

Assessing Media and Security Agencies Relationship in Governance of Niger Delta, Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This work is an assessment of the relationship between media and security agencies in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. The objectives were to assess reasons for frequent clashes between media and security agencies against press freedom while also suggesting measures of reducing face-offs.

Research methodology: The research was a thorough opinion survey of 19,215,351 persons through a sample size of 400 persons in four states of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The states taken were Akwa Ibom, Delta, Cross River, and Rivers states. 400 questionnaires were distributed to residents for answers on the variables of the research. The social responsibility and media authoritarian theories were adopted in a theoretical framework.

Results: The collated data from 375 persons representing 94 % against 25 persons or 6%, shows that the clash between media and the security agencies was very regular as security agencies noticeably enforce fear and intimidation at events.

Limitations: The study was limited to only four states of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Cross River, and Rivers states out of nine states that make up the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Contribution: The media and the security agencies should maintain practitioners' regular training to keep abreast of democratic human rights and ethics in the discharge of duties. The present study will also theoretically contribute to the academic and theoretical richness as well as promote the culture and literature of social responsibility in the field of communication, governance, social civic service, and especially in the field of media literacy. It has effective significance and requisites.

Keywords: *Agencies, Ethics, Media, Rights, Security*

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1. Introduction

The central work of communicating activities of individuals and institutions to the public is the work of professional journalists. The gathering, processing, and disseminating of information about all things, fall under the social service of journalism. Alum (2014) states "information gathering (journalism) is the act of conveying, relaying messages to the audience, an activity of researching news items for broadcast or publication, commonly done by journalists/reporters" (p.77). Across enclaves, communities, countries, and nations there is nothing under the Sun, from natural environmental changes, protests, demonstrations, human political actions, and reactions to institutional activities that journalists do not have interest and curiosity in reporting. Newspapers and broadcast reporters collect and analyze facts about people, places, and events through interviews, investigations, or observations. Journalists write stories describing events, backgrounds, meanings, and effects. They are assigned coverage of disasters, crimes, and human interests. They take notes or sometimes use tape recorders to obtain the actualities of sound. They check materials from books,

news files, and public records of criminal and civil court files for pertinent facts. Basically, reporters are to inform the public about events objectively, and accurately and explain the importance or implications. Based on the environment of the job, the work of reporting is grouped under event reporting, interpretative reporting, and investigative reporting. Other subgroups of reporting can also be political reporting, economic reporting, social reporting, legislative reporting, investments reporting, development reporting, crime reporting, judiciary reporting, science and technology reporting, or sports. Specifically, Harrower (2007) points out that in modern-day journalism there is no reporter who can report on all areas of interest. Each reporter has his or her area of specialization to cover regularly and become an expert on issues concerning the beat.

One of the many institutions in which journalists also carry out the service of taking information to the general public are the security institutions by general interest reporters or regularly assigned security beat reporters. Okon (2013) explains that the security beat is indeed in very difficult terrains that require tenacity, resourcefulness, and tact. Therefore, the covering of the beat goes beyond the rule of thumb of journalism and embraces an interdisciplinary appreciation. Okon adds that contemporary security events, that border on global significance, have lent importance to national security reporting bearing in mind the threat to security, political stability, terrorism, nuclear arms proliferation, and arms control. It is also important to note that in order to report effectively on national security; reporters need to be equipped with the expertise and background understanding of critical security issues.

