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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Exploring the Role of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control: A Study of Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the role of the mass media in crime prevention and control in Chikun Local Government Area (CLGA), Kaduna State, Nigeria. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to collect data from a sample of 600 respondents, with 50 respondents selected from each of the 12 political wards in CLGA using simple random sampling techniques. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26) software. The study findings demonstrate that the majority of respondents are aware of and acknowledge the significant role played by the mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA. The study also highlights the pivotal role of social media in reaching a wider audience in crime prevention and control efforts. Additionally, the study identifies several challenges faced by the mass media that hinder effective crime prevention and control, such as hate speech, the dissemination of false or misleading information, unfavorable communication policies, and a lack of competent media personnel. Based on these findings, the study offers recommendations to address these challenges and enhance the impact of mass media in crime prevention and control efforts.

**Keywords:** mass media, crime prevention, chikun, kaduna state

## 1. Introduction

Governments in both developed and developing nations have implemented various strategies to address the issue of crime and other social vices. Among these strategies, crime prevention and control through the mass media have garnered significant attention. The fundamental principle underlying mass media crime prevention and control programs is to utilize modern communication technologies, such as radio, television, newspapers, and the internet, to educate and sensitize citizens about crime prevention and control behavior (Silverman and Sacco, 1978).



Jaishankar (2007) argues that information and communication technology systems are integral in today's digital era, where modern information and technology services are key to societal development and power. The increasingly complex social structures at national and international levels have presented the media with a multitude of tasks and challenges. The mass media plays a pivotal role in the prevention and control of crime and other social vices in today's digital world, influencing behavior through the reinforcement of certain actions and the discouragement of others (Kendall, 2011). Social learning theories posit that the mass media can significantly impact behavior by encouraging certain actions while discouraging others.

The role of the mass media in crime prevention and control is essential for fostering a safer community. Mass media platforms, including television, radio, newspapers, and social media, play a vital role in disseminating information on crime trends, safety tips, and security measures to the public. Through these mediums, awareness is raised among residents, enabling them to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their properties. Sayyed (2021) argues that the mass media acts as a watchdog, highlighting criminal activities, reporting arrests, and exposing the identities of criminals and areas with high crime incidents. This not only informs the community about potential threats and dangers but also puts pressure on law enforcement agencies to take the required action (Ojedokun and Peters, 2019). Thus, the mass media encourages public participation in crime prevention efforts and helps hold authorities accountable for maintaining law and order (Jewkes, 2004).

Furthermore, mass media serves as a platform for community engagement and education on crime-related issues. Programs and talk shows focusing on crime prevention strategies, legal rights, and community policing policy initiatives can empower residents to actively contribute to maintaining a secure environment. By fostering a culture of vigilance and cooperation, the media plays a vital role in mobilizing the community to work together towards reducing the crime rate.

### *1.1. Statement of the Study Problem*

In recent years, many communities in Nigeria, including the Chikun Local Government Area (CLGA) of Kaduna State, have experienced an increase in various types of crimes. The frequency and severity of crime in CLGA have doubled compared to past decades, leading to a sense of fear and insecurity among the residents. Innocent individuals are being victimized through murder, injury, kidnapping, and displacement, while properties worth millions of naira are being destroyed by armed banditry. In response to the rising crime rate and the authorities perceived inability to effectively address the situation, a vigilante group known as "kato da gora" has emerged in CLGA and gained prominence as an agent of crime control. However, there is still an upsurge in violent criminal activities in CLGA, including armed robbery, kidnapping, theft, burglary, youth gang activities ("sara suka or yan shara"), and drug and substance abuse, among others. To effectively combat these social problems, the mass media plays a crucial role by providing updates on crime-related reports, publicizing crime news, and sensitizing people on measures to prevent and protect themselves from criminals.

