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Salience in the Media and Political Trust in Nigeria: The Mediating Role of Political Participation

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ABSTRACT

Political distrust is prevalent in many parts of the world. Scholars have discovered many factors affecting political trust, but they have paid little attention to the influence of issue salience in the media on political trust. Focusing on the role of media in assigning salience to corruption issues in Nigeria, this study examined the influence of mainstream media and social media on political trust. In addition, we treated political participation as a mediating factor and investigated its effect on the relationship between perceived salience of corruption in media and political trust. A survey was conducted on a sample of 688 Nigerians aged above 18 years old using a multi-stage cluster sampling technique. The data was later analyzed using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). We found that salience in media predicted political trust, and the effect was stronger for social media than mainstream media contexts. Our findings also suggested that political participation directly affected political trust and was a significant mediator that affected the relationships between salience in the mainstream media (SMM) and political trust and between salience in the social media (SSM) and political trust. The results imply that salience in media leads to political participation, leading to political trust. This study supports the assumptions of both agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories. It suggests that policymakers in Nigeria should adopt media, especially social media, to restore the people's trust in government.

Keywords: Corruption, political participation, political trust, salience in the media

INTRODUCTION

Political trust, which is described as confidence in government, is one of the key resources for the development of modern societies because it is critical to democratic governance (Wang, 2016). It is the support for government, parliaments, political parties, or political institutions that can be regarded as an evaluative orientation of citizens towards their political system or some part of it, based on their normative expectations (Hetherington, 1998; Wang, 2016). Consequently, the trust between citizens and their elected representatives and government officials is fundamental for liberal democracy and is a vital element of a well-governed society (Allen, 2016; Berg, 2019). Without political trust, citizens become cynical about their political system and disaffected with the existing order (Kumar et al., 2020). However, building support for democratic government depends on how much citizens trust their government to do right. Newton et al. (2018) and Wang (2016) contend that a democratic society cannot probably emerge without political trust, leading to the loss of political power by the incumbents.

However, previous studies have discovered that the majority of the citizens around the world distrust their governments (Allen, 2016; Ceron, 2015; Wang, 2016). The declining trend of political trust is evident in the United States, United Kingdom, other Western democratic nations, and many Asian and African nations (Camaj, 2014). This trend is also prevalent in Nigeria, which has consistently faced many

problems, particularly high corruption levels that deteriorates political trust. Corruption in Nigeria is endemic, so much so that its pervasiveness has led to a high poverty rate, miserable economic performance, and low national development. Moreover, scholars claim that corruption has continued to threaten the unity, stability, and peace of the nation (Ogbeidi, 2012; Okafor et al., 2020) and has severely undermined people's trust in institutions and political systems in general (Iroghama, 2012). Inevitably these issues have become the media's focus, including mainstream and social media platforms in Nigeria. By giving salience to corruption, this study argues that the media can shape people's opinions about an issue eventually affecting their participation and trust in the government.

Unlike previous studies that investigated the effect of social media on political participation (Dagona et al., 2013; Mustapha & Omar, 2020), we focused on the effect of corruption salience by mainstream and social media on political trust in Nigeria and the mediating effects of political participation on the relationship between salience in media and political trust. It is important to note that most past studies examining media influence on political trust were carried out in western contexts (Camaj, 2014; Ceron, 2015), with a few studies conducted in Asian nations (Wang, 2016; Wilkes, 2015). Thus, investigating it in another context like Nigeria, a multilingual, multi-ethnic, multireligious, and multi-party nation, is a welcome development (Camaj, 2014; Iroghama, 2012). Moreover, the study

findings can give insights into addressing the precarious problems of insecurity, noncompliance with the law by the citizens, and other socio-political problems that arose due to low political trust among Nigerians.

