

Newspaper Audience's Use of GSM Text Messaging for Feedback

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Abstract

Feedback is a key element in the process of mass communication and new media technologies are revolutionising the process by providing easier and more convenient avenue for people to contribute to the mass media. Media organisations are also taking advantage of these new media to provide more access to their audiences. One of such is the “my news.com” page created by The Punch newspaper for people to share their views and information through mobile phone text messaging. This study examined the content of text messages published on the page over a month period using content analysis. It sought to know the theme and purposes of the audience feedback as well as the area of the country where the newspaper has the most active audience. The technological determinism and the agenda setting theories were adopted as theoretical framework. Findings revealed that members of the audience who sent their contributions were mostly from Lagos and the south-west region. The messages focused more on governance, suggestions, criticisms and complains about specific issues.

Key Words: Media audience, Global System for Mobile communications (GSM), Text messaging, my news.com, Feedback

Introduction

....In 1981, “mobile phone” meant pretty much one thing: a big suitcase full of electronic equipment wired and bolted into a millionaire’s cardillac limousine, with a three-foot steel antenna drilled through the trunk lid. (Murray Jr. 2001)

For much of the last century, the term ‘radiotelephony’ was used to describe what is now referred to as mobile phone or cell phones. As far back as the 1940’s, early radiotelephony services were available for a limited number of people. Even at this period, there was the problem of power consumption requirement and size of early radio equipment. Each of these factors had to be overcome in order to enable the mass consumption of mobile phones that is now enjoyed worldwide (Gow and Smith, 2006, p. 22).

The origination of today’s mobile phones is credited to Martin Cooper, a senior engineer and researcher at Motorola. Cooper made the world’s first mobile phone call forty years ago on April 3, 1973, when he called a rival telecommunications company

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and informed them he was speaking via a mobile phone. That mobile phone named Motorola Dynatac weighed 1.1kg and measured 228.6mm by 127mm by 44.4mm. With recharge time of around 10 hours, and talk time of 35 minutes, the phone gave comfortable talking experience to the users (Invention Story of Cell Phones n.d, Skipworth, 2013, Goodwin, 2013).

The bulky hand held device of those days paved way for the ultra-thin sleek technology savvy mobile phones now prevalent today. No doubt, Mobile phones have proved themselves to be one of the greatest gifts to the mankind and have become an indispensable part of our lives. The advancement in technology over the years now makes mobile phones readily available and affordable for everyone. With a plethora of mobile phone sets flooding the market, they are not just catering to the needs but are acting as status symbols for many (Invention story of cell phones, n. d).

Evolution of the GSM

Fendelman (n.d.) traces the origins of the Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) to 1982 when the '*Groupe Spécial Mobile*' was created by the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) to design a pan-European mobile technology. GSM was originally used as acronym for the group, *Groupe Spécial Mobile*, before its global adoption for Global System for Mobile communications.

The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) developed the GSM as a standard to describe protocols for second generation (2G) digital cellular networks used by mobile phones. The GSM standard was developed to replace first generation (1G) analog cellular networks, and originally described a digital, circuit-switched network optimized for full duplex voice telephony (Wikipedia, 2013).

GSM systems provide a number of useful features such as using encryption to make phone calls more secure, data networking, short message service (SMS) for text messages and paging, call forwarding, caller identification, call waiting, and multi-party conferencing (What does GSM mean in a cell phone? n.d.). Commercial service using the GSM system began in 1991 and the service has grown over the years accounting for over 80 per cent market share of the worldwide mobile communications industry. With an estimated three billion global people on the service, GSM is thus considered the undisputable global standard for mobile communications.

GSM in Nigeria

The Global System of Mobile Communications established its presence in Nigeria in 2001. At inception, the service was beyond the reach of the average Nigerian due to the high cost of acquiring a cell phone and even maintaining a telephone line. Increased competition in the sector has however reduced these costs, changing the situation for the better, with almost anyone being able to own and maintain a cell phone. Subscribers, telecommunication companies, and several other stakeholders, are mutually benefitting from the growth in the telecommunication sector. Kazon (n.d) noted that GSM has positively impacted on the lives of Nigerians enabling effective communication not only in cities, but also in the rural areas. Subscribers in the country are now able to use their mobile phones to make voice calls, send text messages and perform other high level services exploring the virtual world such as sending and receiving still and live messages, watching live events from any part of the world, among others. All these can now be done in a flash, and from anywhere with our mobile phones.

