



## Exploring Mass Media Exposure and Perception of Terrorism Threats among Residents in Ibadan, South West Nigeria

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**Abstract.** There is a growing consensus globally that a symbiotic relationship exists between the media and terrorism. In the light of ongoing security situation confronting Nigeria, it has become very critical to analyze and understand people's perception of terrorism threats. Previous studies have focused greatly on media coverage of terrorism while there appears to be dearth of studies exploring the correlation between citizens' perception of terrorism threat and their exposure to the mass media. This study, therefore, investigated exposure to mass media and perception of terrorism threats among the residents in Ibadan South West Nigeria. The study adopted cultivation theory while cross-sectional survey served as the research design. Probability and non-probability (stratification, simple random, purposive and convenient) procedures were employed in selecting (n=339) respondents. Results revealed that perceived level of terrorism threats to self and the community to be high while no significant relationship exists between exposure to mass media information on terrorism threats and perceived terrorism threats to self and community among residents in Ibadan. The study recommends that the federal and state authorities overhaul their security apparatuses and strategies in addressing the challenges of terrorism threats in the country.

**Keywords:** Terrorism threats, perception, South West Nigeria, Ibadan, mass media, Boko Haram

### 1. Introduction

Terrorism assumed a dangerous and frightening dimension globally after the terrorist attacks on the United States of America (USA) on 9/11/2001 (now popularly referred to as 9/11), train bombing in Madrid in 2004 and London train bombing in 2005. The events of 9/11 in the US served to draw the attention and perspective of many to the menace of terrorism globally (Oyeniyi, 2010, Ajah & Okunola cited in Obasi, Igbo & Abiodun, 2021). Now, the

threats of terrorism have become so real in many countries. Ugwa and Okonkwo (2015) had argued that the aftermath of these attacks has reached a point that the battle against terrorism around the globe has increased in a geometric proportion. Without any doubt, globally terrorism has risen to a sublime and global community in a bid to maintain global peace and stability unanimously agreed to counter terrorism in all its forms and to also bring its perpetrators to justice (Majekodunmi, 2015). Although there may be variations in the intentions, nature and magnitude of acts of terrorism, globally, efforts are being geared towards its containment to the barest minimum.

Nigeria has had her own share of terror perpetuated by different terrorist groups. Arguably, there have been some terrorist groups (like the Niger Delta Militants, Indigenous People of Biafra [IPOB], Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra [MASSOB]) in the country which have been localized in their operations. However, the dynamics changed with the onset of Boko Haram. Omede and Omeden (2015) alleged that the insecurity situation in Nigeria seemed to have assumed higher and more complex dimensions with the onset of the sect. Boko Haram, considered one of the deadliest sects since they appeared on the scene in 2002, exacerbated the security situation in the country. The authors referred to above also claimed that besides the frequency and intensity of deadly attacks and carnages, insecurity situation in Nigeria cuts across cities, towns and villages. Beyond the monumental human and material consequences of Boko Haram activities, the continued existence of the country as an entity appears to be hanging precariously in a balance.

Terrorism is designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack (Shekwolo, Nanlir, Temitope & Aondoaver, 2021). The central aim of terrorism is not so much the act of violence or the killing of a target, but rather the dissemination of

terror and uncertainty among a population as well as the spread of the group's message through the newsworthiness of the violent act (Spencer, 2012). The media reporting such violent acts has been seen from a mutually beneficial point of view. Scholars (Spencer, 2012, Ngige, Badekale & HammanJoda, 2016) have argued that there is a symbiotic relationship that benefits both the media and the insurgents.

The Nigerian mass media have been accused of being used in fanning the ember of terrorism in the country. The growing concern, especially in Nigeria, about the relationship between the mass media and the threat of terrorism cannot be totally ignored. The ubiquitous nature of, and the pervasiveness of the mass media in the lives of people, may imply that Nigerian people are not oblivious of the reality of terrorism threats in the country. The power and influence of media narratives are evident in their surveillance function of keeping the citizens adequately informed about events happening within and outside their immediate environments. However, media narratives may have implications on citizen's perception of the terrorism threats.

