



Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research (AJCSR), Vol. 2(2), 175-185, 2026.



AUDREZARA JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH (AJCSR)

Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. 175-185, August, 2026.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22156266>

E-ISSN: 3121-9721

Ethical Energy Reporting and Energy Efficiency: Challenges and Implications for Sustainability Development in Nigeria

Nwamaka Ujunwa Nzotta

Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri



ORCID:

<http://orcid.org/009-0001-7010-904x>

***Corresponding Author:** amakanzotta@futo.edu.ng

History: Received: July 30, 2026; Revised: August 20, 2026; Accepted: August 25, 2026.

Abstract

The energy crisis in Nigeria has created the need to examine ethical energy reporting and the effects on energy efficiency. This study examines ethical energy reporting and its effects on energy efficiency in Nigeria, the challenges and implications for sustainable development. The study was anchored on the agenda setting theory. The descriptive survey research method was used in the study. The study population is 380 and this served as the sample size. The purposive sampling method was adopted in the study, while a structured questionnaire designed along the four-point Likert scale was used for data collection. A reliability test was done with the Cronbach's alpha model. Simple percentages, frequency tables and mean scores were used in the study, while the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The study found a positive correlation energy reporting and energy efficiency. Communication ethics was also found to contribute significantly to effective energy reporting. The study concludes that ethical energy reporting is critical for achieving energy efficiency which is a pillar of sustainable development and recommends continuous ethical standards, increased training of energy reporters and collaborations between media practitioners and policy makers.

Keywords: Communication ethics, energy reporting, energy efficiency, sustainable development, development communication.

Introduction

Communication plays an important role in every aspect of human life. In particular, it plays critical roles in sustaining the economic, political, social and environmental growth and transformation of any society. Communication is the life blood of any nation and enhances economic and developmental activities. Asekome (2008 p. 278) contends that communication is one of the greatest tools that enhances economic advancement, good governance and sustainable development. Here, government policies and programmes



succeed with effective media campaigns and communication. Nweze (2019) posits that individuals communicate to persuade or appeal to the emotions, to convince or appeal to reason, to instruct, to entertain, to educate, to inform, to establish and promote relationships and to influence behavior. Effective communication plays important roles in the development of the society and encourages people's participation in development-oriented projects. Nwabueze (2011) contends that communication mobilizes the citizens to participate in actualising development policies such as energy efficiency.

Energy is a fundamental resource in economic activities and industrial development. Energy encompasses fossil fuel exploitation, renewable energy and clean energy. Poor quality energy supply, energy gaps and erratic energy supply constrain industrial productivity, output and quality of life. Preventing energy crisis arising from energy gaps, energy access and affordability sustains productivity, income increases and poverty reduction (FAO 2007), Vijah and Hernan (2015) In Nigeria, energy gaps are the key impediments to accelerated industrial productivity, increased national output and enhanced economic growth

Vijay and Hernan (2015) contend that there exist serious energy gaps globally, with more than one billion people worldwide lacking access to electricity and energy sources. The report also shows that 85% of global energy mix comes from non-renewable sources, while the potential for energy efficiency in buildings, transportation and industrial processes remain untapped. The study highlights the nature of energy crisis globally. In Nigeria, the situation is very critical and has constrained productivity and all indices of development.

According to the World Health Organisation (2020) 655 million people are globally living without electricity. However, the large number of underserved people underscore the need for emphasis on renewal energy sources to ensure greater access. Energy efficiency is an important pillar of sustainable development and in fact propels the achievement of other pillars of sustainable development United Nations (2024)

A central issue that provides the plank for energy efficiency is energy reporting. Forster and Eller (2018) energy reporting conceptually is the process of gathering, interpreting and disseminating of information on energy generation, transmission, distribution consumption, policy and socio-economic impacts. It covers journalism on electricity, fuel, renewal energy, tariff policy, and corporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting. Energy reporting focuses on energy information, dissemination, affordability and bridging energy gaps which are very critical for energy efficiency. Energy reporting sustains energy efficiency and results in energy access and affordability to households, women and the vulnerable groups. Energy reporting ensures universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy, in line with the targets of the UN Sustainable Goals. This is achieved through efforts to ameliorate energy crisis, expand the energy market and boost the economy (WHO, 2020).