Telecommunication companies in the country are also smiling to the bank, thanks to the thriving sector. In 2012 alone, the industry regulator, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) estimated that consumers may have expended about N107 billion on

telephone calls (Adepetun, 2013). Available statistics on subscriber data from the NCC (2013) show that there are over 120 million (120,362,218) active telephone lines in the country as at June 2013. The distribution of these active lines among various categories of service providers are presented below.

Service providers Distribution (%)	Active lines as at June 2013	Percentage
GSM	117,412,363	97.5
CDMA	2,567,177	2.1
Fixed wired / wireless	382,678	0.3
Total	120,362,218	100

The GSM has 97.5 per cent subscriber share with 117,412,363, the Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) has 2.1 per cent share with its 2,567,177 active subscribers and fixed wired / wireless telephone lines subscribers accounted for 0.3 per cent with only 382,678 active subscribers. The extremely high percentage share of GSM subscribers among the active telephone lines in Nigeria makes it imperative to comfortably regard telephone use in the country simply as GSM use, as adopted in the study.

GSM use in news media

The introduction of GSM into the country has no doubt revolutionised media operations in the country. Gone are the days when newsmen 'must' physically interview every news source relevant to a story. The reporter can now get the views of every news source required in his story by simply making a phone call to each of them from wherever he may be. The possibility of accessing the internet through GSM phones and similar devices now makes it possible for reporters to do their job from any location without being physically present at the office. Etukudoh (2009) notes that Journalists have come to appreciate the immense contributions of GSM to their work of news gathering as telephone interviews and reporting have become commonplace, as well as video clips and photographs on the spot to support their news stories in the media.

Popoola (2011, p. 29) explains that the arrival of GSM has not only made reporting easy, but also a big relief to reporters who hitherto found it difficult to speak directly to news sources, especially the men at top in the society. In his words:

“With GSM, any news medium whose reporters claim “attempt to speak with ----- proved abortive should be treated with disdain. This is because unlike pre – GSM days, GSM has eliminated all the intermediaries between reporters and news sources in the process of newsgathering.”

He notes that despite the irrefutable ability of GSM to promote newsgathering with ease, it also bedevilled with some challenges which include: the ability of the news source to terminate conversation at any time; the inability of service providers to eliminate dubious charges associated with cut calls, and at times, the response from the handsets might be “out of reach” or “switched off” even when the person is actually within reach.

Sometimes, reporters' desperation to obtain reactions to a story under investigation is frustrated by “network busy”. There are also instances when calls will enter voice mail when actually the source did not put the cell phone on voice mail. Another problem associated with establishing calls is “invalid numbers”, which are not really so. GSM interview lacks non-verbal communication which could further help the reporter to interpret the response of the news sources to any questions; the call source could terminate conversation at any time. Alternatively, the call source may even refuse to pick

the calls once he sees the number calling, all these and several others could frustrate the reporter in question.

The reality of today is that the use of GSM has made the tasks of editors and reporters of most Nigerian leading Newspapers and Magazines easier. During the pre-GSM era, the major communication technology tool that was in use then was the Cellular Phone System. This was not popular among practising journalists because it could not operate outside the defunct Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) technology. In spite of the claim by Okonji (1996) of the operations department of NITEL that Nigeria was the first African country south of the Sahara to venture into cellular Mobile Telephony System, the fact remains that the technology was inappropriate and inadequate for newsgathering. Aside from the difficulties associated with operations of the mobile telephone system regarding quick contacts with sources, the impact of the system was also limited by its installed capacity which Okonji puts at 10,000 lines. At that time, the cellular phone system was perceived as an elitist product and could therefore not exert so much impact on newsgathering.

Specifically, Popoola (2011) enumerates the importance of GSM in the areas of newsgathering to include: breaking news of plane or auto crash, bomb explosion and death of eminent personalities, gathering weather forecast, traffic reports and stock exchange news; permit reporters to record a conversation and take key points, allows members of the public to participate in the news gathering process, among others. It has as well proved to be the fastest and cheapest means of conducting short interviews.

The adoption of mobile phones in news media communication process is not limited to media professionals alone. The proliferation of mobile phones in Nigeria has given the audience more control over media content, and has enhanced audience participation in mass media content. The increasing number of smart phone users in the country makes the possibilities endless. Most media organisations in the country now provide different platforms for their messages to reach the public and also allow them contribute to issues. These include the social networks like facebook, google plus, and twitter, electronic mail (e-mail), text messages, live calls, live streaming, customised mobile phone application, among others.

