

South-East People's Understanding of the Indigenous People of Biafra (Ipob) Propaganda

GEORGE, Nneoma Nora

Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies,
University of Port Harcourt Rivers State.
norageorge777@gmail.com

UDOUDO, Aniefiok Jackson

Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies,
University of Port Harcourt Rivers State.
anieudoudo@yahoo.com

Nwachukwu, Fautinus Ginikanwa

Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies,
University of Port Harcourt Rivers State.
fautinus_nwachukwu@uniport.edu.ng

DOI: [10.56201/jhsp.v10.no2.2024.pg1.13](https://doi.org/10.56201/jhsp.v10.no2.2024.pg1.13)

Abstract

This study examined the understanding of the South-East people on the Indigenous People of Biafra's propaganda. The objectives of the study were among others to find out the extent of South-East people's awareness of the Indigenous people of Biafra's propaganda and functions of the Eastern Security Network. The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The population of this study, according to the 2006 population of South-Eastern States aged from 18 and above. The total population of the South-East People from 18 and above age stood at 10,421,081. The Krejcie and Morgan Table which was used to determine the sample size of 384. The study adopted a survey method. The study made use of questionnaire for data collection. The researcher adopted quantitative method to present and analyze the data gathered from the respondents. The quantitative method of data analysis was presented using statistical tools as tables of frequency distribution, simple percentages and weighted mean score (WMS) based on a 4- Point Likert-Scale. Findings from the study revealed that South-East people understood the propaganda inherent in the message of Indigenous People of Biafra as the weighted mean score was 3.36. The portrayal of the Igbo as victims of historical marginalisation can generate empathy and support for the group's cause. Based on the findings, the study recommended that there is need for comprehensive education and dialogue initiatives by federal government, aimed at addressing historical grievances, promoting reconciliation and fostering a more inclusive national identity to mitigate the influence of divisive propaganda and promote unity among all Nigerians.

Keywords: South-South People, Propaganda, Indigenous People of Biafra

Introduction

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a separatist organisation in Nigeria advocating for the independence of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, which declared itself the Republic of Biafra during the Nigeria Civil War from 1967 to 1970. IPOB's campaign for secession has garnered significant attention, both domestically and internationally, through its use of propaganda to influence public opinion. This study focuses on understanding how people in the South-East region perceive and respond to IPOB's propaganda. IPOB's propaganda strategies are multifaceted, utilising social media, radio broadcasts and public demonstrations to disseminate their message. These methods aim to evoke a sense of historical grievance, cultural identity and political injustice among the Igbo people, the primary ethnic group in the South-East (Omeje, 2018).

IPOB's narratives often emphasise themes of marginalisation and oppression, resonating deeply with the historical experiences of the Igbo people post-civil war (Akinyele, 2020). The effectiveness of this propaganda can be attributed to its ability to tap into collective memories and perceived on-going injustices, which are introduced through community discourse and media consumption (Ukiwo, 2019). After the war, several challenges arose from unresolved national questions which revolved around sensitive national issues such as group marginalisation, revenue allocation, and politicisation of religion, ethnic militancy, terrorism and corruption. One of the major manifestations of some of these unresolved problems is the emergence of groups demanding self-determination and political independence.

From the foregoing, separatist agitation dates back to the British Colonial administration as a result, Tamuno (1970) asserts that, the agitations for secession in the entity called Nigeria today is traced to 1914 Amalgamation. He notes that from Ahmadu Bello's account, the north would have preferred a separate political future, instead of being yoked with the South in what the Sardauna termed the "the mistake of 1914". The North displeased with the amalgamation, threatened to secede from the union (Tamuno, 1970). The feelings of marginalisation and deprivation nursed by people of South-East region occasioned by the high spate of poverty in the region have fueled the called secession for another country other than Nigeria.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist group in Eastern Nigeria. Its main aim is to restore the Republic of Biafra (Independent State of Biafra which comprises mainly, the Igbo of the old Eastern Region) through a referendum (Ogu, 2009). The region had seceded from mainstream Nigeria, sequel to the massacre of Igbo people in parts of the country occasioned by the counter coup of July 29, 1966. To this end, Alozie and Akonye (2019) note that, besides the widespread pogromme of the Igbo and the killing of the Head of state, Major, General Aguiyi Ummunnakwe Ironsi, an Igbo, the Federal Government led by General Yakubu Gowon went ahead to abolish the four regions and created 12 states as a replacement. They submit that three states were created out of the Eastern Region namely: East Central State with its capital in Enugu South- Eastern state with Calabar and Rivers State with its capital in Port Harcourt.

