

**AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED NEWSPAPERS COVERAGE OF
DEVELOPMENT NEWS IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined an analysis of selected newspapers coverage of development news in Nigeria. While discussions and findings regarding media role have been mixed and inconclusive, recent study has characterized the press in Nigeria as ineffective in news dissemination and analysis, and described its relationship with governments as controversial and antagonistic. Thus, newspapers when properly conceived can be more than reporting mere events to becoming an instigator of development. The objectives was to ascertain the volume of coverage given to development issues in Nigeria by selected newspapers from January to August 2020, to determine the level of significance attached to development news in Nigeria by the selected newspapers from January to August 2020 and to examine the type of report that received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria. Agenda Setting theory and Media Development theory was adopted for this study. Stratified and purposive sampling technique was also adopted for this study. Content analysis was adopted as a method for this study with a code sheet as an instrument for data collection from four selected newspapers (Punch, The Nation, Guardian and Vanguard) were 192 Nigeria development news was examined from January to August 2020. Findings showed that the volume of coverage for development news was low when compared to other stories in the selected newspapers. Findings also showed that there was no much significance attached to the coverage of development news in the period under study. Furthermore, news stories received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria. Lastly, it was discovered that majority of the stories were covered as national interest. Low coverage was given to human interest stories with a magnitude of only 26 (13%) by the two newspapers within the period under study. The study concluded that the press should give adequate attention in the coverage of development news in the country, as well as provide human interest angle to stories in order to tackle the state of

underdevelopment in the country. It recommended that newspapers should make it a point of duty to update the public on the strategies and measures adopted by the government to handle development projects in the country and significance should be given to coverage of development news by the selected newspapers.

Keywords: Newspapers, Press, Coverage, Development news

INTRODUCTION

The newspaper has contributed to the development of the society in various areas like political, economic, culture, education, agriculture and social system, etc. Uche (2015) observed that the press has become an essential part of the society and plays most significant role towards promoting aspirations of the nation. In the context of sustainable development, the press according to Uche (2015) remains a vital instrument in the realization of nations' goals. Adebayo (2017) believed that the press motivate the people as well as ensure participation in the growth and developmental process apart from informing and educating members of the society. As part of its surveillance role in respect to information and news, the press being instrument to development is expected to inform and educate members of the society on different areas of development in the society.

Fundamentally, the press in Nigeria has different contents like combining adversarial and collaborative postures towards public affairs reporting, in a way that positive and negative news reporting have become part of the political register in the country. Ajibade (2013) aver that the common value denominator however is the persistence claim to defence of public interest and contribution to national development. Notwithstanding, the constitution of Nigeria confers on the press responsibility to monitor governance and ensure compliance with the provisions of the constitution and hold government accountable to the citizenry who elected the government. Moreover, Ajibade (2013) noted that there is an obsession among press journalists in Nigeria to commit to development. The role of the mass media in supporting national development remains controversial in Ajibade (2013) opinion as journalists who are associated with the positive news syndrome are practicing the profession different from those who are associated with the critical journalism.

Furthermore, the role of the press in national development and public discourse has been critically observed in Jimada (2016) with reference to the functions of the press. Jimada (2016) pointed out that the press can help raise public awareness of about development problems and issues; create public consciousness about development; inform people and help them to make right choices by influence policy makers to pay attention and on reflect public opinion. Jimada (2016) suggested that the press could contribute to development and growth by going beyond spot news reporting to engage in analysis of development issues in the news. Hence, the press play a participatory and supporting role by helping to focus attention, point out opportunities, attack indifferences, and influence public opinion to foster better understanding of development issues in the country.