### *1.2. Objectives of the Study*

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the role of mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA, Kaduna State. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the most commonly reported crimes by the mass media in CLGA.
- To identify the challenges faced by mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA.
- To make recommendations that may help overcome the challenges faced by mass media in crime prevention and control.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. *The Concept of Mass Media*

The concept of mass media has been present throughout human civilization (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013). Mass media refers to the various mediums used to communicate with the general public and serves as a source of communication for a large audience. In other words, mass media includes newspapers, books, magazines, maps, billboards, posters, radio, television, mobile phones, and the internet. These channels are fundamental means of communication, not only in Nigeria but also worldwide. Mass media has become an essential component of any social setting, particularly in uniting citizens. Effective and efficient use of mass media is crucial for the functioning of governments (Azeez, 2009).

#### 2.1.1. *Classification of Mass Media*

Giddens (2006) categorized mass media into three main categories:

- a. Publishing Media: This category includes books, newspapers, magazines, booklets, brochures, newsletters, billboards, and other printed materials.
- b. Broadcasting Media: This category encompasses radio and television broadcasting.
- c. Electronic Media: This category includes computers, mobile phones, the internet, CD players, tape recorders, and other electronic devices.

#### 2.1.2. *Roles of Mass Media*

Laswell (as cited in Giddens, 2006) identified three primary functions of the mass media:

- a. Surveillance of the environment: Mass media plays a vital role in informing and providing information to society by monitoring and reporting on activities within it. Laswell described this function as the media's role as a watchman. The surveillance function involves collecting and broadcasting information about events in the environment, both within and outside of society.
- b. Correlation of various parts of society: Mass media helps the public understand the information presented through various communication mediums and how they can use it. Shola, Deji, and Abiodun (2021) argue that the media offers prescriptions for actions in response to events in society. This involves explaining, interpreting, and commenting on the meanings of events through news analysis, editorials, commentaries, features, and opinions. Continuous broadcasting of civil education, for example, has helped restore and reinforce obedience to the law in Nigeria.
- c. Transmission of cultural heritage: This role of the mass media focuses on the transmission of knowledge, values, and social norms from one generation to another. The existence of a community depends on its members' ability to share common values and agree on acceptable behavior (Ferrante, 2011). Thus, mass media can consolidate the normative standards of society by disseminating collective social norms and values.

From the above, the surveillance function of mass media plays a significant role in crime prevention and control in society. It involves closely monitoring and interpreting societal movements. Through this function, mass media informs society about crime waves, types of crime, how they are carried out, and even the times of day when particular crimes are more likely to occur (Sayed, 2021).

### 2.2. *Mass Media in Nigeria*

The history of mass media in Nigeria dates back to 1859, when Reverend Townshend, a famous European missionary, published the first newspaper in what is now the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This newspaper, known as *Iwe Irohin*, significantly contributed to the emergence of media outfits and paved the way for the establishment of other newspapers such as the *Anglo African Newspaper*, *Nigeria Pioneer*, *The Africa Messenger*, *Daily Mirror*, and *The West Africa Pilot*, among others (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013).

Currently, Nigeria boasts several newspapers, magazines, television channels, and radio stations. Prominent newspapers include The Guardian, The Punch, Daily Trust, The Nation, Tribune, Champion, Thisday, Aminiya, Rariya, Almizan, Vanguard, the Sun, and Soccer Sports, among others. Additionally, magazines such as News Watch, Tell, Insider, The Week, The News, and Ovation are actively contributing to nation-building through reporting, analysis, and interpretation. Television channels such as the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT), Desmin Independent Television Kaduna (DITV), Kaduna State Television (KSTV), Liberty TV, Arewa TV, Galaxy TV, and Channel TV, along with radio stations like Radio Nigeria, Ray Power, Liberty Radio, Freedom Radio, Wazobia F.M, Cool F.M., Alheri Radio, Karama FM, Invictor FM, Supreme FM, and Nagarta Radio, provide news and current affairs programs that have a significant impact on Nigerian society (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013).

The Nigerian press, particularly the print, electronic, and outdoor media, has played a remarkable role in various facets of human endeavor. It provides news on politics, religion, education, entertainment, sports, crime, and numerous matters of public interest and importance (Nwabueze, 2009).