The Military Governor of the Eastern Region, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu saw this as a deliberate move to balkanise the region with a view of silencing the Igbo out for further punishment. He vehemently resisted the move and after consultation with Igbo elders, decided to secede from Nigeria as a separate and independent country. Thus, they further submit that, the federal government vehemently opposed the decision and declared Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu *Persona non grata* and ordered for his arrest. Hence, many believed that, the disagreement between the two (Federal Government and Eastern Region) led to the Civil War

that lasted for 30 months before the dissidents (Biafra) were liquidated and reincorporated into the Nigerian nation (Alozie & Akonye, 2019).

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a group that leads the calls for Biafrans freedom from Nigeria. Its main aim is to restore an independent state of Biafra for the people of old Eastern Region of Nigeria through a referendum (Allison, 2019). Founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, a British- Biafra political activist, the group is a movement that stems from perceived injustice orchestrated by the Federal Government of Nigeria on the southeast and south-south regions of Nigeria. To the group, there was total lack of infrastructural development, poor investment, neglect in resources distribution, skewed railways, militarisation of the zone, over-grazing and destruction of lives and crops by Fulani herdsmen and lot of others. Having failed in the Nigerian Civil war that lasted between 1967 and 1970, the secession group decides to fight for freedom and emancipation from their perceived enemy this time through weaponless means especially as it concerns propaganda mechanism.

The IPOB rose to prominence after previous Biafran independence organisations was weakened. The Nigerian government has been cracking down on IPOB members who peacefully protested due to Kanu's arrest and incarceration despite various court rulings for his release. Today, IPOB has metamorphosed from a group to a movement of the Indigenous Biafran population who are fed up with the Nigerian depleting state. Biafrans all over the world have identified with the movement, thereby making IPOB to be a face of Biafra restoration movement. Nnamdi Kanu, who maintains dual (British and Biafran) citizenship created IPOB after he initially gained fame from his broadcasts on Radio Biafra, which was established in 2009. This was a radio station from London that broadcast messages that called for "freedom of Biafrans" and criticised corruption in the government of Nigeria. Radio Biafra catalyzed Kanu's rise to the public scene, as he was previously an unknown figure. Kanu was arrested by Nigerian security forces on 19 October 2015, on charges of "sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony" (Ibeanu et al., 2016).

In recent years, the group gained significant media attention for becoming a frequent target of political crackdowns by the Nigerian government. It also has numerous sites and communication channels serving as the only trusted social apparatus in educating and inculcating first-hand information and news to its members. The Eastern Security Network is the militia arm of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). It was formed in December, 2020 under the leadership of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and Andy Nwaokike Kayinayo popularly known as "Ikonso". This was as a reaction to the South-East perception that they were targeted by Muslim Fulani herders, whom they accused of grazing on farmlands and committing crimes, terrorism and extra-judicial killings against local residents (Ezemenaka & Prouza, 2016).

According to Ajayi (2007), the Eastern Security Network is a contemporary of Amotekun in South-West, Hisbah in Kano, Yan Banga in Sokoto, Yan Kansai in Zamfara, Boyes in Borno, among others. Their major duty is to combat terrorism and criminal activities in the zone. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu renewed the separatist agitation of Biafra by reviving the defunct Radio Biafra and making it a platform to educate and sensitise Igbo both at home and in diaspora on the urgency for an independent nation. It also has social media handle platforms, such as Facebook account, Instagram, Twitter-handle, newspaper websites. The Indigenous of People of Biafra (IPOB) also makes use of opinion leaders in educating, sensitising, mobilising and inculcating first-hand information to the target audience, (South-Easterners) or its publics.

