

**ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATE MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS  
OF BINGHAM UNIVERSITY TOWARDS JOURNALISM AS A CAREER****Saidu, Abu Sabastine, PhD**Department of Mass Communication  
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desmondoo@yahoo.com**Abstract**

*Research has shown that many mass communication graduates have been produced every year in Nigeria. However, only a few of them venture into journalism as a career. Using a quantitative approach, the researcher examined the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University, Nigeria, towards journalism as a career. The population of the study consists of 300 registered 100 to 400 level students in the Department of Mass Communication. Census method was adopted to sample the perception of the respondents towards journalism as a career. Online questionnaire via Google form was employed for data collection and analysis. The data were analyzed and presented in tables and bar chart. Hinged on the Perception Theory, findings revealed that majority (61.2%) of the participants have positive attitude towards journalism as a career. However, further finding shows that the risky and hazardous nature of journalism profession in Nigeria; such as killing, kidnapping, assault and discrimination against journalists, poor remuneration among others, immensely influenced the decision of some students to venture into other professions or careers rather than journalism after graduation. Based on the findings, the study recommended that media organizations and the Nigerian government should ensure adequate security for journalists on the line of duty, provide attractive working conditions such as appropriate salaries and allowances as well as job security and protection of the life of journalists so as to make journalism profession more attractive to the teeming young graduates of mass communication in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Mass Communication, Bingham University, Journalism, Career

## 1.0 Introduction

Journalism plays a crucial role in the socio-cultural, political and economic development of every nation globally. Hanitzsch, Hanusch, and Ramaprasad, (2019) state that the training and practice of journalism differ all over the world in areas such as political, socio-cultural, religious, and economic environments. Journalism entails training in the philosophies and practice of journalism as a career. Apeh (2020) describes journalism as information, communication, and or the happening of the day condensed into a few words. In other words, journalism involves the theory and practice of covering, scrutinizing, processing and reporting newsworthy events which are of human interest through the mass media. Journalists mirror the society, act as the voice of the voiceless and holds the leaders in every nation of the world accountable to their people and Nigeria is no exception (Boukes, et al, 2020).

Journalism, as a major form of mass communication, has been defined in different ways by scholars of journalism, communication and media studies. Generally, journalism is the process of gathering, processing and dissemination of relevant information to large heterogeneous members of the society who are scattered everywhere. Its training and practice involves a process which is usually captured in the educational programmes and policy of every society.

In Nigeria, most of the institutions of higher learning such as polytechnics and universities offer mass communication leading to the award of national and higher national diplomas (ND & HND), bachelor (BSc/BA), master (MSc/MA) and doctor of philosophy (PhD) degrees (Apuke & Dogari, 2022). According to NUC (2023) statistical digest, the Universities in Nigeria produce about 10, 000 to 15, 000 mass communication graduates yearly. This implies that apart from other institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, the Nigerian Universities produce mass communication graduates at varying class of degree in tens of thousands yearly. Which suggests that since inception, universities and polytechnics in Nigeria would have produced mass communication specialists in hundreds of thousands if not millions.

Although there are many graduates of mass communication being produced yearly, the question remains as to how many of them actually practice journalism as a career after graduation? Particularly, considering that training in mass communication offers a unique opportunity for a career in journalism to bring about national development. A study by Apuke and Dogari, (2022) shows that many mass communication graduates do not venture into journalism career especially among female mass communication graduates. In other words, a lot of mass communication graduates opt into other professions such as modelling/makeups, private business, teaching and artist. Apuke and Dogari, (2022) further assert that hazards such as kidnap, jailing of journalists, assault, religious/cultural beliefs and other forms of discrimination dissuade many graduates of mass communication from venturing into journalism as a career.

Journalism has been described as a dignified profession (Apuke & Dogari, 2022). It is a multidisciplinary field which allows experts in other disciplines to take up a career in it and excel. According to Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ, 2023) there are about 15, 000 registered journalists in Nigeria. Similarly, Adaramola (2023) affirms that there are currently 740 functional broadcast stations in Nigeria. Furthermore, Adewuyi (2023)

states that there are over 100 newspaper outlets in Nigeria as at the time of this study. NUC (2022) outlined the new nine (9) degree programmes as a result of the unbundling of the communication discipline in the Nigerian university system. They include; Advertising (ADV), Broadcasting (BCJ), Development Communication Studies (DCS), Film and Multimedia Studies (FMM), Information and Media Studies (IMS), Journalism and Media Studies (JMS), Mass Communication (MCM), Public Relations (PRS), and Strategic Communication (STC). With the introduction of mass communication into the Nigerian university educational system for about 60 years now, over 67 universities in Nigeria now offer mass communication degree. Since then, the enrolment of students into the mass communication degree programme has grown steadily with over 20, 000 entrants into mass communication programme yearly (NUC, 2020).

