



## ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of mass media in the promotion of democracy against the intervention of military coup d'etat in the contemporary Nigeria. The sudden overthrow of democratically elected government in post-independent West Africa by groups of military insurgents, is an evidence of re-emerging of coup d'etat in part of Africa in recent years. Amidst series of challenges, the mass media have played remarkable roles to promote culture of democratic process. This study utilized descriptive survey and structured interview methods.

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## ASS MEDIA, COUP D'ETAT AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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## Introduction

The Nigerian military and by extension Africa is associated with importance virtues such as courage, discipline, self-sacrifice and patriotism which makes it admired by all and sundry. The professionalism and nationalistic antecedents usually made them act in unity and execution of both military and political functions. These skills acquired in the course of their training tend to enhance the military to create a competent difference between them and other facets of the Nigerian society. Despite their significant attributes of command and obedience, their years of staying in power was confrontational rather than compromise to achieve virile democratic culture and societal value system.

The monopolization of political power often discourages public participation, orientation and contestation of useful ideas capable of facilitating the needed development for the governed (Ojo, 2009). These features undoubtedly pose a serious threat to the survival of democracy across the continent of Africa where the military in the past and recently holding sway to revolutionarily overturning the prevailing on popular democratic structures. Nigeria has experienced consistent military interruption before 1999 and it has all along being a transition without transferring power but embarked on rhetoric's about the dire need for democracy (Barka and Neube, 2012).

Democracy is a set of ideas, institutions and processes of governance that permits the mass of people to choose their leaders and also guarantees them a broad range of civil rights with the inclusion of socio-economic concerns of the entire society. The features included fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, right to dignity of being a human, right to fair hearing, life, thoughts, consciences and justices (Mohammed and Fadeyi, 2017). Nwoye



Questionnaire and interview guide were used as instruments for data gathering. The population of the study covered four states in southwest-Oyo, Lagos, Ogun and Osun-States. Simple random and quota sampling techniques were employed to select the sampling size of 240 respondents selected across different Local Government Areas of the selected states. 210 questionnaire were returned valid for data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. This study found that the media efforts in curbing the emergence of coup d'état and promotion of democratic practice in Nigeria is very high. It concluded that military insurgency can be avoided if the leadership of government in Nigeria do the needful by meeting the socio-economic situation of the people. The implications of this study amongst others is to expose the Nigerian media as a veritable tool for uplifting the cause of democracy in Nigerian society. It alerts sub-saharan nations including Nigeria of the likelihood of military insurgency if collective development actions are not implemented.

**Keywords:** Mass Media, Military Coup D'état, Democracy, Contemporary Nigeria, Challenges

(2001), argues that democracy signifies political system dominated by representatives either directly or indirectly chosen by the people. It allows and entrenches the right, ability and capacity of people in any country to take control of their lives through collective participation, objective discussions on issues that affect them and their community. However, one of the parameters for measuring the degree of democratic practice in a particular country is the level to which the media liberty is guaranteed. This is important because the media is seen as instruments for informing, educating and mobilizing citizens on democratic processes and governance, otherwise performing both constitutional and traditional functions to the entire nation.

Historically, journalism practice in Nigeria had undergone series of trials and challenges especially during the military era of different draconic laws and decrees. During this period, journalists were humiliated, harassed, intimidated, maimed, murdered and incassated. Decree 35, 43 and 48 of 1993 introduced stringent requirements while treason and treasonable offences Decree adequately prevented the media from performing its watchdog functions. This role extends from monitoring the entire process of governance to prevention of insurgency or imposition of military rule. Incidentally, police and other security operatives had at different times arrested and detained media practitioners in various correctional centres without trial while hundreds of Newspapers/magazine copies were impounded by different government agents. Admits intimidations and harassment, during both military and democratic system, the media has played remarkable roles to safeguard peaceful co-existence and promotion of the culture of democratic process in Nigeria, rather than taking cues from undemocratic and dictatorial regime (Pate, 2012). Infact, the media truly championed the course of democratic practice and indeed acting as the vanguard of democracy (Okpoko, 2003). Arguably, the media has remained in the forefront for the struggle to promote the rights of the people through credible democratic practice. Though, this is not to say that the media are angels in every circumstance, they are also confronted with severe criticisms especially for complicity in truncating democratic process.



