Shifting Media Landscape: Analysing the Influence of Alternative Media on the Mainstream Discuss of Climate Change and Sustainability

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Abstract

As the world grapples with the intricate challenges of climate change and sustainability, the media landscape plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and driving collective action. This study aims to investigate how audiences interact with climate change narratives in both alternative and mainstream media (MSM). Moving beyond the traditional focus on mainstream media's dissemination of scientific data, this research explores how alternative media, encompassing online outlets, independent news sources, and grassroots initiatives, contribute to a more diverse and nuanced understanding of climate change. Two communication theories were used in this study which comprises of Agenda setting theory and Reception theory. Through qualitative approach and employing thematic analysis, focus group discussions (FGDs) was conducted to gather data for the study. The study reveals employing storytelling and personal narratives to evoke empathy and connection, motivating individuals to take action. Alternative media's focus on diverse voices and critical perspectives can lead audiences to engage in deeper analysis and question dominant narratives. Equipping audiences with the skills to discern fact from fiction, fostering informed public discourse. The study recommends a multi-pronged approach to maximize the positive impact of media on climate action. This includes diversifying mainstream narratives, promoting positive climate stories, emphasizing social justice, supporting alternative media platforms, enhancing media literacy programs, fostering collaboration between media sectors, facilitating audience engagement, and investing in ongoing research on audience reception.
Keywords: Alternative media, climate change, mainstream media, sustainability, shifting media landscape

Introduction

At this crucial moment, our world stands at a crossroads, confronting the intricate challenges of climate change and the imperative pursuit of sustainability. Human activities, primarily the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, are the primary drivers of climate change, disturbing the fragile balance of our planet. This conclusion is underscored by the Assessment Report (AR5), which, with "extremely likely" certainty, asserted that human activities, particularly the emission of these greenhouse gases, played a predominant role, accounting for more than half of the observed increase in global mean surface temperature between 1951 and 2010, as highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2013). The consequences of climate change, evident in rising

temperatures, more frequent and severe weather events, and the alarming rise in sea levels, pose significant threats to ecosystems and essential resources. Beyond these immediate challenges, these impacts also jeopardize the very foundation of human civilization.

According to the IPCC (2013), climate change is characterized as "long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, mainly caused by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels." The repercussions of these changes are evident in rising temperatures, shifts in rainfall patterns, the alarming retreat of glaciers, and a surge in the frequency of extreme weather events. Such alterations in the climate have far-reaching consequences, impacting not only the environment but also exerting substantial effects on societal structures and economic systems. The IPCC's assessment in 2021 underscores the urgency of addressing the root causes of climate change and adopting sustainable practices to mitigate its adverse impacts on a global scale. Lindwall (2022) further explains that the Earth's climate is changing in dramatic ways, causing temperatures to climb, rain patterns to shift, glaciers to shrink rapidly, and extreme weather events to become more common. Basically, things are getting hotter, wetter in some places, drier in others, and way more unpredictable, with big consequences for the planet and everyone on it. In the same vein, Grantham Institute (2022) posits that the alterations in the climate have extensive repercussions, affecting not only the environment but also exerting substantial effects on societal structures and economic systems.

In recent years, there has been a significant transformation in the global conversation about climate change and sustainability, and the media landscape has played a crucial role in molding public perceptions and attitudes. Traditionally, mainstream media has been the primary conduit for information on these crucial issues, McCright et al. (2011). The mainstream media (MSM) serves as a pivotal force in molding public perspectives and fostering awareness regarding critical issues, notably climate change and sustainability. Over the years, there has been a notable surge in media coverage dedicated to these pressing concerns as the global community confronts the multifaceted challenges arising from environmental degradation. As noted by Trumbo (2016), the number of environmental issues has not only grown but has also become more prominently featured in news cycles. Subjects such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are now consistently highlighted on front pages and during prime-time broadcasts. Moreover, there has been a change in emphasis from predominantly addressing scientific aspects to highlighting the human consequences and possible resolutions, Doyle (2015). The escalating impacts of climate change and the imperative for sustainable practices have spurred an intensified focus in mainstream media outlets. Through its extensive

reach and influence, the media plays a key role in disseminating information about scientific findings, policy developments, and the far-reaching consequences of environmental shifts. This heightened coverage reflects an acknowledgment of the urgent need for collective action and underscores the media's role in shaping a well-informed and engaged global citizenry.