It is, therefore, not surprising that scholars are interrogating the nexus between the mass media and the threats of terrorism in Nigeria. For instance, Ngige et al. (2016) investigated the media and Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, Kupoluyi & Awotunde (2019) examined media reportage of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, Asemah (2013) study focused on public perception of media framing of terrorism, Kente & Sheyigari (2021) investigated news media framing and the coverage of Boko-haram insurgency in the Northeast Nigeria while Shekwolo et al. (2021) conducted a study on social characteristics and perception of terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria.

Cohen-louck (2016) had argued that one important issue that needed to be analyzed and understood in the light of the tense and ongoing security situation in the State of Israel was the citizen's perception of terrorism. In the same vein, in view of the disturbing and growing insecurity in Nigeria, it has become imperative to interrogate the issue of citizen's perception of these terrorism threats in the country, in relation to their exposure to mass media information on terrorism threats. The perception of the public toward terrorism has been seen to have affected Nigeria's political, economic and social insecurity which encompasses all developmental goals (Shekwolo et al., 2021). This notwithstanding, none of the studies mentioned above focused on the variables of interest of this present study. This current

study, therefore, investigated the relationship between exposure to mass media and perception of terrorism threats among residents of Ibadan, south west Nigeria. The study area was selected based on the argument made by Shekwolo et al. (2016) that beyond targeting people within their environs, and inflicting injuries and destroying their properties, terrorists aim to send fear to those who are not within their immediate vicinities.

The study adopted the cultivation theory, propounded by George Gerbner in the 1960s, as the theoretical underpinning. Cultivation is a sociocultural theory regarding the role of television in shaping viewers' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). The primary hypothesis of cultivation theory is that the more people watch television, the more they will come to adopt its underlying messages. That is, the more they watch television, the more likely they are to hold beliefs that are consistent with the world as it is portrayed on television (Shrum, 2017). This study hypothesized, therefore, that the more exposed the respondents are to mass media information on terrorism, the higher their perception of terrorism threat to them and their community.

The attraction on television was because at the time of the development of cultivation theory television was the dominant storytelling medium, hence most of the theory's development and testing focused on the influence and effects of television on viewers' perceptions of social reality (Shrum, 2017). However, research frontiers have expanded beyond television to other media such as social media. This is not surprising considering the pervasiveness and ubiquitous nature of social media networks in the lives of users. Although there were three areas of analysis at the conception of the cultivation analysis, up till date cultivation analysis has continued to be the primary focus of most media research by scholars (Shrum, 2017).

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1.) What is the level of perceived terrorism threat among residents in Ibadan South West Nigeria?
- 2.) What is the exposure pattern to mass media information on terrorism among residents in Ibadan south west Nigeria?
- 3.) What is the relationship between exposure pattern to mass media information on terrorism and perception of terrorism threat among residents in Ibadan South West Nigeria?
- 4.) Do some demographic variables (such as sex, age, level of education, place of residence and religious affiliation) have a significant relationship with perception of

terrorism threat among residents in Ibadan South West Nigeria?

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Study Design**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design in order to reach the target population who are residents of Ibadan. This design was deemed appropriate in order to harness their perception and opinions on terrorism threats to them and their community.

### **2.2 Participants**

The participants in this study are residents of Ibadan aged 18 years and above. Residents below 18 years were excluded from the study since they are regarded as minors. Participation in the study was not compulsory and their right to withdraw from the study was not infringed upon.

### **2.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

The probability and non-probability sampling procedures (stratification, simple random, purposive and convenient) were utilized in the selection of residents who took part in the study. Ibadan municipality was stratified along urban and semi-urban areas. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of the communities while purposive and convenient sampling procedures were used in the selection of the respondents. The rationale for the stratification of the communities into urban and semi-urban was to investigate if place of residence would have influence on respondents' perception of terrorism threat. Out of a total of three hundred and fifty (350) copies of questionnaire administered, three hundred and thirty nine (339) were returned.

### **2.4 Data Collection**

Three (3) research assistants who were trained assisted in the data collection. Data collection lasted for a total of two (2) weeks. The research assistants were instructed to administer and retrieve the copies of the instrument after completion by the respondents. They were also to ensure that all the items were answered. These decisions not only ensured very high return rates but also ensured that the copies of the questionnaire were usable.

### **2.5 Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics expressed in simple percentages and frequency counts were adopted in order to analyse the descriptive data. Furthermore, Spearman rho, t-test and One Way ANOVA were used in order to establish relationship between the variables.