In doing so, we developed a model drawn from agenda-setting and agenda-melding perspectives to demonstrate the influence of mainstream media and social media, respectively. The model was further extended by introducing political participation as a mediator between salience in media and its relation to political trust. The novelty of this study is the extension of literature on agenda-setting as the theory of media's effect to agenda-melding, which is a new theoretical preoccupation being adopted to explain social media effect on political trust. We argue that while agenda-setting declared that mass media effectively sets the agenda for the people and government, thereby influencing the salience of attitude towards political outcomes by determining the news items readers should read (Mustapha & Wok, 2015), agenda-melding assumes that it is the audience which set the agenda for the government and the people (Allen, 2016). In other words, agenda-melding maintains that the audience is active participants who initiate and produce news to influence people's opinion through the news items they produce, modify, like, and share with other readers (McCombs et al., 2014; Ragas & Roberts, 2009). Hence this new media theory claims that unlike mainstream media, where the audience is perceived as passive participants, they are active and major agenda setters (Bantimaroudis et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the limited literature on the effect of media salience on political trust has prompted this research to extend the investigation on political trust by examining mainstream media and social media as determinants of political trust and political participation as factors that mediated the relationship between media salience and political trust. We assumed that citizens' exposure to corruption that the media have given news salience would affect their participation in politics, eventually affecting their levels of trust in the incumbent government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

In this study, two theoretical lenses, agenda-setting, and agenda-melding, were adopted to explicate the effect of salience in traditional mainstream media and social media. The two theories are interconnected but distinguished by their contexts (Bantimaroudis et al., 2020; McCombs et al., 2014). While agenda-setting involves how mass media determine what the people read and think about government, agenda-melding sees the audience as a major stakeholder in news production and sharing. Agenda melding submits that mass media no longer has the monopoly of news production and the only opinion molder. Thus, agenda setting research emphasizes how the media consciously transfer the salience to specific issues to set the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In other words, through the gatekeeping process, journalists manipulate audience opinion to set agendas for the

people and consequently for the government (McCombs et al., 2014). Furthermore, through the press's priming and framing activities, the media indirectly informs the audience what to think and tells them how to think about it (Hänggli, 2020).

Kiousis (2011) asserts that the theoretical assumption of the agenda-setting theory is the transferring of salience from the media to the people by presenting news items to influence audience opinions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs et al., 2014; Mustapha & Wok, 2015). The theory assumes that the audience is passive. The media feeds them the news and therefore influences their opinion through the quantity, prominence, and attention given to issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The theory is often applied to understand how media organizations dictate what people should think about. The emergence of new media has called for renewed attention to the relationships between old and new media (Omar, 2017) and the introduction of new theories to understand a new phenomenon (Siapera, 2017). Agenda melding is one of the new theories that emanates from the agenda-setting theory (Bantimaroudis et al., 2020; Cheng, 2021: McCombs et al., 2014; Woo et al., 2020). It provides an insight into how the audience, rather than being passive as explicated by agenda-setting, is active. Social media users become producers and presenters of news. Thus, in this age of digital, audiences now, from their personal views, intentionally decide, initiate, select, comment, frame, like, salience, create and share news items to modify people's political opinion and therefore set national agendas (Allen, 2016; McCombs et al., 2014; Ragas & Roberts, 2009).

Through the agenda-melding process, social media users gather various agendas to create the ''personal communities'' in which the users willingly choose to live (Allen, 2016; McCombs et al., 2014). Unlike agenda-setting theory, where the media gatekeeping the news items deliberately and select news issues to influence people's opinion, agenda-melding theory gives the audience opportunities to initiate and create the public and media agenda. Concerning media use and political trust, past research confirmed a positive relationship between mainstream media and political trust (Camaj, 2014). Drawing from the views of previous researchers and the perspective of both agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories, we contend that the media effect which arises from the way and manner through which mass media and social media users used the gatekeeping process to intentionally influence the opinion of the audience on their political decisions. Consequently, this study adopted agenda-setting and agenda-melding media effect elements to explain media use as a strong determinant of political trust. Adopting the agenda-setting and agenda-melding is expected to broaden our understanding of political trust within a Nigerian context.