The mainstream media (MSM) not only disseminates information but also plays a pivotal role in influencing public perception. Portraying climate change as an urgent crisis demanding immediate attention has the potential to generate greater urgency and involvement, as opposed to depicting it as a distant and abstract long-term issue. Studies (Maibach et al., 2019; McCright et al., 2011) revealed that media's highlighting of the immediacy and closeness of climate-related consequences, such as extreme weather events, resulted in increased backing for initiatives addressing climate change.

On the flip side, some suggest adopting a more well-rounded strategy that recognizes the pressing nature of the issue while also emphasizing uplifting narratives about climate initiatives and resolutions. This approach aims to instill hope and promote active involvement, Nisbet, (2018). In essence, the global dialogue on climate change and sustainability has undergone a shift, shaped by the media environment, and alternative media channels have emerged as influential contributors to this transformation. Bernard et al. (2018) assert that these platforms have expanded the range of information available to the public, disrupting the conventional gatekeeping function of mainstream media and promoting a more democratic distribution of information. Alternative media possess the potential to offer in-depth information and comprehensive analyses on climate change. They have the capability to cite and draw upon other media outlets, contributing to a more holistic comprehension of diverse subjects, including but not limited to climate change (Karoline et al., 2022).

Statement of Problem:

While the influence of alternative media on mainstream discussions about climate change and sustainability has gained increasing attention, research has primarily focused on analyzing the content and framing within alternative media itself. Scholars like Entman (2017) and McCright & Dunlap (2011) highlight the importance of this analysis, as traditional media often emphasizes scientific data and risks, while alternative media prioritizes personal

narratives, local impacts, and social justice. Similarly, Couldry et al. (2017) and Skeggs (2017) emphasize the significance of understanding alternative media's potential influence on the broader discourse.

Studies such as those by Adejumo et al. (2022) and Uzoigwe et al. (2020) explore the media's role in holding power accountable and promoting sustainable policies. They demonstrate how media can effectively reach diverse audiences with environmental news and education, as exemplified by Okoro's (2018) study on radio campaigns raising deforestation awareness in rural communities and Emenike's (2020) research on television documentaries influencing support for waste management initiatives in urban settings. These studies showcase a strong interest in the media's role in combating environmental issues that contribute to climate change.

However, a critical gap exists in understanding how audiences engage with these narratives and how these engagements shape and reshape mainstream discussions. This study aims to address this gap by employing audience reception studies to investigate how audiences interact with climate change narratives in both alternative and mainstream media (MSM).

This focus on audience engagement offers a novel perspective on alternative media's impact, viewing audiences as active interpreters and communicators. By understanding how alternative narratives can amplify marginalized voices, challenge dominant framing, and contribute to societal shifts, we can gain valuable insights for effective communication strategies and social mobilization efforts in the face of climate change.

Research Questions:

- How do audiences construct meaning and interpret information regarding climate change in both alternative and mainstream media?
- How can the influence of engagement with alternative media narratives be evaluated in terms of its impact on individuals' attitudes towards climate change?
- To what extent do audiences actively participate in shaping mainstream discourse on climate action through sharing and discussing alternative media narratives?

Review of Relevant Literatures

Mainstream Media and Climate Change Discourse

Mainstream media (MSM) plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of climate change, influencing individual attitudes and behaviors. Scholars have shown keen interest in the mainstream media's discussion of climate change. Painter et al. (2023) revealed, in a study published in Communications Earth & Environment, that skepticism regarding the science of climate change persists in media outlets covering climate-related news. Furthermore, Wilkins' research (1993); as cited in Boykoff (2007), indicated that media coverage of climate change in the USA and the UK was influenced by values and beliefs. Additionally, a study by Wetts (2020) in PNAS found that press releases opposing climate action are approximately twice as likely to be cited in national newspapers compared to those supporting action. Hase et al.'s (2021) comparative study across ten countries from the Global North and the Global South revealed variations in climate change coverage. Analyzing mass media publications for content has become a prominent scientific approach, as demonstrated by Kirilenko et al. (2012), to scrutinize public discourse on climate change.