In Nigeria, the service of information dissemination about security agencies by journalists is usually undertaken through newspapers, television, and social media reports either as stories, feature articles or editorial commentaries. The service of journalists is not unappreciated by several persons and institutions. There is no blanket appreciation of the media without criticisms even from persons and institutions which journalists aimed at projecting activities to the public. Himelboim and Limor (2010) confirm that journalists and media organizations are habitually disapproved by politicians, the public, and media scholars for not achieving responsibilities to society. The reason stems from the premise that journalists do not only report the positive sides of organizations but also go to the high extent of exposing the negatives of institutions. In the double-sided perspectives of reporting institutions by journalists, the security agencies have not been spared all sides of positive and negative reports. There is no institution including the security agencies that can just take or accept the prying of journalists to report negatives without reactions. It is either the institutions complain that the media houses have reported out of context or have outrightly churned out falsehoods. The overall aspects of reporting institutions such as security agencies are not without barricades that range from lockouts, threats, beatings, intimidations, arrests, and detentions of journalists. In the struggle of scaling over the multifarious fences of the security agencies to get information, it is hard to conclude that the reports of media houses can completely be without bias and half-truths. Consequently, the media can be right and wrong while the positions of institutions under media searchlights can be equally right and wrong. The media dissemination of information is not a blanket password to insinuating or invading classified interests. The provision of security cannot be implemented on a platform of causing fear and harm to the media. There are media ethics and there are rights of the security agencies in the discharging of social responsibilities. This work is therefore aimed at making it to be understood perspectives that media institutions' basic ethics and rights in working with the security agencies, particularly in the discharge of responsibilities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Undisputedly, the media and the security agencies are inseparable in the umbilical cord to the emergence of Nigeria as a country. The media have earned the credit for spearheading the agitation for the independence of Nigeria from the clutches of the British colonial masters. Although without stints of blames for the invasion of privacies and breaches of security rules and protocols, the media has applauses of making contributions to the growth of civil governance by punctuating military rule for the consolidation of democracy in the country. The security agencies have primarily received accolades for averting the disintegration of Nigeria from a - 30-month civil war. On the other side, Nigeria's history is not without recounting trails of security afflictions against civilians, from the civil war in 1969 to the raid of Odi village in the Niger Delta region in 1999. The security agencies'

conduct in similar situations has caused a long history of distrust in the interface with the Nigerian civil public including the media. Between 2020 and 2021, civilian and armed personnel clashes claimed about 7,691 persons including journalists across Nigerian states.

Specifically, a Nigerian army officer, on January 8, 2013, beat up the Nigerian Tribune reporter attached to the Oyo state Government House, Nigeria for attempting to take shots of soldiers engaged in suspected illegal duties. This similar action was repeated on September 6, 2016, by the *Vanguard* newspaper reporter at Ugehelli, Delta state, where the reporter was banished by the commanding officer of the Nigerian Army from covering activities of soldiers in a brawl with some community persons. Related to these, on January 6, 2019, a group of soldiers raided the *Daily Trust* newspaper's offices in Maiduguri and Abuja, arrested journalists, and carted away several computer sets. It was not the last of such raids and confiscations of media personnel and property by the Army. On July, 6 2021. The Correspondent of *Correct FM radio* was beaten to a coma by military officers at Government House, Calabar sent to report about protests on unpaid pensions by teachers. In each of these instances, the Human Rights Watch [HRW] has often swiftly condemned the actions of the army and described such raids as disturbing and chilling attempts at stifling media freedom. The HRW insisted that the Nigerian military need not takes further actions to intimidate or harass journalists anywhere in the country.

However, the security agencies habitually do react that soldiers only routine invitations to journalists about cloudy articles and reports that appear to divulge classified information on national security. In addition, the security agencies do analyze that media reports frustrate plans to quell attacks at the supposed base of insurgent militant groups in communities of the Niger Delta states. More so, the army also does maintain that through media reports, insurgent and militant groups are usually put on alert to repel arrests and attacks. Concerned by the misgivings from the security agencies, the Correspondents Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) arranged and undertook a courtesy visit, as well as tour to the 2 Brigade of the Nigerian Army in Akwa Ibom State dialogue and seal, assumed gaps of poor working relationship with the security agencies.

In an ideal democratic environment, the major tenets of public institutions like the media and the army rest on the exhibiting of civility in actions aimed at responsible service to society. The duty of protecting security porous communities of the Niger Delta region is an essential service in as much as the reports of the media for information to the members of the public. Considering that the media and the security agencies operate under the democratic government, it becomes ideal raising statements for answers to fill the gaps by assessing the relationship between the media and the security agencies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In light of the above, this work is set to address the following problems:

1. What is the frequency that media and security agencies clash in the course of duties for sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
2. Why is it that the media and the security agencies are at loggerheads in their practice of sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria?
3. What measures can be adopted to check media and security agencies' interference in the provision of social service for sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the frequency of clashes between the media and the security agencies in the course of duties for sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
2. To investigate the major causes of friction between the media and the security agencies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria
3. To suggest measures that may help in reducing cases of friction between the media and the security agencies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study has empirical, theoretical, and academic significance.