The Indigenous People of Biafra's approach is the use of propaganda techniques of incisive and inflammatory statements that appeal to the South-East (Igbo) but derogate the

Nigerian government. Such propaganda techniques are name-calling, fear, half-truth, and stereotyping, unwarranted extrapolation among others. Below is some of the propaganda used by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) leader:

We are justified in seeking the damnation of the zoo Nigeria; it doesn't matter what you the zoo must fall. Say no to saboteurs; Saboteurs brought operation Python Dance 1, 2 into Biafra land that killed Biafran (IPOB) members; Saboteurs with the Islamic Nigeria government abducted IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu and his parents; Saboteurs are responsible for the death of over 5 million Biafrans since 1967 till date. Say no to Operation Dance 3 in Biafran Land (Biafra Radio, 2020). Some of these politicians never learned anything; In their quest to please their Fulani masters, they are destroying our children, they are destroying our hope because they want to please their Fulani masters; IPOB is here to say it is the zoo; Nigeria is a failed state; Biafra exit is unstoppable; (Biafra Radio, 13 Sept, 2020).

It is not for the living to respond to the dead but given the lack of reasoning prevalent in the zoo Nigeria; I wish to assure Garshehu, the Jihadi midget @elrufai and that Fulani lapdog Femi Adesina that any army they send to Biafra land will die there. None will return alive. Even if it requires sacrificing my people, I will do it. Freedom doesn't come easy any Igbo that die will be remembered (Twitter, 2nd June 2021). Thus, these messages as regards the propaganda techniques of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) leader, was so propagated that Nigeria is referred to as zoo (name-calling), leaders or Governors in the South-East are referred to as saboteurs, and some political appointees as lapdog etc. Other propaganda used by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is:

Nigeria will empty her treasury in a bid to stop the coming of Biafra but at the end; Biafra will still come; If you support one Nigeria, Nigeria will consume you; A white man came from Scotland, said your name is Nigeria and you accepted it without asking him any question (Biafra Radio, 22nd March, 2020).

We will not let go! We are not like any other set of people that you have even seen; I'm not like any other that may have come before me; Everybody responsible, each and every sound implicated in the persecution, arbitrary arrest, detention, summary execution of Biafrans will be held to account; That is an assurance, and they know it will happen. Biafran land is under Fulani siege; it is time for you as a true born Biafran or friend of Biafra to rise and answer this call now; they brought war to Biafra, we had to defend ourselves (Twitter, 17th February, 2020). However, the message and the messenger have to be believed, otherwise they are not effective. Based on the foregoing this study examines the South-East people's understanding of the Indigenous People of Biafra propaganda.

Statement of the Problem

The resurgence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has reignited the quest for Biafra Independence, bringing with it a wave of propaganda aimed at galvanising support among the Igbo population in the South-East region of Nigeria. IPOB's propaganda leverages historical grievances, perceived marginalisation and ethnic identity to cultivate a robust secessionist

sentiment. Despite its pervasive presence, there is a significant gap in understanding how this propaganda is interpreted and internalised by the South-East populace. It is unclear on how IPOB's messages resonate with the general populace, understanding whether these narratives of historical injustice and cultural pride are broadly accepted, partially believed or largely dismissed by the people of the South-East is vital for assessing the impact of IPOB's propaganda. Given these concerns, this study seeks to bridge the knowledge gap by investigating the South-East people's understanding of IPOB's propaganda.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the South-East people's awareness of the Indigenous people of Biafra's propaganda and functions of the Eastern Security Network activities. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine South-East people's understanding of the propaganda techniques of the Indigenous People of Biafra.
2. Investigate the extent to which South-East people believe the messages received from Indigenous People of Biafra.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is South-East people's understanding of the propaganda technique of Indigenous People of Biafra?
2. To what extent do the people of South-East believe the messages received from Indigenous People of Biafra?

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Propaganda

It is important to differentiate between types of propaganda as it connotes two sides, positive and negative (Ngoa, 2011). Propaganda on hand, could be used to incite the masses to certain ends, and on the other hand, could be used to pacify the masses into a non-challenging lumber (Scanto, 1977). Guth (2009) classifies Propaganda into three categories and these are: white propaganda, black propaganda and Grey propaganda.

