the flood during its occurrence which is the response stage other than the pre-flood stage which presupposes

the media purveying information for education and advocacy, and awareness to enhance risk mitigation and prevention. The audience has a moderate perception of the effects of the pre-flood risks messages in the online newspapers. This perhaps seems to be as a result of low level of awareness created in these newspapers in the pre-flood stage since there is the nexus between flood risk awareness among the audience and perception and response.

Recommendations

Considering the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Online Nigerian newspapers should improve on the frequency of publication of flood news reports. The gap of frequency of reportage left much to be desired.

2. Nigerian online newspapers should give more attention to reportage at the pre-flood stage to enhance risk mitigation and prevention.

3. Since perception of flood risk is contingent on the level of awareness creation by the mass media as one of the factors enhancing it, the Nigerian online newspapers should improve on pre-flood reporting to enhance the perception and response of the audience to flood risk mitigation and prevention.

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