Communication ethics play a key role in energy reporting. It refers to the moral principles and standards that guide journalistic practice. In energy reporting, ethical communication involves presenting accurate, balanced, transparent and socially responsive information that enables the citizen and policy makers to make informed decisions. Ethical lapses such as misinformation, misrepresentation of facts, sensationalism, bias or selective reporting and junk journalism, distort the public's understanding of energy matters and undermines trust in the media, stakeholders and energy regulatory institutions.

Previous studies in this area did not empirically examine the relationship between energy reporting and energy efficiency in Owerri. Forster & Eller (2018), International Energy Agency (2019) there are also limited studies on how digital media affect energy efficiency and thus sustainable development in particular. Thus, this present study examines the relationship between energy reporting and energy efficiency and their implications for sustainable development.



Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

- RQ₁ What media platforms do journalists in Owerri use in energy reporting?
- RQ₂ What are the forms of media engagement used in energy reporting?
- RQ₃ How do journalists in Owerri evaluate the effectiveness of energy reporting in achieving energy efficiency?
- RQ₄ What are the major constraints to effective energy reporting in Owerri metropolis?
- RQ₅ To what extent does communication ethics affect energy reporting in Owerri?

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho₁: There is no positive correlation between energy reporting and energy efficiency.

Ho₂: There is no correlation between energy reporting and communication ethics.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the agenda-setting theory: This theory focused on setting political agenda as presented in the seminal work of McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory was extended by Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) to encompass digital media dynamics. The focus is that media platforms influence the critical issues in public discourse, and thus what the citizens think. The theory advocated that audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, but also what importance to attach to a topic from the emphasis the media places on it. Nzotta and Orji (2020). The agenda setting theory describes the ability of the media to influence the salience of issues on the public agenda. Basically, the media agenda affects the public agenda and the public agenda affects the policy agenda.

Agenda setting is thus the creation of public awareness and concern of the salient issues of public concern by the media.

Agenda setting theory traces public policy from its root as an agenda through its promotion in the media and finally to its form as a policy. Thus, the theory emphasizes the salience or relative importance of an issue and then attempt to understand what causes it to be important. It is important to note that agenda setting becomes enhanced when the value structure of societies is in a state of flux. Konkwo, 2013. From this perspective, as the media coverage of an event or activity wares, so does the general public's interest in the subject matter. Here, when the media coverage of an event increases, the general public's interest in the subject matter also increases.

In the context of energy reporting, the theory suggests that sustained communication systems and energy reporting can elevate the consciousness of the public on energy systems and efficiency, increase public awareness and thus generate public pressure for institutional accountability and growth. The theory is also important in appreciating how digital platforms can close energy gaps, elevate energy mix and ensure behavior changes necessary for energy efficiency and thus sustainable development.

Method

The study used the descriptive survey research method. The population of the study consists of 380 journalists in Owerri metropolis made up as follows;

- i. Journalist registered at 19 chapels of NUJ 220 Journalists



- ii. Freelance Journalists – unregistered 150 Journalists
- iii. Bloggers 10 Journalists

The journalists are found in the three local governments namely: Owerri Urban, Owerri North, and Owerri West LGAs.