Hypothesis Development

Salience in the Media and Political Participation. Media is a vital source of influence on political trust. This study

developed a research model depicting the relationship between media salience, political participation, and political trust (see Figure 1). Both mainstream and social media use for political news reinforces political participation by playing an essential role in bringing the politicians and the generality of the people together (Kiousis, 2004; Mustapha & Omar, 2020). Through the media, people are informed, educated, and influenced politically. Supporting this assertion, Krishna and Jha (2017) noted that mass media like radio, television, and newspaper impact people's socio-political lives. They disseminate political information upward or downward (Echeverría & Mani, 2020). Färdigh (2013) and Park (2012) maintained that through framing corruption issues in certain ways and assigning salience to them, the media influence people's opinions about the menace of corruption. Media can shape and influence people's opinions, attitudes, behaviors and perceptions towards political leaders and political activities by giving prominence to certain issues and ignoring others (Kiousis, 2004). By exposing the corrupt activities of the politicians, the media helped increase society's political knowledge and behavior at large (Aarts et al., 2012). In addition, past studies have consistently found that social media use predicted political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Shahzat & Omar, 2021). Extending past studies that mainly focused on general media use or social media use per se, we examined the degree of salience given by mainstream media and social media on corruption and how it

affected people's trust in politics. Hence, we hypothesize that:

> **H1**: Salience in the mainstream media is positively associated with political participation.
>
> **H2**: Salience in social media is positively associated with political participation.

Political Participation and Political Trust. Democratic governments perform better when the people understand and trust the government. Political trust facilitates talking and working together among individuals and between the public and the government (Wilkes, 2015). Generally, the level of political trust depends on the individual objective evaluation of government performance. Jacob and Schenke (2020) claimed that regardless of media exposure intensity to poor governance of the incumbent government, members of the ruling party can hardly believe that the government is bad and can easily feel satisfied with their performance, unlike those in the opposition party. Thus, an individual with party affiliation generally believes that a party they associate with performs more effectively and efficiently than other parties (Jacob & Schenke, 2020; Wilkes, 2015). Regarding the possible relationship between political participation and political trust, past studies (Bonifácio & Paulino, 2015; Wilkes, 2015) found that party affiliation, tolerance, for and experience with corruption determined people's trust in the incumbent government. Hence, we propose that:

H3: Political participation is positively associated with political trust.

Media Use, Political Participation, and Political Trust. There is an interdependence between politics and media. Skamnakis (2006) argued that since 1960, politics and media do not only continue to have a close relationship, but they are interdependent. Media provides a platform for articulation and contestation of viewpoints that assists the audience to make an informed decision on their political activities (Mustapha & Wok, 2015) and solidify or reduce their support in the government (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2020). This study asserts from media salience literature, that the volume, placement, and valence of issues are necessary to produce media effects. Past research has established the effects of media use on political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Shahzad & Omar, 2021) and political trust (Aarts et al., 2012). A few studies also found the association between political participation and political trust (Bonifácio & Paulino, 2015; Wilkes, 2015). Linking these studies together, we argue that salience in media leads to political participation, which in turn leads to political trust. Hence, we treat political participation as a mediator and hypothesize that:

H4: Political participation mediates the relationship between salience in the mainstream media and political trust.
H5: Political participation mediates the relationship between salience in social media and political trust.

