



TV News Presentation, Source attractiveness, and Credibility: An Audience Perception Study

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Abstract. Source credibility is integral to how news audience receive and perceive news, especially from Television which appeals to both sight and hearing. This study sought to find out audience perception of news credibility as it pertains to TV news presentations. To achieve the objectives of this study, the convenient sampling was employed to gather data from 392 respondents of Oshogbo metropolis using a structured questionnaire. Findings from the study indicated that the majority of the respondents disagreed that the dressing appeal of a news presenter informed their decision on how credible news is however, the majority of the respondents agreed that the western mode of dressing makes news presenters more appealing. Findings also indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that female news presenters were more appealing and casted more than their male counterparts for their looks but disagreed that the gender of a news presenter had any connection to their perception of the news credibility. The study also indicated that other aesthetics and personality elements that could influence perception as voice, eloquence of the presenter and the news content. The paper concluded that when broadcast organizations especially television embrace the practice of balancing gender and other elements of news credibility they have a better chance of improving source attractiveness and news credibility, which in turn endears the news organization to Television audiences.

Keywords: TV, News Presentation, Source attractiveness, Credibility, Perception

1. Introduction

In a complex, information-saturated society, such as Nigeria, one of the main functions of media in

society is accurate and factual information. News is trusted to give such factual investigations to enable people to make calculated and educated decisions. Little wonder scholars and indeed journalism practitioners are highly interested in and concerned about the issue of the trustworthiness of news reporting because journalism's core professional values are hinged on credibility (Sanusi, Alade, & Shodipe, 2020). Although Payne and Dozier, (2013) highlighted that academics and journalists have different opinions on what constitutes credibility, they both agree that it essentially has to do with the accuracy and honesty of the facts that journalists report. According to Andaleeb, Rahman, Rajeb, Akter, and Gulshan, (2012), herein lies the function of images; believability, credibility, and appeal to an audience.

One of the most reliable sources of news regarding politics and current affairs is television. Journalists and communication scholars are concerned about how effective television news can spread information about reported events (Andaleeb, et al., 2012). According to Cummins and Chambers (2011), visual news presentation may provide greater news credibility than other formats. Commenting on news presentation and how it enhances audience appeal Andaleeb, Rahman, Rajeb, Akter, and Gulshan, (2012) posited that with advancements in presentation and creativity among the privately owned satellite TV channels in developing countries like Bangladesh, news has become the most popular program. People's thirst for information has caused many stations globally to present news on an hourly basis. In essence audience perceptions of news authenticity were influenced by the calibre of audio-visual components.

Communication scholars and journalists have long been interested in the perceptions viewers make of television news content. According to Bracken, (2006) citing Austin and Dong, (1994) perception of credibility is influenced by the content of the news reports and the news presenter or anchors' personality. There are also perceptions that credibility may be influenced by presentation variables. The gender appeal, dressing appearance, and aesthetics of the TV news set may be part of such variables. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how the TV audience views the credibility of news presentations through dressing, gender, and aesthetic appeals.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To determine whether the mode of dressing of news presenters influences the audience's perception of TV news credibility.
- To find out to what extent the gender appeal of news presenters influences TV news credibility.
- To establish other factors that influence audiences' perception of TV news credibility.

2. Literature and Empirical Review

McCroskey & Teven (1999), cited by (Hellmueller & Trilling, 2012, p.6), "studied the corpus of work on source credibility and argued that one aspect of the construct—credibility—has been 'lost.'" The authors contend that Aristotle's conception of ethos/source credibility was founded on three dimensions: competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill (p. 90). The authors cite Aristotle's conception because it is a milestone in the philosophy of rhetorical communication." Credibility is thus the base upon which every respectable media outlet should be expected to stand. Credibility is essential to the meaningful existence and continued functioning of any public communication medium.

A news organization is said to be a credible source of information if such medium reports events truthfully and objectively. By implication for a new medium to be regarded as credible, it must have consistently in its daily reports present facts without favour or fear. This is why Payne and Dozier (2013:700) noted that credibility "has been defined variously as the perception of news messages as plausible reflections of the events they depict, and as a global evaluation of the objectivity of a given story". Rasha (2019) went a step further to investigate the components of credibility from a variety of media and the result indicated that perceptions of credibility varied by

news source; while story balance, honesty, and currency were important in newspaper content; fairness and currency were identified as important factors in determining news credibility in television; and trustworthiness, timeliness, and bias were considered vital in determining online news credibility.