### **2.6 Measures**

Questionnaire, which was utilized as the instrument for data collection, has a total of forty five (45) items and four (4) sections. These sections focused on the variables of interest of the study – demographics, mass media information seeking behaviour on terrorism threats and perception of terrorism threats to self and community. These sections are discussed separately.

### **2.7 Demographics**

In order to generate their demographic information, respondents were asked to respond to their sex, age, marital status, religious affiliation, level of education, local government area of residence.

### **Information seeking behaviour on terrorism threats from the mass media**

This section has a total of twelve (12) items. The battery of questions probed the respondents' pattern of mass media exposure, information seeking behaviour on terrorism threats, opinions on mass media coverage of terrorism threats and other (alternate) sources of information on terrorism threats. Their opinions were also sought regarding government sources handling of information on terrorism threats as well as the credibility of news and information on threats of terrorism from government sources.

### **Perception of terrorism threats to self and community**

In order to measure respondents' perception of terrorism threat to self, the statements they responded to focused on their perception of control, vulnerability and fear of terrorism threat. Items on control focused on loss of control, helplessness due to uncertainty and inability to predict threats. Items on vulnerability focused on feeling of victimization and vulnerability to terrorism while items on fear of terrorism focused on feeling of fear, anxiety, danger and emotional distress among the respondents. Respondents' perception of threat to their communities was measured by asking them to

respond to statements that focused on social and psychological factors. In all, this section has a total of sixteen (16) statements with a 5-point Likert Scale response options where 1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree. Based on their responses, perception of terrorism threat was categorized into two (2) levels - low and high. These levels apply to both threats of terrorism to self and community.

**Opinion on most serious crime threats facing their community and the country**

Opinions of respondents were sought on the most serious crime threats facing their community and the country. Respondents were asked to select only one crime threat facing their community and the country from the list of crime threats provided. The options include armed robbery, terrorism, burglary, kidnapping, gang, banditry threats and others. The “others” option required the respondents to provide just one crime threat each for their community and the country.

**3. Analysis of findings**

**Socio-Demographic Information of Respondents**

Table 1 reflects the socio-demographic data of the respondents who participated in the study. Majority of the respondents were 26years and above (n=239;70.5%), are males (n=194;57.2%), were married (n=179;52.8%), were Christians (n=244;72.0%), lived in urban(n=200; 59.0%) and had HND/First Degree (n=173; 51.1%).

**Table 1:** Socio-demographic information of the respondents

| All                                      | Demography Characteristics | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Age of the respondents                   |                            |           |             |
| Young adults                             | 18-25years                 | 100       | 29.5        |
| Old adults                               | 26 and above               | 239       | 70.5        |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |
| Sex of the respondents                   | male                       | 194       | 57.2        |
|  | female                     | 145       | 42.8        |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |
| Marital status of the respondents        | single                     | 144       | 42.4        |
|  | married                    | 179       | 52.8        |
|  | others                     | 16        | 4.8         |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |
| Religious affiliation of the respondents | christian                  | 244       | 72.0        |
|  | moslem                     | 88        | 26.0        |
|  | traditionalist             | 7         | 2.0         |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |
| Place of residence of the respondents    | urban                      | 200       | 59.0        |
|  | semi-urban                 | 139       | 41.0        |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |
| Level of education of the respondents    | wassce                     | 31        | 9.1         |
|  | nce/ond                    | 43        | 12.7        |
|  | hnd/first degree           | 173       | 51.1        |
|  | masters/phd                | 76        | 22.4        |
|  | others                     | 16        | 4.7         |
|  | Total                      | 339       | 100.0       |

**Exposure pattern to mass media information on terrorism threats**

Respondents always get news and information of terrorism threats from the mass media. Finding in Table 2 reveals that majority (n=183;54.0%) always are exposed to news and information on terrorism threats from the mass media.

