

Challenges of Muslim Actors in Nigeria's Political Communication: A Case for Islamic Agenda Setting

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Abstract

In Political Communication, three actors, the media, politicians and audience or readers, engage in interest-driving interaction. Each of these actors engages in receiving and interpreting political messages, which influence its political decisions. The media is the actor that dish out the messages and often, in Nigeria, these messages influence public policy formulation and other political matters. For the fact that every media outfit is formed to protect certain interest or ideology, most of the messages disseminated by the media in Nigeria are not favouring the interest of the Muslims, largely because most of the media actors are not Muslims. It is on this basis; this paper examines the challenges that Muslims face in Nigeria's Political Communication vis-a-vis the demand on Muslims to understand the pressing need for investment in media industry to enable them set the agenda that would not only portray the religion of Islam and Muslims in good light but formulation of public policies in favour of the former and the latter. Content analysis was used in generating and analysing the data for the research where the existing literature were content analysed to determine the challenges Muslims and Islam face in Nigeria's political communication and how those challenges can be addressed. Specific examples on the impact of Daily Trust newspaper's coverage of Muslims and Islam were drawn. In order not to be taken over by flukes, the paper adopted the Agenda Setting Theory as guide. The choice of this theory was influenced by the fact that media is free in Nigeria and it sets agenda to favour the interest, ideology and disposition of its owners and practitioners. Therefore, this paper, among others, recommends the need for investment in the media industry by wealthy Muslims for the faithful to have adequate representation and voice in the Nigeria's political communication.

Keywords: Muslims, challenges, political communication, agenda setting

Introduction

Media is an important tool in the creation of the right perception for any given ideology, creed or belief system. This therefore informs the imperativeness of an affective media that would champion the cause of Islam not only in Nigeria but the world over. Islam is often misrepresented and even maligned by the Nigerian media, largely because Muslims are not actively participating in media practice. More importantly, Muslims do not regard ownership of Media houses as important ingredient that their religion requires to prosper and be represented in the scheme of things in Nigeria.

Although some Muslims are showing interest in media practice and ownership, they are however facing a lot of challenges. Some of these challenges affect segments of media practitioners in Nigeria, while others are limited to Muslims alone. However, the faithful of other faiths are enduring and even taking measures to surmount these challenges but Muslims seemed to be unperturbed.

Members of other faiths in Nigeria obviously see the media as an essential tool of promoting the ideologies of their faith. Building an ideology requires long time investment of

resources. It also requires a lot of sacrifices where the end goal and gain may take long time to be actualised. Members of other faiths understand this salient fact, but wealthy Muslims in Nigeria did not regard investment in the media as a venture worth engaging in.

According to Haruna, Shariff and Yusuf (2003), wealthy Muslims, especially in northern Nigeria have, for some strange reasons, never regarded the Mass Media as a priority in which to invest. This, they said, may have been partly because, unlike their compatriots elsewhere, they counted the gains of investment purely in terms of Naira and Kobo. Therefore, there is obvious lack of media organisations to fight for the cause of Islam. Similarly, the nonchalance of the few that are available is not stopping the ridiculing of Muslims and Islam by the Christians-dominated Nigerian media and this often makes Muslims to loss out in the pursuit of their political and other social goals.

In the same direction, Muslim-journalists also tend to forget that they are first of all Muslims before any other personal or material gain. Most Muslim-journalists in Nigeria either engage in mischievous ventures for money making or feel ashamed to portray themselves as Muslims through the professional propagation of the virtues of their religion or champion the cause of Muslims' political rights and privileges.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there is lack of information balance between Nigerian Muslims and Christians. The Christian community is, of course, having an upper hand and this often forces Muslims to surrender some of their rights due to the influence of the Christians-dominated media in Nigeria, (Tsebee & Toyin, 2017). For example, in a democratic rule, the majority determines who becomes what, but in Nigeria this is not the case. A good case to portray this fact was what happened in 1999 when Muslims were forced to hand over power to Southern Christians.