METHOD

This study, based on a survey research method, focuses on Nigerian electorates 18 years and above. In Nigeria, the political structure of six geopolitical zones, 36 states, and 774 local governments make the country a complex one (Mustapha & Wok, 2015). As a result of the country's complex political structure, the study adopted a multistage sampling technique to obtain a representative sample from the population. A questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. We used the G*power to determine the minimum sample size of 77, with three predictors, medium effect size, and a power of 0.80. However, the sample size was increased to 688 since we are dealing with
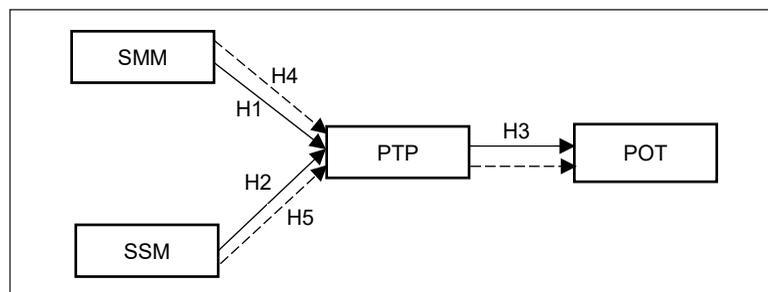

Figure 1. Research model
Note: SSM = Salience in the Social Media; SMM = Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media, PTP = Political Participation, POT = Political Trust

a heterogeneous population. Some scholars (Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Omar & Ahrari, 2020) suggested a comparison of the study sample with the national demographic statistics to achieve generalizability and increase the sample's representativeness. Therefore, a questionnaire was administered to 688 respondents in the 36 states and 774 local governments that make up the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. As shown in the demographic profile in Table 1, it could be inferred that the sample of this study is almost similar to the demographic data of the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017). Thus, the sampling bias in the current study was minimized.

This study sample comprises 688 Nigerians above 18 years old. Since the minimum voting age in Nigeria is 18, anyone below the voting age was disqualified from participating in this study. The data was collected in February 2019, before the country's general election. As indicated in the table, more males (59.3%) than female respondents (40.7%). The highest age category was between 18 and 34 (64.5%). In relation to education levels, most respondents of this study possessed Bachelor or Higher National Diploma (HND) degree (56.3%), followed by Diploma certificates (23.4%), master's degree (12.8%), and Ph.D. (2.6%). This analysis indicated that the majority of respondents were young educated Nigerians. The distribution of respondents according to geopolitical zones shows that the number of respondents across all zones was almost equal. In terms of government support, more than half of the respondents (57.1%)

indicated their support, while the rest (42.9) did not identify as supporters of the current government in power.

Measurement

This study has four constructs. First, we treat salience in mainstream media and social media as independent variables, political participation as the mediating variable, and political trust as the dependent variable. Second, all items were adopted from past studies. The items were adapted from past studies (Schneider, 2017), while political participation was adopted from Huddy et al. (2010). Third, we adopted the salience in media for both traditional mainstream media and social media contexts from the work of Kiousis (2004). They used content analysis to derive a few themes of media silence. Finally, we developed statements from the themes and tested them empirically in this study. The variables were measured based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree. Three experts of political communication were consulted to validate the study's items. A pilot study was also conducted to improve the questionnaire. Based on the contributions of the experts and the feedback from the pilot study, the instrument was amended and reworded to enhance its richness and clarity.

FINDINGS

To analyze our model, we used Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to allow us to examine relationships between constructs

Table 1
Respondents' demographic profile

Demographic Factors	Freq.	Pert
Gender		
Male	408	59.3
Female	280	40.7
Age		
18- 24 years	168	24.5
25-34 years	275	40
35-44 years	119	17.3
45-54 years	85	12.4
55- 64 years	34	4.9
65 years and above	7	1
Marital Status		
Single	363	52.8
Married	314	45.6
Others	11	1.6
Level of Education		
Do not Attend School	1	0.1
Primary School	5	0.7
Secondary School	28	4.1
Diploma	161	23.4
Bachelor /HND	387	56.3
Masters	88	12.8
PhD	18	2.6
Income (N)		
Up to 18,000	198	28.8
18001- 30,000	112	16.3
30,001- 50,000	138	20.1
50,001- 70,000	68	9.9
70,001- 100,000	94	13.7
Above 100,000	78	11.3
Types of Employment		
Self	268	39
Government	253	36.8
Unemployed	167	24.3
Religion		
Islam	404	58.7
Christianity	281	40.8
Others	2	0.3
None	1	0.1
Ethnicity (Geopolitical Zones)		
Hausa (North Central, North East & North West)	345	50.1
Igbo (South East & South-South)	227	33
Yoruba (South West)	116	16.9
Political Participation		
African Action Congress (AAC)	4	0.6
Action People's Congress (APC)	245	35.6
All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	21	3.1
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	196	28.5
Others (Parties)	3	0.4
No (not belong to any party)	219	31.8
Government Support		
Yes	393	57.1
No	295	42.9