Limitations and Biases in Media Coverage of Climate Change

Several inherent limitations and biases within mainstream media (MSM) coverage can distort the public's understanding of climate change. One such issue is the phenomenon of "false balance," wherein MSM frequently presents opposing views on climate change, even in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus pointing to human-caused warming. This approach fosters doubt and confusion among the public, undermining the robustness of scientific evidence (Boykoff, 2007).

Another factor contributing to distortion is the media's inclination to prioritize drama and conflict for attention. In the competitive landscape, MSM tends to favor sensational stories and conflicts over nuanced analysis. This emphasis often leads to an overfocus on extreme weather events and political controversies, sidelining discussions on long-term trends and potential solutions (Trumbo, 2016).

Roles of Alternative Media in Climate Change Communication

Supplementing and Contesting Dominant Narratives: Mainstream narratives offer additional perspectives that may be overlooked or marginalized in the dominant discourse. This inclusivity helps broaden the understanding of climate change, moving beyond the simplified and often politicized framings commonly found in mainstream media. Alternative media also serves as a challenging force, questioning and providing counter-narratives to the mainstream

discourse on climate change. This act of challenging encourages a more critical examination of the issues at hand, fostering a nuanced public discourse. By presenting alternative viewpoints and challenging simplistic narratives, alternative media contributes to a more comprehensive and informed discussion on climate change and sustainability. This fosters a more nuanced and critically engaged public discourse, as asserted by Carruthers (2015).

Supplementing and Contesting Dominant Narratives: Elevating Consciousness and Fostering Public Insight: Alternative media, by presenting a variety of inclusive and easily accessible narratives, plays a pivotal role in increasing public consciousness regarding climate change, its effects on humanity, and possible solutions—particularly within marginalized communities, Carrington et al. (2017). Through a range of accessible narratives, alternative media platforms contribute to educating the public about the realities of climate change, its human consequences, and potential solutions. Notably, the emphasis is on reaching out to marginalized communities, ensuring that their perspectives and experiences are highlighted.

Enabling Knowledge Dissemination and Collaborative Education: Knowledge-sharing is significant because it allows for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to addressing environmental issues. Rather than relying solely on mainstream sources or expert opinions, alternative media platforms create opportunities for a broader range of voices to contribute to the discourse. This inclusivity can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by climate change and, in turn, promote collaborative efforts in finding sustainable solutions. Alternative media platforms encourage a shared understanding of climate issues, fostering a sense of community engagement in addressing environmental concerns.

Limitations and Challenges

Echo Chambers and Confirmation Bias: Certain alternative media outlets may cater to specific ideological groups, creating echo chambers and reinforcing existing biases rather than encouraging open dialogue and critical engagement with diverse perspectives, Höflich (2017). This can limit the exposure of individuals to a range of viewpoints and hinder the development of a more nuanced understanding of climate-related issues. Ultimately, the concern is that echo chambers and confirmation bias may impede constructive discussions and hinder efforts to address climate change through collaborative and informed decision-making.

Concerns regarding Precision and Reliability: Within alternative media channels, there is a risk of the dissemination of misinformation and inaccurate storylines. Emphasizing the significance of fostering critical media literacy and incorporating fact-checking measures among audiences becomes crucial. These efforts aim to empower the audience to discern and dismiss any information aiming to mislead them, particularly in the context of climate change issues.

By promoting open discussions, encouraging critical thought, and fostering collaboration, alternative media has the potential to make substantial contributions to meaningful climate action and a future characterized by justice and sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda Setting Theory: Agenda-setting theory, proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, aims to elucidate the impact of media messages on the audience. According to Wogu (2015), individuals consider significant those issues highlighted in the media, emphasizing the crucial role of the media in introducing major societal topics for discussion. McCombs and Shaw (1968), as cited in Asemah (2017), assert that we rely on news professionals for cues on where to direct our attention, and what the media deems important, we, in turn, perceive as important.

Agenda-setting theory facilitates an exploration of how alternative media influences the prioritization of topics in climate change discussions, showcasing distinct facets compared to mainstream media. For example, alternative media may concentrate on personal narratives instead of scientific data, thereby shaping public awareness and engagement in climate change discourse.