One of such platforms provided by media organisations in Nigeria for their audience is the “my news.com” page introduced by The Punch newspaper in its weekdays’ edition. The page was created for readers to send in text messages to a dedicated GSM number. The essence of the page was to create a platform for the newspaper’s audience to share their views and other newsworthy information with the general public. Over time, the newspapers’ audience have come to rely on the page as a platform to react to public issues, appeal to concerned parties, and express their grievances on a variety of life endeavours.

As a proof of the importance users accord the page, one contributor, in his message titled “Thanks, The PUNCH” was full of gratitude for the newspaper for publishing 60 different contributions from him during the one-year period he started contributing on the page (Sanni, 2013). Another contributor was grateful to the newspaper for facilitating the redemption of his prize from a leading noodle production company in the country during a sales promotion (Ucheoma, 2013). The study thus examines the mass media’s audience use of the GSM phone in contemporary mass communication process. It studies the usage of GSM text messaging among newspaper readers to generate feedback in The Punch newspaper, a popular newspaper in Nigeria, on key areas of life.

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine audience’s use of the mass media to contribute to national discourse using text messages published in The Punch’s “my news.com” page over a one-month period. The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What issue gained the most attention among Nigerian mass media audience?
2. What are the main purposes for audience's feedback in Nigeria's mass media?
3. Does a newspaper's location influence its audience base?

Based on this, the technological determinism and the agenda setting theories were adopted as theoretical framework for the study.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory posits that the extent of coverage the media gives to an issue influences the level of importance the public attach to such issue. The crux of the theory is that the media set the agenda for public discussion by focussing on certain issues and playing down others. It examines how news media reports on particular issues influence or shape public awareness and debate (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, cited in Franklin, Hamer, Kinsey, Hanna and Richardson, 2005, p. 46). Editors act as gatekeepers of mass mediated messages. They promote a media agenda by prioritising certain issues. They can provide sustained and prominent coverage to an issue while others are marginalised or ignored (Kayode and Adeniran, 2012).

Earlier propositions about the agenda setting theory suggested that while media do not tell us what to think, they may tell us how to think about it. This suggests that mass media has the potential to draw people's attention to certain issues, and allows for conclusions already raised in the public agenda. Griffin (2011) notes that the agenda setting theory reaffirms the power of the press, while still maintaining the individual's freedom to choose. The theory assumes that individual members of society reflect on such issues already raised, and then make personal submissions based on their subjective reasoning.

Technological Determinism Theory

The term 'technological determinism' was believed to have been coined by an American sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929). Proponents of the theory consider technology to be driving force of changes in society, and a fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organisation (Chandler, 1995). Croteau and Hoynes (2005) define technological determinism as an approach that identifies technology, or technological advances, as the central causal element in processes of social change. According to Burton (2010, p. 201), it represents "an argument that technology of itself shape society and can be a course of social change".

According to Baran and Davies (2006, p. 303) "a technological determinist is a person who believes that all societal political, economic and cultural change is inevitably based on the development and diffusion of technology". Citing McLuhan (1977), Baran and Davies note that our culture is moulded by how we are able to communicate. The basic idea behind the theory hence is that the changes in the way human communicate is what shape our existence. To understand this, there are a few basic assumptions to take note of:

1. Inventions in communication technology cause cultural change and affects the way we do things, our way of life
2. Changes in modes of communication shape human life.
3. As McLuhan put it "we shape our tools, and they in turn shape us."
4. Burton (2010) however argues that though any technology may have potential, it lacks intentionality. It has to be used and developed, as determined by media industries.

The study thus examines the impact of the agenda setting ability of the media on the audience. It sought to establish if the Nigerian audience rely on the media in determining what issue to focus their attention on, and also how they react to such issue. It aims to establish if the Nigerian media truly tell the audience what to think about, and also how the audience reacts to such issues already raised in the media. The technological determinism theory is therefore adopted for the study to examine the use of GSM technology in generating feedback from newspaper readers as represented by contributors on The Punch's *My news.com* page. It focuses on how the media have been able to utilise GSM phones as a veritable means of generating feedbacks from audiences.

Review of Related Studies

Ekström and Sekei (2011) examine audience interaction with a reality TV entrepreneurship competition in Tanzania named '*Ruka juu*', meaning jump up. Their study focused on the use of short message service (SMS) to *Ruka juu* as an evaluation of the use of mobile phones as a form of participatory communication tool for the media. Their findings show that the SMS - format does not allow for much discussion and that audience showed increased interest in the themes covered by the program. The researchers also discovered that relying on SMS engages certain group of audience in particular and that certain technical and economical obstacles impede the use of mobile phone messaging to engage the audience. They added that the cultural and social patterns, as well as habits need to be understood in order to improve audience's participation in such programme.