Against the backdrop of the media credibility and passion for democratic culture in Nigeria and by extension in Africa, the sudden overthrow of democratically elected government in post-independence West Africa by groups of military insurgents, is an evidence of re-emerging of coup d'état in part of Africa in recent times. Since Independence, African nations including Nigeria have experienced more than 200 military coups, considering both successful and failed attempts. However, by sheer providence, the Nigeria military have been prominence both in democratic transitions and nation building. Thus, at virtually every phase of Nigeria's succeeding history, the military has been prominent despite their contradictory characters to the virtues of democracy. In view of the forgoing, military rule is magisterial government by fiat and authoritarian perhaps because of their significant elements of command and obedience supra-individuality and confrontational rather than compromise. Of course, it is a demonstration of outright disdain for democratic values (Ojo, 2000).

Following the above introductory overview, the thrust of this paper is to investigate and proffers solutions to the following fundamental questions; what are the efforts of the media in curbing the emergence of coup d'état and promotion of democratic practice in Nigeria? What are the professional approaches applied by the media to encourage democratic culture rather than military insurgency? What are the likely causal factors for military coup d'état in Nigeria? What are the challenges confronted by the Nigeria media in their efforts to promote democracy rather than military rule in Nigeria?

### Objectives

1. To investigate the efforts of the media in curbing the emergence of coup d'état and promotion of democratic practice in Nigeria.
2. To determine the professional approaches applied by the media to encourage democratic culture rather than military insurgency.
3. To identify the likely causal factors for military coup d'état in Nigeria?
4. To ascertain the challenges confronted by the Nigerian media in their efforts to promote democracy rather than military rule in Nigeria.

### Coup d'état in Nigeria: The Historical Perspectives

The discourse on transition and succession speaks volume on Nigerian political journey, Nigeria has experienced transitions to democracy in a gradual political disengagement of the military regime from governance. Like in most African nations, democratic transitions and successions in Nigeria have been difficult and problematic.

In 1964, political contest was getting tough because the two major alliance of all the then political parties were involved in federal elections which was characterised by rampant fraud, malpractices and anarchy which led the elections ending in a stalemate, western region election was later held and resulted to deadlock (we tie) meaning "burn him". This helpless situation led to the military coup d'état on January 15, 1966 where prominent politicians and senior military officers were murdered. This led to the eventual ascension to power by Major General Aguiyi Ironsi marked the end of the first civilian democratic government. General Ironsi promulgated Decree No 34 which will permit him to handover to an elected government since the military had no plan to elongate its tenure. Sad enough, in June 1966, another coup came up which led to the assassination of



General Ironsi and many other senior military officers. General Yakubu Gowon took over the mantle of power under a retaliatory coup. This government ruled the country amidst civil war for nine years after which he was overthrown on July, 1975, by General Muritala Mohammed regime. Mohammed/Obasanjo introduced people oriented programme (operation feed the nation) and setting up a realistic time-table for the transfer of political power to civilian according to the five stage programme (Obodumu, 2000). According to Banjo (2001), the succession or transition to democratic government implemented by this government was not thorough because the programme concentrated on the political aspects and not the economic that is capable of entrenching the democratic culture. In addition, the removal of Electoral College and replacing it with second election (re-run) if the first is incapable of producing a clear winner.

This regime handed over to Alhaji Shehu Shagari of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) as the Executive President of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The installation was not hugely welcome by all citizens because the elections was adjudged as day light robbery against the opposition party especially the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Unfortunately, Shagari administration did not live up to people's expectation due to certain hiccups in the policy. After all, the conduct of 1983 state and federal elections were characterised by strong allegations of political violence, harassment, victimization of party supporters by the party in power and other electoral fraud at both the federal and state levels. This ugly situation created the dire need for military intervention that eventually forestalled the already established second republic civilian government.

In 1983, General Mohammed Buhari came into power and enunciated a ten point agenda programme which focused majorly on the revival of the economy of the country, ensure discipline and better diplomatic ties. The idea of not respecting the return to civil rule led to another military take-over in August 27, 1985 that brought Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida into power. In a bid to assure the nation of the government intention to shift to democracy, the administration set up relevant socio-political infrastructure such as Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS) and Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) as the regime believed that public mobilization as a vital process in the realization of democratic governance. In addition, constituent Assembly and constitution Drafting Committee were also engaged in the process (Olagunju, Jinadu and Oyobiare, 2001). Issues of terminal date of military rule attracted series of conflicts in its actualization.