According to Haruna et al (2003), information balance is a critical factor to the attainment of political interests and objectives of Muslims in Nigeria. The absence of a balanced information order is said to be one of the factors that made Muslims in Nigeria to be losing their political relevance. Whenever a Muslims is at the helm of affairs in Nigeria, Islamphobia becomes prominent. Such Muslim leader is often intimidated by the Christians-dominated media to compromise the legal and constitutional rights of Muslims and often force by the media power to do the biddings of the Christians. For instance, during the build-up to the 2011 presidential elections, the then prominent Muslim candidate contesting against a sitting Christian president was deliberately maligned by the Christians-dominated media where they referred to him as "extremist, fundamentalist and even sponsor of Boko Haram". This happened at the time when the Christian candidate was publicly moving from one Church to another kneeling before Pastors for blessing and prayer while he canvassed for votes and the Christians-dominated media looked the other way.

The foregoing had clearly shown that Muslims need to form media houses and also need to work as media practitioners. If that is not done, the political war that was waged against the Muslims in Nigeria would continue to yield casualties and would deprive Nigerian Muslims their rights and privileges. It is based on this imperative that this paper sets out to examine some of the challenges Nigerian Muslims encounter in the country's political communication. This is with a view to proffering some solutions by making reference to the impact that media sympathetic to the cause of Muslims are making in Nigeria's political communication. The paper also sets out to establish the imperatives of investment in the Nigeria's media industry by Muslims for Islam and its faithful to have the required representation and voice in Nigeria's political communication.

Literature Review

The paper discusses some of the available literature that are relevant to its problem. This is done with a view to effectively understand the subject-matter that may lead to establishing the solutions of the problem under study.

Political Communication

According to Gurevitch and Blumler (1995), political communication entails a system of dynamic interaction between political actors, the media and audience members, each of whom is involved in producing, receiving and interpreting political messages. Viewing political communication as a system of interaction implies that all three sets of actors are dependent on the performance of the other actors of the system as a resource for achieving their own interests and objectives.

The high degree of mutual interdependence of the actors in political communication makes it imperative for the Muslims to be well represented. Islam in Nigeria needs to have keen politicians to champion its cause in the complex web of interactions and negotiations that often take place in political communication. Similarly, the religion needs to have devoted media practitioners, and even audience/readers, to push forward the cause of Muslims and Islam in Nigeria's political communication. The whole essence of the dynamic interaction in political communication is to control the public agenda.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims in Nigeria to understand that political communication is increasingly becoming an important political tool. Studies have shown the importance of the media in contributing significantly to creating public awareness and mobilising participation and nation-building. The media assist citizens to reach informed decisions, hence the need for Muslims to be aware of this in order to be involved in the discussions of state matters (Des, 2012).

Challenges of Muslims in Nigeria's political communication

Under the following sub-headings, the paper examines some of the general challenges facing media practitioners in Nigeria with emphasis on the unique challenges facing the Muslims. This is with a view to appreciate the environment in which journalism is practiced in Nigeria.

Why Christianity is more reported than Islam in Nigeria

Many scholars, especially Haruna et al (2003) and Tsebee and Toyin (2017), posited that Christianity enjoys more coverage in Nigerian media than Islam. They attributed many reasons to that. However, they both agreed that the dominance of the media space by Christians is largely responsible for that development.

Aside the dominance of Christians in the Nigeria's media industry, Tsebee and Toyin (2017) identified access to information as one of the major factors hindering the effective coverage of Muslims and Islam by the Nigerian media. They posited that Christianity is more reported in Nigeria, because the Christian umbrella body, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), has an effective and robust news dissemination mechanism. Tsebee and Toyin (2017) said:

On the whole however, of the two-dominant religions in Nigeria, Christianity seems to be more reported. This has been attributed to certain peculiar difficulties in accessing news reports on Islam in Nigeria. Lack of structural headquarters has been identified as a major problem of Islamic news reporting in the country. While the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the body prompting the interest of Christians all over Nigeria, has a headquarters from where news can be accessed; the apex Islamic

organisation in the country, Nigeria Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), has none. Despite existing for more than 20 years, NSCIA has no functional head office. So, except for personal contacts with Islamic leaders, it is difficult to generate reports on Islamic activities to a certain extent.