Ezeh (2012) conducted a study on public perception of GSM as communication tool for effective policing. He discovered that most Nigerians consider the GSM as an effective communication tool. They believe that the use of mobile phones has helped police to curb crime to some extent, though the rate at which police responds to distress call is still very low. Respondents thus urged the Nigerian Police Force to create an enabling environment for Nigerians to liaise with the police at any time through their mobile phones.

Etukudo (2009) in a survey on the uses and effects of GSM in Urban Lagos found that GSM use among residents of urban Lagos has gone beyond the traditional purpose of making and receiving calls and sending text messages. Findings from the study show that its use is being extended to advanced services such as multimedia messaging and exploration of the World Wide Web, thus making its effects in urban Lagos compelling. He notes that the introduction of cutting-edge technology by service providers has made for real-time communication among GSM users in the country adding that GSM service providers need to improve service quality to enable subscribers maximize its benefits. His analysis on the uses and effects of GSM among subscribers, though includes use of GSM for short message services, however ignores how the proliferation of mobile phones has enhanced the feedback process in the mass communication process in the country.

Laurantine (2011) examines the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICTS) such as GSM /mobile phones on news gathering, reporting and dissemination. He observes that ICTs such as the use GSM /mobile phones have positively impacted the news gathering process by significantly reducing the gap between news sources and news gatherers. Citing Muga (2006), he observes that telephone has shortened the time between the reporter and the source, reporter and editor, saving costs such as travel logistics, since everyone is only a phone call-away for any clarification. He observes that ICTs is enhancing the richness and timeliness of the news by empowering the news media to improve both the quality and quantity of information reported. He adds that news dissemination has been made easier as ICTs (eg GSM) have helped to bring communicators and receivers closer thereby making feedback swift. This, he notes, thus makes the communication process, participatory, useful and development focused, as it

centres on the audience. He added that ICTs also enhance wide spread electronic delivery of news.

Method of Study

The paper adopts the content analysis method for the study. The Punch, a national newspaper in Nigeria, was sampled and analysed for the study. The study covered all weekday editions of January, 2013 because the "My news.com page" is not produced for the newspaper's Sunday and Saturday editions. The page features eight to twelve messages and a photograph on the page in each edition. The study was limited to the messages, excluding the pictures featured on the page. In all, 23 editions of the Punch for January 2013 were analysed in the study resulting in a total of 235 text messages analysed in the study. A coding schedule was developed as the research instrument to measure three content categories analysed in the study. These included theme, purpose and dateline of each contributor.

Analysis

The first variable measured was the central theme of the text messages analysed in the study. Over 15 central themes were identified in the study. Messages relating to the dilapidated facilities at Police College, Ikeja, which gained prominence during the month under review were classified under infrastructure as against security since the focus of the issue was on the decaying infrastructure at the college and not the security implication. In general, most of the issues commented upon were current issues reported around the period. The results on the central themes of the text messages analysed in the study are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Central theme of messages

THEME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Governance	52	22.1%
Infrastructure	43	18.3%
Business / Economy	22	9.4%
Security	19	8.1%
Power	14	6.0%
Education	12	5.1%
Politics	11	4.7%
Pension	8	3.4%
Transport	8	3.4%
Judiciary	6	2.6%
Media	5	2.1%
Sport	5	2.1%
Agriculture	4	1.7%
Health	4	1.7%
Corruption	3	1.3%
Religion	3	1.3%
Tradition	3	1.3%
Others	13	5.5%
TOTAL	235	100.0%

The table above shows that most media audience were more interested in expressing their views on issues relating to governance, infrastructure and business / economy which collectively accounted for 50 per cent of the total messages analysed in the study. Text messages commenting on governance had the highest percentage of 22 per cent of the total text messages analysed in the study, while infrastructure and business / economy had over 18 per cent and nine per cent respectively. Issues relating to tradition, religion, corruption and others like environment, tourism were among the least issues commented upon.