The question remains as to the capacity of the media outlets in Nigeria to absorb the huge number of graduates being produced yearly. However, research has shown that many mass communication graduates do not practice journalism, rather they venture into other occupations such as modelling, make-up artist, marketing, public relations, advertising, teaching, to mention but only a few of them. Hence, this study is predicated on the need to assess the attitude of the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career.

In the Nigerian mass media ecosystem, studies have shown that the number of mass communication graduate has increased considerably within the last few decades. With the growing number of mass communication enrolments and graduates from the institutions of higher learning, the number of those who opted into journalism are relatively insignificant. Opuke and Dagari (2022) argue that “a large number of female journalists are produced from different institutions offering mass communication; but female participation in the profession is very negligible”. This assertion implies that female mass communication graduates tend to scamper away from practising journalism after graduation.

In the same vein, Boukes, et al, (2020) further describe this as “a quiescent attitude of females towards journalism profession” and this has subsequently made their male counterparts to have prerogative dominance over them in the profession. The belief of most male folks in the Nigerian society is that journalism exposes the practitioners and makes the female colleagues lose their dignity. The question that remains unanswered is “what is the implication of this dormant attitude of females towards journalism as a career on the graduates of mass communication?” Do their male counterparts have similar attitudes towards journalism? What is the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students generally towards journalism as a career? This study is designed to find answers to these and any other question that may arise in the course of this investigation.

Journalism is a multidisciplinary profession which allows experts in other fields of learning to take up a career in it and excel. Research has shown that quite a number of practising journalists all over the world are graduates of other disciplines such as English

and literary studies, sociology, psychology, to mention but only a few of them, also take up a career in journalism. However, some graduates of mass communication, journalism and media studies do not practice journalism. This reality raises the curiosity of this researcher to investigate the situation in order to ascertain the attitude of the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career (Sharma, 2021).

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The main goal of this study is to examine the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career. The study also seeks specifically to:

- i. identify the perception of undergraduate mass communication students towards Journalism as a career;
- ii. highlight the challenges that confront the choice of journalism as a career;
- iii. proffer solutions to impediments or challenges against choosing journalism as a career.

### **2.0 Theoretical framework**

Perception Theory (PT) of communication is adopted to anchor this study.

#### **Perception Theory**

Perception theory, advocated with the key assumption that individuals have a multifaceted method of choosing, organizing, and interpreting sensory inspiration into a meaningful and intelligible image of the world, entails the process of selective exposure which enables people to pay attention to media messages or any other messages which are in agreement with the already conceived attitude, choosy consideration to certain aspects of media messages that are in consonant with strongly held beliefs or behaviour. Propounded by B. Berelson and G.A Steiner in 1964, perception theory has gone through several reviews which affirm that the media expect audiences to consider their messages, absorb the contents and make appropriate changes in attitudes, beliefs as well as produce the desired behavioural responses. In essence, the theory states that the process of interpreting messages is complex and that the goals may be difficult to achieve.

Berelson and Steiner (1964) assert that perception is a complex process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into meaningful and coherent picture of the world. The review has identified two types of influences on human perception such as structural and functional influences. While structural influences on perception come from the physical aspect of the stimuli to which individuals are being exposed, functional influences are the psychological factors that influence perception and therefore introduce some subjectivity into the process.

Severin and Tankard (2001) identified three types of perception which include selective exposure, selective attention and selective retention. Selective exposure deals with the tendency for individuals to expose themselves to those communications that are in

agreement with their existing attitudes and to avoid those that are not. The notion of selective exposure follows agreeably from Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance which suggests that one way to reduce dissonance after making a decision is to seek out information that is in consonant with the selection or the choice that has been made. While selective attention is the tendency of individuals to pay attention to those parts of a message that are in consonant with strongly held beliefs, attitudes or behaviours and to avoid those parts of a message that go against strongly held attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Selective retention is the tendency for the individuals or audience to recall information to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors.

Perception theory is relevant to this study because students perceive journalism as a career in different ways. The undergraduate mass communication students are humans who have their own interpretation or attitude towards journalism. While some students may view journalism as a career of high interest and passion, others may not see it in that light at all. This depends to a very large extent on the student's level of exposure to information or interaction about the subject. Also, the general psychological make-up of the student plays a significant role on the way such a student perceives the information he or she receives as well as a personal conviction about journalism as a career.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **Evolution of Mass Communication**

Mass Communication has existed since the ancient times when it was present in the basic forms of verbal and non-verbal communication. Nnaemeka (2021) stresses that with the progressing time, mass media has transformed immensely from being a medium of public communication to becoming a global platform of social communication where people can freely express themselves. The new technologies and social media platforms have changed the way we perceive the world around us. Kaluarachchi (2020) further argues that this outbreak of innovations and technologies has also boosted the media industry leading to colossal career opportunities emerging in this field. There are various types of mass communication and the diverse opportunities you can explore in this ever-growing field. Gujarat (2020) avers that broadly speaking, there are mainly four types of mass communication. They include Print Media which comprise newspapers, magazines, books and novels, comics, journals and other publications. Broadcast Media on the other hand consist of films, television, and radio. Outdoor and Transit Media; Billboards, boardings, posters, and banners. Digital Media/New Media; Social media, video platforms, websites, mobile apps, e-books, podcasts, online radio and a host of others.