simultaneously (Hair et al., 2019). PLS-SEM is suitable for this study because the explanatory nature of our study and the normality tests shows our data was not normally distributed (as the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, Mardia test of multivariate normality, Skewness and Kurtosis were all significant). Since our data were collected in a single survey, we also checked for common method bias (CMB), using Harman's single factor test. The results showed that a single factor only explained 18.6% of the variance, suggesting that we do not have an issue with CMB since it does not exceed the threshold of 50%. We also confirmed the variance inflation factor (VIF) and found that none were above the threshold of three (Hair et al., 2017) (Table 2). Therefore, we followed the two steps approach; first, we analyzed the measurement model and then tested the structural model.

The Measurement Model

In the measurement model, we established the validity and reliability of measures

Table 2
Measurement model assessment

Construct	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	VIF
Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media	SMM1	0.806	0.851	0.893	0.625	1.302
	SMM2	0.772				
	SMM3	0.769				
	SMM4	0.797				
	SMM5	0.808				
Salience in the Social Media	SSM1	0.784	0.888	0.915	0.643	1.302
	SSM2	0.852				
	SSM3	0.845				
	SSM4	0.795				
	SSM5	0.78				
	SSM6	0.749				
Political Participation	PSP1	0.877	0.918	0.938	0.752	1.000
	PSP2	0.861				
	PSP3	0.834				
	PSP4	0.877				
	PSP5	0.887				
Political Trust	POT1	0.8	0.915	0.931	0.658	-
	POT2	0.816				
	POT4	0.792				
	POT5	0.736				
	POT6	0.834				
	POT7	0.871				
	POT8	0.821				

before assessing the structural relationships in this study. Firstly, we determined the convergent validity by checking the Cronbach's alpha (α), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and the loadings. As a result, the α values were above the threshold of 0.70, AVE was above 0.50, CR was above 0.70, and the loadings were all above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017), suggesting that the results satisfied the criteria for convergent validity and composite reliability (See Table 2).

Secondly, we tested the discriminant validity to establish the differences between variables. Two criteria (Fornell & Larcker and HTMT) were used to determine discriminant validity. For the Fornell and Larcker criterion, Table 3 shows that each construct's AVE's square root surpassed the correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of the HTMT, as shown in Table 4, also demonstrates that none of the diagonal values were above the

threshold of 0.85 (Ramayah et al., 2018). Thus, the criteria for discriminant validity were also met.

The Structural Model

In examining the structural model, scholars (Hair et al., 2014) recommended that researchers look at the R^2, beta β, and t-values through a bootstrapping technique of 5000 samples. In addition to these basic steps, it was also suggested that the predictive significance (Q^2) and the effect sizes (f^2) should also be assessed. The structural equation model results are presented in Table 4 and Figure 2. The results show that 51% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.51$) in political participation is explained by the salience in mainstream media and salience in social media. Political participation, in turn, contributes to 35% of the variance in political trust ($R^2 = 0.35$). As shown in Table 5, all direct hypotheses were supported. Firstly, we found a positive relationship between

Table 3
Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Political Participation	0.867			
2. Salience in the Social Media	0.412	0.802		
3. Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media	0.346	0.482	0.791	
4. Political Trust	0.136	0.068	0.138	0.811