**Table 2:** Exposure pattern to mass media information on terrorism threats among the respondents

| Response     | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| always       | 183       | 54.0       |
| occasionally | 123       | 36.3       |
| rarely       | 33        | 9.7        |
| Total        | 339       | 100.0      |

The study also probed further into other media issues such as extent of, and satisfaction with coverage of terrorism threat by the mass media, credibility of information of terrorism threats from the mass media. Residents believe that the mass media give enough coverage to the issue of terrorism threat. Finding shows that more respondents believe that the media have given too much (n=34;10.0%) and much(n=199;58.7%) coverage to terrorism threats while less believe that mass media have given little (n=94;27.7% and very little(n=12;3.5%) coverage to terrorism threats. It is, therefore, not surprising that residents expressed their satisfaction on the attention mass media have given to the issue. Put together respondents who are very satisfied (n=19;5.6%) and satisfied(n=200;59.0%) are more than those who are not satisfied (n=105;31.0%) and not very satisfied(n=15;4.4%) on the attention mass media have given to terrorism threats. Residents are of the opinion that traditional media are more credible source of news and information about terrorism threat than the social media. This is evidenced by the finding that majority (n=185;54.6%) of the respondents stated that traditional media are more credible source of news and information about terrorism threats than the social media while minority(n=154;45.4%) thought otherwise. A follow-up question focused on which media respondents would turn to for news and information in case of terrorism threat. Surprisingly, majority (n=198;58.4%) said that they would turn to social media while a lesser number(n=141;41.6%) of the respondents said that they would turn to the traditional media for news and information in case of terrorism threats. Besides turning to the mass media for news and information about terrorism threats, other sources that the residents turn to are friends (n=109;32.2%), colleagues/class members(n=100;29.5%), family members(n=56;16.5%) and government officials(n=39;11.5%), in that order.

**Perceived terrorism threat to self**

In order to enhance analysis, response options “strongly agree and “agree” were merged together to represent “agree” “while “strongly disagree” and “disagree” represent “disagree”. Finding on Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents believe that terrorism is a threat to them. In response to all the items, majority of the respondents agreed that terrorism is a threat to them. For instance, majority (n=234;69.0%) agreed that they have reduced the frequency of travel due to terrorism threats on Nigerian roads while only a small number (n=65; 19.1%) disagreed with the statement. Again, a total of (n=177;52.2%) of the respondents agreed that they feel a sense of loss of control of things happening around their environment because of terrorism threats, while a total of (n=100;29.5%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. A total (n=62;18.3%) of the respondents were undecided on the issue.

**Table3:** Respondents’ opinion on terrorism threat to self

| Statement   | Agree      | Undecided | Disagree   |
|---|------------|-----------|------------|
| I always feel a sense of loss of control of things happening around my environment because of terrorism threats | 177(52.2%) | 62(18.3%) | 100(29.5%) |
| I always feel threatened because I am not able to predict terrorism threats in my community                     | 161(47.5%) | 67(19.8%) | 111(32.7%) |
| I always feel so unsafe because of terrorism threats in my community  | 175(51.7%) | 36(10.6%) | 128(37.7%) |
| I am always worried or concerned about being attacked by terrorists   | 174(51.3%) | 77(22.7%) | 88(26.0%)  |
| I have stopped going out at night because of terrorism threats  | 169(49.8%) | 64(18.9%) | 106(31.3%) |
| I have reduced the frequency of my travels due to terrorism threats on Nigerian roads                           | 234(69.0%) | 40(11.9%) | 65(19.1%)  |
| I always feel a sense of helplessness because of terrorism threats in my community                              | 134(39.5%) | 88(26.0%) | 117(34.5%) |
| I am sometimes afraid that I may be exposed to terrorism attack in my community                                 | 160(47.2%) | 87(25.7%) | 92(27.1%)  |

**Categorization of level of terrorism threats to self**

Based on their responses, residents were categorized based on the perception of level of terrorism threats to self. Majority (n=238;70.2%) of the respondents perceive level of terrorism threat to self to be high while minority(n=101;29.8%) of the respondents perceive level of terrorism threats to be low. The implication of this finding is that many of the residents perceive terrorism to be a threat to their personal lives.

**Perceived terrorism threats to community**

Responses were also collapsed in order to enhance analysis. The response options “strongly agree and “agree” were merged together to represent “agree” “while “strongly disagree” and “disagree” represent “disagree”. The respondents in this study appear not to trust and welcome strangers into their community. This is evident in Table 3 where the majority (n=232;68.5%) of the respondents agreed that people in their community are now suspicious of strangers who come into their community because of terrorism threats while fewer respondents disagreed with the statement. Similarly, a larger number (n=201;59.3%) agreed that people in their community no longer trust strangers because of terrorism threats while fewer number(n=86;25.4%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. However, respondents believe that people in their community still maintain social interaction despite terrorism threats. Majority(n=176;51.9%) disagree that people in their community no longer feel free to attend social functions (such as funerals, marriages, house warmings) organized in the community because of terrorism threats. A lesser number (n=98;28.9%) agreed with the statement while those who were undecided were (n=65;19.2%). Furthermore, majority (n=150;44.3%) disagreed that social functions (such as funerals, marriages, house warmings) are not allowed into the night because of terrorism threats while lesser number(n=129;38%) agreed with the statement.