White Propaganda is a type of propaganda where the origin of the information is known and the content is considered truthful (Guth, 2009). An example of white propaganda could be government communication to deter drivers from drinking and driving (Prem & Dewani, 2020). White propaganda refers to propaganda that is openly and truthfully attributed to its source, where the propagandist is known and their intentions are transparent in this type of propaganda, the messages are usually presented in a way that aligns with the source's objectives, but without any hidden or deceptive tactics. For example, government campaigns promoting public health or safety measures can be considered as white propaganda (Mckernan, 2012).

Black Propaganda refers to a type of propaganda that the origin of the source is unknown and information being transmitted as false (Guth, 2009). This is fairly common in war efforts and political marketing, where the truth may not see any daylight. In black propaganda, the identity of the source of the message to falsely attributing it to different entity, such as attributing inflammatory message to a hostile source in order to stir up hatred against the source. Black propaganda involves spreading false information or using deceptive tactics to promote a specific agenda. The source of black propaganda is intentionally disguised or misrepresented, making it appear as if it is coming from a different source. This type of

propaganda aims to intentionally deceive or mislead the audience, and can be used for various purposes, including political manipulation or psychological warfare (Phillips, 2019).

Grey Propaganda is a type of propaganda that public relations practitioners absolutely embrace. Here the source of the information is suspect and the information truthfulness is also doubtful (Prem & Dewani, 2020). Gray propaganda falls somewhere in between white and black propaganda, as it contains elements of both. In gray propaganda, the source may be known but not readily identified or openly acknowledged. The messages may contain partial truths, exaggerations, or distortions of facts, which can create confusion and manipulate the opinions of the audience (Flemming, 2020).

Security Challenges in the South-East Nigeria

The five states in South-East have in varying degrees witnessed total breakdown of law and order as organized criminal networks have undermined the operation of law enforcement agencies, especially the police. At various points during this period, people of the South-East have resorted to “self-help” measures to stem the rising waves of crime, which gravely undermine their survival.

According to Nwodu et al (2021), the South-East region is known for its peaceful nature, bolstering business environment, and hospitality. Recently the region has been enmeshed in rising security challenges that have almost pitched the people against the federal government and the security agencies. The security challenges in the South-East range from killing of farmers and raping of women by armed Fulani herders, farmer-herder clashes, kidnapping for ransom, cultism and cult rivalry, armed robbery, separatist agitation by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to the clash and face-off between Eastern Security Network (ESN) and the combined force of the military and the police.

Thus, these indicate the number of incidents and fatalities per state in South-East Nigeria (4) states in 2020. From the (2020) ACLED report, Abia state recorded 8 battles, 9 riots, 14 violence against civilians and total incidents of 31 while the state recorded the total fatalities of 23. In Anambra state, 8 battles were recorded, 12, 22 violence against civilians as recorded by ACLED, a total incident of 42 and 26 recorded as fatalities. From the report, Imo state recorded 6 battles, with 9 riots, 16 as violence against civilians, total incidents of 38 and 18 as total fatalities. Ebonyi state recorded 10 battles, 5 riots, 14 as violence against civilians, a total incidents and 37 total of fatalities.

Security challenges in the South-East region of Nigeria have had significant implications for the stability and development of the area. One of the major security challenges in the South-East region is the emergence and activities of secessionist groups, most notably the Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) (Ezenwa, 2019). The quest for secession and the promotion of Biafran independence has led to tensions and conflicts with the Nigerian government, resulting in clashes between IPOB members and security forces. The clashes between security forces and secessionist groups have often resulted in violence, loss of lives and destruction of property.

Another security challenge is the proliferation of armed criminal gangs and the rise of kidnapping for ransom in the region (Odukwu, 2018). These criminal elements prey on unsuspecting individuals, including business people, travellers and even students, causing fear and insecurity in the region. The activities of these criminal networks not only affect the economy but also erode the trust between communities and law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, communal conflicts between different ethnic cultural groups have been a recurring security challenge in the South-East region (Nwogu, 2017).