### *2.3. The Concept of Crime*

Crime, according to Dambazau (2007), refers to the violation of criminal law. Paul Tappan (as cited in Paranjape, 2019) defines crime as “an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law committed without defense or justification and penalized by the law as a felony or misdemeanor.” Similarly, Tierney (2010) describes crime as an act that infringes on criminal laws within a society, encompassing behaviors considered dangerous, prohibited, or threatening to life and property. Siegel (2012) defines crime as the violation of societal rules of behavior as interpreted and expressed by a criminal law created by the people’s government.

When referring to crime in Nigeria, terms such as insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, Niger Delta crises, ethno-religious crises, and armed robbery come to mind. Prior to the public emergence of the insurgent group “Boko Haram,” Nigeria witnessed kidnapping incidents by militants in the southern part of the country, leading to intense insecurity in the region (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). The phenomenon of kidnapping and armed banditry has posed significant challenges in various parts of Nigeria, contributing to the worsening insecurity levels. Additionally, ethno-religious violence in states such as Plateau, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, and Kogi, along with attacks in some parts of the southern and western regions, has further exacerbated the security situation (Azeez, 2009).

The emergence of the “Boko Haram” insurgent group introduced a new dimension to the threat to life in Nigeria, characterized by terrorism with a strong aversion to Western education and a persistent agenda to establish an Islamic state (Okpaga, Chyioke, and Innocent, 2012). The group targeted mosques, churches, schools, markets, and other important places, resulting in significant loss of life and property (Okpaga, Chyioke, and Innocent, 2012). Various factors, including poor governance, unemployment, poverty, broken homes, multicultural diversity, and conflict issues, have been identified as responsible for the high crime rate in Nigeria.

### *2.4. The Concept of Crime Prevention*

Crime prevention can be defined as any proactive plan that reduces the impact of an adverse event or completely eliminates the level of victimization or the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities (Welsh and Farrington, 2006). In other words, Ramadhoan, Amiruddin, and Ufran (2024) define crime prevention as the effort put in place to reduce the chances of victimization and to deter criminals from committing crimes. It encompasses both formal and informal initiatives aimed at reducing the adverse effects of crime in society.

According to Mihinjac and Saville (2019), crime prevention focuses on individuals, such as children, teenagers, and the elderly, who are not involved in criminal or deviant activities, and devises measures to prevent them from breaking the rules and regulations of a given society. It also examines environments with low crime rates and aims to ensure that crime does not flourish in these places. Scholars in criminology and security studies recognize the significance of crime prevention in society, emphasizing that the government must go beyond law enforcement and criminal justice to combat crime. Crime prevention is also believed to offer social benefits compared to standard responses to crime.

Crime prevention strategies can be categorized into people, places, and situation-oriented approaches (Hurth, 1981). The former is often referred to as “Crime Prevention through Social Development” (CPSD), while the latter is known as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). The goal of crime prevention is to reduce risk factors that may lead individuals to engage in criminal activity and to create barriers that mitigate those risk factors. These risk factors are associated with various social problems, such as parental negligence, child abuse, drug and substance abuse, poor academic performance, poverty, teen pregnancy, and peer influence (Dambazau, 2007). Therefore, when society and organizations work to prevent crime, they are also working to create healthy, safe, and sustainable communities in many respects.

### *2.5. The Role of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control*

The mass media has undeniably become an integral part of everyone's life, fulfilling key functions such as increasing public awareness, collecting views and information, and molding the general attitudes of people toward abstaining from crime (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013). It is a significant agent for shaping individuals' behaviors and attitudes, distributing ideas in society, and influencing dominant perceptions, values, and attitudes (Pate, 2011).

The surveillance functions of the mass media are central to reinforcing conformity, fighting against crime, and other social vices. The media's ability to provide information to society is essential for molding attitudes and relating news and various happenings to individual lives and society (McQuail, 2000). Laswell (as cited in Giddens, 2006) emphasizes the crucial role of the mass media in preventing and controlling crime, stating that publicity is essential in exposing and checking social vices in society.