Consequently, the long awaited presidential election took place on June 12, 1993 using the modified open ballot system. The outcome of the election indicated that the Social Democratic Party (SDP) flagbeaves-Chief M.K.O Abiola-victory over the National Republican Convention (NRC), Alhaji Ibrahim Tofa. The election was adjudged as the most peaceful and orderly conducted in the anal of Nigerian history, in spite of this clear cut successes, the whole process was put to a half by allegations, counter allegations, court actions and at the end annulment. The annulment led to the establishment of non-democratically elected president and head of Interim National Government (ING), Chief Ernest Shonekan. General Babangida, the president and commander in Chief step aside for Shonekan's administration to thrive. Following organized and inclusive government talks with the striking labour union and serious pressures from the military hierarchy, Chief Ernest Shonekan bowed to pressures and relinquish his position as the Head of Interim National



Government (ING) and Commander-in-Chief and instantly replaced by General Sani Abacha (Robert and Obioha, 2015).

The regime of General Sanni Abacha witnessed the end of third republic or quasi civilian government. After inception, the military regime constituted Provision Ruling Council (PRC) and Federal Executive Council (FEC) after the prescription of Interim National Government (ING). The government embarked on fake transition programme by sponsoring political parties such as NCPN, GDM, DPN and others for self-succession bid. During this regime, powerful Nigerians were murdered – Pa. Alfred Rewane, Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, Alhaja Suliat Adedeji and others – respectively. Many top politicians were jailed, Nigerian treasury looted and hundreds were ran out of the country. General Sanni Abacha’s Deputy, General Oladipo Dipo Diya along with other senior officers were arrested and prosecuted for treasonable felony. Consequently, General Sanni Abacha died mysteriously after his tortious years of self-succession bid.

On June 1998, General Abdulsalam Abubakar became Nigeria’s new leader. General Abubakar’s transition plans consolidated the way towards true democratic transition in Nigeria. Incidentally, elections were held on February, 27<sup>th</sup> 1999 that ushered into power new set of political leaders and administration under the watch of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This unbelievable bold steps of General Abubakar registered his name in gold as the military Head of State that signalled positive end of the military oppressions in Nigeria and heralded fourth Republic on 27 May, 1999.

#### **Mass Media and the Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria**

Mass media has played an important role in the scramble for democracy in many countries of Africa including Nigeria. The media have helped to entrench cooperation between the new leaders in government and citizenry through persuasions that facilitated legitimized government and win people loyalty for such government (Ojo, 2003). Though there are no systematic national communication policies reliable enough to achieve effective communication on the people scattered over large geographical areas, the mass media most times fraud themselves in the crossroad especially in the areas that have to do with the dominant culture and preservation of national interest. Harassment of journalists and media organizations has resulted in the incapability of the media to adequately perform their role as watchdog of society (Pate and Akingbulu, 2020). One of the central roles of the media is that of enhancing and promotion of democracy. This is because democracy can only survive and thrive when ideas are raised and information dissemination are democratized via free from undue control by government. For instance in Nigeria, journalists were seen as government enemies, this why they are usually embarrassed, molested, harassed and incarcerated. For democracy to be built, the media must be free totally from government interference which will propel accountability, probity, equity and responsiveness in governance. Meanwhile, the media sets agenda for the discussion for critical national issues, collate views of the public on these issues and convey them to the authorities concerned for implementation (Uzoamaka, Gerald and Eze, 2016). They serve as a link between the governments and governed. This role made the media struggle for democratization full of stories of undaunted and fearless journalists who act as social critics who preferred to be incarcerated to ensure democratic practice and good governance rather than permitting government by fiat. This said patriotic behaviours stand as a benchmark for Nigerian flourishing democratic cultures.



However, the media is essentially responsible for informing and educating the public on political time-tables, registrations and all other democratic processes particularly those that have to do with the conduct of democratic elections, right to vote, organizing political debates, manifestos and knowledge about participatory political processes. They provide required information to electorates in order to make meaningful decisions on candidate choices, political parties, legal options and mechanisms for preventing allegations of violations or malpractices and political thuggery. Hence, the propagation and development of democratic practice is closely linked to the activities of the mass media. It is difficult, however, to have a thriving and robust democracy without the provision of a viable media system capable of facilitating democratic dividends for Nigerian people (Ovute, Dibia, Obasis, 2015). Ademola (2011), observes that a responsible democracy must require a media which is capable of generating discussion with public concerns in a way that devoids partisan interests such as political parties or ruling party. This shows that the media should possess true democratic values. They should act as protector of democratic process and trustee of the collective will and power of the people (Das, 2011).