1. Empirically: The result of this work will enable the population of media staff and security personnel in Nigeria to come to terms with the reason for collaboration for sustainable democracy.
2. Theoretically: This work is significant because it will add to the series of literature based on media and security agencies' relationship for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.
3. Academically: The outcome of the study will be a contribution to the existing literature in the area of communication and conflict resolution between media practitioners and security agencies globally.

2. Literature review

2.1 *The Concept of Media*

Media are channels of communication networks for broadcasting and narrowcasting news, entertainment, education, and other various information among people. It provides knowledge and makes society aware of various legal, political, social, economic, and educational activities happening around the world. Laughey (2007) defines media as technologies that spread messages to the masses in different parts of a region, country, and world. As the media landscape becomes complex day in and day out, there are classifications of indigenous and traditional, mainstream, alternative and social media. The traditional media of communication is the form or means people in rural settings use in passing across the information. The traditional media include the town crier, oral tradition, talking drum, smoke signals, ivory horn, long brass, the open market, music/lyrics, festivals, and drama amongst others. The mainstream media incorporates all the means of communication that existed before the internet particularly books, magazines, newspapers, bulletins flyers, and in electronic television, radio, film, and music. The alternative media are combinations of the indigenous and the traditional means of communication.

In the position of Cote (2022), New media is any media articles music, and podcasts that are delivered digitally from websites or email to mobile phones and streaming apps. Simply, new or social media include all forms of communication in the digital world. They are more instant, free, interactive, and flexible and can reach a large number of people. The term new media often relates to digital media internet sites of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and LinkedIn.

It has the advantage of immediate dispersal of news, a variety of different perceptions of events, and the ability to communicate with people all over the globe. It has brought a revolutionary change in journalism. The trend has fastened entry to journalism by unprofessional. The capacity to publish to the public is shifted to anyone's access to the internet. Hence, Ward (2020) stresses that professional journalist domination of the media sphere is threatened, by the sharing of space with tweeters, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users around the world.

2.2 *Media Ethics*

In a submission, Black and Roberts (2011) state that ethics come from the Greek word “ethos” meanings character or what has to do with good character. The major issue is that ethics are very important in the construction, and organization, of moral values and codes of human conduct in society. In the media, ethics serve to deliver the critical agenda of giving an unbiased opportunity to persons or institutions rather than taking news from the perspective of being conservative. In the security service, ethics are guides to conscientious dealing with others.

Ethics support individuals to understand certain fundamental principles of logic and morals for a peaceful life in a society devoid of framed cultures and beliefs. Head (2006) sums up that ethics provide the fundamental principles or beliefs by which persons distinguish, consciously, unconsciously, or by instinct, between morally acceptable and morally unacceptable behavior.

Media ethics also known as journalism or communication ethics help people and institutions to grow to determine the direction of the practice. In media practice, Drozdek (2015) states that ethics is a branch of principles that addresses moral issues arising in connection with the acquisition, preparation, storage, presentation, dissemination, and reception of information through the means of mass media.

Media ethics is the subdivision of real-world actions and moral consideration in the coverage of public, private, and professional sectors of health, law, technology, and leadership of institutions. Media ethics emphasize the value of being reliable and appreciated by parties in the communication process. Media ethics abhor the domination of a party over another by the subjectivity of contents and untruthfulness in reporting. Media ethics assist in finding vent for points of view by clarifying the goals and values of society. This requires ethical journalism of the free exchange of accurate, fair, and thorough information. An ethical journalist has the task to act with integrity by seeking the truth, identifying and keeping the confidentiality of sources, and reporting stories clearly. White (2011) maintains that journalists are to put on ethical choices and processes to inspire civil dialogue with the public while abiding by the high standards expected of reporting.

The challenge is that the whole ethics of journalism are mere statements of abiding principles. It is not a set of rules, but rather a guide that encourages all journalists to take responsibility for the information they provide, regardless of medium. In most media institutions, there exists no compendium or encyclopedia of ethics of practice. This is because ethics cannot be quantified. It is just abstract. What is good for one media house may not be so good for another media house.