In Nigeria, various programs and media content are dedicated to creating awareness about crime and discouraging acts of criminality. Notable examples include programs like “Police Diary” on Radio Nigeria, “Eagle on Radio,” and “Dan Sanda Abokin Kowa” on many radio stations, alongside with dedicated newspaper pages for reporting crime stories, non-crime specific news, and political awareness radio and television programs. Additionally, jingles and promotional messages against violence and conflict are broadcasted daily on most television channels and radio stations in Nigeria (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013). Street journalism plays a pivotal role in utilizing the mass media to prevent and control crime in society, as it involves the collection, analysis, reporting, and distribution of information, particularly on crime and other social vices. Effective use of the mass media helps in exposing crime and sensitizing members of society against criminal activities (Anand and Taneja, 2024).

The commitment of media personnel and collaboration between the public and journalists are essential for achieving the desired goals and objectives of the media in preventing and controlling crimes. Nwabueze (2009) highlights that individuals who consume a significant amount of television and radio programs are more likely to feel a greater threat from crime, believe that crime is more prevalent than official data shows, and take more precautions against crime. This underscores the influence of media portrayal on public perceptions of crime.

While the mass media provides a platform for acquiring knowledge, awareness, and entertainment, it can also contribute to changes in attitudes, behaviors, or the character of people (Parajuli and Budhathoki, 2022). It has the potential to create social awareness about various social problems, such as child abuse, domestic violence, kidnapping, rape, burglary, and terrorism. Television channels and radio stations are expected to organize programs aimed at encouraging proactive measures against crime. The mass media, with its influence and reach, can significantly impact people's lifestyles and cultures. It has the power to create awareness amongst people faster than anything else and can play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and behaviors.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Agenda-Setting Theory (AST) and the Social Learning Theory (SLT), which provide valuable insights into the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and influencing individual behaviors.

#### 3.1. The Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory, pioneered by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972), posits that the mass media plays a pivotal role in determining the issues considered significant at a given time. It goes beyond being a mere source of information and opinion, as it influences what the audience thinks about, rather than what to think about. Through meaningful and responsible coverage of criminal activities, the media can sensitize the public against such activities, attracting attention to the need to address social problems and raise awareness about the prevention and control of crime.

The AST, in relation to crime, highlights the media's key role in the formation of public opinion and the selective dissemination of information to the audience. The media's selection and supply of crime stories form the basis of what the audience thinks and debates about, thereby setting agendas for public opinion and discussion. The prominence given to certain crime stories through frequent reporting, headline display, or positioning shapes public perceptions and influences discussions on societal issues.

#### 3.2. Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory, widely used in mass communication and social sciences disciplines, emphasizes that people tend to exhibit behaviors they observe in others, especially when these behaviors are perceived as real, distinct, functional, and salient. Bandura's concept of symbolic imitation, where individuals observe events that receive some form of reward and subsequently imitate such behaviors, is central to the theory (Akers and Jennings, 2016). The mass media, particularly television, plays a significant role in shaping the socialization process of individuals by bringing the outside world into their homes and influencing their perceptions and behaviors (Akers and Jennings, 2016).

In line with SLT, the media act as subtle educators, teaching the audience about the world and influencing individual behaviors through observations. Characters in media content can serve as models for the audience to imitate, particularly children, shaping their perceptions and actions when confronted with similar conditions.

The objectives of this study align with these theoretical frameworks, which explore the impact of mass media on crime prevention and control through the portrayal of crime across various mediums. They highlight how direct or indirect interaction with mass media influences individual behavior, ultimately leading to the imitation of acts viewed in the media.

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1. Study Setting

This study was conducted in Chikun Local Government Area (CLGA) in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Chikun, formerly known as Kujama, is one of the 23 local government areas in

Kaduna State, with its headquarters located in Kujama town, approximately 45 km away from the capital of Kaduna State. It covers an area of about 4,645 km<sup>2</sup> and had a population of 372,272 as of the 2006 census. The local government area consists of 12 political wards, including Chikun, Gwagwada, Kakau, Kujama, Kuriga, Narayi, Nassarawa, Rido, Sabon Garin Arewa Tirkania, Kunai, Sabon Tasha, and Unguwan Yalwa.

#### *4.2. Research Design*

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is considered appropriate for obtaining accurate and firsthand data regarding the opinions of residents of CLGA on the role of mass media in crime prevention and control.