Emergency of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a group that leads the calls for Biafrans freedom from Nigeria. Its main aim is to restore an independent state of Biafra for the people of old Eastern Region of Nigeria through a referendum (Allison, 2019). Founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, a British- Biafra political activist, the group is a movement that stems from perceived injustice orchestrated by the Federal Government of Nigeria on the southeast and south-south regions of Nigeria. To the group, there was total lack of infrastructural development, poor investment, neglect in resources distribution, skewed railways, militarisation of the zone, over-grazing and destruction of lives and crops by Fulani herdsmen and lot of others. Having failed in the Nigerian Civil war that lasted between 1967 and 1970, the secession group decides to fight for freedom and emancipation from their perceived enemy this time through weaponless means especially as it concerns propaganda mechanism (Allison, 2019).

Radio Biafra Broadcasting and IPOB Renewed Agitation

In 2013, the Nigerian government was greeted with the re-opening of Radio Biafra which was last heard during the civil war (1967-1970). According to the director Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the new Radio Biafra had been “broadcasting from London, on short wave frequency” since 2009 (DailySun, 2013). Kanu revealed that Radio Biafra broadcast was brought home to intensify the struggle for Biafra restoration by creating awareness and mobilizing the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and other Pro-Biafran groups like the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) towards achieving the goal. At first, the station was not entirely critical and seemed to pose no threat to the then government of former President Goodluck Jonathan but became a major concern to the Buhari administration as station employed different frames, slants and languages in criticizing the government thereby raising the tension for succession and disintegration of the various federation units the Nigerian state (Osamwonyi, & Amenaghawon, 2017).

This resulted in arrest and detention of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu whose rhetoric on the radio station was viewed as treasonable and effrontery to sovereignty of the Nigerian government. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in charge of broadcasting in Nigeria took drastic steps to shut down the station which they described as a pirate radio station. The Commission subsequently announced that the station had been shut down and cautioned Nigerians to totally “ignore all propaganda designed to sow seeds of discord among them to promote a separatist agenda against national unity, solidarity and progress” (Premium Times, 2015). This effort failed because the operating license of the new Radio Biafra was obtained in London and it utilizes digital facilities like satellite and the internet in broadcasts on 102.1 FM and 15.6 AM at different wavelengths.

Theoretical Review

Revolution Theory

This theory was propounded by some notable scholars such as Karl Marx (1818-1883). Conflict theory depicts that there exists a struggle because of limited resources. However, the never-ending competition for these finite resources gives rise to conflict (Wells, 1979). The conflict theory as propounded by Karl Marx is one of the major sociological models for understanding the social world. Marx as a revolutionary thinker and writer strongly believed in the “irrepressible unanimous power of the masses in redressing their social conditions of existence”. He is of the opinion that social classes identify a particular way of relating with themselves and social class arises from the relations of production in which case “people come to rectify classes and as a result these classes come to have life of their own that constraints the actor” (Aritt et al., 2007).

For Karl Marx and Max Weber cited in Kivisto, (2011), the conflict theory has three components: the first component is that conflict is a common and ongoing feature of society, conflict is the main basic of social life. The second component is that society is made up of various social groups who have conflicting values and interest. Finally, the third component states that all social conflict occurs between dominant and subordinate social groups who are in competition over resources. The main ideas of conflict theory are rooted in historical materialism. The idea is that a society's social structure and development is shaped by its economic production. Karl Marx argues that the distribution of wealth created class divides throughout history, and that social inequality and eventual revolutions stemmed from these divides (Karl Marx, 1883). The scholar believes that, in a capitalist society, economic production is made up of two things: means of productions (raw materials, factories etc) privately owned by the producers rather than owned collectively by the laborer .and labour (provided by the masses, and compensated in wages).