In addition, the dynamic development in media information technology generates hurdles against the control of standards in the ethical practice of journalism. The emerging Internet of Things (IoT) has not extensively reached everywhere. Martin and Leurent (2017) state that 85% of public institutions including media houses remain unconnected and several barriers hook governments and companies against adoption in countries. In addition, political issues, instability, and variations in laws from time to time cause undue priority to partisan interest for the unsafe environment to media ethics. The media have also become a source of confusion by selling out conscience to the highest political bidders for airtime and space. News content becomes centrally wheeled by the sentiments of media owners and the government. The challenge is that the owners articulate rules for dealing with assumed enemies and leave the media liable for wrongs against the ethics of accuracy, verification, and transparency. More so, sentiments, poverty, and favoritism towards organizations, political groups, ideologies, or other agendas create challenges for media ethics. Since the Nigerian media is part and parcel of the society it mirrors, the resentments and hatred against government institutions are often reflected in media presentations. It is therefore not a surprise that most media personnel infused personal, tribal, and regional bitterness to affect reportage of service by the security to cause frequent invasion of media premises, journalists' privacies, censorship, and undue trials of the media.

2.3 Security Obligations

Ogunnaike (2021) agrees that security training and retraining of officers are part of strategies to combat insecurity, enrich professionalism, and improve leadership, traits, organizational ability, initiative, esprit-de-corps, inter-formations, and unit relationships. Primarily, Wood (2005) states that a soldier is expected to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution, fulfill obligations; respect people; offer selfless service and welfare, honor values; exhibit Integrity; be legally and morally bound; have personal courage above fear, danger, or adversity.

In relating with civilians, the security agencies through the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) achieve tasks using publications, production of documentaries, media relations, and radio and television broadcasts. Gercken (2007) states that the job of the public affairs director is to communicate the roles, missions, and stories within to audiences both internally and externally. In getting the right public affairs responsibilities, the security agencies communicate with outsiders through media outlets and outreaches by answering media inquiries, providing press releases, conducting press conferences, seminars, symposiums, interviews, and tours as well as through established media planning and strategic communications plans. This is not without setbacks. Thus, Odo (2001) mentions that the regimental system of administration in the security service, which is not trendy amongst civilians does not let the Public Relations units function in the public interest practically. These undermine missions; worsen the public security situations and paints a lack of security professionals. Thus security personnel is often accused of intimidation and coercion of civilians, corruption and extortion, and subjection of civilians to psychological and emotional abuse.

This causes power incompatibility, unhealthy relationships, and a vicious cycle in which each side accuses the other of unfair practices.

2.4 Empirical Review of Studies

Caparini (2004) in a study 'Media in security and governance: The role of the news media in security' asked: What role can the media play in the governance of the security sector? What obstacles hinder the media's ability to provide effective oversight of security institutions? The study from the Bonn International Center for Conversion and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces examined the role of the media in governance and oversight of the security sector. He argued that the media have a vital role to play in monitoring security institutions and helping citizens make informed decisions regarding the security sector.

Accordingly, the author came with findings that journalists encounter numerous obstacles and challenges in reporting on the security sector and performing their watchdog function. Governments restrict access to information or seek to co-opt journalists, while the media risk internalizing official perspectives on perceived threats to national security. Reliance on privileged official statements and lack of expertise on security issues can undermine the media's ability to act as a watchdog. He recommended that journalists play an effective role in overseeing the security sector but a degree of distance from the government for protection from intimidation and threats.

Dairo (2017) in a study "The connection between national security and communication" stated that the concept of national security is all-encompassing and permeates all regions of national life. It is not limited to duties of the military and prowess in territorial protection. As the foundation of human principles, communication plays a giant role in the security of each nation. This paper analyzed the interdependence that exists between national security and communication from the Nigerian standpoint as both factors influence each other. Communication inside a nation can loom over the security of a nation, just as much as issues of national security can influence the facts that pervade many institutions in the public together with the media. The systems theory was the theoretical basis for this work emphasizing the nation as a complete system reliant on associated elements of national security and communication. National stakeholders have to know and walk around the link between the concepts as a way for actual decision-making, peace, and security within a nation. The gap between the two research works rests on the premise that each focused on national issues affecting security agencies and the media while the work under study rests on regional aspects of the media and security relationship. However, the central issues still border on the democratic governance of the affected places.