This population of 380 was adopted as the sample size. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in the allocation of samples. This non probability technique assisted the researcher to allocate samples based on experience of the respondents in responding to the questions. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. A reliability test of the measuring instrument was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha model. The result was found to be 0.882 (88.2%) showing a high degree of reliability. A validity test was conducted to ascertain the objectivity of the instrument. Here a face and sampling validity were done. In the face of validity, the researcher found that on the face value, the instrument achieved the objectives it was designed to attain. The same applies with the sampling validity. The questionnaires were administered through an efficient mechanism which involved a drop and pick up method. Thus, out of the 380 questionnaires administered to the respondents, 360 were returned and found usable, representing a 95 percent response rate. The data obtained were presented using percentages, frequency tables, and mean scores. The Pearson Correlation statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Ethical clearance was sought from the respondents during the data collection. They were made to understand that the exercise served only for academic purposes and their participation was voluntary.

Findings

Demographic Statistics

Table 1 Demographic Statistics

Variables	Frequencies (n = 360)	Percentages %
Gender		
Male	225	62.5
Female	135	37.5
Age Group		
18 – 25 years	47	13.33
26 – 35 years	55	15.27
36 – 45 years	105	29.17
46 – 55 years	110	30.56
56 years and above	42	11.67
Level of Education		
School certificate	120	33.33
Degree holders	205	56.95
Post Graduate Degrees	35	9.72

Table 1 below presents the demographic statistics of the respondents. Here the respondents were males (62.5 percent) and females (37.5 percent). The implication is that there is a gender imbalance amongst reporters in Owerri Metropolis. The dominant age bracket of the respondents is 46-55 years age (30.56%) followed by the 36-45 years age bracket (29.17%), 26-35 years bracket (15.25%), 18-25 years (13.33%)



and over 56 years (11.67%) The respondents were predominantly degree holders (56.95%), school certificate holders (33.33%), and post graduate degree holders (9.72%).

Media Platforms Used in Energy Reporting (RQ1)

Table 2 Digital Media Platforms for Energy Reporting

Platform	Frequency n= 360	Percentage %
a. Digital Media		
Facebook	280	77.78
Twitter/X	220	61.11
WhatsApp	302	83.88
YouTube /LinkedIn	196	54.44
Instagram/ TikTok	105	29.17
Online News Portals	160	44.44
Blogs/citizen Journalism	120	33.33
Pod casts	95	36.58
b. Electronic Media	90	25.00
c. Other media	65	18.06

Table 2 presents the media platforms used by respondents for energy reporting. From the trend established from the responses, WhatsApp ranked as the most widely used platform (83.86%), followed by Facebook (77.78%) Twitter/X (61.11%) and YouTube (54.44%). On line news portals (44.33%), Instagram/TikTok (29.17%), Blogs (33.33%) and Pod Casts (26.38%) followed next, electronic media (25%) and other communication media (18.06%) came next. §

Forms of Media Engagement in Energy Reporting (RQ2)

Table 3 Forms of Media Engagement on Energy Reports (RQ2)

Forms of Media Engagement	Frequency(n=360)	Percentages %
• Sharing energy reports online	288	80.0
• Reporting on energy via digital platforms	265	73.6
• Participating in online advocacy campaigns	235	65.28
• Evolving energy reports for electronic media	224	62.22
• Commenting on energy posts	220	61.11
• Joining digital energy platform/pages	185	51.39
• Signing online petitions/coverage	165	45.83
• Creating original energy content	145	40.28
• Creating editorials in media	105	29.16

Table 3 presents the forms of media engagement in energy reporting. The trend established show that sharing energy reports on line (80%) was the most common form of engagement. This finding connotes online reports dominate public discourse. Energy reporting through digital platforms (73.6%) followed next, while participation in online advocacy campaigns (65.28%) came next. Energy reports on electronic media (62.22%) and comments on energy posts (61.11%) followed in that order. Respondents also used



digital energy platforms/pages, (51.39%) in addition to online petitions (45.83%). Creating original energy content (40.28%) and creating editorials in news media (29.16%) follow next. These findings conform with the reporting patterns established in the study by Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal (2008).