The theory can help understand how and why social movements like IPOB emerge and gain support. It provides insights into the grievances and aspirations of marginalied groups, such as the southeast people and how these movements mobilise people to challenge the existing power structures and seek change. The theory emphasises the importance of propaganda and framing in shaping people's awareness and perception of social movements. By examining the propaganda techniques used by IPOB and the narratives they employ, the study can understand how IPOB's message resonates with the Southeast population and influences their awareness and support. The theory focuses on the process of mobilisation, organisation and collective action. The study can analyse how IPOB and ESN activate and mobilise individuals to participate in their activities. It can explore the strategies used by these groups to recruit and engage their members and how they maintain cohesion and commitment among their supporters.

The theory emphasises power dynamics and the struggle between dominant and marginalised power dynamics and the struggle between dominant and marginalised groups. By studying the activities of IPOB and ESN, the study can examine how these movements challenge the existing power structures in Nigeria and the Southeast region, it can analyse the responses of the government and other powerful actors to their activities and the impact they have on power relations in the region. The theory is concerned with understanding how social movements can bring about meaningful social change. By examining the activities of IPOB and ESN, the study can assess the extent to which these movements have been successful in achieving their objectives. It can analyse their impact on the Southeast people's struggle and evaluate the changes they have brought about in terms of marginalisation, political discourse or policy measures.

Empirical Review

Anele and Eke (2023) carried out a study on "Owerri residents' perception of IPOB facebook handle sensitisation on the regular sit-at-home imposed in South-East States." The study ascertained the exact perception of Owerri Municipal residents to the IPOB Facebook sensitization on the mandatory sit-at-home on southeastern states, as well as the influence of the sit-at-home on them. The researcher employed the mix-method which allowed for the use of survey and in-depth interview designs. The population used in the study was 983,000 and a sample size of 384. Finding got from the study showed that Owerri residents were moderately exposed to IPOB Facebook sensitization on the sit-at-home. Owerri residents perceive the IPOB imposed sit-at-home to be a joke to the Nigerian government. The IPOB sit-at-home has

caused several losses of lives, properties; increased the level of insecurity, heightened the hunger rate and hardship level in southeastern states.

Orlu and Asor (2022) conducted a study on ‘‘Fake News and Radio Biafra between 1967 and 1970 in Nigeria: A Lesson for the Contemporary Media Industry in South-South Region.’’ The objectives of the study were to examine Radio Biafra, critically assessed the prevalence of fake news with unreliable sources contributing to the confusion, a proliferation of unreliable pieces of news in Contemporary Nigeria. The lessons for media houses operating in the South-South region. The study adopted Framing and Agenda setting theory as theoretical framework. The study employed library research method. The study revealed that, misinformation, as well as post-truth have lingered over in the society, but can be eradicated through robust laws, regulations and public engagement.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey method. The essence of survey research design to this study was to enable the researcher to elicit information from the South-Easterners, to evaluate the extent of their understanding of Indigenous people of Biafra’s propaganda. The population for the study comprised the residents of South-Eastern States aged from 18 and above. This age bracket was considered appropriate to meet the research objectives because the age bracket can make decisions and is responsible for the decisions. According to the 2006 National Population Census of South-East states as projected at 2.8 as growth rate for 17 years (that is from 2006 – 2023 which gave a projection of 10,712,872.

Since the population for the study is 10,712,872 which fall within the infinite population as observed by krejcie and Morgan (1970), the researcher made use of the scholars’ sampling template in order to determine the sample size for the study. According to the sampling template, when the population of any study is in the range of 100,000 and above, then the appropriate sample size would be 384. The sample size of the study was divided into smaller clusters in several stages in order to make primary data collection more manageable. As a result, three states were purposively selected from South-East Nigeria; Abia State, Anambra State and Imo State. The reason for the state selection is as a result of heightened activities of members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The study made use of questionnaire for data collection. The researcher adopted quantitative method to present and analyze the data gathered from the respondents. The quantitative method of data analysis was presented using statistical tools as tables of frequency distribution, simple percentages and weighted mean score (WMS) based on a 4- Point Likert-Scale.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: South-East People’s Understanding of the Propaganda Inherent in messages of Indigeous people of Biafra

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
My understanding of the message Nigeria is a zoo describes Nigerians as animals which lack social and political understanding	612	567	40	17	1236	3.26	Accepted
I perceive the message of Biafra or death by indigenou people of Biafra drive South-east people to action	716	528	48	0	1292	3.41	Accepted