On the other hand, Armstrong and Collins, (2009) examined the credibility of news from three perspectives namely; source credibility, news credibility and message credibility. Source credibility according to Armstrong and Collins (2009) targets four dimensions of credibility—knowledge, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and dynamism. News Credibility examines the credibility of the medium or the particular industry i.e. T.V, radio, and newspaper amongst others, while message credibility examines the believability of the message content.

The issue of the credibility of news arose out of the crumbling faith the media audiences have in the media. In the case of the British media, Barnett (2008) identified four factors that are responsible for the crumbling faith in British journalism. Although Barnett examined the British media, the factors he identified are peculiar to media in developing nations too. According to Barnett, the factors are the drip-drop effect, the dog-eat-dog effect, the bandwagon effect, and the universal suspicion effect. The drip-drop explains the distrust in journalism as a result of commercial and partisan interests while the dog-eat-dog effect explains the distrust in journalism from unhealthy competition in the industry as a result of lack of support and being the first to break the news. The bandwagon effect explains distrust in journalism from fact-checking, plagiarism, and lazy journalism. The universal suspicion explains the distrust in journalism from the perception of the audience who now view the media as a propaganda tool.

Organisations, including broadcasting institutions, idealised images of women – a glamorised version of attractiveness - through employing women with the 'right look" (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009, p.385) and sex appeal. Although news-reading for both sexes is a platform where audience attention is sometimes focused on physical appearance; but this is more prevalent with the female presenters. This has made many people to believe that women reporters are frequently relegated to soft news stories, like health and entertainment news, whereas their male counterparts are given stories of political and international importance. Women have also been underrepresented as sources on news programs. According to Irvin (2013, p. 39), "male experts are

often used as sources than female experts, and female experts are used less in hard news stories than men". The above assertions represent the different views people have about female broadcasters and such impressions go a long way to determine how the audiences consume news items on television.

In a study titled "Credibility of TV News in a Developing Country: The Case of Bangladesh" Andaleeb, Rahman, Rajeb, Akter and Gulshan, (2012), conducted a survey using a multistage cluster sampling technique. Data was collected from 300 respondents via face-to-face interviews. Field interviewers explained the study and asked the interviewee to self-administer the questionnaire; occasionally, the interviewers filled out the questionnaire based on respondents' verbal responses. Using the regression analysis the study finding showed that clearly indicate that the audience judges TV news as credible. The study showed that the more the perceived expertise of the TV channels in delivering TV news, the more credible the news will be to the audience. The study also showed that the better the quality of the audio-visual elements when presenting TV news, the more credible the news will be to the audience. Lastly the study found that with improvements in presentation and creativity among the privately owned satellite TV channels, news has become the most popular program.

In a study titled "Influence of Gender Appeals on Audience Consumption of Television News" Agba, Henshaw and Ogri, (2018) examined the assumption that gender plays a crucial role in broadcasters' persuasive skills and the view that female or male broadcasters face differing gender-based challenges all require critical enquiry. The study was survey based and used the questionnaire and in-depth interview to solicit opinions of audience as well as broadcast scholars and professionals. The multistage and purposive sampling techniques was employed to select 219 respondents from Calabar Metropolis and six broadcast communication scholars in tertiary institutions. The Elaboration Likelihood Theory served as the theoretical framework. The study findings revealed that female newscasters are not more credible than their male counterparts and that physical appearance does not have much significance on the audiences' preference for news consumption. The study thus concluded that audience should be persuaded at all times to appreciate broadcast contents and not the gender-based issues associated with such contents.

Mitra, Webb and Wolfe (2014) in a study titled "Audience responses to the physical appearance of

television newsreaders". The study investigated the opinions of those who watch television news in relation to the appearance of news presenters through the use of 20 semi-structured interviews with female and male viewers and 167 questionnaires. The study found that audiences were well aware that female newsreaders may have been chosen for their appearance. The study also reported that many respondents thought that this was rather unjust. The audience felt that male newsreaders were credible whether they had grey hair or were young and good looking. Where women were glamorised they were often belittled and trivialised in terms of intelligence and abilities. The study also found that audiences were more interested in the actual news than newsreaders' appearance and some respondents wanted more diverse representations.