In all, Inayatullah (2015), defined development as the capacity of an individual to have greater control over the environment and increased realization of the values of the society. Inayatullah (2015) described human development indices as better management and control of the environment, including good system of governance which is good enough for all concerned. Inayatullah (2015) further emphasized the endogenous path to

development through the participatory approach. This is important in realizing the values of the people in the society. Also, Melkote & Steeves (2011) described development as the process by which societal situations are improved. The human and societal situations are considered to be both the social and physical conditions of life including environmental conditions. Thus, developing or improving the environment has become a major source of concern to the press. This comes from the understanding that no society can develop without tampering with its social and physical environment.

Vilanilam (2013) stated that development is viewed differently to different people and that its meaning varies according to the changes that occurs in the social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, scientific and technological value of a society. Thus, Vilanilam (2013) that the development rate of a particular country should not be used as a measure to quantify development performance of another country because each country has its own uniqueness which forms the basis for development and which means that what can be categorized as development in one nation may be seen differently another nation. Therefore, Jimoh, (2015) pointed out that development is the basis of renewed thinking on sustainable development as it enhanced capacity of people to manipulate the environment for betterment. It is also seen as all efforts, both physical and social including policies and programmes, geared towards a better living for the people.

In a nutshell, development is the process of social change, intended to bring about both social and material advancement. It involves greater numbers of people gaining control over their environment, empowering people to be self-reliant and creating the right environment for people to improve their living conditions. Whereas, low levels of development reasons why countries experience extreme poverty, with a substantial segment of the population living in deplorable conditions, and lacking basic amenities taken for granted. In the opinion of Entman (2014) the mass media is seen as powerful institutions in the society, which involves in creating, processing, managing, and diffusing knowledge and information in a country in search of establishing democratic values. Additionally, Diamond (2017) aver that in the quest for sustainable development, the press has been associated with playing analytical role in explains events and issues for intellectual stimulation, public debate, and collective action.

Nwanko (2013) asserted that because of information availability of the press, the public has become less resistant to development news, policy reforms, government actions and implementations. Okoro (2019) opined that a report from the World Bank (2019) justifies the role and contributions of indigenous press in nation-building, ethnic integration, and national unity, stressing the utility of news sources national development. Significantly, the press present development issues which inform and empower the public in decision-making and having a feeling that they have a part in national development. Thus, Nigeria's quest for development governance is achievable to the extent that the national press can provide coverage of the overall scheme of democratic governance. Therefore, it become of essence to examine newspapers coverage of development news in Nigeria. Hence, four dailies were examined between January and August 2020.

Over a period of time, this issue on newspaper coverage of development news in Nigeria, has been a recurrent debate and a focus of scholarly analyses among researchers like Nwanko (2013) and Entman (2014).While discussions and findings regarding media role

have been mixed and inconclusive, recent study like Okoro(2019) characterized the press in Nigeria as ineffective in news dissemination and analysis, and described its relationship with governments as controversial and antagonistic. Thus, newspapers when properly conceived can be more than reporting mere events to becoming an instigator of development. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine newspaper coverage of development news and how the information is translated into development for the people through the available channels of public communications. Despite there are many newspapers in the country, it would be impossible to study all of them. Consequently The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and The Nations were examined, and will form the basis for this study. Thus, these four dailies were examined between January to August 2020.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To ascertain the volume of coverage given to development issues in Nigeria by selected newspapers from January to August 2020.
2. To determine the level of significance attached to development news in Nigeria by the selected newspapers from January to August 2020.
3. To examine the type of report that received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jimi & Raheemat (2012) carried out a study on Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of the Millennium Development Goals: The Role of the Media. The purpose of this study was to examine media coverage of development issues in Nigeria using the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as examples. The agenda setting and development media theories formed the theoretical framework for the study. Two prominent Nigerian national newspapers, The Punch and The Guardian, were sampled for the research. The study covered all 182 editions of each sampled newspaper published from January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008. Thus, 364 editions were content analysed. The findings showed that the Nigerian media did not give equal coverage to the development issues they covered. They reported some issues frequently, while other equally pressing developmental challenges in the country were neglected. Furthermore, Jimi & Raheemat (2012) indicated that the Nigerian media did not do much to educate, enlighten or motivate the public towards the need to achieve the developmental issues reported. It concluded that The Nigerian media is still largely government oriented, focusing mainly on governance and its politics. The paper recommended that media must give more attention to development issues like child mortality, maternal health and universal primary education.