The above position of Tsebee and Toyin (2017) may not completely be true, as NSCIA is not the only national umbrella body for Muslims in Nigeria. Of recent, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), another prominent Muslims umbrella body, has been up and doing in releasing press statements expressing the stand of Islam and Muslims on certain national issues. This new development might have been informed by the observations like that of Tsebee and Toyin (2017). The patronage of the media by the JNI and other similar Islamic bodies are actually strengthening the position of Muslims actor in Nigerian political communication (Ahmadu-Suka, 2019).

Islamphobia

The growing anti-Islam campaign, especially by some Western world and sections of Nigerian media is another major challenge of Muslim actors in the interaction that take place in political communication. Not only in Nigeria but world over, Islam and Muslims face discrimination in the media. Most renowned global media organisations champion the promotion of Islamphobia. They define who is a terrorist, for example. While these media organisations term the activities of Israel in the Palestinian territories as self-defence, for example, attempt by the Palestine to defend themselves against the war tankers of Israel, most time by throwing stones, is termed as terrorism (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016).

The anti-Muslims discourse in the Western media, according to Ahmed and Matthes (2016), began with the Iranian revolution of 1979 and it grew up to the 1980s to the 9/11 (11th September, 2001) attack in the United States of America and up to the present time. The campaigns against Muslims are usually covered under the banner of Muslims are anti-democracy. However, the real fact is that Islam is a civilisation that is perceived as a threat to the West hence the deliberate campaign of calumny against it (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016).

Muslims had, however, got a sympathetic platform with the advent of Aljazeera satellite station. For example, in the opening days of the war in Afghanistan, United States of America's Secretary of State, Colin Powell, had to call the Emir of Qatar to seek for his cooperation in moderating the views of Aljazeera, because of its important demographic of Arab viewers (Monroe, 2002:4-5). Because Aljazeera largely refused to compromise its independence, after September 11, 2001, its programming, reach, and effectiveness were viewed by many in the US government as inimical to its campaign against (so called) terrorism.

According to Monroe (2002), the Aljazeera's service as a platform for Osama bin Laden videotapes was a cause for enormous concern in the United States. After persistent efforts to persuade the satellite service to refrain from airing the videotapes, a second approach was tried, one that offered US officials for interviews on Aljazeera, purchasing air time in Aljazeera or supporting competitors for the satellite station.

The aforementioned postures that were portrayed by Aljazeera are what Nigerian Muslims, especially the wealthy and Muslims-journalists supposed to copy. This would allow Muslims to take their right place in the matters of Nigerian state, aside giving the religion of Islam its admirable place in the general affairs of Nigeria.

Profit motive

Most media organisations in Nigeria are founded as commercial entities. They are therefore investments where the investors expect to make profit out of their investment. According to Jatula (2017), the motive for profit maximisation in the Nigerian media defines

its character. This means that only those that can afford to pay now determine what people read or hear in the media. This therefore influences editorial decisions on what appeared or aired by the media.

The foregoing is a challenge for Nigerian Muslims, as most of them, including the wealthy, do not see investment in media as something worth doing. But pushing the cause of an ideology, as stated by Haruna et al (2003), require sacrificial investment. It takes time before such investment begins to yield any fruit. However, most Nigerian Muslims prefer investment that would yield immediate gain, hence the situation that Islam finds itself in its coverage by the Nigerian media.

Boko Haram

According to Jatula (2017), the Boko Haram terrorism had attracted negative comments on Islam in Nigeria and across the world. This is because the sect is seen as a major threat to press freedom and security. Therefore, this has added to the woes of Muslims in Nigeria's political communication.

Therefore, Nigerian Muslims need media channels to disseminate the fact that Boko Haram is not a representative of Islam and Muslims; hence its violent activities should not be associated to Islam. However, there are very few media outfits to do this for the Nigerian Muslims, hence the activities of the sect had succeeded in putting the Nigerian Muslims in dilemma.