Sharma (2018) holds the view that the evolution of mass communication has been a continuous process that has been shaped by technological advancements and changing societal needs. According to Hanitzsch, et al, (2019), some of the significant milestones in the evolution of mass communication include the invention of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century which marked the beginning of mass communication. Similarly, Nnaemeka (2021) states that the emergence of printing press enabled mass production of books,

newspapers, magazines and other printed materials which significantly increased the availability and accessibility of information. The invention of telegraph in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutionized communication by allowing messages to be sent over long distances almost instantly. It made it possible to transmit news quickly, resulting in the birth of the news wire services. The radio became an influential mass medium in the 1920s and quickly became a popular form of entertainment and news source. It allowed people to hear news and events as they happened making it a powerful tool for propaganda and advertising. The television (TV) was introduced in the 1950s and quickly became the dominant form of mass communication. It allowed people to see news and events as they happened making it a more compelling medium than radio. The TV also became a powerful tool for advertising (Nnaemeka, 2021).

The internet emerged in the 1990s and has since revolutionized mass communication. It has made it possible to transmit and access information quickly and easily from anywhere in the world. The internet has also given rise to new forms of communication (Nnaemeka, 2021), such as social media and online news sources. Hanitzsch, et al (2019) aver that the widespread use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets has further accelerated the evolution of mass communication. These devices have made it possible to access information and communicate with others at any time and from any location. Overall, the evolution of mass communication has been a continuous process that has been driven by technological advancements and changing societal needs. The emergence of new technologies and communication channels will continue to shape the future of mass communication (Kaluarachchi, 2020; Nnaemeka, 2021).

Many scholars have contributed to the study of mass communication and its evolution over time. Some of the prominent mass communication scholars include, Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian philosopher and media theorist who is best known for his work "The Medium is the Message." He believes that the form of the medium itself, that is, print, radio, television, and so on, has a greater impact on society than the content it carries. Also, Harold Lasswell was an American political scientist and communication theorist who is known for his famous model of communication, which he described as "who says what to whom in what channel with what effect?" Another scholar in the mass communication hall of fame is Walter Lippmann, an American journalist and political commentator who wrote extensively about the role of the media in shaping public opinion. This scholar holds a strong belief that the media have the power to shape public perception of reality and influence public policy. Next is James W. Carey, an American communication theorist who is known for his work on the cultural aspects of communication. He argued that communication is not just about transmitting information, but also about creating and sharing meaning. The fifth prominent mass communication scholar is Stuart Hall, a Jamaican-British cultural theorist who is known for his work on the relationship between culture, power, and identity. He argued that the media plays a significant role in shaping cultural norms and values, and that it is important to examine the values in which media representation can reinforce or challenge dominant ideologies (Kaluarachchi, 2020; Nnaemeka, 2021).

These scholars among many others, have helped to shape our understanding of mass communication and its evolution over time. Their works have influenced the fields of media studies, communication and cultural studies, and their insights continue to be relevant to our understanding of the media landscape today.

### **Unbundling Communication as a Discipline in Nigeria**

National Universities Commission (NUC, 2020) unbundled the communication field in the Nigerian university system, making the different areas of specialization previously shoved together, to sprout and stand out distinctively. The implication of this is that the field of communication which used to be a single degree programme would henceforth have nine (9) different programmes, namely; Advertising (ADV), Broadcasting (BCJ), Development Communication Studies (DCS), Film and Multimedia Studies (FMM), Information and Media Studies (IMS), Journalism and Media Studies (JMS), Mass Communication (MCM), Public Relations (PRS), Strategic Communication (STC). Johnson (2020) describes this new development in the field of mass communication as a “tree” which has a “trunk” with many branches, each branch growing its leaves and fruits. The analogy here fits perfectly into the evolution of mass communication discipline in the Nigeria university system. In other words, mass communication had been like a trunk with its branches choked up in itself. But now, the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2020) has made the different branches of communication to come out and fully enjoy the freedom of existential entity. NUC (2020) holds the view that the exercise is done to meet the reality of the time as it applies in other climes in order to meet the global best practices. The argument here is that beyond knowledge, educational system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be designed in such a way as to make it competitive in the global labour market. The interesting part of this evolution is that aspiring communication students have the opportunity at the very beginning of their career to make a choice based on their passion, vision, and to fit into the emerging trends in the field of communication as they graduate from the university.