Reception theory: Reception theory, also known as audience reception theory, is a fascinating approach to understanding how meaning is created in communication, particularly in literature and other forms of media. The theory is attributed to the contributions of the British Sociologist Stuart Hall in the late 1960s, particularly through his communication model presented in an essay titled "Encoding/Decoding." Unlike traditional literary analysis, which often focuses on the author's intention or the inherent meaning of a text, reception theory shifts the spotlight to the reader or audience. It argues that the meaning of a text is not fixed but rather emerges from the dynamic interaction between the text and the reader's individual background, experiences, and expectations.

Addressing the intricate problem of climate change involves the utilization of diverse media forms such as documentaries, news articles, films, and even social media posts. These representations may vary significantly in their tone, emphasis, and even precision. Studies carried out by Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia; Kor, Ryan (2018) posit that the way media texts are received can differ significantly, showcasing the varied interpretations and experiences of diverse audience members. Every viewer brings a distinct set of personal background, knowledge, and life experiences to their understanding of media content. Elements such as age, geographical location, cultural heritage, individual values, and even prior exposure to information about climate change can impact how people perceive and comprehend the conveyed message.

Reception theory provides a framework for understanding the dynamic and interactive nature of the communication process between media producers and audiences.

Methodology

The research employed a qualitative research methodology, as advocated by Moser et al. (2017), which involves exploring real-world issues to gain a deeper understanding and insights. Qualitative research is focused on capturing the experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of participants, with an emphasis on understanding the underlying reasons and processes, rather than quantifying them in terms of quantity or amount, as highlighted by Tenny et al. (2022).

The researcher utilized the Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) method for data collection. In preparation for the discussions, an informed consent letter was sent to ten (10) participants who were purposefully selected based on specific criteria. This selection included two (2) media experts chosen for their experience and professionalism in communication, three (3) experts in environmental health services, and five (5) postgraduate students from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The participants, who are active users of alternative media and possess experience in the study of climate change and sustainability, were chosen to provide firsthand and authentic data stemming from their expertise in environmental health services or their role as active users of alternative and mainstream media.

Information was gathered through open-ended inquiries directed at a group of ten participants involved in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This group included two journalists affiliated with NUJ Lokoja, Kogi State, three experts from the Environmental Studies

department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and five Postgraduate Students from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. The utilization of open-ended questions facilitated the capture of diverse and rich responses, unveiling unforeseen discoveries. This format allowed participants to freely and authentically express themselves, minimizing researcher bias and external influence. The selection of questions was guided by ethical considerations related to communication and the respective fields of the participants.

Thematic analysis was employed for data analysis, following the method outlined by Crosley (2021). Thematic analysis, as suggested by Crosley, entails the exploration of patterns to unveil their significance. In simpler terms, it involves a thorough examination of patterns and themes within a dataset to discern the underlying meaning. This analytical approach is utilized to scrutinize qualitative data by closely examining the dataset and identifying recurring patterns that reveal the core themes. An integral aspect of this method involves an active process of reflection, where the researcher's subjective perspective is pivotal in interpreting the data, as highlighted by Villegas (2022).

To carry out the data analysis effectively, the Focus Group Discussion was recorded and transcribed into text. This gave the researcher easy access to study the transcript and identify the common patterns to select the themes for the study. Themes ought to shed light on important facets of your research query and align with the objectives of your study, as emphasized by Nowell et al. (2017). Despite their potential intrigue, themes that are irrelevant or trivial were dismissed. Themes that emerged from the analysis and were relevant to the study were presented and discussed. These themes represent the participants' understanding of the subject of the study.

Results

Data were collected through online and physical discussion. After the analysis and coding, nine themes emerged, which were considered relevant and all aligned with the research questions under study. The themes include: Independence and Plurality, Audience Construction of Meaning, Local and Overlooked Stories, Emotional Appeals and Personal Narratives, Social Justice and Equity, Audience Participation in Shaping Mainstream Discourse, Challenging the Gatekeeping Function, and Fact-Checking and Critical Media Literacy Solutions and Hope. Answers to the research questions were drawn using the themes originated from the discussion during the study.

RQ 1: How do audiences construct meaning and interpret information regarding climate change in both alternative and mainstream media?

- **Independence and Plurality:** Alternative media's focus on diverse voices and critical perspectives can lead audiences to engage in deeper analysis and question dominant narratives. This contrasts with mainstream media's emphasis on scientific data, which may lead audiences to rely on expert interpretations.