#### *4.3. Study Population*

The target population of this study comprises all residents of CLGA, including farmers, civil servants, students, law enforcement agents, businessmen and women, and journalists within the study area. According to the Population Census (2006), the population of CLGA was 368,250.

#### *4.4. Sampling Size*

A sample of 600 residents was drawn using randomized sampling techniques, with 50 respondents from each of the 12 political wards. Among the sampled respondents, 400 were male and 200 were female, aged between 18 and 45 years.

#### *4.5. Data Collection*

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews (IDI) were the main instruments used in collecting data from the sampled respondents. The study questionnaire was self-administered, and informed consent from the questionnaire and IDI respondents was obtained.

#### *4.6. Data Analysis*

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to analyze the data collected from the 600 sampled respondents. Microsoft Word and Excel (2013 version) were used for data entry, coding, editing, and cleaning. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to analyze the quantitative data. The study findings were presented using tables of frequency and percentage.

### **5. Results**

#### *5.1. Socio-Demographic Data of the Sampled Respondents*

Based on the findings presented in Table 1, it is evident that the majority (79%) of the surveyed respondents in CLGA were between 18 and 37 years of age. Male respondents accounted for 66.7% of the sample, while female respondents made up 33.3%. Additionally, a significant proportion (51.1%) of the respondents reported that they were single, with 30.8% being married, 11.6% divorced, and 5.8% widowed. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of the sampled respondents (80%) had tertiary education, 14.4% had secondary education, and 1.6% had primary education. Regarding religion, 50.6% of the respondents identified as Muslims, followed by 42.6% who identified as Christians, and only 6.6% practiced traditional religion. Furthermore, the occupational distribution of the sampled respondents revealed that 46.6% indicated they were unemployed, 18.3% were farmers, and 17.5% were civil servants.

#### *5.2. Role of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control in CLGA*

According to the findings presented in Table 2, an overwhelming majority (96.6%) of the sampled respondents acknowledged that they were aware of the reporting of crime incidents through the mass media. This aligns with the participants' perspectives on the

pervasive nature of crime-related stories in the media. For instance, one male participant, aged 35 and residing in Narayi ward, stated:

“I am well aware that crime incidents are frequently reported through the mass media. It's challenging to engage with the media without coming across stories about crimes like kidnapping, banditry, and so on.”

**Table 1.** Socio-Demographic characteristics of the surveyed respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	400	66.7	66.7
Female	200	33.3	100
<b>Total</b>	600	100	
<b>Age</b>			
18-27	237	39.5	39.5
28-37	223	37.1	76.7
38-47	83	13.8	90.5
48 above	60	10	100
<b>Total</b>	600	100	
<b>Marital status</b>			
Married	185	30.8	30.8
Single	310	51.6	82.4
Divorced	70	11.6	94
Widowed	35	5.8	100
<b>Total</b>	600	100	
<b>Educational qualification</b>			
Tertiary	155	80	80
Secondary	350	14.4	94.4
Primary	95	1.6	96
<b>Total</b>	600	100	
<b>Occupation</b>			
Civil servant	105	17.5	17.5
Farmer	110	18.3	35.8
Trader	100	16.6	52.4
Unemployed	280	46.6	99
Others	5	0.8	100
<b>Total</b>	600	100	
<b>Religion</b>			
Islam	304	50.6	50.6
Christianity	256	42.6	93.2
Traditionalist	40	6.6	100
<b>Total</b>	600	100	

Source: field survey, 2024

**Table 2.** Awareness of the Role of Mass Media in Crime Prevention

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	580	96.6
No	20	3.3
<b>Total</b>	600	100

Source: field survey, 2024

Supporting this viewpoint, a female participant, aged 25, and residing in Sabon Tasha ward, added:





“When consuming media content, it is nearly impossible to avoid encountering news about crimes. These reports can significantly shape our perceptions of safety and security.”

**Table 3.** Role of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control in CLGA

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Publicize crime news	580 (96.6%)	20 (3.30%)	600 (100%)
Creating awareness about crime prevention	568 (94.6%)	32 (5.3%)	600 (100%)
Discouraging negative behaviors	415 (69.1%)	185 (30.8%)	600 (100%)
Sensitizing people to the measures they can take to prevent and protect themselves from criminals	529 (88.1%)	71 (11.8%)	600 (100%)
Exposing the identity of criminals	590 (98.3%)	10 (1.6%)	600 (100%)

Source: field survey 2024.