The media plays the role of an advocate of policy by stressing the need for thorough policy implementation geared towards national development and integration. Thus, the media is the voice of the people in a democratic setting (Omula and Johnson, 2016). Though it suffered tremendously from the act of arbitrary use of power especially under the military dictatorship, the media played its ethical role in sustaining democratic governance, divesting itself of sensationalism and manipulation of facts. Rather than rocking the boat of democracy through emphasizing the negative aspects of elections, the media generally urged caution so that democratic practice could thrive in the country, in fact, media championed the course of democratic practice in Nigeria (Sadeeq, 2006).

The media as the “fourth estate of the realm” are not expected to be subservient to the state political institutions but permit these institutions the opportunities to have free access to the media to be able to articulate their views, thus blossoming the political and democratic processes. Currain (2005), argues that the basic function of the media is to help discover the truth to assist in solving of political and social crises capable of sustaining vigilance, do the scrutiny of government and centre of powers. In order to discharge this duty, the media must articulate concepts such as objectivity, balance, truth, fairness as values which must inform the work of the media practitioners. Eziokwu (2004), states that the media are not only chief makers of national development, they also serve as a mirror of socio-economic and political structures of a nation. Thus, they serve as a stimulus to the aspiration of the Nigerian populace for true political unit which derives from a democratic process.

In local governance, the media are providing an avenue for the participation of citizens in politics by giving voices to the grassroots through localised popular media such as community radios and newspapers. Their activities are gradually percolating down into grassroots communities in Nigeria and by extension in Africa. The local media content are structured to propagate development issues that could improve lives of rural dwellers. Today’s local media have become the major components of rural development communication initiatives geared towards spreading innovative and development ideas to rural people. Rural radio seems to be more prevalent in Nigerian rural areas, unfortunately, the legal framework for the operation of community radios are still cumbersome and yet to be robustly formulated in spite of rural dwellers’ interest to embrace the



initiative, willingness of interested agencies and donor organizations to support the laudable sensitization actions (Isola, 2008). It is however, becoming apparent that no meaningful development could emanate at the grassroots without credible media from which rural dwellers could obtain information and contribute their quota toward democratization and support national integration. One important factor that affects the rapid growth of rural media is the protracted militarization of governance. During the military reign, electronic media were all owned and operated by military government which enabled them to control content and access to such media. Coincidentally, towards the tail end of the military rule in the country, different guerrilla radios sprang up which contributed to struggle to achieve democracy at last. The consequence of the said military era seems to be pervasive even in the current situation of democratic government.

### **Causes of Coup 'etat in West Africa Countries**

The West Africa sub-region comprising of 17 states recently recorded the highest rate of coup activities in Africa. The sub-region alone experienced 104 military coup d'etat which is almost half of coups reported in the Africa. As the occurrence of military coups in one country grows, the possibility of the same incident in other countries. There are various factors leading to a coup d'etat in the West Africa sub region, these are according to Barka and Ncube (2012).

**Ideological motivations:** This means the desire to radically change social base of their countries from status ridden oligarchies. A good example is Captain Thomas Sankara, who fronted a coup d'etat in Burkina Faso in 1983 with the determination to set up a well reformed, fair and prosperous society.

**Corruption:** The administration and governance spending among politicians is often accompanied by widespread corruption leads to social inequality. This element usually fuel most of the military coups in West Africa.

**Socio-political factor:** coups occurred where the socio-political environment is not conducive for citizenry, a government inability to design, implement and administer sound policy in conjunction of other economic and political weaknesses such as low political will, low economic growth, lack of institutionalised democratic structures motivated the inventory to overthrow democratic government with the aim to pursue selfish interest. Though, these are military leaders in Africa that fulfilled their political promises such as flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in Ghana who took over power in 1979. Lieutenant Colonel Ahmadou Toure in Mali also took over power of leadership in Mali in 1991. The two military leaders did wonderfully well to shape their nation's socio-economic comatose. In the overall, the military coup plotters have generally dishonoured their promises to correct wrongs in their various countries.