Akpoghiran, Umukoro and Okoro, (2017) in a study examined viewers' perception of female newsreaders' appearance on television and its influence on news attention. The study was anchored on social perception theory, which explains how people form impressions of and make inferences about other people. In order to determine this, two research approaches were adopted: research assistants rating scale and viewers' rating scale (VRS). The categories studied on female newsreader physical appearance were dress or attire, hairstyle, makeup/facial expression and voice quality. Three cable television stations were viewed. They were the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA); Channels Television and African Independent Television (AIT). The Krejcie Robert and Morgan Daryle sample size of 384 was adopted. However, 382 of the sample size were retrieved. Results showed that female newsreaders' appearance affects viewers' attention to news at the first few minutes of the news. While the female viewers are attracted to the general physical appearance, male viewers are attracted to facial beauty. The import of this is that physical appearance of a female newsreader distracts attention from the news if sexual appealing looks were applied. A moderate appearance was recommended for female newsreader.

3. Theoretical Framework

Klapper's 1960 perception theory is suitable for this study. Perception theory is one of the limited effects theories that show how people view things differently based on their needs, perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, and abilities. Four categories separate the theory (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017):

Selective exposure: People pick media messages depending on reach, accessibility, age, cultural acceptability, taboos, etc. The hypothesis, utilized in media and communication study, relates to people's inclination to favour information that supports their pre-existing opinions while rejecting contradicting information. People can't be impacted by communications they don't see, thus they may prevent information overload by selectively seeing particular messages (Griffin, 2012).

Selective perception: suggests that individuals would perceive communications based on their pre-existing ideas. This is typically impacted by social relationships since we decipher communication signals based on past experiences, emotions, wants, and memories. It's how people receive media messages while dismissing alternative views. It describes how individuals tend to view things according to their own frame of reference, needs, moods, and emotions (Asemah et al 2017).

Selective Retention: is the capacity to remember just particular messages. Choices, values, culture, emotions, etc. are some of the psychological factors that impact this category of perception.

Selective Attention: People choose which information to focus on. Messages that don't grab audiences' attention won't affect them. Advertisers utilize gimmicks to attract and keep audiences' attention. These systems help us absorb, recall, and interpret information in distinctive ways. Complex and not isolated, they function. Media messages are always competing (Asemah et al 2017).

Selective attention: is the process of filtering out information in which one has little interest, such as an adult listening to the news while a youngster watches a cartoon. This hypothesis is pertinent to this research since it says that people's perception of billboard messages and COVID-19 impacts their happiness and adoption.

Thus, the perception theory is relevant to this research because exposure to Television to a level that audience want such that greater levels of retention of attention in the audience can only be determined by if the psychologically feeling and level the audience think the message is credible enough. It means that the audience actually chose or determine what is credible and not the media.

4. Methodology

4.1 Study Group

This study used the survey method. The justification for the use of survey is to prompt reactions from the

sampled respondents. According to Asemah & Kierian, (2018) cited in Ayinla & Amenaghawon (2021) the justification for the use of survey to collect data for a study is in the fact that it is the most suitable method of collecting data connected to demographics, attitudes, opinions and perceptions. Thus the population of this study comprises residents of Osogbo the capital of Osun State Nigeria. According to National Population Commission estimate the population of Osogbo is 750,000, using the United Nations population projections of 2.6% increase from 2021 (Macrotrends n.d). The sample size of the population was 400 determined using Taro Yamane's sample size formula. The data collected from the questionnaire used in this research work were analysed using SPSS 23 package.

4.2 Study Design

A descriptive survey was conducted using residents of Oshogbo purposively selected by the researchers. Also, the questionnaires were distributed via face to face administration. Also, we considered that with the chosen respondents' level of maturity in age, reasoning and educational status, they could sensibly state their perception on the subject matter studied.

4.3 Instrument of Data Gathering

The researchers adopted a structured questionnaire using close-ended questions to elicit the various opinions of the respondents on the subject matter. To ensure validity of instrument, the face validity was done by submitting a drafted copy of the research instrument to a senior academic in mass communication that went through it and vetted the contents. Also a pilot study of 40 questionnaire was conducted for students of mass communication redeemers to find out how reliable and valid the survey is, then all grey areas in the questionnaire were then corrected base on the pilot study findings.