Table 4
Discriminant validity (HTMT criterion)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Political participation	-			
2. Salience in the Social Media	0.454			
3. Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media	0.385	0.551		
4. Political Trust	0.138	0.091	0.169	-

salience in the traditional mainstream media and political participation ($\beta = 0.192$, p<0.001), supporting H1. Secondly, the positive relationship between salience in social media and political participation was endorsed ($\beta = 0.319$, p < 0.001), supporting H2. Thirdly, we hypothesized a positive association between political participation and political trust, and our data supported it ($\beta = 0.136$, p < 0.001). Finally, we further confirmed that the Q^2 values for political participation ($Q^2 = 0.111$) and political trust ($Q^2 = 0.146$) were s greater than 0 (Hair et al., 2014), suggesting that the model has sufficient predictive relevance. With respect to the effect size (f^2), it could be seen in Table 5 that the effect size ranged from medium to large, which resonated with the threshold of Cohen (1988).

Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2018) noted that we adopted bootstrapping method to test the indirect effect, Based on Table 6, we found the indirect effect between salience in mainstream media and political trust ($\beta = 0.336$, p = 0.000) and between social media and political trust ($\beta = 0.297$, p = 0.000) were significant. For the indirect effects at 97.5% Bootstrapping Confidence Level Bias Correction (BC) assessment, we found that there was no 0 value in between lower limit and upper limit (LL= 0.245, UL=0.412), (LL= 0.218, UL=0.381). The results suggest a significant mediation. Political participation was a significant mediator that affected the relationship between salience in media (for both mainstream media and social media contexts) and political trust. Hence, both H4 and H5 were supported.
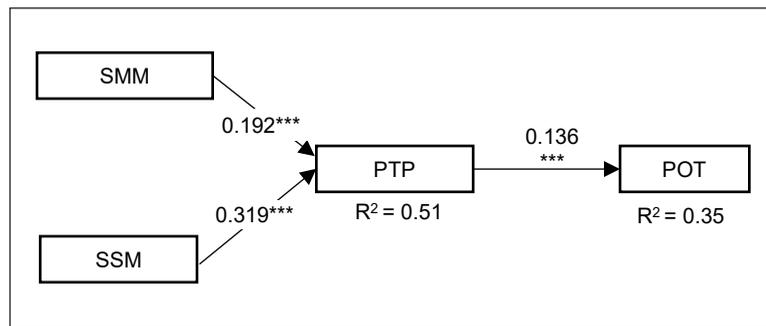

Figure 2. The structural model

Table 5
Direct relationships

Path Analysis	Beta	S.E.	t-value	p-value	LCI	UCI	R2	f2	Q2	Decision
SMM -> PTP	0.192	0.043	4.505	0.000	0.110	0.275		0.234		Supported
SSM -> PTP	0.319	0.041	7.806	0.000	0.237	0.397	0.51	0.382	0.146	Supported
PTP -> Political Trust	0.136	0.035	3.870	0.000	0.199	0.269	0.35	0.162	0.111	Supported

NB: SSM = Salience in the Social Media; SMM = Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media, PTP = Political Participation, LCI = 2.5%, UCI = 97.5%.

Table 6
Indirect (mediating) relationships

Path Analysis	Beta	S.E.	t-value	p-value	LI	CI	Decision
SMM -> PTP -> Political Trust	0.336	0.077	7.161	0.000	0.245	0.412	Supported
SSM -> PTP-> Political Trust	0.297	0.058	6.474	0.000	0.218	0.381	Supported

Note: SSM = Salience in the Social Media; SMM = Salience in the Traditional Mainstream Media, LCI = 2.5%, PTP= Political Participation, UCI = 97.5%.

DISCUSSION

This study affirmed the general postulation that the media, as the information provider of political and current affairs news, is crucial to the democratic development of any democratic nation (Camaj, 2014; Ceron, 2015), especially for a nation with a nascent democracy like Nigeria. Contrary to the cynics, the general results of this study show that both traditional mainstream media and social media are generally indispensable to democratic development and political outcomes. It is because the media is essential to influence citizens' perception of government activities. Furthermore, it corroborates the suggestions of previous studies in Allen (2016), Camaj (2014), and Ceron (2015) that the audience accumulates political knowledge, which is germane to political trust through media exposure.