- **Audience Construction of Meaning:** Audiences actively shape their understanding based on their experiences and media exposure. Alternative media's focus on personal narratives and local impacts can foster emotional engagement and personalized interpretations of climate change.

- **Social Justice and Equity:** Alternative media's emphasis on marginalized communities' perspectives can lead audiences to consider the unequal distribution of climate change impacts and the importance of equitable solutions.

RQ 2: How can the influence of engagement with alternative media narratives be evaluated in terms of its impact on individuals' attitudes towards climate change?

- **Emotional Appeals and Personal Narratives:** Alternative media's focus on emotional engagement and storytelling can potentially lead to increased concern about climate change and a stronger sense of personal responsibility.

- **Local and Overlooked Stories:** Exposure to stories of local communities impacted by climate change can increase empathy and understanding of the issue's real-world consequences.

- **Solutions and Hope:** Showcasing positive examples of climate action and community resilience can foster optimism and inspire individuals to take action.

RQ 3: To what extent do audiences actively participate in shaping mainstream discourse on climate action through sharing and discussing alternative media narratives?

- **Audience Participation in Shaping Mainstream Discourse:** Sharing and discussing alternative media narratives can challenge dominant media perspectives, amplify marginalized voices, and influence public comprehension. This can indirectly pressure mainstream media to address previously overlooked issues.

- **Challenging the Gatekeeping Function:** Alternative media's decentralization allows for the circulation of information often excluded by mainstream media, potentially influencing the agenda of mainstream discourse.

- **Fact-Checking and Critical Media Literacy:** Promoting critical media literacy can equip audiences to evaluate information from both mainstream and alternative sources, potentially leading to more informed public discussions.

Discussion of Findings

Alternative media playing an important role in amplifying the voices of marginalized groups impacted by climate change. Lewis et al. (2010) highlights how indigenous groups, communities of color, and those facing disproportionate impacts find a platform to communicate their perspectives, breaking away from conventional academic or institutional environments (Carruthers, 2015).

This amplification of diverse voices in alternative media contributes to audiences actively deriving meaning from climate change information. Studies (Shanahan et al., 2016; Painter et al., 2023) demonstrate that exposure to both mainstream and alternative media shapes public comprehension. While mainstream media often emphasizes scientific data, alternative media presents personal narratives, local impacts, and social justice perspectives, fostering deeper engagement and challenging prevailing narratives (Entman, 2017; Carruthers, 2015). This diverse interpretation across media platforms becomes essential for effective communication and mobilizing collective action (Adejumo et al., 2022).

Further, the focus shifts to local impacts and grassroots efforts in addressing climate change challenges. Carrington et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of understanding the uneven distribution of climate change effects, particularly on marginalized communities. The discussion highlights how emphasizing local initiatives and the ability to bounce back empowers communities, motivating others to engage in similar efforts (Okoro, 2018; Uzoigwe et al., 2020).

The narrative then delves into the emotional appeals and personal narratives utilized by alternative media. By drawing upon human emotions, alternative media establishes a profound rapport with the audience, making climate change more relatable. The use of storytelling, documentaries, podcasts, and citizen journalism proves to be more effective than traditional scientific data in raising awareness and motivating action (Maibach et al., 2019; Nisbet, 2018).

The unevenly spread effects of climate change and the perspective of social justice and equity, marginalized communities face the greatest impact and often lack the resources to cope with climate change-related incidents. Addressing disparities and prioritizing the needs of the

most marginalized individuals become crucial in climate action (Agyeman, 2005; Walker et al., 2020).

Audience participation in shaping mainstream discourse is then explored, illustrating that audiences actively contribute to shaping the discourse on mainstream climate action. The impact of audience engagement on agenda-setting, sharing, and discussing narratives from alternative media challenges prevailing perspectives, influencing public comprehension, and potentially impacting policy agendas (Carruthers, 2015; Carrington et al., 2017; Uzoigwe et al., 2020).

The influence of alternative media in impacting mainstream discourse, challenging gatekeeping functions, promoting fact-checking, and encouraging critical media literacy is then discussed. Alternative media brings attention to marginalized perspectives and overlooked issues, facilitating a more democratic distribution of information (Couldry et al., 2017; Lazer et al., 2018).