4.4 Administration of Instrument

Convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants. The questionnaire was distributed through research assistants in Oshogbo metropolis. The questionnaire was also designed to capture answers on respondents' demographics, their perceived opinion on news credibility of TV News presenters.

Sample:

Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size of this study; $n = N/1+N(e)^2$ where:

n= sample size

N = population

e = margin of error (0.05)

In the light of the above, the sample size for this research purpose is shown below:

$$= 750,000/1+750,000(0.05)^2$$

$$= 750,000/1+ 750,000 (0.0025)$$

$$= 750,000/1 + 1875$$

$$n = 399.78 \approx 400$$

4.5 Method of Analysis:

Data elicited based on research questions are presented using the Likert scale and analysed using the SPSS statistical tool. Responses are either accepted or rejected based on the value of the weighted mean for each response. A mean of 2.51 and below is accepted, a mean of 2.50 to 3.50 is indifferent, while a mean of 3.51 and above is rejected.

5. Presentation of Data

400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 392 were validly returned. The age range of the respondents was between 18 – 59 years and above. This is an indication that the respondents are matured enough to participate in the study. From the data obtained, male respondents were 178(45.4%) while the female respondents were 214(54.6%). Majority of the respondents were from the age bracket of 18 – 37 years of age (n=189, 48.2%), while 34.9% made up the number of respondents that fall within the age bracket of 38-59 (n=137) and the age range of 60+ (n=66, 16.8%). In terms of occupation, majority 195 (49.7%) are Entrepreneurs, while 66 (16.8%) constitute Civil servants, 91 (23.2%) indicated that they are Students, 40 (10.2%) indicated that they are retirees.

1. To determine whether the mode dressing of news presenters influence audience perception of TV news credibility.

Statements	S A	A	N	D	S D	M	Decision
Appearance of Newscaster attracts me to a TV News presentation	178	165	2	28	19	1.84	Accepted
I prefer news presenters to dress in native attire than foreign	221	161	4	2	4	1.49	Accepted
Foreign dressing makes Newscasters lose credibility	9	3	19	193	168	4.90	Rejected
Regardless of dress sense of presenter I would listen to news	203	131	21	31	6	1.74	Accepted
Newscasters dressing makes the story credible and believable	25	61	31	97	178	3.88	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The result of the analysis showed that the mean of 1.84 implies that majority of the respondent’s agreed that appearance of Newscaster attracts them to a TV News presentation. The result showed that for the second statement the mean of 1.49 implies that majority of the respondents agreed that they prefer news presenters to dress in native attire than foreign. Also, for the third statement the mean of 4.90 indicated that majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that foreign dressing makes Newscasters lose credibility. For the last statement the mean of 3.88 implies that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Newscasters dressing makes the story credible and believable.

2. To find out how gender appeal of news presenters influence TV news credibility.

Statements	S A	A	N	D	S D	M	Decision
Female News presenters are more credible than their male Counterparts	9	27	1	154	201	4.30	rejected
Female news presenters are more intelligent than their male counterparts	12	24	6	159	191	4.26	rejected
Female news presenters are more honest than their Male Counterparts	6	2	1	172	211	4.48	rejected
More Females are assigned news casting roles than men.	154	89	6	111	32	2.43	accepted
The male voice is more believable than the female voice	22	34	9	156	171	4.07	rejected
Personality of presenter regardless of gender is what makes presentation credible	192	149	1	32	18	1.81	accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The result of the analysis showed that the mean of 4.30 implies that majority of the respondent’s disagreed with the first statement that female news presenters are more credible than their male counterparts. The result showed that for the second statement the mean of 4.26 implies that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that female news presenters are more intelligent than their male counterparts. Also, for the third statement the mean of 4.48 indicated that majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that female news presenters are more honest than their male counterparts. The result showed that for the fourth statement the mean of 2.23 implies that majority of the respondents agreed that more females are assigned news casting roles than men. The result also showed that for the fifth statement the mean of 4.07 implies that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the

male voice is more believable than the female voice. For the last statement the mean of 1.81 implies that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that Personality of presenter regardless of gender is what makes presentation credible.