Based on the study findings presented in Table 3, it is evident that almost 98.3% of the sampled respondents believed that the mass media plays a crucial role in exposing the identities of criminals. Additionally, 96.6% of the respondents agreed that publicizing crime stories is a primary role of the mass media in crime prevention and control, while a small percentage (3.3%) held a different opinion. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (94.6%) expressed the belief that the mass media creates awareness about crime prevention, with only 5.3% not sharing this view. Moreover, 88.1% of the respondents agreed that the mass media in CLGA serves as a tool for sensitizing people about measures to protect themselves from criminals and deviants, while 11.8% disagreed. In addition, 69.1% of the respondents indicated that the mass media helps in discouraging negative behaviors in CLGA. These findings were further supported during the in-depth interviews (IDI). For instance, a male participant, aged 45 and residing in Chikun Ward, emphasized the importance of the mass media in crime prevention and control:

“Mass media is an important catalyst, especially in today's digital world. It helps connect people from different parts of the world and plays a role in crime prevention and control. Nowadays, authorities use the mass media to sensitize people against engaging in criminal activities. Without the mass media, people would be unaware of what is happening in their immediate environment.”

Similarly, a female journalist, aged 30, highlighted the significant role of the mass media in crime prevention and control:

“The mass media plays a crucial role, especially in crime prevention and control, by ensuring peaceful coexistence among people in different communities. In fact, the media acts as the watchdog of society, constantly broadcasting crime-related issues.”

### 5.3. Most Commonly Reported Crime by the Mass Media in CLGA

**Table 4.** Most Commonly Reported Crimes by the Mass Media

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Banditry	192	32
Kidnapping	270	45
Robbery	25	4.2
Drug and substance abuse	55	9.2
Rape	28	4.6
Theft	30	5
Others	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	100	100

Source: field survey, 2024

The data presented in Table 4 provides insights into the frequency and percentage of the most commonly reported criminal activities in CLGA. According to the study findings, the



majority (32% of the sampled respondents) identified kidnapping as the most frequently reported crime through the mass media in CLGA. This was closely followed by banditry (32%), drug and substance abuse (9.2%), theft (5%), rape (4.6%), and armed robbery (4.2%).

During an in-depth interview (IDI), a female participant, aged 35 and working as a law enforcement officer, emphasized the prevalence of kidnappings and bandit activities in CLGA:

“When it comes to crime reporting in CLGA, kidnappings and bandit activities take the spotlight as the most frequently discussed criminal activities affecting the area.”

Similarly, a male participant, aged 38 and working as a journalist, highlighted the prominent coverage of various crimes in CLGA:

“The media coverage in CLGA often highlights kidnappings, banditry, communal clashes, and drug and substance abuse, among others. These crimes receive significant attention as they are the predominant criminal activities affecting the area.”

**Table 5.** Media Have a Greater Outreach in Crime Prevention and Control in CLGA

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	150	25
Television	69	11.5
Newspaper	79	13.2
Social media	302	50.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: field survey, 2024

According to the data presented in Table 5, the majority (50.3%) of the respondents believed that social media platforms have a greater outreach in crime prevention and control in CLGA. Additionally, 25% of the respondents indicated radio, 13.2% newspaper, and 11.5% television as having significant outreach. Supporting these findings, a male participant, aged 25 and residing in Uguwan Yelwa Tirkaniya, explained:

“CLGA comprises both metropolitan and rural areas. Therefore, social media platforms, television, radio, and newspapers may have greater outreach in metropolitan areas, while radio and television have greater outreach in rural areas.”

Echoing this viewpoint, a female participant, aged 25 and residing in Kujama, highlighted the significance of social media platforms in crime prevention and control:

“In CLGA, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, etc., have a greater outreach in crime prevention and control. Nowadays, social media is widely used to create awareness and sensitize people to protect themselves from crime and criminality.”