The second variable measured in the study is purpose of the text messages analysed in the study. This was to determine the main reasons for audience's contributions to media contents. The identified purposes in the study are suggestion, criticism, complaint, rejoinder, request, commendation, information, reflection, among others. 'Criticism' and 'complaint', though similar, were purposely separated in the study. Messages in which contributors express their disapproval of actions of others such as government, public or private individuals were categorised as criticism. Messages in which contributors express grievances over the actions and activities of others, that directly affect them or their associates are categorised as complaint. Most of the messages categorised as complaint were written to complain about the ills contributors were directly or indirectly involved with. The findings of the study are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Main purpose of messages

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Suggestion	59	25.1%
Criticism	54	23.0%
Complaint	37	15.7%
Rejoinder	24	10.2%
Request	23	9.8%
Commendation	23	9.8%
Information	6	2.6%
Reflection	3	1.3%
Tribute	2	0.9%
Others	4	1.7%
TOTAL	235	100.0%

Table 2 above shows that most of the contributors were interested in offering suggestions, and also criticism and complaints on the issues raised in their text messages. About a quarter of the messages analysed in the study offered suggestions on the way forward for the issues addressed. Criticism and complaint collectively gulped about 40 per cent (38.7%) with each having 23 per cent and 15.7 each respectively. Others such as wish, warning, tribute, etc., were among the least expressed purposes in the text messages analysed in the study.

The last variable addressed in the study is the location of the contributors sending the text messages. This categorisation was done based on the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. To get a more manageable data, the states were further collapsed into the six geographical zones of the federation. The FCT was

grouped under the north-central zone since it is located within that region. The findings are presented in table 3 and table 4 below.

Table 3: Dateline of messages (By States)

REGION	STATE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	
South West:	Lagos	134	57.0%	
	Ogun	33	14.0%	
	Oyo	20	8.5%	
	Osun	6	2.6%	
	Ondo	5	2.1%	
	Ekiti	3	1.3%	
South East:	Abia	2	0.9%	
	Imo	1	0.4%	
	Anambra	0	0.0%	
	Ebonyi	0	0.0%	
	Enugu	0	0.0%	
	South South:	Rivers	2	0.9%
	Delta	1	0.4%	
	Edo	1	0.4%	
	Akwa-Ibom	0	0.0%	
	Bayelsa	0	0.0%	
	Cross River	0	0.0%	
North Central	Kwara	13	5.5%	
	Abuja	8	3.4%	
	Benue	1	0.4%	
	Niger	1	0.4%	
	Kogi	1	0.4%	
	Katsina	0	0.0%	
	Nassarawa	0	0.0%	
	Plateau	0	0.0%	
	North West	Jigawa	0	0.0%
		Kaduna	0	0.0%
Kano		0	0.0%	
Kebbi		0	0.0%	
Sokoto		0	0.0%	
Zamfara		0	0.0%	
North East		Adamawa	0	0.0%
	Bauchi	0	0.0%	
	Borno	0	0.0%	
	Gombe	0	0.0%	
	Taraba	0	0.0%	
	Yobe	0	0.0%	
Foreign		3	1.3%	
Total		235	100.0%	

Table 3 above shows the location of each contributor of the text messages analysed in the study. The table shows that majority of the text messages published by The Punch

Newspaper during the month under review emanated from Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states with the three states collectively accounting for almost 80 per cent (79.5%) of the total messages analysed in the study. There were no text messages from 21 different states during the month under review. Three text messages were received from foreign locations accounting for more than one per cent (1.3%) of the total study.

Table 4: Dateline of messages (By Zones)

REGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
South West:	201	85.5%
South East:	3	1.3%
South South:	4	1.7%
North Central	24	10.2%
North West	0	0.0%
North East	0	0.0%
Foreign	3	1.3%
Total	235	100.0%

Table 4 above shows the dateline distribution by the six geographical zones in the country. As expected, based on data presented in table 3, the south-west geo-political zone had the most percentage with over 85 per cent of the messages studied. The north-central accounted for over 10 per cent while two other regions, south-east and south-south, had less than two per cent each. The north-west and the north-east had zero percentage with no story published from both zones.

Discussion

1. What issue(s) gained the most attention among Nigerian mass media audience?

Findings of the study show that issues relating to governance gained the most attention among the newspaper audience with over 22 per cent of the total text messages analysed in the study. This may be attributed to the extreme coverage of the issue by the media. It is common for most broadcast stations to begin their news bulletin with activities of government or its functionaries. Similarly most newspaper still devotes their front page stories to government at various levels.

Adeniran (2008) in an analysis of the editorial page contents of The PUNCH Newspaper found that the newspaper focused mostly on issues of governance, security and economy in its editorials while neglecting others such as education, health, power, and conflict.