3. To establish other factors that influence audiences' perception of TV news credibility.

Statements	S A	A	N	D	S D	M	Decision
I perceive foreign news channels more credible than local news channels	169	125	17	47	34	2.11	accepted
TV stations with better TV output is more credibility	69	41	14	121	147	3.60	rejected
beauty and colour of the news set and background is important and helpful to TV News presentation	111	102	7	89	83	2.82	indifferent
News stories are more credible when the news is anchored by more than one news presenter	106	91	6	113	76	2.90	Indifferent
Voice, Eloquence and pronunciations of news caster enhances my news consumption and credibility	171	82	12	74	53	2.38	accepted
News presentation using live on the spot news reporter enhances credibility of TV news.	131	163	3	41	54	2.29	accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The result of the analysis showed that the mean of 2.11 implies that majority of the respondent's agreed with the first statement that foreign news channels are more credible than local news channels. The result showed that for the second statement the mean of 3.60 implies that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that TV stations with better TV output is more credibility. Also, for the third statement the mean of 2.82 indicated that majority of respondents were indifferent about the statement that beauty and colour of the news set and background is important and helpful to TV News presentation. The result showed that for the fourth statement the mean of 2.90 implies that majority of the respondents were indifferent about the statement that news stories are more credible when the news is anchored by more than one news presenter. The result also showed that for the fifth statement the mean of 2.38 implies that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that voice, eloquence and pronunciations of news caster enhances my news consumption and credibility. For the last statement the mean of 2.29 implies that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that Voice, Eloquence and pronunciations of news caster enhances my news consumption and credibility.

6. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that mode of dressing of news presenters does not influences audience view or perception of TV news credibility. This can be related to the theory of selectivity that propounds that audience have choices especially as to the mental recast of a message so that its meaning is in line with a person's beliefs and attitudes. It follows a psychological process, which involves decoding of communication messages and ensuring that they align with your previous experiences and current

dispositions – needs, moods and memories. Andaleeb, Rahman, Rajeb, Akter and Gulshan, (2012),in their study found that rather than dressing technique of presentation and other audio-visual elements were are the heart of the discussion on what makes news credible in the eyes of the audience.

The data have shown, in general, that female newscasters are not more trustworthy than their male counterparts. This was seen across the board. When it comes to reporting the news, a newscaster's credibility may be gauged by the traits or personal attributes that he or she demonstrates to viewers or listeners in a way that compels them to trust the news being reported. This result is in consonance with Agba, Henshaw and Oгри, (2018) who found that the female newscasters are not more credible than their male counterparts and that physical appearance does not have much significance on the audiences' preference for news consumption. Although this is in variance with the findings from Mitra, Webb and Wolfe (2014) were the findings showed that respondent's perceived that women are chosen for the news casting role because of their beauty and men for their deep voice. Thus it is this present studies position that audience should be persuaded at all times to appreciate broadcast contents and not the gender-based issues associated with such contents. More investigation is required since it might be difficult to determine whether or not a newscaster is reliable while reporting the news. However, personal characteristics like as honesty and intellect may be certain methods to determine a newscaster's trustworthiness. However, queries such as "honesty and intelligence, can only be found via more investigation. Credibility has been identified as one of the three persuasive communicator factors, along with authority and social attractiveness, by communication scholars such as Perloff (2003, page

159), which makes it a very dominant determinant of persuasiveness. Other factors include social attractiveness and authority. In spite of the fact that the purpose of this study was not to create a comparison regarding the credibility of male and female newscasters, there are research implications involved in evaluating how audiences perceive the credibility of newsreaders depending on their gender.

Other factors that influence TV news credibility according to the findings of this study are content of the story, other aesthetic elements like the TV set, the presenters personality, eloquence, voice and using live on the spot news reports this is in line with the recommendations of Akpoghiran, Umukoro and Okoro, (2017) who recommended a moderate appearance was recommended for female newsreader. After finding that physical appearance of a female newsreader distracts attention from the news if sexual appealing looks were applied.

7. Conclusion

The results from this study established that audience do not perceive the mode of dressing and gender of news presenters as major influence to their view of TV news credibility, although result shows the subtle tilt to such areas it is very imperative that TV news look at source attractiveness and news credibility in the area of presenters and also other aesthetic elements so as to gain the viewer ship needed to be able to inform and educate the society.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- News reports should be complemented with pictures as this will strengthened news stories credibility.
- News presenters should undergo training and retraining in news presentation to catch up with fashion sense as well as best global practices not forgetting cultural difference in other to provide improved news content.
- Journalists should endeavour to check and recheck information to ensure source credibility.

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