#### 5.4. Challenges Faced by the Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control in CLGA

**Table 6.** Awareness of the Challenges of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	452	75.3
No	138	23
I don't know.	10	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: field survey, 2024

The data presented in Table 6 indicates that the majority (75.3%) of the sampled respondents were aware of the challenges faced by mass media in crime prevention and

control. Conversely, 24.6% of the respondents expressed their unawareness of these challenges.

**Table 7.** Major Challenges of Mass Media in Crime Prevention and Control

Responses	Yes	No	Total
Spreading fake news	405 (67.5)	195 (32.5)	600 (100%)
Lack of expertise by media personnel	369 (61.5)	231 (38.5)	600 (100%)
Aiding hate speech	504 (84)	96 (16)	600 (100%)
Lack of a clear-cut communication policy	290 (48.3)	310 (51.6)	600 (100%)
Agents of cultural decadence	387 (64.5)	213 (38.5)	600 (100%)

Source: field survey, 2024

Based on the findings presented in Table 7, it is evident that the majority (84% of the sampled respondents) identified aiding hate speech as the major challenge faced by the mass media in crime prevention and control. Conversely, only 16% of the respondents did not view it as a significant challenge. Additionally, 67.5% of the respondents indicated that the spreading of fake news is a challenge, while 32.5% did not share this opinion. Moreover, 64.5% of the respondents believed that the mass media can contribute to moral decadence, while the remaining 35.5% disagreed. In terms of expertise, 61% of the sampled respondents stated that a lack of expertise among media personnel is a major challenge for the mass media, whereas 38.5% held a different view. Furthermore, 51.6% of the respondents believed that the mass media faces a challenge due to a lack of clear-cut communication policies, while 48.3% did not think so.

During an in-depth interview (IDI) with a female journalist, aged 39, she emphasized the challenges faced by the mass media:

“The mass media is faced with challenges that negatively impact its objectives. Criminals and deviants misuse the mass media for various dubious activities, such as spreading fake news, propaganda, and explicit content.”

Similarly, a male law enforcement officer, aged 30, acknowledged the challenges encountered by the mass media in crime prevention and control:

“The mass media faces several challenges, including the spread of false news and hate speech, which contribute to the escalation of violence and conflict in CLGA and other locations within the state.”

## 6. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the role of mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The quantitative data revealed that the majority of respondents from the 12 political wards in CLGA agreed that the mass media plays a significant role in crime prevention and control in the area. Notably, a substantial proportion of the respondents, representing 98.3%, believed that exposing the identity of criminals is a major role of the mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA. Additionally, 96.6% of the respondents emphasized the importance of disseminating information about crime, while 94.6% highlighted the role of the mass media in creating awareness about crime prevention and control. Furthermore, 88.1% of the respondents recognized the mass media's role in encouraging public vigilance and safety, and 69.1% acknowledged its role in discouraging negative behaviors. These findings are consistent with the arguments put forth by Sayeed (2021), who emphasized the significant role of mass media in crime prevention and control by raising awareness, disseminating crime stories, revealing the identities of criminals, encouraging public vigilance, and promoting community safety. Similarly, the arguments of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1979) support these findings, as they highlight the agenda-setting function of the media in shaping public views on crime and deviance.



The quantitative study also revealed the most commonly reported criminal activities by the mass media in CLGA, with nearly half (45%) of the sampled respondents identifying kidnapping and 32% identifying banditry as the most commonly reported crimes in the area. Accordingly, the qualitative data reinforced the same argument and shed light on the crimes that receive extensive media coverage in CLGA. These findings are consistent with the work of Abdullahi and Faruk (2022), who found that rural banditry and kidnapping incidents are widespread across various communities in Nigeria, particularly in the northwestern states. Kidnapping and banditry, along with other security challenges such as cattle rustling, farmer-herder clashes, and terrorism, have become major issues in Nigeria, especially in the northern states. The prevalence of these criminal activities is further evidenced by the recent abduction of 287 students and their teachers in a government school in CLGA (Olanrewaju, 2024), which is just one example of the many kidnappings by armed bandits in the area. The extensive media coverage of these incidents reflects the prevalence of kidnappings and bandit activities in CLGA and other parts of Nigeria.