Professional challenges

In Nigeria, there are many professional challenges hindering the performance of media practitioners. Therefore, since Muslims are part of the pool of media practitioners, these challenges also hinder their activities. Jatula (2017) has identified what he called three critical professional challenges that confront the press in Nigeria. He said proprietors of media outfits in Nigeria place a lot of premia on profit making, hence their attempt to always please those that patronise them, especially the business and political elites. This reflects in the news the media outfits disseminate. Because of their desire for profit, most owners of media organisations don't invest in investigative journalism, as the resources and time that this endeavour requires are enormous. This affects the professional output of Nigerian journalists both Muslims and non-Muslims.

The last professional challenge identified by Jatula (2017) is what he called a dearth of skilled manpower and competent staff. He identified ownership of media outfits by politicians as the brain behind this challenge.

He added: The media space is saturated with politicians who own newspapers. The reason why they invest so much in such ventures is for publicity and to push their political agenda. Are these papers economically sustainable? Not really. I'm afraid not. Gbenga Daniel as Gov. of Ogun State started Comet and Westerner newspapers but the papers died immediately he left office. That shows the power owners wield.....it is a tall order to expect editors of privately owned newspapers to turn against or criticise their owners, advertisers and shareholders.....By and large, Nigerian newspapers operate in a difficult environment - dearth of infrastructure, no constant electric power, no paper mill, dearth of properly trained manpower; yet, they have to critic those who wield power and wealth. This is not a rather comfortable task..... news organisations in general and newspaper journalists in particular are deeply entrenched in allegations of controversies, corruption, and cheque-book journalism, which in no small way affect objectivity, professionalism and balanced reporting.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the menace of corruption did not spare the Nigerian media industry. Some of these journalists that engage in corrupt practices are Muslims. This, no doubt, is against the teachings of Islam, as corruption in the media affect their objectivity, balanced reporting and encourages bias.

Theoretical Framework

The main aim of theory to any research is to give direction and prevent the researcher from being taken over by flukes. Therefore, the framework for analysis adopted by this paper is the Agenda Setting Theory. Agenda Setting Theory was formally developed by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw in a study on the [1968 United States of America's presidential election](#). In the 1968 "Chapel Hill study," McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation between what 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, they were able to determine the degree to which the media determine public opinion (Des, 2012).

The Agenda Setting Theory entails that media organisations, through their activities, engage in producing national issues for discussion among the general public. The major assumption of the agenda setting theory is that the media set agenda for the public to follow. The theory holds that most times the picture in the heads of citizens, the things the citizens worry and think about and most of the issues the citizens talk about are based on what they have seen, heard and read from the media. Therefore, the media have a significant impact over what the people think, discuss or worry about if the media continuously give prominence and importance to such an issue (Pate, Nwabueze and Idiong, 2013) and (Des, 2012).

Agenda Setting Theory refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences. Agenda Setting Theory of the media describes the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda, that is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important (Scheufele and David, 2006) and (Des, 2014).

Since this paper attempts to establish the challenges that Muslims face in Nigeria's political communication due to largely inadequate and biased coverage, the Agenda Setting Theory becomes the most effective framework to guide the paper. The theory was used to determine how the Christians-dominated Nigerian media is used to set anti-Islam agenda through the maligning of Muslims and Islam, while the Muslims and Islam remain handicap largely because of their lack of participation in the media practice as well establishment of media outfits.

Methodology

According to Babbie (2010), methodology entails a detailed systematic attempt to discover or confirm facts through investigation in regards to a specific problem and this is based on concrete and defined procedures. This paper therefore employs Content Analysis Research Method in collecting and analysis of its data. By the use of purposive sampling technique, the paper analysed some of the existing literature, especially empirical studies conducted by other researchers on similar subject matters, verses of the Holy Qur'an and Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Babbie (2010:192) justified the use of any of the non-probability sampling techniques where the use of probability sampling "wouldn't be appropriate even if it were possible". Therefore, in the content analysis of the various chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an, Hadith

of the Prophet (pbuh) and the existing literature, the knowledge of the researcher was used in the selection.