Responses on Energy reporting and the effects on Energy efficiency (RQ3)

Table 4 Energy Reporting Effects on Energy Efficiency

Item Statement	Mean	Decision
Enhances energy affordability	2.87	Accepted
Ensures energy access	3.06	Accepted
Enhances renewal energy	2.82	Accepted
Ensures energy reliability	3.00	Accepted
Bridges energy gaps	2.96	Accepted
Expands energy market	2.63	Accepted
Sustains a good tariff policy	2.45	Accepted
Ensures energy information dissemination	2.78	Accepted
Sustains Corporate Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) reporting	2.50	Accepted
Average Mean	2.79	Accepted

From table 4, the findings show that with an average mean of 2.79, respondents agreed that energy reporting enhances a high degree of energy efficiency. In particular, the trend show that energy reporting ensures a high degree of energy access (mean 3.06), energy reliability (mean 3.00, bridging energy gaps (mean 2.96), energy affordability (mean 2.87), enhances renewable energy (mean 2.82), ensures information dissemination (mean 2.78) expands energy market (mean 2.63), sustains a good tariff structure (mean 2.45) and sustains ESG reporting (mean 2.50.)

Constraints to Energy Reporting (RQ4)

Table 5 Constraints to Effective Energy Reporting

Constraints	Frequency (N = 360)	Percentages %
• Digital illiteracy	246	68.3
• Government surveillance/Interference	234	65
• Technical and knowledge-based constraint	224	62.22
• Data access and transparency	208	57.77
• Economic pressures/costs	168	46.67
• Safety and access issues	146	40.55
• Audience and literacy	120	33.33
• Disinformation and digital constraints	108	30.00
• Corporate/ESG Energy Reporting	90	25.00

Table 5 highlights the trend of the responses obtained from the respondents, which show that digital illiteracy was the most common constraint in energy reporting (68.3%) followed by government surveillance/interference (65%), technical and knowledge-based constraints (62.22%), data access and



transparency (57.77%), economic pressures/cost considerations (46.67%). Safety and data access issues (40.55%), and audience literacy (33.33%) disinformation/digital constraints (30.0%) and corporate/ESG energy reporting (25%) were also significant.

Communication Ethics and Energy reporting (RQ5)

Table 6 Ethical Issues in Energy Reporting

Item Statement	Mean	Decision
Misrepresentation/ under presentation of facts.	3.15	Accepted
Poor ethical standards/dilemma	3.2	Accepted
Non inclusive reporting	2.89	Accepted
Diversity gaps/biased reporting	2.95	Accepted
Lack of Transparency	2.89	Accepted
Proliferation of Junk Journalism0	3.15	Accepted
Digital Surveillance by government	2.55	Accepted
Trust issues/polarization of news	2.88	Accepted
Rights violations	2.95	Accepted
Plagiarism	3.00	Accepted
Financial sustainability gaps	3.20	Accepted
Average mean	2.98	Accepted

Table 6 presents the trend of the responses on ethical communication issues involved in energy reporting. The findings revealed that with an average mean score of 2.98, respondents agreed that critical ethical issues shown in table 6 influence energy reporting. The ethical issues lie at the root of effective energy reporting and thus ability to achieve energy efficiency. The findings agreed with the studies by Charity, Iniobong & Comfort (2025). which contends that defined ethical guidelines, standards and resolution of ethical dilemmas, enhances successful journalism practice.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant correlation between energy reporting and energy efficiency.

Correlation Analysis

Table 7: Energy Reporting and Energy Efficiency

Energy Reporting	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	9
Energy Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.950**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	9

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation result shows a very strong positive relationship between energy reporting and energy efficiency, $r = .950$, $p = .000$, $N = 9$. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is



rejected. This implies that improved energy reporting is significantly associated with improved energy efficiency with indicators such as energy access, affordability, reliability, and reduction of energy gaps. The decision is to reject H_{01} and accept the alternative. Thus, there is a significant positive correlation between energy reporting and energy efficiency.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant correlation between energy reporting and communication ethics.