Many reasons have been advanced for the unbundling. Prominent among them is that it deepens specialization, easy cross fertilization of ideas among students from different universities offering the same discipline, The unbundling offers opportunity for upcoming journalists, advertising, broadcasting, and public relations scholars and practitioners to explore all the skills required in each of the disciplines. This would further deepen their knowledge of the theories, principles and practice of their chosen sequence.

Nevertheless, the unbundling poses many challenges to the field of journalism, broadcasting, PR, and advertising the challenges among others. The capacity of universities in Nigeria in terms of personnel, structural facilities, and equipment to adopt or implement the policy poses a huge challenge (NUC, 2020). In other words, inspite of the many benefits of the unbundling of the field of mass communication such as deepening specialization, improved quality of communication graduates among others, the implementing institutions of higher learning have an uphill task of providing

adequate quality manpower, structures, facilities and equipment for proper take off or effective implementation of the policy of unbundling the mass communication programme in the Nigerian universities.

### **Journalism as a Career in Nigeria: The Prospects and Challenges**

A lot of people stumbled into this career called journalism while many others prepared and consciously entered into the journalism profession fully and aware and adequately knowledgeable about the principles that guide the practice of journalism. Several skills and abilities are required to be successful in journalism as a career. Therefore, it is imperative to have a career development plan in journalism. This is because journalism is a wide and diverse field with many career opportunities and roles (Apuke and Dogari, 2022). Knowledge skills, technology skills as well as social skills are some of the main specific roles required to ensure a long and fruitful career in journalism.

Journalism is information. It is communication. It is the events of the day distilled into a few words. Sounds or pictures are processed by the mechanics of communication to satisfy the human curiosity of a world that is always eager to know what's new. Journalism is basically news. The word derives from the term "journal", its best contents are the happenings of the day. But journalism may also be entertainment and reassurance, to satisfy the human frailty of a world that is always eager to be comforted with the knowledge that there are millions of human beings just like us all around the world (Apeh, 2020).

Journalism is a craft, a profession and even a trade or business which has been existing for over two centuries now (Heflin, 2015). The coming together of many technologies, social, economic and political developments made it possible for journalism to thrive and has expanded beyond confines of the profession. Apeh (2020) avers that technologies such as the printing press and development of large-scale printing and distribution of print materials are responsible for the rapid growth of the journalism profession; opening the door of professional journalism to all comers.

Many scholars have defined Journalism in many ways. Some scholars defined it as the production and distribution of reports on recent events. Others see it as the collection and editing of news for presentation through the media or the public press. Heflin (2015) defined Journalism as an academic study concerned with the collection and editing of news or the management of news medium. It is also described as a piece of writing designed for publication in a newspaper or magazine or a writing characterized by a direct presentation of facts or description of events without an attempt at interpretation. Journalism is also defined as writing designed to appeal to current or popular taste or public interest (Robinson, 2011; Heflin, 2015).

Similarly, Okocha, et al (2022) view journalism as an occupation which applies the process or methods of gathering information with the use of literary techniques. According to them, journalistic media include print, television, radio, internet and newsreels. The concept and practice of the proper role for journalism vary from country to country. In some nations, the news media are controlled by government intervention



and are not fully independent. In other words, the news media are independent of the government but instead operate as private industry. These are mostly motivated by profit. In addition to the varying nature of how media organizations are run and funded, countries may have differing implementations of laws handling the freedom of speech and libel cases.

The advent of the Internet and Smartphone has brought considerable changes to the media landscape in recent years. This has created a shift in the consumption of print media channels, as people increasingly consume news through e-readers, smartphone, and other personal electronic devices, as opposed to the more traditional formats of newspapers, magazines as well as television news channels. News organizations are challenged to fully monetize their digital wing, as well as improvise on the context in which they publish in print. Newspapers have seen print revenues sink at a faster pace than the rate of growth for digital revenues (Harcup, 2009).

From the definitions and review of the concept of journalism, some forms of journalism are clearly identifiable. They include access journalism, advocacy journalism, broadcast journalism, “citizen” journalism, data journalism, drone journalism, robotic journalism, interactive journalism, Investigative journalism, photojournalism, sensor journalism, and tabloid journalism, gonzo journalism or sensationalism (Igyuve & Odeba, 2018). *Journalism practice covers virtually every aspect of human endeavour from arts to business, entertainment, environment, fashion, medicine, music, politics, sports, science and technology, weather amongst others. Journalists cover and write stories on events of human interest as well as both natural and man-made occurrences. The genres of journalism include advocacy, analytic, blogging, broadcast, civic, collaborative, comic-based, fact-checking, and so on.* Lemelshtich (2015) states that the emergence of AI algorithms are being composed that can convert facts into readable stories in a fraction of a second. This is what gave birth to “Robotic Journalism” that exists on two pillars; the computer software that automatically extracts new knowledge from huge data silos employing the new “social Physics” concept and algorithms that automatically convert this knowledge into readable stories with little human involvement. This development in digital technology (robotics) raises the question of whether or not “robotics” are taking over the work of human journalists. Okocha, et al. (2021) opines that drone journalism or the use of drone for journalism is an aid to human journalists and not a replacement. Similarly, Odeba, et al. (2022) posit that drones which were originally invented for military operations are now being extensively used for journalism practice largely because of the high quality of image or pictures they produce, efficiency and precision of newsgathering as well as protection of journalists in hostile environments. In other words, drones are tools for journalism practice and like every other tool, human journalists only need to be trained in the use of drones for their journalistic tasks.