How Muslims should use the media

The fact that Muslims are obliged to use the media in promoting the cause of Islam and protecting the dignity of Muslims in order to set agenda for the Nigerian polity as postulated by the Agenda Setting Theory that was adopted by this paper, yet they are demanded by Islam to work in accordance to the directives of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Allah says in Chapter 3 (Ali-'Imran), Verse 110;

You (true believers in Islamic Monotheism) and real followers of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Sunnah, are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'aruf, that is Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained, and forbid Al-Munkar, that is Polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden, and you believe in Allah.....

The implication of the above verse is that a Muslim-journalist should work in accordance with the ethics of the field by directing his effort on writing or reporting the truth, Al-Ma'aruf, and denouncing falsehood, Al-Munkar. Al-Ma'aruf can be fighting for people's political rights, enlightening them on the right people to elect or how to struggle for their rights and privileges. On the other hand, a Muslim-journalist can engage in the fight against Al-Munkar that may include fighting corruption or exposing the activities of corrupt officials who engage in siphoning the wealth of the country at the detriment of the country's development, among other things.

Again, Allah says in Chapter 50 (Qaf), Verse 18: "Not a word does he, or she, utter but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)." In the same vein, Allah says in Chapter 17 (Al-Isra), Verse 36: "And follow not, O man that is, say not, or do not or witness not, that of which you have no knowledge. Verily! The hearing, and sight, and the heart, of each of those one will be questioned (by Allah)."

The aforementioned verses simply imply that a Muslim-journalist should know that anything he writes or says should be based on facts and knowledge. That journalists should not fabricate stories as doing so would earn them Allah's anger. Allah, according to the verses, would judge whatever that is said, heard or spoken by any human being, journalists inclusive.

In a Hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) was reported in the Book of Bukhari to have said, whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement should speak pleasant words or statement otherwise he should keep quiet. From here, it is clear that the religion of Islam has provided a code of conduct for journalists, which should be jealously upheld even when Muslim-journalists are promoting or defending their values and that of their religion.

Islam did not only restrict its direction on media practitioners. Even listeners or readers are provided with a guide on how to use the Media. Allah says in Chapter 49 (Al-Hujrat), Verse 6: "O you who believe! If a Fasiq (liar – evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done."

The above verse is clear, because it is telling Muslims that it is not all stories they should believe without authentication. Muslims are enjoined to verify all news and stories that they come across. From the foregoing, it is clear that Islam has direction for journalists, listeners, readers and other media stakeholders. Therefore, practicing journalism according to the direction provided by Islam can lead one to Allah's favour, while the contrary can attract Allah's sanction. The following verse should therefore be the guide of Muslims in whatever they do "Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful (over them)," Chapter 89 (Al-Fajr), Verse 14.

Muslims' challenges in political communication: The role of *Daily Trust* newspaper

Sa'idu (2017) and Sa'idu, (2016) studied the prominence that *Daily Trust* newspaper is giving to the issues of Shari'ah and other matters that touch on the lives of Muslims and Islam as a religion. He content analysed the front page stories, editorials and back page columns of the editions of *Daily Trust* newspaper from 2004 to 2014 premised on the fact that Voltmer (2006) established that front page stories and editorials of newspaper determine its identity.

Within the period under study, *Daily Trust* newspaper, Sa'idu (2017) said, being a daily title, produced four thousand and fifteen (4,015) editions, if an average of three hundred and sixty five days (365) per year is taking into consideration. He employed systematic sampling in selecting and reviewing one thousand five hundred and fifty eight (1,558) editions of *Daily Trust* newspaper, representing 77.61% of the targeted editions (population) of two thousand and seven point five (2,007.5).