This study argues that media can shape and influence people's opinions, attitudes and behavior by salience to selected issues. Focusing on how people perceive the salience of corruption in traditional media and social media, this study found that perceived salience in both media contexts has positive effects on political participation and political trust. This outcome supports our hypotheses 1 and 2. The significant relationship between these constructs indicates that traditional mainstream media and social media can enrich people's political knowledge that affects their political behavior. It further shows that mainstream media and social media complement each other, rather than working at cross purposes (Albarran & Moellinger, 2013; Mare, 2013). In this sense, both media types can increase public awareness about corruption and increase people's political participation and trust.

Furthermore, affirming the existing studies on the relationship between political participation and political trust (Jacob & Schenke, 2020; Wilkes, 2015), this study demonstrates the high relevance of political participation to political trust. It thus emphasizes that political participation is a strong predictor of political trust in Nigeria. It supports our H3. Moreover, we treated political participation as a mediating variable in this study to reveal its indirect effect on political trust. Political participation was found to be a significant mediator. Our findings suggest that the media exerts its influence on political participation, affecting political trust. Thus, H4 and H5 were supported. When comparing the results of direct and indirect effects, we found a higher increase in political trust when political participation mediated the relationship in traditional mainstream media

than social media contexts. Our findings have theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

Previous studies identify the perception of corruption, political performance, and economic performance as determinants of political trust (Drakos et al., 2019; Murtin et al., 2018; Wang, 2016), but this study identified media salience as one of the crucial determinants of political trust. The incorporation of media as a strong predictor of political trust showed the importance of media in restoring people's trust in their government. Furthermore, political participation is also a mediating variable and significant determinant of political trust in Nigeria.

Also, this study contributed to the theoretical advancement of the concept of political trust. The previous study adopted media malaise and virtuous theories to predict that mass media will cause political alienation by fueling citizens' cynicism (Cheng, 2020; Marien, 2017). However, in this study, the theories of agenda-setting and agenda-melding were employed to explain media influence on political trust. Combining the two theoretical lenses is unique since no study on the political outcome has combined the two theories in a study. It has therefore enhanced the richness and interconnectivity effects of the two theories in this study. This study also fills the gap in the previous studies by demonstrating that both agenda-setting and agenda-melding theories operating in different contexts act together to impact political trust.

Practical Implications

The study provides some insights on the important role of the media in restoring trust towards the government by assigning salience to important issues in society. Our findings can help the government develop effective media strategies to address the problem of low political participation and low political trust among the people, especially among the younger generations. To achieve this, the government should utilize both traditional mainstream media and social media to reach out to the people. One of the ways is by leveraging on national issues, such as corruption, affecting so many people in Nigeria. In doing so, media can serve as a tool to attract people to participate in politics. Harnessing on the indispensable roles of media in priming, framing, and giving salience to important issues in society, both mainstream media and social media in Nigeria can act as catalysts of change in society by fostering active participation in politics among the people and hence increasing their trust in the incumbent government.

CONCLUSION

Our study is set to uncover the role of different media types (i.e., traditional mainstream media and social media) in influencing political participation and political trust in Nigeria. We found support for all hypotheses in our study. We concluded that traditional mainstream media and social media significantly affect political participation in Nigeria because they strengthen citizens' political knowledge

and motivate efficient media information processing by giving salience on certain issues over others. In other words, it allows Nigerians to become more knowledgeable and develop their stance on political issues. Our study found that greater salience given to political media content increases citizens' participation in politics and subsequently increases political trust. In this study, we also confirm the direct link between political participation and political trust. The key factor in increasing political trust in Nigeria is participation in politics. When people are alert and active, they are motivated to participate in many activities and committed to programs and policies that bring more development. These activities lead to trust in the government. Future research should examine the types of political participation that can enhance political trust further to understanding the dyadic relationships between media and politics.

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