*Journalists write news using different styles of writing. However, they must adhere to the ethics of the profession, objectivity, fairness, news values, attribution, and defamation, editorial independence and so on. The social impact of journalism practice covers check on fake news, Fourth Estate, Fifth Estate, Freedom of the Press,*

*infotainment, Media bias, Public Relations (PR), propaganda model and so on. The news media include newspapers, magazines, television, radio, internet, news agencies and alternative media. Journalism plays roles such as reporting (reporters or journalists), column writers (columnists), Blogging (Bloggers), Editing (Editors), copy editing (Copy Editors), meteorology (Meteorologists), news presenting (News Presenters), photojournalism (Photographers), pundit and commentators (Thomson, 2018; Ward, 2018). Apuke (2022) carried out a study on the attitude of female mass communication students of Taraba State University towards journalism as a career. The study found that majority of the female graduates of mass communication do not venture into journalism for reasons such as marriage, working odd hours and other hazards associated with the practice of journalism in Nigeria.*

World Press Freedom Index (WPFI, 2021) ranks Nigeria at 120 out of 180 countries, with journalists facing harassment, arrest, and prosecution when reporting on corruption and terrorism. These among many other hazards being faced by journalists in Nigeria suggest that the media ecosystem in Nigeria is certainly not conducive for journalism practice. Similarly, Okocha, et al. (2022) ascertained that media freedom in Nigeria and indeed, globally, has been deteriorating; giving room for repression, intimidation, threats to journalists and media practitioners' lives and career. This negative trend does not only dampen the morale of the established media practitioners, but also makes journalism profession very unattractive to upcoming journalists or the fledgling media practitioners to venture into.

In addition, Okocha and Agaku (2022) affirmed that insurgency such as Boko Haram, banditry, frequent farmer-herder clashes and other forms of terrorism across Nigeria, has made the country too hostile and hazardous for journalism practice. These researchers further aver that government hostility and suppression of the media industry in Nigeria is a major setback that discourages both those who are already in the field and the young graduates of mass communication who may want to venture into journalism practice. The stereotyping of female journalists in Nigeria is yet another source of discouragement for young graduates of mass communication, particularly females to enter into journalism profession. According to Okocha and Dapoet (2022), female journalists in Plateau State of Nigeria are seriously discriminated against in the media industry. This stereotype of female journalists in the media industry is a source of worry and discouragement for female graduates of mass communication who may desire to venture into journalism as a career.

WPFI (2021) further outlines the daily newspapers in Nigeria that ranked highly in terms of the corollary to government attempts in influencing the media. The result of survey shows that independently owned news brands came out best in the ranking. This implies that privately owned and operated media outlets in Nigeria are perceived to be free of political control based on the brand trust scores. Channel TV ranked the most trusted brand at 84%, closely followed by the Vanguard Newspaper (82%), Punch Newspaper (82%) as well as the Guardian Newspaper which has (80%). The 2023 ranking by the

Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON) ranks Arise News Television as the Best Television station in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Okocha and Udeh (2022) established that media industry in Africa has been faced with so many turbulent times. The media practitioners in most African counties are daily confronted with threats, harassment, intimidation and even death from the powers that be which makes it difficult for the media industry in the continent to adequately discharge its constitutional mandate or responsibility. This presupposes that it is not only in Nigeria, but also in other parts of Africa, the general media ecosystem in the continent of Africa is hazardous and therefore, makes journalism profession unattractive to the graduates of mass communication to take up a career in the media industry.

This accounts for why only few media outlets stand out when it comes to trust and authenticity and proper journalistic practice in Nigeria. Nigerian lawmakers are currently reviewing legislation, with a view to criminalizing the dissemination of misinformation online. The law will enable the government to order internet shutdowns and block access to social media sites.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study is a quantitative method of investigation using the online Google Form. The study focused on the entire population of the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The sample size is 300 respondents. The entire population of the undergraduate mass communication students is used for the study because the universe is relatively few and the respondents are easily assessable through the use of digital technology.