Sa'idu (2017) also used Interview Method of Survey Research to interview the two founders of *Daily Trust* newspaper, Malam Kabiru Yusuf and Alhaji Ishaq Ajibola, and two columnists of the paper, Malam Mohammed Haruna and Dr. Bala Muhammad. He found that the newspaper has featured one hundred and forty three (143) news items on Muslims and Shari'a issues between 2004 and 2014. Eighty seven (87) of these news items, representing 60.84%, concerned Muslims in the Northern states of Nigeria, six (6), representing 4.19%, concerned Muslims in Southern states, while fifty (50), representing 34.97%, were on Muslims in both Northern and the Southern states.

The foregoing revealed the interest that *Daily Trust* newspaper has on issues that concern the Muslims and Shari'a in both the North and the South of Nigeria. Both the two founders of the newspaper interviewed by Sa'idu (2017) and two of the columnists of the newspaper have confirmed that *Daily Trust* newspaper was founded to, among other things; give voice to Muslims and Islam.

Alhaji Ishaq Ajibola, one of the two founders of *Daily Trust* newspaper said; "there were two things that were important to us; to cover the North very well like no other newspaper; our religion was also important for us" (Sa'idu, 2017:247).

Also, Malam Kabiru Yusuf said thus:

I think every news medium that is located in a certain area would have to go along with the belief and the views of its readers to some extent. So, being in the North with largely Muslim readership meant that, to some extent, we have to respond to those issues or views that our readers have and to the kind of information that they are interesting in. To that extent, I cannot say that we set up in a vacuum. We are conscious of the community where we are based. And we thought that the only way to succeed is to respond to their needs and aspirations to the best that we can. (Sa'idu, 2017:248).

Again, Malam Mohammed Haruna, a *Daily Trust* newspaper columnist, said: "The way some people would think that the *Daily Trust* is Northern or Islamic paper, I don't think they should apologise for that. Because every newspaper in the world has an immediate constituency, and unless it serves that constituency well, it wouldn't survive." (Sa'idu, 2017:248).

In the same vein, another columnist of the newspaper, Malam Bala Muhammad, said thus:

Not necessarily the North. My first agenda is Islam. I am a Muslim and I always feel that Islam is underreported and misunderstood. Part of my contribution is to see that people understand Islam more, and that it is not what people think it is, especially our compatriots in this country, the non-Muslims. So, that is my first agenda to set the record of Islam correctly, to

ensure that at least I do a little bit of explaining the religion. (Sa'idu, 2017:248).

Similarly, Sa'idu (2016) studied 12 editions of *Daily Trust* newspaper between November 2013 and January 2014. He found that the newspaper had featured eight (8) news stories on Islam and Muslims within the period, representing 66.66% of the total news items featured on Islam and Muslims within the period. *Daily Trust* newspaper also uses its editorials in reporting Islam and Muslims while the readers and columnists of the newspaper also voice out their position on Islam and Muslims by using the platforms that the newspaper provides (Sa'idu, 2016:105).

Discussion of findings

From the literature reviewed by this paper, it was established that Islam and Muslims are underreported in Nigeria due to largely the dominance of the members of other faiths in the country's media industry. Tsebe and Toyin (2017) categorically posited that Christianity is more reported in Nigeria than Islam. They however attributed that to the lack of an established institution where news about Islam can be sourced. This is aside the dominance of Christians in the media industry.

Another challenge of Muslims in Nigeria's political communication is lack of investment by wealthy Muslims in the media industry. This is why Haruna, et al (2003) described Nigerian wealthy Muslims as lacking in knowing the importance of investment in ideology. Investment in ideology, they said, takes time to yield material result, but it is an avenue where the dignity of any given faith can be protected and over time results to material gains. Christians have realised the importance of this type of investment and they endured the "challenges" and they are now reaping the benefits in terms of protecting the dignity of their religion and monetary gains, leaving Muslims complaining of being maligned and ridiculed by the Christians-dominated media.

The paper also established that the growing Islamophobia across the world is also affecting Muslims in Nigeria. Muslims, according to Ahmed and Matthes (2016), are being targeted for ridicule largely because they don't have devoted media organisations to propagate their agenda. However, the coming on board of media organisations like Aljazeera, *Daily Trust* newspaper and other outfits is changing this trend.