**Poor socio-economic situation:** Most African countries economics ran up bad balance of payment deficits and are unable to finance development project. Some of them battle with low or negative per capital GDP growth since independent especially during the military regime. All this economic weakness contributed to collapsing infrastructure, unemployment, insecurity and others due to deteriorating economic situations. However, as agitation of each country's labour union or social movements commenced to challenge the spate of economic catastrophe, the military usually take advantage of the crises to seek political power.

**Porous Judicial Systems:** It is worthy of nothing that the occurrence of military coups emanated from the incessant decline in governance performance. Consequently, poor governance



aggravated rule of law abuse and decreased human rights tremendously which makes it virtually impossible for democratic government to provide their citizens with an effective judicial system capable of enhancing accountability of public officials and control of corruption activities. Meanwhile, the aforementioned factors resulted to limited availability of internal resources which made democratic system legitimacy increasingly challenged in West African countries including Nigeria. However, by addressing these mentioned problems, democratic government would be positioned to provide socio-economic opportunities for all citizens as well as creating the enabling environment for poverty alleviation and political stability.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that is most relevant for this study is the social responsibility media and the Agenda-setting theories respectively.

Social responsibility media theory appears to be one of the major four normative press theories propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Shramm (1956 cited in Folarin 2002). Its emergence was due to the recommendations of Hutchins commission which submitted its report in 1947 on the review of the concept of press freedom. The theory cautions journalists to always remember that press freedom is a moral right which media practitioners must exercise in the overall interest of the public. One of the pivotal characteristics of the theorists view is an emphasis on the media's responsibility to use their powerful position to ensure appropriate delivery of information to audience (Middleton, 2009). The argument by the theory was that the media plays a significant role in the society and by so doing, the responsibility to disseminate information paramount on the media. Therefore, the media is expected to have the moral obligation to consider in the first instance, the interest of the society when considering editorial decisions on the societal happenings. However, the media have the right to publish news but not owing the right to libel, it is essential for the media to provide adequate news for citizens to make strong decisions on issues that concerns public interest (Daramola, 2003). Media organizations must report from the social responsibility theory perspectives by being public oriented and focus on the need of society. Coincidentally, the relevant of this stud is that it helped the public and the democratic government to be effectively fed with the campaigns against coup d'etat in Nigeria by reflecting society's plurality, giving access to various points of view as well as regulating themselves within the framework of law and established institutions capable to carry out its responsibilities.

Agenda-setting theory assumes that the media through coverage of issues determine what the dominant discussion would be. It states that the media may not tell us what to think but they divert our minds to what to think about. The level of frequency of reportage of certain issues, determines the ability of the media to move those issues from media agenda to public agenda (McQuail, 2000). Although, the public have a right to think what we want to think, but we tend to think most of those things the media highlights as important (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2012).

Through frequent and responsible coverage of the government programmes, the media can sensitize and orientate the citizens on the negative consequences of allowing military coup d'etat in Nigeria. However, frequent discussion of the issue would encourage the general public to see the act as an aberration while discouraging the perpetrators from acting in that direction.





### Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey and structured interview methods. The research instruments employed by the study for the collection of data are questionnaire and structured interview guide. The open-ended questions of the questionnaire were based on the mass media performance and coverage of democratic government activities or programmes with an efforts to forestall any likely occurrence of coup d'état in Nigeria there are 12 items in the questionnaire which the respondents were expected to fill. The population of the study covered four states in south west – Oyo, Lagos, Ogun and Osun – states respectively. The breakdown of the population for each state are Oyo ( ), Ogun ( ), Lagos ( ) and Osun ( ) totalling

This study adopted simple random and quota sampling technique to select the sample size of 240 respondents selecting the educated ones across different local Government Areas of the selected states. 210 questionnaires were returned valid for data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data utilizing statistical tools of tables, percentages, values and frequencies. For the structured interview, certain professionals were randomly selected for the interview conducted. Professionals selected are security practitioners retired military officers, media practitioners, practising journalists, public analysts, political scientists and media scholars. Data gathered was transcribed and qualitatively analysed.