Another study by Ephraim (2013) on the Media, Development Communication, and Governance in Nigeria: The Press for National Integration. The paper analyzed the role of communication media sources towards sustainable governance in an emerging democracy. It specifically examines and discusses the relationship between the press and governance, and the contributions of the press in political development and national integration in Nigeria. The methodology used was a hybrid approach consisting of analytical technique of historical/critical descriptive and content analysis of selected past and current literature on development and political issues. Agenda-setting theory guided the analysis of the

relationship of news sources with governments as well as the role of the press in national unity and development. Findings showed that the increasing proliferation of news sources in the country does not translate into objective and independent coverage of political issues and events. The study then concluded that development initiatives in a pluralistic and culturally-diverse country should be holistic and situation-realistic. It recommended that a conceptual-theoretical framework of press participation-based integrative model be adopted for sustainable development governance in Nigeria.

Similarly, a study conducted by Agbaje (2012) on a content analysis of Nigerian Newspapers, findings showed that majority of the stories focused on the central governments, while the states and local government were not given much coverage. The situation is made worse according to Agbaje (2012) by the fact that most newspapers in Nigeria do not have reporters in rural areas. Agbaje (2012) observed that the Nigerian newspapers did not give sufficient press coverage in terms of prominence in its reportage to agriculture compared to other issues. Also, the press did not give sufficient attention on certain areas of agricultural sub-sector in its report as observed in the study. The study revealed that the Nigerian press as an institution or organ is expected to report all sector of the Nigerian economy with sufficient attention on each sector.

According to Ifenkwe (2016) on Assessment of Newspaper Advocacy for Rural Development and Environmental Education in Nigeria. The study analysed five national newspapers for a period of twelve months. Using a content analysis method, the study revealed that The Sun newspapers with 23.65% was considered the best print medium in reporting environmental and rural development news, among the five news media. This was followed by The Punch (22.5%) and The Champion (21.3%) newspapers. The Sun newspapers also exhibited consistent leadership in promoting activities in the health and population and family planning sub-sectors. Other newspapers in the study are Thisday and The Guardian, coming fourth and fifth respectively.

Furthermore, Nwokeafor & Nwafo (2015) carried out a study on Development Information Content in the African Mass Media: A study of two Nigerian Dailies. The study sampled news stories in all the Monday editions of each paper during a 15- year period between 1954 to 1979. Content analysis was adopted for the study and DailyTimes and Nigerian Tribune served as the newspaper for examination. The results of the analysis of 566 news and information items from a sample of 106 editions of the newspapers showed that the difference between the number of development-oriented items were 43.0% and the number of non-development-oriented items were 57%. The data showed that the distribution of developmental and non-development items in the two newspapers fluctuated but not in a statistically significant manner. This trend appeared to be reversed with regard to the topical diversity of developmental items. While development item diversity was evident in the two newspapers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the concept of this study, the following theories were adapted to aid a clear understanding of the study.

AGENDA SETTING THEORY

Agenda settings as McQuail (2005) cited in Ekwueme (2017) observed that the term agenda setting was developed by McCombs and Shaw 1972 and 1993 in order to describe a phenomenon which had long been noticed and studied in the context of election

campaigns. The core idea is that the mass media calls public attention to the main issues of the day and this is reflected in what the public considers as the main issues. Ekwueme (2017) define the process as an on-going competition among issue protagonists to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites. Agenda-setting theory explains the power of the mass media to set the agenda and raise issues of public interest.