Exploring other related work, Vesali, Sadat, Afkhami, and Kia (2022) in "managing uncertainties for the effective social network: Strategic analysis of media literacy with Scenario Planning Method" to identify future scenarios in the field of media literacy and explore alternative futures in this field in Iran. The method of this research was scenario planning or scenario design with an exploratory futuristic approach. Using this method, the authors in several steps explore the factors affecting the future of media literacy, explored future uncertainties, create the logic of scenarios and described the narrative of scenarios and strategically analyze opportunities and threats. The use of 30 factors affecting the future scenarios of media literacy in four novels of *Paradise Lost*, *Titanic*, *Leviathan*, and *The Dark Knight*, each though with limitations derived from the matrix analysis of opportunities and threats and their interaction made theoretical contributions to the academic richness as well as promote the culture and literature of futurism in the field of communication and the field of media literacy. It has operational importance and necessity.

Similarly, Anayochukwu, Ani, and Nsah (2022) in an "assessment of Local Government Autonomy and Governance: A Case Study in Nigeria" critically examined opportunities and problems confronting the Nigerian local government system. It was principally, to assess why the practice of complete local government autonomy and governance is difficult in Nigeria and suggest measures that may help improve the collaboration between the federal, state, and local government authorities in Nigeria. Using a research methodology of the survey, 300 questionnaires were administered to the

staff of the Nkanu-West Local Government Area in Enugu State and 276 were returned giving a response rate of 92 percent. The Marxist theory was adopted as the theoretical framework which shows results that state interference in local affairs contributes to a lack of local government autonomy and governance, and the constitutional provisions portend intractable intergovernmental problems which make the local government a whipping child and less autonomous. Though it was limited to Nkanu-West local government only, the outcome of the study contributed to the existing literature in the area of local government autonomy and governance.

Relatedly, Mwesigwa (2021) took research on “Public service delivery in Uganda: A reconsideration of grand corruption” reviewed intends to ascertain and analyze available literature on the degree of corruption in Ugandan public organizations and how they can be enhanced to get rid of corruption. In a focused mapping review and synthesis, literature themes were approached. The review exposed the potential influence of both predisposing factors and precipitating factors in terms of socio-economic and political dimensions. Nonetheless, Public organizations in Uganda can be enhanced to get rid of corruption by enforcing a robust blend of all three clusters of instruments of accountability; internal, legal, and external. Since the study was largely based on Uganda, its outcomes may not be generalized to other African countries. In contributions, this explanatory review underscored the apathy of government machinery to rid public organizations of corruption.

Additionally, Mwesigwa, Bogere, and Ogwal (2022) carried out research on “Local citizen participation in Uganda: Examining the political, administrative and financial aspects in Hoima district” It was to ascertain the impact of political, administrative and financial factors on local participants in Hoima district, Uganda. A descriptive study was used in which primary data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were identified and clustered into thematic areas which suggest that financial and political challenges are key impediments to effective participation and a good number of the technical personnel were not appointed on the basis of technical know-how. Hoima district needed to intensify its advocacy regarding increased central government transfers as well as the disbursements of more unconditional grants coupled with regular monitoring of its technical personnel. It had limitations in the geographical scope since this study covered only one district, implying that the results cannot be generalized to the whole country. In contributions, the results are essential to academics in both Public Administration and Policy studies interested in enhancing local democracy and citizen-based governance.

More so, Khan (2021) in “Political state and the dilemma of dignity, equality and freedom Evidence from a sovereign state discussed the idea of political redefinition and its connection to dignity, freedom, and equality in a sovereign state. This article concluded by briefly touching on some serious issues about sovereign communities that arise as a result of the fundamental dignity, freedom, and equality ideals of the sovereign state. The author conducted theoretical research in a qualitative format using conceptual analysis as well as critical and rational argumentation. A deductive approach was used in reaching a prior opinion. The results showed that the sovereign state itself became the judge and restricted human dignity, equality, and the freedom to contract by forcing citizens to make transfers they did not consent to and prohibiting certain private transactions on the sole pretext. In limitations, there are shortcomings in theoretical research, as the author used a deductive approach to conclude but made a contribution that conceptualizes the proponents of a sovereign state to be drawn into the dilemma of dignity, freedom, and equality.