### Data Analysis and Discussion

**Table 1: Efforts of the Mass media in curbing the emergence of coup d'état and promotion of democratic practice in Nigeria**

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentages
Highly effective	1	142	68.0%
Effective	2	30	14.3%
Fair	3	15	7.1%
Ineffective	4	13	6.2%
Not at all	5	10	5.0%
Source: field survey, 2023		210	100%

Table 1 shows that 142 respondents with 68.0 percent unanimously agreed that the mass media efforts in curbing the emergence of coup d'état and promotion of democratic practice in Nigeria is highly effective and impactful. The implication of the result on this table 1 is that the role of the media was founded upon sound and objective professional ethical judgement of journalism practice. Kurfi (2010), argues that the fact remains that the media institutions are established to facilitate the socio-economic and political development of the society and without access to the full range of information about their world, citizens cannot fulfil their roles and democracy will wither. Theoretically, social responsibility theory assumes that it is essential for the media to provide adequate information for citizens to make good decisions on matters regarding public interest. The media is expected to report the true accounts of events and also be mindful of the implications their reports will have on the peace and development of the society. Imoh (2009), contends that the media provide information democratic practices to citizens so that they can



make their judgement over judgements on issues of public interest thereby ensuring popular based public policies, programmes and decisions.

**Table 2: Professional approaches applied by the media to encourage democratic culture rather than military insurgence**

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentages
Agenda-setting role	1	43	20.5%
Surveillance function	2	51	24.3%
Gatekeeping role	3	49	23.3%
Watchdog function	4	40	19.0%
Ethical conduct adherence	5	27	13.0%
Source: field survey, 2023		210	100%

Table 2 indicates that 43 respondent with 20.5% established that the mass media utilized Agenda-setting role as one of the professional approaches applied to encourage democratic culture rather than military insurgence. 51(24.3%) chose surveillance function, 49(23.3%) picked Gate-keeping role, 40(19.0%) ticked watchdog function while 27(13.0%) agreed that the mass media were strongly adhered with the professional ethical conduct in the process of discharging their responsibilities toward the encouragement of democracy and discouragement of military regime. Washboard (2000) observes that the media are regarded as the voice of the people, the social watchdog and advocacy of libertarian principles that hinged on three main functions of the media-watchdog role, provision of information, facilitation of the public sphere via-a-vis as platform for the expression of diverse voices. Schudson (2011), avers that the role of the mass media in the democracy process is to understand the important of information flows and the establishment of media institution for the functioning of democracy. Eweluka (2004), relates the media practice to purely moral actions, motive of character, ethical emotions, precepts of morality and conforming to professional standard of conduct. Theoretically, agenda-setting theory also assumes that the facts which people know about public issues tend to be those which the mass media presents to them. This simply means that the media sets the agenda for our general discussion. Gatekeeping theory proposes that media act as gates to the flood of information coming in from larger society.

**Table 3: Identification of likely causal factors for military coup d'etat in Nigeria**

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentages
Poor socio-economic situation	1	34	16.2%
Corruption	2	26	12.4%
Bad governance	3	47	22.4%
Bastardized socio-political situation	4	30	14.3%
Ideological motivations	5	45	21.4%
Porous judicial system	6	28	13.3%
Source: field survey, 2023		210	100%

Table 3 shows that 34 respondents with 16.2% agreed that poor socio-economic situation is one of the likely causal factors for military coup d'etat in Nigeria. 26(12.4%) selected corruption, 47(22.4%)



picked bad governance, 30(14.3%) said bastardized socio-political situation is one of the factors 45(21.4%) ticked ideological motivation while 28(13.3%) agreed on ideological motivations. Blake (2019), states that poverty stands as a crucial factor in the spread of coup d'état and terrorism. Burkina Faso, for instance, is ranked amongst the poorest countries in Africa with about half of the population living below the internationally approved poverty line of \$1.90 per day. Osiomhelayo (2020) states that the inability or lack of access to external financial markets stand as another problem encountered by developing countries. Hence, the latest economic estimated show that West Africa battles with a high level of poverty. However, with its 16 member countries ECOWAS is still faced with myriads of socio-political and economic challenges. Abubakar and Fadeyi (2017), argue that the inability of political elites to resolve differences and provide leadership after independence was responsible for the series of intervention by the military in governance. This, the system has encountered uproar characterised by controversies, military incursions, dashed hopes, leadership and systemic failures.