**Table 4:** Respondents’ opinion on terrorism threats to their community

| Statement  | Agree      | Undecided | Disagree   |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|
| The people in my community are no longer willing to help their neighbours because of terrorism threats in our community  | 117(34.5%) | 56(16.2%) | 164(49.3%) |
| The people in my community no longer welcome strangers into our community because of terrorism threats   | 138(40.7%) | 59(17.4%) | 142(41.9%) |
| The people in my community are now suspicious of strangers who come into our community because of terrorism threats  | 232(68.5%) | 52(15.3%) | 52(16.3%)  |
| The people in the community no longer feel free to attend social functions (such as funerals, marriages, house warmings) organized in community because of terrorism threats | 98(28.9%)  | 65(19.2%) | 176(51.9%) |
| In my community social functions (such as funerals, marriages, house warmings) are not allowed into the night because of terrorism threats                                   | 129(38.0%) | 60(17.7%) | 150(44.3%) |
| The people in my community no longer keep late nights  | 193(57.0%) | 50(14.7%) | 96(28.3%)  |
| The community where I live has put in place extra security measures to guard against terrorism threats to our community  | 188(55.5%) | 63(18.5%) | 88(26.0%)  |
| The people in my community no longer trust strangers because of terrorism threats to our community   | 201(59.3%) | 52(15.3%) | 86(25.4%)  |

**Categorization of level of terrorism threats to the community**

Similarly, based on their responses, residents were categorized based on the perception of level of terrorism threat to their community. Majority (n=219;64.6%) of the respondents perceive level of terrorism threat to their community to be high while minority(n=120;35.4%) of the respondents perceive level of terrorism threats to their community to be low. The implication of this finding is that many of the residents perceive terrorism to be a threat to their community.

**Most serious crime threats facing their community and the country**

Residents identified armed robbery threats (n=171;50.4%), burglary threats(n=75;22.1%), gang threat(n=36;10.6%) and terrorism threats(n=25;7.4%) in that order as the most serious crime threats facing their community. However, a reversal of these crime threats in their community was evident as residents identified serious crime threats facing the country as terrorism threats (122;36.0%), kidnapping threats(n=89;26.3%), armed robbery threats(n=85;25.15) and banditry threats(n=23;6.8%) in that order. The implication of this finding is that residents believe that the pattern of crime threats facing their local community are different from the ones facing the entire country.

**Relationship between exposure pattern to mass media and perception of terrorism threats among the respondents**

In order to investigate any relationship that exists between exposure patterns to mass media and perception of terrorism threat among the respondents, Spearman’s rho was employed to analyze the data generated. Considering that perception of terrorism threats was explored separately (for self and community), this was also applied to this analysis. At Table 4, it was revealed that a relationship exists between exposure to mass media and perception of terrorism threats to self. However, the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between exposure patterns and perceived terrorism threats to oneself is 0.096. This indicates a weak positive relationship between these two variables. Importantly, this correlation value does not attain statistical significance at the 5% level, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.077, which exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05. The implication of this finding is that an increased exposure to mass media information on terrorism threats does not translate to perceived high level of terrorism threats to self and vice versa.

Similarly, Spearman rho correlation coefficient between exposure patterns and perceived terrorism threats to the community is 0.041. This indicates a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This also does not reach a statistical significance at the 5% level as indicated by the p-value of 0.456, which surpasses the significance threshold of 0.05. This means that an increased exposure to mass media information on terrorism threats does not lead to perceived high level of terrorism threats to the community and vice versa.