Chirozva and Damba (2021) in “The law of treaties in Africa: Exploring the Southern African development community mutual defense pact explored the structural and fundamental discussions connected with the law of treaties with a detailed orientation toward the Southern African Development Community Mutual Defence Pact (SADC MDP) of 2003 and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969. The study was informed by the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* and employed a desktop research approach in a systematic review of a number of secondary sources on the law of treaties.

The results established that the SADC MDP drafters were cognizant of the principles of international law and the treaties in framing the sub-regional legal instrument. Some articles within the SADC MDP are ignorant of the political realities of the international system. The limitation was the realism school of thought used as the tool of analysis to unravel the SADC MDP from a political perspective. This study made contributions in sojourning to educate policymakers and implementers of laws and policies in the 21st century.

In another study, Tarasari and Nasywa (2021) on “Alternative settlement of the dispute between Israel and Palestine did research to find an alternative dispute resolution between Israel and Palestine so that human rights are not being deprived anymore. The approach in this study was carried out in deepening research by reading literature related to the problem that became the topic, namely the dispute between Palestine and Israel. The results obtained from this study are that the dispute between Israel and Palestine was still experiencing obstacles in the implementation of resolution so there can be a need for follow-up from the UN security council and the UN general assembly for the dispute to be resolved immediately. This research had limitations since it did not explain how the implementation of the solution can be given. The contribution is that it analyzed ways to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine. There are connections between each of these review studies since they are not far away from issues of human relations, politics, governance, and democracy which this present work has the direction to achieve through the generalization of results.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The frameworks that were selected after reviewing the literature of the research as the basis for assessing media and security agencies' relationship for sustainable democracy in the Nigeria Delta region of Nigeria were the Social Responsibility theory and the authoritarian theory. The Social Responsibility theory takes its origin from the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press, set up in the United States of America in 1942 and turned its report in 1947 (Blevins, 1997). The standpoint of Social Responsibility theory is drawn from the libertarian idea that the media have the obligation to inspire the absence of conflicts through discussions and to support the public opinion, consumer action, private rights, and important social interests. This theory has its major premise that media freedom carries related obligations to the public. The authoritarian theory is a normative theory advocating the complete domination of media by the government. Siebert, Peterson, Peterson, and Schramm (1956), state that the authoritarian theory of the media has been most pervasive both historically and geographically. It is the theory that was almost automatically adopted by most countries when society and technology became sufficiently developed to produce what today we call the “mass media” of communication. It furnishes the basis for the press systems in many modern societies; even where it has been abandoned, it has continued to influence the practices of a number of governments. Authoritarian theory places all forms of communication under the control of governing elites or authorities by undermining the intellect of the average person or group. Criticism of ruling elites is not tolerated. Many steps are usually taken to curb the freedom of the press by licensing, censorship, approval of content prior to publication, and other illegal punishments for erring journalists.

Contrarily, Oluwasola (2020) states that since digital communication is changing media practice, the relationship between individuals, media, government, and society, the philosophical assumptions of some normative media theories and the media effects theories require reexamination as new models are needed given the current realities. These theories are relevant to this study since media must express the views of varied groups devoid of bias against citizens and institutions. Media must work out things that are useful to society. They should not write about things that are vague or opposing as those messages might cause conflict in society. The application of the authoritarian theory is to show governmental strict encouragement of hierarchical superiority and reliance on dictatorial threats and punishments to those who do not follow censorship rules or do not respect authorities.