Correlation Analysis

Table 8 **Energy Reporting Communication Ethics**

Energy Reporting	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	10
Communication Ethics	Pearson Correlation	.918**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	10

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson Product Correlation result indicates a strong positive association between energy reporting and communication ethics, $r = .918$, $p = .000$, $N = 10$. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that higher adherence to communication ethics is associated with more effective energy reporting. The result is consistent with the descriptive findings in Table 6 where all communication ethics indicators recorded accepted mean scores above the benchmark and an overall mean of 2.98. Ethical practices such as accuracy, transparency, fairness, avoidance of misinformation, and professionalism therefore contribute significantly to effective energy reporting. The decision is to reject H_{02} . Thus, there is a significant strong positive association between energy reporting and communication ethics.

Discussion

The findings of this study are in conformity with the agenda setting theory adopted for the study. The theory established that ethical energy reporting elevates the consciousness of the public on energy systems, increasing the awareness of the public on energy gaps and the nature of the energy crisis in Owerri and the public response on closing the energy gaps, access and affordability issues.

The findings from the research questions and the tests conducted in the study lend credence to the agenda setting theory. The results demonstrate that communication ethics is a critical determinant of effective energy reporting and that energy reporting contributes significantly to energy efficiency and sustainable development in Nigeria. The dominance of WhatsApp, Facebook, and other digital platforms in energy reporting indicates that energy information is increasingly disseminated through networked digital communication systems rather than traditional media channels. This finding supports the agenda setting theory and in particular provides contemporary evidence that social media platforms have become central spaces for public discourse, policy engagement, and energy information sharing in Nigeria (DataReportal, 2024; Ojo, 2022). The widespread use of these platforms suggests that journalists and citizens now



participate jointly in shaping public understanding of energy issues, thereby reinforcing the agenda-setting role of digital media. These findings are consistent with national-level data indicating the dominance of WhatsApp in Nigeria's digital communication landscape. (DataReportal 2024) The findings also confirm Ojo's (2022) observations that Facebook and Twitter serve as the primary platforms for civic discourse in Nigeria. The findings however show that the electronic media and other media types have a reduced usage in energy reporting.

The study also revealed that respondents mainly engage in low-cost digital activities such as sharing energy reports, commenting on posts, and participating in online advocacy campaigns. This pattern reflects broader trends in digital citizenship where information sharing precedes more demanding forms of civic participation such as investigative reporting or editorial writing (Mossberger et al., 2008). Although digital engagement expands public participation in energy discussions, the relatively low level of original content creation suggests that technical expertise and institutional support remain important barriers to deeper journalistic engagement. The major constraints identified such as digital illiteracy, government interference, technical knowledge deficits, poor data access, economic pressures, and misinformation highlight structural weaknesses in Nigeria's energy communication environment. These findings are consistent with studies showing that inadequate technical capacity and limited access to credible energy data reduce the accuracy and watchdog effectiveness of energy journalism. The findings further show that improvements in journalism training, data transparency, and media independence are essential for strengthening energy reporting, governance and public accountability.

Most importantly, the study established a strong positive relationship between energy reporting and energy efficiency ($r = .950, p < .001$). Respondents agreed that energy reporting improves energy access, affordability, reliability, renewable energy awareness, and the reduction of energy gaps. This finding supports the view that energy efficiency is not only a technological issue but also a communication issue because informed citizens are more likely to adopt efficient energy practices and support energy reforms (International Energy Agency (IEA), 2019). Furthermore, the strong positive relationship between communication ethics and energy reporting ($r = .918, p < .001$) confirms that ethical principles such as accuracy, fairness, transparency, and accountability are fundamental to credible energy journalism. Ethical failures, including misinformation, biased reporting, plagiarism, and sensationalism, can distort public understanding and undermine trust in both the media and energy institutions. Overall, the study demonstrates that strengthening ethical journalism and improving the quality of energy reporting are essential strategies for advancing energy efficiency, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that ethical energy reporting is critical for achieving energy efficiency which is a central pillar for sustainable development. Promoting energy efficiency enhances productivity and enhances the overall quality of life of the citizens.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Ethical standards should be integrated into the media platforms used in energy reporting.
2. On line media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter (X) should increasingly be used to sustain a wider reach in energy reporting
3. Ethical energy reporting should focus on energy access, energy affordability and energy efficiency. Energy reporting should also focus on renewal energy and clean energy.
4. Collaboration between the public sector and energy reporting should intensify to ensure that the constraints on energy effective energy reporting are addressed.