The researcher also adopted the online approach for data collection and analysis. The fastest way to reach the respondents and most accurate means of data collection and analysis was through the use of digital technology. The study used census approach in order to give every registered undergraduate mass communication student the opportunity to express their views and opinions as the subject matter concerns individual attitude towards journalism as a career. In this type of investigation, every item of the universe is taken into account and analyzed. This method of investigation is used because the results as well as the conclusions are more accurate and reliable. This method of study is highly reliable because it does not give room for biases as every member of the population is equally investigated.

When the population is large, complete enumeration is not possible as it may be very expensive, time-consuming, and requires many trained investigators. However, when the population is small such as the population in this study, and within a manageable area, the census approach is ideal.

### **4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this section, data collected are presented and analyzed. The response rate of the questionnaire distributed and retrieved is 100%. 300 copies of questionnaire were administered using Google Form via the social media (WhatsApp) platforms of the 4 different levels of study in the Department of Mass Communication.

**Table 1: Demographics of Respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	88	29.3
	Female	212	70.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	16 – 25 years	280	93.3
	26 – 35 years	<b>20</b>	<b>6.7</b>
	36 – 45 years	-	-
	46 years and above	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Level of Study</b>	100 Level	103	34.4
	200 level	85	28.3
	300 Level	54	18
	400 Level	58	19.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

### Analysis of the Gender of the Respondents

The male respondents have less responses (29.3%) while the females’ responses have a higher percentage (70.7%) of respondents. This implies that there are more female undergraduate mass communication students in Bingham University. This shows that both genders were adequately represented.

### Analysis of the Age Range of Respondents

Majority, 93.3% of the respondents who participated in the survey are aged between 16 and 25 years. The implication is that the overwhelming majority of the students admitted into the undergraduate mass communication programme in Bingham University are mostly young people who are below the age of 30 years. The rate of mortality is grossly insignificant to affect the result of the investigation.

### Analysis of the Level of Study of Respondents

The analysis here shows the level of study of the respondents. 100 level students has the highest respondents of 34.4%, followed by 200 level (28.3%). The first implication of this is that there are more registered students at level 100 as at the time of the survey; while the second implication of this analysis is that, perhaps there were more 100 level students who were available and willing to participate in the survey than the other levels of study.

**Table 2: Attitude of Undergraduate Mass Communication Students towards Journalism as a career**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Negative	5	1.6
Positive	184	61.2
Neutral	91	30.2
Not sure	20	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The primary aim of this study is to find out the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career. The question, response and analysis here indicate the students' attitude, that is, whether or not they have negative or positive attitude. 61.2% of the respondents shows positive attitude towards the practice of journalism profession after graduation. This is followed by those who are neutral about the career they would venture into after graduation. The implication of their refusal to disclose or for being neutral might mean that either they have not made up their minds on their choice of career or they just chose not to disclose it.

**Table 3: Choice of Journalism Practice after Graduation**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	135	45.9
No	76	25.9
Maybe	83	28.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The analysis reveals that majority 45.9% of the respondents would practice journalism on graduation while 25.9% said they would not practice journalism at the end of undergraduate studies. 28.2% of the respondents said "maybe" which implies that they were not yet sure whether they would practise journalism at the end of their undergraduate studies. The "maybe" option can also imply that they do not want to disclose their career choice after graduation. The mortality rate of response here is not significant enough to affect outcome of the investigation.

**Table 4: Choice of Careers other than Journalism by Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Advertising	66	22
Marketing	15	5
Public Relations	75	25
Make-up Artist	33	11
Modelling	36	12
Private Business	36	12
Teaching Journalism	6	2
Not sure	33	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The analysis on table 4 shows that the respondents have diverse choices on the career they would like to practice after graduation other than journalism with Public Relations having the highest percent (25%) of the respondents, followed by Advertising which has 22%. The implication of this finding is that majority of the respondents chose other careers within the field of communication and media studies.

**Table 5: What Influenced the Respondents’ Choice of Other Careers?**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Information about Journalism	94	31.2
Interaction with Journalists	47	15.8
Parental Influence/Advice	13	4.3
Peer Pressure/Influence	6	2.1
Personal conviction	103	34.4
Others (Please specify)	37	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The analysis in Table 5 shows that respondents’ choice of journalism as a career has been influenced by many factors. However, personal conviction about journalism as a career takes the lead with 34.4 per cent. This is followed closely by information about journalism (31.2%) that respondents had before making their choice of journalism as a career. Others are interaction with journalists which has 15.8%, others having 12.2%; while parental influence, and peer pressure/influence share the remaining 6.4 per cent. The implication of this analysis is that majority (93.6%) of the respondents made their choices based on informed decision and personal conviction. This means that since the decision is made mainly by the respondents themselves, they are most likely to go far scaling every hurdle in the pathway to becoming trained and practising journalist.