In terms of the media with greater outreach in crime prevention and control in CLGA, the quantitative data revealed that half of the sampled respondents believed that social media has a wider outreach, followed by radio at 25%. These findings are consistent with the works of Ojedokun and Peters (2019) and Sayeed (2021), who noted the vital role of social media in spreading awareness about crime and the activities of the criminal justice system. In today's digital era, law enforcement agencies use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram plays a crucial role in the dissemination of crime news (Denef, Bayerl, and Kapstein 2013).

Regarding the challenges faced by the mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA, the study found that two-thirds (75.3%) of the sampled respondents expressed their awareness of these challenges. These findings suggest that a significant portion of the participants recognized the existence of challenges faced by the media in this domain. However, it is worth noting that a notable proportion of respondents still expressed their lack of awareness regarding these challenges. The majority (84%) identified aiding hate speech as a significant challenge, followed by 67.5% of the respondents recognizing the role of spreading fake news as an agent of moral decay (64.5%), a lack of expertise among media personnel (61.5%), and a lack of a clear-cut communication policy (48.3%). These findings align with the arguments of Mashamaite (2023), who emphasized the important role of mass media in crime prevention and control while also highlighting significant challenges such as hate speech and the spread of false or misleading stories. Additionally, Fitzpatrick (2018) argued that criminals and deviants take advantage of the mass media, especially social media, to spread bogus information with the aim of causing panic and tension among citizens, undermining a sense of security. Some media content can contribute to moral decay by glorifying violence and criminal behavior. These challenges are compounded by the lack of expertise among media personnel, as highlighted by Oyero (2007), and the impact of past military laws on mass media practitioners, as noted by Kadiri et al. (2015).

In essence, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the perceptions of the role of mass media in crime prevention and control, the most commonly reported criminal activities, the media with greater outreach, and the challenges faced by the mass media in CLGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria. These insights are crucial for understanding the dynamics of crime reporting and prevention in the region and can inform strategies to address the identified challenges and leverage the strengths of the mass media in promoting public safety and security.

## 7. Conclusion

The increase in criminal activities in Nigeria, as evidenced by newspaper reports, television headlines, and radio announcements, is a growing concern. The CLGA in Kaduna State is no exception, with residents living in fear of criminal victimization. In response, crime prevention and control through the mass media has become a widely used strategy in both

developed and developing countries. The findings of this study confirm the significant role played by the mass media in crime prevention and control in CLGA. Residents rely on social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, as well as mainstream media outlets such as television, newspapers, and radio, to obtain information on various topics, including crime-related issues. The prevalence of crimes such as kidnapping, cow rustling, armed robbery, substance abuse, rape, urban gangs, communal clashes, and political violence in CLGA is evident in newspaper headlines and frequent reporting on radio and television channels. However, the study also highlights several obstacles faced by the mass media in crime prevention and control. These include unfair government policies, the spread of false news, hate speech, incompetence among media personnel, and audience illiteracy, among others. To address the challenges and leverage the strengths of the mass media in promoting public safety and security in CLGA, the following recommendations are suggested:

- The Chikun Local Government Council should establish and foster a collaborative relationship with media houses and stakeholder groups. This partnership should go beyond using media outlets as a mere tool for public announcements and should involve them in meaningful collaborations to address crime-related issues effectively.
- Residents of CLGA should be encouraged to actively participate in crime prevention initiatives. This can be achieved by promoting the reporting of criminal activities and volunteering for neighborhood watch programs. Engaging the community in crime prevention efforts can significantly contribute to enhancing public safety and security.
- Efforts should be made to provide comprehensive training to media personnel on the use of modern broadcasting equipment for reporting crime news. This will ensure effective and adequate utilization of mass media, particularly new media technologies, to enhance the quality and accuracy of crime reporting.
- Collaboration between media outlets and law enforcement agencies is crucial. As such, joint efforts should be made to create targeted campaigns that raise awareness about crime prevention strategies, encourage the reporting of suspicious activities, and promote safety initiatives. This partnership can enhance the effectiveness of crime prevention and control efforts.

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