Jatula (2017) had identified many challenges hindering the performance of journalists in general, Muslims in particular. Such challenges include activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria that are further damaging the image of Islam, economic challenges and even professional challenges, especially how corruption is tattering professionalism in the Nigerian media industry.

Sa'idu (2016) and Sa'idu (2017) established the role that *Daily Trust* newspaper is playing in promoting the agenda of Islam and Muslims in Nigeria. He has shown how the newspaper is giving Islam and Muslims prominence in its news reportage, editorials as well as in other segments of the newspaper. This is giving Nigerian Muslims a voice in their interaction with other actors in the country's political communication.

However, the paper had established that despite the need for Muslims to be actively involved in media practice and take their rightful place in Nigeria's political communication, they are expected to adhere to the code of conduct provided by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), which demand that Muslims should not engage in distortion of facts, maligning of others as well as engaging in corruption in order to promote their interests or that of any individual or organisation.

Conclusion/Recommendation

The nonchalance of Muslims on Nigeria media industry, especially the establishment of media outfits, led to their present predicament. Many Nigerian Muslims see the country's media as sentimental, partisan and one-sided in reporting issues of religion and economy. Issues relating to Muslims and Christians are always reported in favour of the Christians largely because most of the organisations in Nigeria are either owned by Christians or dominated by them. They therefore determine the news, editorial or comment that is disseminated to the public.

However, the formation of media outfits like *Daily Trust* newspaper is gradually changing the disturbing trend. Proprietors of *Daily Trust* newspaper are gradually proving to Nigerian Muslims, especially the wealthy, that forming media outfits can be an avenue of setting agenda as well as a viable means of doing business.

Therefore, if a single media organisation can make such impact on the lives of many Muslims, the question will be; what the position of Muslims would be in Nigeria's political communication had Muslims established many media houses to champion the cause of Islam? The answer can be better imagined. *Daily Trust* newspaper, as at now, is not only giving voice to Muslims and Islam, but it is providing hundreds of direct and indirect job opportunities to Muslims and even non-Muslims. Therefore, the impact of such an endeavour is enormous.

Moreover, in accordance with the postulations of the Agenda Setting Theory, media organisations with sympathy and bias for Islam and Muslims would be vital tools in stating the position of Muslims and Islam in the Nigeria's polity. Muslims and Islam, like Christians and Christianity, would have mediums to counter any mischief and mischievous agenda set against them. Of course, through these types of media outfits, matters concerning Islam and Muslims would get prominent coverage and by so doing, these mediums would create a constituency that would be patronising them for sustenance, just similar to what *Daily Trust* newspaper has been able to achieve for itself.

It is on the basis of the above that this paper recommends that the two supreme umbrella bodies of Muslims in Nigeria, the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Jamatu Nasril Islam (JNI), should strengthen their media units for effective and robust information dissemination on matters that affect Muslims and Islam in Nigeria. If these bodies do not have such units, it is imperative for them to form them, as this would allow smooth access to information on Islamic matters.

Wealthy Muslims should, as a matter of necessity, make investment in the media business. Doing so has proven to be profitable, aside assisting the cause of the religion of Islam in Nigeria, it is also an opportunity of giving back to the society as hundreds of direct and indirect job opportunities may be created.

Muslims from all walks of life should continue to publicly challenge the activities of sects like Boko Haram, which has hitherto portrayed Muslims and Islam in bad light. The real positions of Islam on issues like Jihad and formation of Islamic government should be put to the fore in challenging the Boko Haram atrocities that are being perpetrated in the name of Islam. This would greatly assist in safeguarding the image of the religion of Islam and its jurisprudence.

The importance and position of journalism in contemporary world cannot be overemphasised. Therefore, this makes it extremely necessary for Muslims to strive to join the field of journalism. However, Muslim journalists are expected to work with *Iklas* (good intention) by working according to the code of conduct provided by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) so that they may succeed in getting Allah's acceptance and rewards for promoting the cause of his religion and setting agenda in favour of Muslims and Islam.

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