**Table 6: Respondents’ fascination for journalism as a career. Their response to Journalism has great fascination for me.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agree	78	26
Agree	144	48
Not sure	57	19
Strongly disagree	11	3.7
Disagree	10	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

26% and 48% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that journalism as a career has great fascination for them. This implies that majority of the respondents 74% (that is, total of strongly agree and agree) are greatly fascinated about their choice

of journalism as a career. However, 19% of the respondents said they are not sure whether or not journalism has any fascination for them. The remaining 2.6% goes for respondent who strongly disagree and disagree respectively.

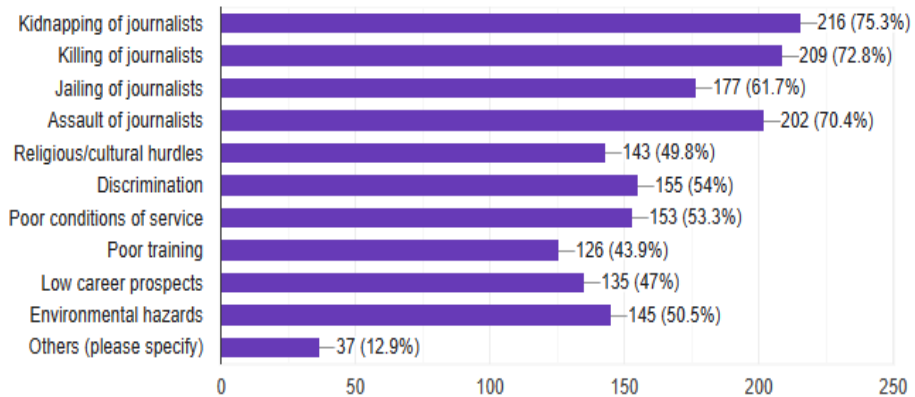
**Table 7: Respondents’ view on Journalism as a Hazardous Career as they respond to the statement: Journalism is a hazardous career.**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	179	59.5
No	59	19.7
Maybe	62	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The analysis in Table 7 shows that more than half of the respondents (59.5%) said that journalism is a hazardous career. This is followed by those who said “maybe” (20.8%), implying that they either do not know or are not sure whether or not journalism is a hazardous profession. Generally, the result here indicates that majority of the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University are knowledgeable the nature of the career are preparing to enter into. This is necessary because, knowledge is power, therefore, having a sound knowledge of journalism as career before entering into it will help greatly in tackling the issues that may arise.

**Figure 1: The Hazards of Journalism Profession in Nigeria**



Source: Field Survey, 2023

Analysis in figure 1 shows that there are many hazards being faced by practising journalists in Nigeria on a daily basis. Kidnapping of journalists has the highest

frequency of 216 respondents which represents 75.3 per cent. This is closely followed by killing of journalists with 209 respondents representing 72.8%. This implies that kidnapping and killing of journalists are on the increase. This is bad enough to deter anyone from venturing into the profession. Other hazards of journalism in Nigeria include jailing of journalists (61.7%), assault (70.4%), religious/cultural hurdles (49.8%), discrimination (54%), poor conditions of service (53.3%), poor training (43.9%), low career prospects (47%), environmental hazards (50.5%) as well as others which are not specified having 12.9%). The implication of this analysis is that journalists in Nigeria face so many hazards on the line of duty.

**Table 8: Ways of Minimizing the Hazards of Journalism Profession in Nigeria.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Passion for Journalism	58	19.2
Adequate security for Journalists	144	48.1
Training	15	5
Legislation	9	3
Attractive package	12	4.1
Conducive working environment	28	9.4
Appropriate digital technology	21	7.1
Glamour	12	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The analysis in table 8 avers that there are many ways by which the hazards of journalism can be averted or minimized. Provision of adequate security for journalists on the line of duty tops the suggested factors for mitigating against the hurdles or hazards of journalism in Nigeria with 43.1 per cent. Passion for journalism as a career is also a factor that can help to minimize the hazards of journalism as suggested by the respondents. 19.2% of the respondents are of the view that when journalists are passionate about their job or profession, nothing can stop them easily from doing what they know how to do best. Other ways by which hazards of journalism practice in Nigeria based on the views of the respondents include training of journalists, legislation to ensure that journalists are adequately protected, attractive pay package, conducive working environment (9.4%), and deployment of appropriate digital technology for the job as well as the glamour of the profession.

**Table 9: Number of Mass Communication Students who will venture into Journalism after Graduation.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very large	61	20
Large	129	43.1
Very small	24	8
Small	44	14.8
Not sure	42	14.1



**Total** **300** **100**  
**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

The analysis in table 9 reveals that a very large number of mass communication graduates venture into journalism after their studies. This is because 20% of the respondents said very large number of mass communication graduates chose to practice journalism and 43.1% said large number of them go into journalism profession on graduation. This implies that 63.6 per cent of the respondents are most likely to venture into journalism practice.

#### **4.1 Discussion of Findings**

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career. The three key objectives of the study are; to identify the perception of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards Journalism as a career; find out the challenges being faced by the students in choosing journalism as a career; and to proffer solutions to the impediments against choosing journalism as a career.