However, mainstream media often highlights the severe outcomes of climate change, alternative media provides a more balanced perspective. By showcasing positive examples of climate action and community resilience, alternative media fosters hope and inspires individuals to believe in the feasibility of taking meaningful actions (Carrington et al., 2017; Nisbet, 2018).

Conclusion

Recognized as a crucial influencer of public perceptions and awareness regarding climate change and sustainability, the mainstream media has undergone a notable shift towards environmental issues. This shift, transitioning from a focus on scientific aspects to emphasizing the human consequences of climate change, underscores the media's dual role of information dissemination and perception shaping. The study underscores that the portrayal of climate change as an urgent crisis within the mainstream media has proven effective in garnering increased public support for initiatives aimed at addressing this pressing global issue.

In contrast, the transformative impact of alternative media platforms, encompassing online outlets, independent news sources, and grassroots initiatives, is brought to the forefront. These alternative media channels are recognized as agents of change, playing a pivotal role in diversifying perspectives, disrupting established narratives, and facilitating a more democratic distribution of information.

Notably, alternative media is characterized by its prioritization of diverse voices, emphasis on local impacts, utilization of emotional appeals, commitment to addressing social justice and equity, showcasing of solutions, challenging the gatekeeping function traditionally associated with mainstream media, and promotion of fact-checking and critical media literacy. This research emphasizes the importance of understanding audience engagement with these narratives for the development of effective communication strategies and the mobilization of collective action in addressing climate change. The insights gained from audience reception studies are seen as valuable contributions to nurturing a more informed and engaged global citizenry, ultimately facilitating meaningful climate action and the adoption of sustainable practices.

Recommendations

Diversify Mainstream Media Narratives: Given the significant impact of mainstream media on public perceptions, there is a need for a continued effort to diversify narratives. Mainstream media should actively include a broader range of voices, local perspectives, and solutions to present a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of climate change and sustainability.

Promote Positive Climate Narratives: Recognizing the influence of media on shaping public attitudes, both mainstream and alternative media should strike a balance between highlighting the urgency of the climate crisis and promoting positive examples of climate action and community resilience. This approach can foster hope and inspire individuals to engage in meaningful actions.

Emphasize Social Justice and Equity: The media, particularly alternative platforms, should continue to emphasize the social justice aspects of climate change. Highlighting the disproportionate impact on marginalized communities and advocating for solutions that address existing disparities can contribute to a more informed and socially responsible public.

Support Alternative Media Platforms: Acknowledging the valuable role of alternative media in diversifying perspectives, supporting these platforms is crucial. Initiatives, funding, and collaborations that bolster independent online sources, grassroots initiatives, and diverse voices should be encouraged to maintain a democratic distribution of information.

Enhance Media Literacy Programs: To empower audiences to critically assess information, media literacy programs should be promoted. These programs should focus on fact-checking skills, critical analysis of media content, and understanding potential biases. This

will reduce vulnerability to misinformation and manipulation, particularly in the context of climate change.

Encourage Collaboration Between Mainstream and Alternative Media: Recognizing the strengths of both mainstream and alternative media, collaborative efforts can be beneficial. Joint initiatives that bring together diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources from various media sources can contribute to a more holistic and nuanced understanding of climate change.

Facilitate Audience Engagement: Understanding audience engagement is crucial. Both media sectors should actively encourage audience participation, discussion, and sharing of information. This can contribute to shaping mainstream discourse on climate action and foster a sense of collective responsibility among the public.

Invest in Audience Reception Studies: Continued research into how audiences engage with climate change narratives, both in alternative and mainstream media, is essential. This will provide ongoing insights into evolving audience perspectives, allowing for more targeted and effective communication strategies.

Incorporate Emotional Appeals in Mainstream Media: Recognizing the effectiveness of emotional appeals in alternative media, mainstream media should consider incorporating more personal narratives and emotional connections in their climate change coverage. This approach can enhance the relatability of climate issues to a broader audience.

Adopt a Multi-Pronged Communication Strategy: Media outlets should adopt a comprehensive communication strategy that combines scientific data, personal narratives, and positive examples of climate action. This multi-pronged approach can cater to diverse audience preferences and increase overall engagement with climate change issues.

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