The high feedback rate on issues relating to governance can therefore be attributed to the extensive coverage of issues on governance which, in most cases raises such issues to the level of public discourse. This thus proves the agenda-setting function of the media. It shows that media audience are more interested in discussing issues prioritised in the media. Governance featured prominently among audience's feedbacks in this study due to the fact that the issue has been raised to the level of public discourse because the media attached much importance to it.

2. *What are the main purposes for audience's feedback in Nigeria's mass media?*

Our second research question examines the main purposes of audience's feedback in the media as sent through GSM text messages. Our findings show that the main reason for audience's contribution in the media is to offer suggestions or criticise certain things they disagree with on the issues they comment on. They also use the platform to complain about injustices they were victim of; send rejoinder to earlier reports and also make request and commendation to appropriate quarters.

All these were made possible with GSM text messages. The Punch newspaper effectively employs the potential of GSM technology to encourage more of its readers to provide feedback. Similarly, the audience also harnessed the opportunity provided by the availability of GSM technology to express their views and contribute to issues of public discourse; thus confirming the use of new media technologies in enhancing the mass communication process. GSM technology is thus being used as a driving force for change in providing feedback for the mass media. This is because most media organisations now rely on opportunities provided by the new media of communication such as e-mail, social media, electronic text message, electronic opinion poll, etc, to get feedback from their audience. Interestingly, most of these emerging means of expressing feedback in the media can easily be done by smart phones now popular among GSM subscribers in the country.

3. *Does a newspaper's location influence its audience base?*

Our last research question examines if the location of a newspaper influences its audience base. This was determined in the study by finding out the part of the country where The Punch newspaper has the most active audience as evidence in the region or state where readers provided feedback the most; and then comparing this to the geographical location of the newspaper. Findings of the study show that the newspaper has the most active audience in the south-west region of the country which accounted for over 85 per cent of the text messages analysed in the study. Lagos State particularly accounted for more than half (57%) of the feedback analysed in the study. This shows that the Punch newspaper is very popular in south-west Nigeria, and Lagos State in particular. This finding can then be extended to imply that the Punch newspaper has a large percentage of its audience located in the south-west region of the country, where the newspaper is also situated, thus proving that a newspaper's location influences its audience base.

The Punch newspaper is strategically located in the south-west region of the country precisely in the outskirts of Lagos on the Lagos-Ibadan express way. Even though the location is geographically located in Ogun State, the area is still considered part of Lagos due to its proximity to the nation's 'financial capital'. Majority of the residents in the area regularly commute to Lagos where they work. Ayodele (2013), a resident of the area who also works in Lagos, notes that the area is now popularly called "Second Lagos" due to the level of 'estate' development going on along the Lagos-Ibadan express way, up to Sagamu intersection.

It should however be noted that this does not necessarily qualify the paper as an 'Ngbati press' mainly for the Yorubas since most of the contributors for the *my news.com* page analysed in the study cut across different ethnic groups (considering their names) though they made their contributions from Lagos State, and the rest of the south-west region. The south-west region is crucial in Nigeria's media landscape making some to posit that the Nigerian press is in reality the Lagos-Ibadan press (Okonkwo, n.d.). This, according to Okonkwo, is due to the proliferation of newspaper and magazine titles, with supporting television and radio stations within the Lagos-Ibadan axis of the country. The perception of Nigeria by these media organisations is what the world has consistently seen and considered reality. Findings from the study reiterate the position of the south-

west region in the country's media landscape as it proves that audiences in the region are also the most active across the federation.

Conclusion

The study examines the themes, purpose and dateline of audience feedback in Nigerian media provided through the means of GSM text messaging. The study shows that audience are more interested in reacting to issues on governance, and that they mostly offer suggestions, and also criticise and complain about issues bothering them in their feedback to the mass media. All these were made possible due to the opportunities inherent in GSM technology which was harnessed by The Punch newspaper.

The GSM has no doubt revolutionised feedback process in mass communication. It has enabled members of the public react to public issue from any part of the world. It has significantly reduced the delay in audience feedback peculiar to the print media. This is because it has made it possible for audience's feedback to be published in less than a day as text message received during an evening period can easily be published in the newspaper's morning edition. This is made possible with the availability of new technology like the GSM which consumers can readily use to communicate their ideas, particularly in short and concise language and such messages can easily be processed for publication without the hassle of retyping peculiar to the old means of generating feedback by post. It also made it possible for the media to publish more feedback from their audience as exemplified by the Punch newspaper devoting a page to reader's text messages every weekday.

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