**Table 5:** Relationship between exposure pattern to mass media and perception of terrorism threats among the respondents

|                  |                     | Exposure pattern | Threat to self | Threat to community |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Exposure pattern | Pearson correlation | 1                | .096           | .041                |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                  | .077           | .456                |
|                  | N                   | 339              | 339            | 339                 |

**Relationship between some demographic variables (such as sex, age, level of education, religious affiliation and place of residence) and perception of terrorism threats among the respondents.**

Analysis for this was done in two parts. In the first part, T-test comparing respondents’ perception of terrorism threats grouped by sex, age and place of residence was carried out. Finding (see Table 5) shows that the females have a higher mean score of 55.77 while the males have a lower mean score of 54.97. However, the T-test shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups on their perception of terrorism threats ( $t(337)=-0.557, p=.578$ ). This shows that the sex of the residents does not influence their perception of terrorism threats. Finding also shows that the older adults have a higher mean score of 55.81 while the younger adults have a lower mean score of 54.19. The T-test shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups on their perception of terrorism threats ( $t(337) = -1.077, p = .282$ ). The implication is that the age of the respondents does not have any significant relationship with their perception of terrorism threats.

Finally, respondents who reside in semi-urban areas have a higher mean score of 56.56 while those who reside in urban areas have a lower mean score of 54.46. Similarly, the T-test reveals that there is no significant difference between the two groups on their perception of terrorism threats ( $t(337) = -1.458, p = .146$ ). This shows that area of residence of the respondents does not influence their perception of terrorism threats.

**Table 6:** T-test comparing respondents’ perception of terrorism threats grouped by sex, age and place of residence

| Sex                | N   | Mean    | Df  | t-test | Sig. |
|--------------------|-----|---------|-----|--------|------|
| male               | 194 | 54.9794 | 337 | -.557  | .578 |
| female             | 145 | 55.7793 |     |        |      |
| Age                | N   | Mean    | Df  | t-test | Sig. |
| young adult        | 100 | 54.1400 | 337 | -1.077 | .282 |
| old adult          | 239 | 55.8159 |     |        |      |
| Place of residence | N   | Mean    | df  | t-test | Sig. |
| urban              | 200 | 54.4600 | 337 | -1.458 | .146 |
| semi urban         | 139 | 56.5612 |     |        |      |

Sig. level = 0.05

In this second part, One-way ANOVA comparing respondents' perception of terrorism threats grouped by religious affiliation and educational level was carried out. Finding shows that traditionalists, Christians and moslems have mean scores of 56.28, 55.46 and 54.85 respectively (see Table 6). The F-value is 0.090 while the p-value is 0.914(this is greater than the 0.05 level of significance). Therefore, no significant relationship exists between respondents' religious affiliation and their perception of terrorism threats.

Furthermore, finding reveals that the mean scores of the respondents with varying educational levels range from 54.3226 to 57.8553(see Table 6). Although there are some variations in their scores, further analysis revealed that there is no significant difference within the groups on their perception of terrorism threats ( $F(334) = .996, p = .410$ ). This indicates that the respondents' level of education does not influence their perception of terrorism threats.

Overall, the findings reveal that demographic variables (sex, age, place of residence, religious affiliation and educational level) do not significantly influence the residents' perception of terrorism threats.

**Table 7:** One-way ANOVA comparing perception of terrorism threats among the respondents grouped by religious affiliation and educational level

| Religion                | N   | Mean    | df  | F    | Sig. |
|-------------------------|-----|---------|-----|------|------|
| <i>christian</i>        | 244 | 55.4631 | 336 | .090 | .914 |
| <i>moslem</i>           | 88  | 54.8523 |     |      |      |
| <i>traditionalist</i>   | 7   | 56.2857 |     |      |      |
| <i>Total</i>            | 339 | 55.3215 |     |      |      |
| Education level         | N   | Mean    | Df  | F    | Sig. |
| <i>Wassce</i>           | 31  | 54.3226 | 334 | .996 | .410 |
| <i>Nce /Ond</i>         | 43  | 55.5814 |     |      |      |
| <i>hnd/first degree</i> | 173 | 54.3873 |     |      |      |
| <i>masters/phd</i>      | 76  | 57.8553 |     |      |      |
| <i>Others</i>           | 16  | 54.6250 |     |      |      |
| <i>Total</i>            | 339 | 55.3215 |     |      |      |

Sig. level = 0.05

#### 4. Discussion of findings

The study shows that residents of Ibadan are always exposed to mass media information on terrorism threats. The ubiquitous nature of the mass media in the modern society enables media users to key into the surveillance function of the mass media. The increased security threats and citizen awareness have consequences. Therefore, considering the uncertainty, frequency and enormity of the terrorism threats and attacks, it is not surprising that the residents have adjusted to keeping track of related events in their immediate and remote environments.