I depend on Radio Biafra on daily basis for the Indigeous People of Biafra messages	608	486	130	0	1224	3.23	Accepted
I believe in the Indigeous people of Biafra messages to South-East Biafra messages	656	564	54	0	1274	3.36	Accepted
As a South-Easterner, the message from Indigeous People of Biafra have really affected my perception about Nigeria	784	549	0	0	1333	3.52	Accepted
					6359	3.36	Accepted

Data in Table 1 show that South-East people agreed to have an understanding of the propaganda inherent in messages of Indigeous People of Biafra.

Table 2: Extent People of South-East believe the Messages received from Indigeous people of Biafra

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
As a resident of South-East Nigeria, I believe in the messages received from Indigeous People of Biafra	828	516	0	0	1344	3.55	Accepted
I agree with the statement Nigeria is a zoo	608	567	66	5	1246	3.29	Accepted
I depend on radio Biafra broadcast on daily basis for more information from Indigeous People of Biafra	716	495	50	10	1271	3.35	Accepted
I believe that the messages of Indigeous people of Biafra have affected me	604	576	72	0	1252	3.30	Accepted
The message of Indigeous people of Biafra makes me support their activities	808	531	0	0	1339	3.53	Accepted
					6452	3.40	Accepted

Data in Table 2 reveal that the majority of the people of South-East believed the messages received from Indigeous People of Biafra were high. This was indicated in their agreement with the statement Nigeria is a zoo, daily dependence on radio Biafra broadcast for more information, and support for their activities.

Discussion of Findings

The data presented in Tables 1 to 2 provided the platform for this discussion which was purely done in relation to the research questions

Research Question 1: What is South-East people's understanding of the propaganda technique of Indigeous People of Biafra?

Findings revealed that South-East people understood the propaganda inherent in the message of Indigeous People of Biafra as the weighted mean score was 3.36. The portrayal of the Igbo

as victims of historical marginalisation can generate empathy and support for the group's cause. The emphasis on preserving Igbo cultural identity within IPOB's messaging may appeal to those who value the importance of cultural heritage. Some people in the South-East may share the sentiment of desiring greater autonomy and self-determination. IPOB's message of an independent Biafran state can resonate with those who believe that regional sovereignty would better address their socio-economic and political aspirations.

Findings of this study align the study of Anele and Eke (2023) on "Owerri residents' perception of IPOB Facebook handle sensitisation on the regular sit-at-home imposed in South-East states." The revolution theory upon which this study is underpinned gives backing to these findings as it lies in understanding how historical grievances, propagated through narratives of perceived injustices, can serve as catalysts for revolutionary movements like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-East.

Research question 2: To what extent do the people of South- East believe the messages received from Indigenous People of Biafra?

Finding revealed that to a high extent, the majority of the people of South-East believed the messages received from Indigenous People of Biafra as the weighted mean score was 3.40. This was indicated in their agreement with the statement that Nigeria is a zoo, daily dependence on radio Biafra broadcast for more information, and support for their activities.

These findings refute the study of Anele and Eke (2023) which showed that Owerri residents perceived the IPOB imposed sit-at-home to be a joke to the Nigerian government. The IPOB sit-at-home has caused loss of lives and property; increased the level of insecurity, heightened hunger rate and hardship level in South-Eastern states.

The findings are relevant to the revolution theory that this study is underpinned which lays its ability to explain the underlying socio-political dynamics fuelling supports for movement like IPOB in the South-East region. The theory posits that social movement emerges when there is a significant disconnect between the ruling elite and the populace, often fuelled by perceived injustice, marginalization or oppression. In the context of the finding, the belief among the majority of people in the South-East that Nigeria is akin to a "zoo" suggests a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the status quo and a desire for radical change. Moreover, the reliance on Radio Biafra broadcast indicates the importance of alternative media in mobilizing and shaping public opinion, a central tenet of revolution theory. By utilizing platforms like Radio Biafra, IPOB effectively disseminated its messages, mobilised support and fostered a sense of collective identity and resistance among its followers.