3.2 Research approach

Ideally, this type of study can alternatively be carried out through interviews and group discussion methods. But the method of research adopted for this study was the use of survey methods. The survey research method suits this research because surveys allowed the collection of views and ideas, and the assessment of attitudes on the relationship of media practitioners and security agents while also providing an avenue of getting suggestions on measures of combating soar reactions of a population or group. The population of four states in the Niger Delta region indicates that Delta state has a population of 5,663,400, Cross River, 3,866,300, Rivers 3,187,684 and Akwa Ibom 6,497,967 amounting to 19,215,351 persons to form the population for the study (knoema, 2022). The sample size of the study was taken from Ryan (2013) in Slovin's sampling formula, given as $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size and e is the margin of error. Using the formula, the population of 19,215,351, the sample size was 399.77 corrected to 400. The study setting is Akwa Ibom state, Cross River State, Rivers state, and Delta state. The basis of choice was due to the sharing of boundaries with each of the states and each has at least more than one security barracks located in the state. The entire security agencies have regular security operations drafted often to suppress acts of uprising, protests, and demonstrations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The instrument of data collection adopted was a structured questionnaire with 20 close-ended questions relating to the objectives of the study. The research instrument was administered by one trained person in each of the four states. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were produced and divided proportionally for the four states. Based on a proportionate calculation of population, Delta state had 118 copies, Cross River state had 80 copies, Rivers state had 67 copies and Akwa Ibom state had 135 copies to correspond with the 400 copies of the questionnaire. These questionnaires were distributed judgmentally at the Government House gates of the respective states on separate days in the months of June and July. Serial numbers were assigned to each copy for easy identification of any instrument with problems. The analysis of data was computed from 400 copies of the questionnaire collected and computed in terms of the higher and lower numbers to ascertain the totals. The totals are subsequently computed in terms of simple percentage analysis.

4. Result and Discussion

The data generated from the questionnaires with respect to assessing the relationship of media and security agencies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria for sustainable democracy were summarized and analyzed as presented in the tables below.

Table 1. What is the public rating of the frequency of clashes between the media and the security agencies in the Niger Delta region?

Frequency of clash	Responses	%
Very Often	375	94%
Often	17	4
Not Often	8	2
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 shows data collection in respect of the frequency of clashes between the media and the security agencies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, reflecting 375 or 94% responses on very often or very regular clashes against 25 on an often and not often basis. The implication is that the media and the security agencies are not friendly in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Table 2. What has been the outstanding cause of media and security agency clashes in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Causes of Clash	Responses	%
Fanaticism	356	89
National Interest	26	7
Ethnic/Tribal Interest	18	4
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 2 shows that out of 400 respondents, 356 or 89 % of persons indicated that fanaticism by the media and the security agencies form the root causes of clashes against other causes of personal bias or ethnic sentiments. The implication is that both the media and the security agencies exhibit overzealousness in the discharge of responsibilities

Table 3. What is the public solution to frequent media and security agency clashes in the Niger Delta region?

Solutions to Clash	Responses	%
Professionalism	345	86
High Pay package	35	9
Show of "Might"	20	5
Total	400	100

Source: Filed Survey (2022)

Table 3 has data showing the solutions professed by the respondents on solutions to frequent military clashes in the Niger Delta states. Professionalism attracted 345 or 86 % against other solutions at 55 or 14%. The implication is that both the media and the army require training to meet public expectations.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Frequency of media and security clash

The opinion of 375 persons representing 94 % against 25 persons or 6% says that the security agencies ranging from the Army, police, and air force personnel have the blame over clashes with the media by frequent enforcement of fear and intimidation at events. The situation is that from the views of the public members, the security personnel rightly worry that journalists publish anything to get pages, pictures, and clicks, regardless of whether it breaches security, undermines public support for security missions or even causes casualties. The implication is that the desire for the freedom of the press comes under suppression and is undermined. This has largely affected the contents of media institutions in reporting issues about sustainable democracy where fundamental rights of people and communities appear to have been impeded by the activities of security agencies.

4.2.2 Causes of media/security clash

In analysis, the viewpoints of 356 persons representing 89% against 44 persons or 11% reflect that the media have been over fanatical in reporting the military institutions. This is agreeable that the media no longer just report an event as they seem to have happened. There are very many interests that act against the contents of what reporters turn out to the readers and viewers. There is the curiosity to file the story. There is the pressure of poor pay, ethnicity, and tribal national interest. Oftentimes, the media tend to act as the judge, jury, and executioner, investigating every disturbance through the superficial prism of law, impatience, intruding, and creating a nuisance for the security agencies all in an attempt to get or seek exclusive stories.