5. Finally, there is need for professional development of energy reporters on ethical standards needed for elevating ethical energy reporting.

Acknowledgements: I acknowledge Prof Samuel M. Nzotta and Paul Njoku for assisting with data analysis

Funding: The study was not funded

Conflict of interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be constructed as a potential conflict of interest.

Disclosure and use of AI-assisted tools: During the presentation of this manuscript, the author used Claude for language editing, grammar correction, readability improvement and formatting assistance. The author carefully reviewed, revised and verified all outputs generated by the AI tool and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality and integrity of the manuscript content.

Data availability: The data sets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request

How to Cite: Nzotta, N. U. (2026) Ethical energy reporting and energy efficiency: Challenges and implications for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research* 2(2), 175-185. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22156266>

References

- Asekome, M.O. (2008) Role of the press in Nigerian economic reforms and democratization process for national development in Mass Media in Nigerian Democracy, Ibadan Stirling Horden publishers Nig Ltd
- Charity, E.J, Iniobong C. N & Comfort, W. (2025) Bridging the Gaps in Professional Journalism Practice: Mentorship and the Future, Mentorship and Transformation: Nexus for Impactful Development, Uyo, Gift Augustine Company Ltd, giftaugustineco@gmail.com
- DataReportal. Digital 2024: Nigeria datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024 Nigeria
- Forster, R & Eller, E (2018) the impact of sustainability reporting on energy efficiency performance. Evidence from GRI reporters. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 198. 1334-1344.
- IEA – International Energy Agency (2019) Energy efficiency 2019, Paris, IEA publication
- Konkwo, D.J.E, Advanced theories of mass communication, an unpublished handwork, IMSU, Owerri-
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D W (1972) The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36 (2) <http://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J. & McNeal, R. S (2008). *Digital citizenship: The Internet society and participation*, MIT Press
- Nwabueze, C. (2011) *Communication and rural development in Africa: Critical role of broadcasting*, in *Readings in Mass Communication*, Enugu, Phyce Kerex, Publishers
- Nweze, S. (2019) The role of development communication in the development of Nigeria's economy, *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 4(1).91-99



Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research (AJCSR), Vol. 2(2), 175-185, 2026.

- Nzotta, N.U. & Uche U.F (2020) Influence of radio Nigeria Health Watch program on sustainable maternal and child care practices among rural young mothers in Ohaji/ Egbema LGA Imo State, *American Journal of Humanities & Social Science Research* 4 (9) 324 -331
- Ojo, A. O. (2022) Twitter as a protest arena: Anti-corruption hashtag and the mobilization of networked publics in Nigeria. *New Media and Society* 24(9) <http://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211063840>
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007) Framing agenda setting and priming: The evolution of three media effects models, *Journal of Communication* 57(1), <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x>
- United Nations (2022) Sustainable development goals, retrieved from sdgs.un.org on Feb 4 2022.
- United Nations (2024) Powering for sustainable development goals <http://www.seforall.com>, Retrieved on June 25 2026
- Vijah, M. & Hernan, P. F. (2015) Sustainable development goals for energy and information communication technology, UN Chronicle, United Nations, [un.org](https://www.un.org) retrieved on July 25 2026
- World Health Organization (2020) Tracking SDG 7: The Energy progress report, <http://www.who.int> Retrieved on June 28 2026.