Conclusion

This study highlights a widespread understanding among individuals in the South-East regarding the propaganda techniques utilised in messages from groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), particularly their emphasis on historical narratives surrounding perceived injustices during and after the Nigerian Civil War. This persuasive tactics employed by IPOB highlights the need to address historical grievances and promote national cohesion, recognising the complexities of historical memory and its impact on contemporary social dynamics.

This study establishes the role of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) in the South-East, serving not only as a symbol of resistance against perceived marginalisation and injustice but also embodying aspirations for self-determination, local autonomy and community protection in the face of external threats and security challenges. This study explores the significant level of resonance and belief among the majority of the people of South-East with

the messages disseminated by IPOB. Their agreement with statement such as “Nigeria is a zoo” and reliance on Radio Biafra broadcasts for information and support underscore the strong influence and appeal of the movement within the region.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for comprehensive education and dialogue initiatives by federal government, aimed at addressing historical grievances, promoting reconciliation and fostering a more inclusive national identity to mitigate the influence of divisive propaganda and promote unity among all Nigerians.
2. It is imperative to implement inclusive policies and foster a sense of belonging and representation within the Nigerian State to help in promoting unity and stability in the region.

References

- Adibe, T. (2015). MASSOB is dying, but pro-Biafra crusade spreads dangerously, Daily Trust, 24th October 2015, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/massob-is-dying-but-probiafra-crusade-spreads-dangerously/116357.htm>
- Ajayi, J. O. (2007). O’odus People’s Congress (OPC) and crime control in Lagos metropolis. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Ajayi, J. O. (2007). O’odus People’s Congress (OPC) and crime control in Lagos metropolis. PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Akinyele, R. T. (2020). The politics of memory: Civil war, sectarianism, and the propaganda of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). *African Studies Review*, 63(2), 246 – 264.
- Allison, S. (2019). *Mystery of the missing Biafran separatist*. The M&G Online.
- Anele, M. C., & Eke, G. E. (2023). Owerri resident’s perception of IPOB Facebook handle sensitization on the regular sit-at-home imposed in South-eastern States. *IMSU Journal of Communication Studies*, 7(1), 181 – 191.
- Ezenwo, P. (2019). Biafra separatism and security challenges in Nigeria. *African Conflict & Peace-building Review*, 9(2), 157 – 175.
- Flemming, D. (2020). *Mass media and propaganda*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.
- Guth, D.W. (2009). Black, white and shades of gray: The sixty year debate over propaganda versus public diplomacy. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 14(3-4), 309-325.
- McKernan, M. (2012). Propaganda. In G. Kurian (Eds.). *The encyclopedia of political science*. Pp. 1412 – 1416. CQ Press.

- Ngoa, N. (2011) A review & analytical narrative of propaganda activities: A Nigerian Perspective. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(16), 237-248.
- Nwogu, N. A. (2017). Ethno-political conflict and the challenges of governance in Nigeria: A study of the Kanu and WASSOB secessionist movements in the South-East. *African Conflict & Peace-building Review*, 7(2), 53 – 83.
- Odukwu, U. (2018). Kidnapping, a key impediment to economic development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 6(4), 1117 – 1126.
- Omeje, K. (2018). Propaganda and ethnic mobilization: The role of media in IPOB’s agitation for Biafra. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 36(3), 249 – 368.
- Phillips, G. M. (2019). Propaganda, black. In A. Thompson (Ed.). *The international encyclopedia of journalism studies*. Pp. 1 -11. John Wiley & Sons.
- Premium Times. (July 15, 2015). Nigerian Govt. lied, Radio Biafra still broadcasting. Premium Times. <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/186692-nigerian-govtlie-radio-Biafra-still-broadcasting.html>.
- Tamuno, N. T. (1970). Separatist agitations in Nigeria since 1914. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 563-564.
- Ukiwo, U. (2019). Understanding the roots of ethnic agitations in Nigeria: A case study of IPOB’s campaign. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(5), 765 – 782.
- Wells, A. (1979). Conflict theory and functionalism: Introductory sociology textbooks 1928-1976. *Teaching Sociology*, 429 – 437.