4.2.3 Measures to contain media/security clash

The variables advanced for the public to tick the choice are professionalism of the media and the army, high pay package, and show of might. Professionalism has to do with appropriate training of the

media and security agencies to carefully know their rights. A high pay package simply relates to appropriate remunerations while the show of might is about maintaining a stand on insistence to report and get dammed or exhibiting authority no matter the situation. The finding has it that 345 or 86 % of respondents accept professionalism covering effective training to reduce clashes. This is against recommendations of a high pay package and show of authority at 55 or 14%. This is ideal since over the years too many reporters in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria are not abreast with issues of boundaries between their work and that of the security agencies. Many reporters lack formal education, training, and experience in tactics, strategy, foreign affairs, and grand security strategy in line with the culture and society of nations where troops are present. The implication is that reporters could hardly separate social responsibility and censorship. They focus attention on breaking the news to break the society rather than writing stories of educating the public on roles and obligations for sustainable democracy in Nigeria. In as much as the media practitioners are half-baked, the military officers are also not without elements of poor training. This is due to the poor standard of education which low standards bring out poor personnel in all sectors of the country.

5. Conclusion

The central issue is that the media and security agencies in service are critical to sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Democracy thrives where there exists freedom of the press for peace, unity, and progress in communities and regions. The freedom of the media can enhance the release of positive stories and the suppression of the press can lead to the releasing or publishing of stories from the grapevine. Unconfirmed reports of the media from restricted places or events are bound to be with elements of rumors, lies, and inaccuracies. The nascent democracy in Nigeria cannot be protected or consolidated by one agency of the government. It requires the integration of the media by security agencies. The supposed posture of the security agencies as the sole defender of national security in the isolation of the media creates confusion that leads to clashes. Fanaticism by the media and security agencies forms the root cause of clashes against other causes of personal bias or ethnic sentiments. The implication is that both the media and the security agencies exhibit overzealousness in the discharge of responsibilities more so, the overzealous attitude of some of the media men, breeds suspicion and distrust in the security agencies and weakens the needed collaboration.

The security agencies and media have parallel constitutional roles that bother on national security, information management, peace, and safety of Nigerians. The media is to share information and the security agents are for territorial protection. The media are the conveyor belt that institutional stories roll out to the public and vice versa. The media familiarize the public with the security agencies by reporting the complexities of tasks, successes, progress, strengths and problems, or weaknesses. It also offers security agencies unquantifiable opportunities to showcase or tell their own stories. On the other hand, the media on its own need the cooperation of security to report affairs effectively.

The security toga of authoritarianism hinders media relationships. The security agencies through the media have consistently demonstrated the interest of the nation at heart. The press has been masking to prying and spying on security institutions and affairs at large. In this context, both the media and the security agencies have reasons to clash with each other against a symbiotic relationship. Based on the findings, it was clear that frequent clashes between media and security agencies have affected accurate, factual, and objective reporting, professionalism on the path of the media, and non-adherence to the constitutional provisions for freedom of expression on the side of the security agencies to support the free flow of information for sustainable democracy.

5.1 Recommendations

In light of the challenges examined above, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. To enhance the effectiveness of the relationship between the media and the security agencies, there is an urgent need to review the constitutional areas of security duties for governmental security agencies in the Niger Delta regions of Nigeria to reduce frictions of duties with other social service-providing institutions of the media.

2. Security agencies should help in reducing over zealotness of reporters by providing timely and accurate information at accessible locations including online sites for cross-referencing by the media and other interested stakeholders.
3. The Public Relations unit of security agencies should tighten loose ends of effective media relations with emphasis on regular press releases, and provide security reporting training and updates on collaboration with the media community.
4. The media institutions and the security agencies should continue to educate practitioners on both sides to curtail frequent infusion of ego and sentiments in the discharge of duties.

5.2 Limitations and future studies

Based on the findings of the study, the use of only four states out of nine states that make up the Niger Delta region for the study may have limited the generalization of the findings. This is because other states in the Niger Delta region could have provided more valid information on the frequencies of clashes, causes, and suggestions to ameliorate the problems of ineffective relationships between the media and the security agencies which confront sustainable democracy in the Niger Delta region. Based on the limitations of the present study, it is a suggestion that further research studies in this area should be carried out with more states in the Niger Delta region with a larger sample size to enable superior confidence in the broad view of results.

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