The data were collected and analyzed to ascertain the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career. The result of the analysis indicated that most of the respondents are within the age range of 16 to 25 years which showed that the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University are mostly young adults below the age of 30 years.

Firstly, the study sought to identify the perception of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards Journalism as a career. Findings revealed that majority (61.2%) of the respondents have positive attitude towards journalism as a career. The implication is that they are interested in becoming journalists after graduation. However, some of them indicated interests in other professions or career rather than journalism such as public relations, advertising, modelling, private business and so on. Therefore, it can be said with a high level of certainty the perception of the students was a true reflection of what they perceive about journalism as a discipline and whether or not they would opt for journalism as a career at the end of their course of study. This is in consonance with the key assumption of perception theory as reviewed that “students perceive journalism as a career in different ways” (Berelson and Steiner, 1964; Severin and Tankard, 2001). In other words, perception is an expression of one’s views as they affect or influence their choices or attitude towards a course of action.

The second objective of the study sought to find out the challenges being faced by the undergraduate mass communication students in choosing journalism as a career. Findings indicated that, though the respondents are highly fascinated by journalism profession, over 75% of them are of the opinion that there are many hazards associated with the practice of journalism in Nigeria. In their views, the practice of journalism profession in Nigeria is plagued with so many hazards such as poor remuneration of

journalists, kidnapping of journalism, general insecurity such as killing of journalists, arrest and detaining of journalists for speaking truth to power. The major finding shows that the challenges being faced by the press in Nigeria ranges between 50.5% and 75.3%. This finding corroborates the position of World Press Freedom Index (WPFI, 2021) that ranks Nigeria at 120 out of 180 countries, with journalists facing harassment, arrest, and prosecution when reporting on corruption and terrorism. These among many other hazards being faced by journalists in Nigeria suggest that the media ecosystem in Nigeria is certainly not conducive for journalism practice. This finding further agrees with Apuke (2022) which affirmed that majority of the female graduates of mass communication do not venture into journalism for reasons such as marriage, working odd hours and other hazards associated with the practice of journalism in Nigeria. This also verifies Okocha and Dapoet (2022)'s affirmation that female journalists in Plateau State of Nigeria are seriously discriminated against in the media industry. This implies that the choice of other careers rather than journalism is as a result of the many hazards associated with journalism profession in the Nigerian media ecosystem. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria generally and those directly related to journalist such as intimidation, assaults, killing, kidnapping, poor conditions of service, cultural/religious hurdles, low career prospects, discrimination, poor or lack of training for journalists, lack of conducive environment and prospects for journalism practice account for the plethora of factors responsible for the choice of other professions by many mass communication graduates in Nigeria.

The third objective of the study was to proffer solutions to the impediments against choosing journalism as a career. The respondents have diverse views and suggestions on how to mitigate against or minimize the impediments in the choice of journalism as a career. The key points advanced by the participants include Passion for journalism as a career, the argument is that when journalists are passionate about their job or profession, nothing can stop them easily from doing what they know how to do best. Other ways by which hazards of journalism practice in Nigeria based on the views of the respondents are training of journalists, legislation to ensure that journalists are adequately protected, attractive pay package, conducive working environment and deployment of appropriate digital technology for the job as well as the glamour of the profession. This perspective of the respondents corroborates Nnaemeka (2021)'s position about what should be done to attract more fresh graduates of mass communication into the practice of journalism as a career.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The study examined the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University to determine their choice of career after graduation. The result of the study has shown that while majority (61.2%) of the respondents have positive attitude towards journalism as a career, a large number of them, are not willing to enter in the practice of journalism after graduation. Certain perceived difficulties and hazards such as killing, jailing, and assaults of journalists, lack of conducive and attractive conditions

of service among others are responsible for mass communication graduates' choice of other careers instead of journalism.

It is also obvious from the analysis that a lot (89%) of them would venture into other careers such as advertising, public relations, modelling, makeup artist, teaching journalism, among others. The researcher observed that despite their negative attitude and choice of other professions, they will do well in journalism. However, this can only happen if enabling environment is provided for them to practice journalism after graduation.

It has been further observed that the undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University made informed decision as regards their choice of mass communication as a course of study.

### 5.1 Recommendations

Having critically analyzed the attitude of undergraduate mass communication students of Bingham University towards journalism as a career, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The federal Government of Nigeria should provide a secured environment for both practising and upcoming journalists to work without fear of any form of molestation.
2. The training and practice of journalism in Nigeria should be made so attractive that potential journalists will be interested in the profession.
3. There should be improved conditions of service for journalists so that they can take care their basic needs of life; shelter, food and clothing.
4. There should be adequate legal provision and implementation that guarantees the safety of journalists as well as freedom of the press.
5. Employers of journalists should pay attractive salaries that will motivate both practising journalists and those desiring to venture into the profession.

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