**Table 4: Challenges confronted by the Nigerian media in their efforts to promote democracy rather than military rule**

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Concept of ownership and control</b>	1	35	17.0%
<b>Insufficient digital technology</b>	2	41	20.0%
<b>Brown envelope syndrome</b>	3	40	19.05%
<b>Fear of being harassed and intimidated by government regulatory agencies</b>	4	36	17.1%
<b>Inadequate funding</b>	5	58	28.0%
Source: field survey, 2023		210	100%

Table 4 shows 35(17.0%) respondents agreed that the concept of ownership and control perpetuated by most media organization proprietors in Nigeria is indeed a spanner in the wheel of journalism practice, 41(20.0%) pitched tent with insufficient digital technology as a major bane to promotion of democracy in Nigeria by the media, 40(19.05%) said that the brown envelope syndrome among journalists undermined their efforts of promoting democracy objectively, 36(17.1%) chose fear of being harassed and intimidated by government regulatory agencies while 58(28.0%) selected inadequate funding of political programmes capable of promoting democracy on both electronic and print media. Omula and Johnson (2016), observe that there is also the need to check the alleged increasing rate of corruption in the media by resisting all temptations that could make journalists compromise their professional ethics. Media proprietors are also enjoined to pay adequate attention to the welfare of journalists so that they would not be susceptible to corruption. This is to ensure independent, neutral and unbiased media that will contribute significant to democratic practice and development in Nigeria. Bako (2008), contends that the Nigerian media need to overcome the teething problems of insufficient digital technology and funding to be able to campaign against military rule and entrust themselves with the role of serving as the watchdog of the society without flouting the media ethical standards. Udeala (2020), argues that the challenges posed by the return of democracy have been how to ensure good governance



and sustain democratic ideals. The media had initiated series of measures to energise the media in contributing effectively towards sustaining democratic practice.

### **Conclusion**

The media contributed immensely as a key stakeholder in the Nigerian democratic process. Indeed, it is not gain saying that the instrumentality of the mass media made democratic governance possible in Nigeria. The media championed the course of democratic practice as well as acting as the vanguard of democracy via different approaches such as dissemination of political news, presentation of political programmes, sensitization, orientation, criticisms and education. Despite the challenges such as intimidations, embarrassments, harassment and illegal incasseration confronted by the media, they are resolute in ensuring that public interest serves the guiding principle in coverage and publications. Though adjudged as an aberration, the military cannot be totally condemned or indirectly to development Nigerian wedging democracy. This claim is a testament as evidence in the democratic enthronement and sustenance since 1999 including the inclusion of retired senior military officers into politics to continue the struggle for democracy. However, the analysis of the information gathered in this research work attests to the fact that the Nigerian media need to step up actions in encouraging the government to improve on the causal factors of coup d'etat in Nigeria. Thus, the media should play the role of serving as the watchdog in building stable democracy for sustainable development in Nigerian society. It must serves as a critic of the government in power and should provide the checks needed on government policy advocacy, operations and implementations. The Nigerian media should stress on the need for attitude-change among Nigerian leaders in a bid to experience genuine democratic development. Findings established that the media irrespective of the challenges identified by the respondents of this study, should help Nigerians to find new political norms by giving knowledge capable of making political development a self-perpetuating process. The Nigerian mass media should brace up to the challenge of building a virile, prosperous and sustainable democracy robust enough to avert coup d'etat in Nigeria.

### **Implications/Relevant of the Study**

In line with the findings and conclusion of this study, the following implication are highlighted: This study exposes the Nigerian media as a veritable tool for uplifting the cause of democracy in Nigerian society. The media as the fourth estate of the realm have the strength to check those at the corridors of power for better governance. With unequalled stamina, resiliency and strongwill, Nigeria media historically had constantly carried out their statutory role of upholding the tenets of democracy and good governance. In spite of tribunal incessant tribulations suffered in the hands of successive governments especially the military regime, upheld their role of informing, educating, sensitizing and mobilizing Nigerians to participate in government plans, advocacy and programmes.

This study alerts sub-saharan nations including Nigeria of likely military insurgency across broad if careful or collective development actions are not implemented. This stems from the findings that the military were evolving in staging coup d'etat rather than restoring democracy. African leaders should endeavour to curb the current wave of military insurgency by providing good governance and leadership devoid of the suspicion of military coup d'etat.



This study also shown the significant role of the people in the struggle for installation, restoration and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria since precolonial and post-colonial days. They have always at the forefront of democratic struggle and as a result have suffered more casualties in this democratic exercise. Despite that, the Nigerians have continued to fight a selfless and true war for sustainable democracy at the expense of comfort and freedom.

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