Previous studies have interrogated the different aspects of the symbiotic relationship between the Nigerian media and terrorism (Asemah,2013, Ngige et al, 2016, Ajakaiye et al., 2021). For instance, the study by Ajakaiye et al.(2021)found out that the press in Nigeria is discharging its corporate social responsibility by setting and sustaining public consciousness on the injustice and inhumanity of the abduction of the Chibok girls. This current study also shows that the mass media give enough coverage to the issue of terrorism threats and attacks. However,

divergent opinions on this issue have been expressed by other scholars. Whereas some scholars (Ngige et al., 2016, Awoviebe, Gbighidje & Temisere (2019) and other concerned stakeholders have argued strongly on the mutually beneficial relationships between the media and terrorists' groups, the mass media thrive in breaking news and as such terrorists' groups depend on them to "propagate" the message of their attacks. Indeed the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, paid specific attention to this effect by calling the media the "oxygen" of terrorists (Muller, Spaaij & Ruitenbergh cited in Ngige et al., 2016).

The study by Lemyre, Turner, Lee & Krewski, (2006) showed that the Canadian media was cited as the source most often referred to when seeking credible information about terrorism, while elected politicians and government officials were referred to as the least. This current study also corroborated their finding. The traditional media are the most credible source while government officials are the least credible sources that the residents turn to when seeking news and information about terrorism threats. This is not surprising considering that government

officials, considered the mouth piece of government, will not speak to jeopardise the interest of the government that they represent. This may amount to a case of self indictment.

Globally terrorism threats and attacks have become a joint issue that no country can afford to ignore, although the intensity and frequency may vary. Terrorism is designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack (Shekwolo et al., 2021). The varying scope and impact on different locations may be a key moderating factor on how citizens perceive these threats. For instance, Lemyre et al.'s. (2006) study reported that terrorism was perceived as low to moderate threat to the Canadian population and an even lower threat to themselves as individuals while Cvetkovic et al. (2018) study revealed that participants exhibited low levels of perception vis-a-vis the future likelihood of terrorist attacks occurring in their Belgrade communities. However, this current study showed that the perceived level of terrorism threats to self and community is high among the Ibadan residents. This result is not unexpected considering that the country is at the cross roads in its fight against insurgent groups. Oladele cited in Shekwolo et al. (2021:252) painted a grim picture by stating that "the nation Nigeria has witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assaults from terrorist group which is undoubtedly the most blood-thirsty and destructive in terms of demonic brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to the principles of peace and stability".

This study also revealed that no significant relationship exists between exposure to mass media information on terrorism threats and perceived terrorism threat to self and community. Although Shekwolo et al. (2021) obliquely made reference to the fact that fear and uncertainty of terrorism attacks may spread to people who are exposed through broadcast, this appears not to be the case in this study. This finding, therefore, did not support the key assumption of the cultivation theory as discussed earlier. There is need for further studies to interrogate the relationship between other sources, such as interpersonal sources, and perceived terrorism threats.

Some studies (Cohen-Louck, 2016, Cvetkovic et al., 2018) have established a correlation between some demographic variables and perception of terrorism threats or risks. However, this current study did not show any significant relationship between demographic variables and residents' perception of terrorism threats. Ewetan cited in Shekwolo et al.

(2021) had noted the alarming level of terrorists' attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria and in different parts of the country, so it is not unlikely that everyone, irrespective of their gender, age, religious affiliation etc, will feel threatened as they may be the targets of attacks.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study investigated the relationship between mass media exposure and perception of terrorism threats among residents of Ibadan South West Nigeria. The main findings of this study revealed that residents of Ibadan are always exposed to mass media information on terrorism threats, perceived high terrorism threats to self and community but that there was no significant relationship between exposure to mass media information on terrorism and perceived terrorism threats to self and community.

Since the public perception of the risks(threats) of terrorism are very important for directing risk management decision-making and for preparedness planning (Cvetković et al., 2018), this study recommends that the Federal and state authorities overhaul their security apparatuses and strategies in addressing the challenges of terrorism threats in the country. It is important that the concerned authorities make terrorism their first policy priority. This has become imperative based on the devastating effects that terrorism threats may be having on the political, social and economic development of the country.

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