The theory further explains how the media reports on particular issues, and influences public awareness and discussion. They can provide sustained and prominent coverage to an issue while others are ignored. Ekwueme (2017) propositions about the agenda setting theory suggested that while media do not tell us what to think, they may tell us what to think about. This suggests that mass media has the potential to draw people's attention to certain issues, and allows for conclusions of already raised issues in the public agenda. Griffin (2011) notes that the agenda setting theory reaffirms the power of the press, while still maintaining the individual's freedom to choose. This explains the power of the mass media to set the agenda and raise issue of public importance. This function is closely related to public opinion generation, since it is often the mass media that raise issues upon which public opinion is expressed. This theory is relevant to this study because development news are issues of public importance which the masses have to know about and based on the amount of coverage given to it, the media have thus worked in emphasizing how much important it is to national discourse.

DEVELOPMENT MEDIA THEORY

This theory is designed to address the imbalance in development and information flow of third world countries as well as provide solutions to the technological problems facing them. The assumptions of the theory according to McQuail (2005) cited in Ekwueme (2017) are that the media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy; media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically; Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks. On the ground of the both theories, this study examined newspaper coverage of development news in Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The research method adopted in this study is the content analysis method of research. It was adopted because it is suitable for the study. According to Okpanachi (2012) content analysis as a technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. It is the manifest content of communication. Thus, it becomes appropriate to use content analysis as the above definitions have stated that it should be done on recorded materials and the newspapers are assumed to be so. Because the study is on newspaper coverage of development issues, the population of study is made up of registered newspapers circulated daily within the country under the period of study. According to Newspaper printing company (2017) a total of 267 newspapers are in circulation at the time of this study. Thus, the population of this study is 267.

For this study, a sample size of 192 issues was selected for the months January to August 2020. For each of the weeks of the months, two issues were chosen for the four newspapers. The days Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were for Vanguard and Guardian while Thursday, Friday and Saturday were for The Nation, and Punch. The choice to study two

issues for each newspaper and to choose these days was based on stratified sampling technique where the days were picked to stand in for the rest of the days that could not be studied since it would have been difficult to study all the editions of the two newspapers within eight months.

Also, the Four newspapers chosen and the months to study employed purposive sampling because the researcher was looking for some characteristics that the four newspapers will have in common within eight months as agreed by Okpanachi (2012) that purposive sampling is used when the researcher just picks the sampling elements considered to possess the required characteristics. Therefore, the researcher found the newspapers to possess some characteristics of daily publication, wide readership, wide circulation, national outlook and professionalism.

1. Story Type

This is the format each story appears such as News, Editorials, Features, and Letters to the Editor and Opinion Articles. News stories are those who answer the 5Ws questions like When, Where, Who, What and Why and How. They normally appear in straight news format without any opinion. Editorials are those written by the newspaper organization stating their opinion on any topical issue of great importance and are seen in the editorial page (s) of the publication. Features are stories about people, events and places that are written with styles and embellishments. Letters to the editor are opinions of the public written by individuals to the editor concerning issues of critical importance in the society. While Opinion articles are the view point of a writer in a newspaper.

2. Placement

This is where stories appeared in the pages of the newspaper. That is Front Page, Back Page, Centre Page and Inside Page stories. A front-paged story appears in the front page. A back-paged story appears at the back page. A centre-paged story is found at the centre spread. An inside-paged story appears in any of the pages inside the newspaper.

3. Story Length

That is Length I (0-10 lines), Length II (11-20 lines), Length III (21-30 lines) and Length IV (31 and above). Thus, Length I stories are those whose story lines ran from 0-10, length II stories are those whose story lines ran from 11-20, length III stories are those whose story lines ran from 21-30 while length IV stories are those whose story lines ran from 31 and above.

4. Direction

Story direction comes can be Favourable, Unfavourable or Neutral. Favourable news is news that showcased the government in good light. Unfavourable ones are those that portrayed the government in bad light. It emphasizes the weaknesses of the government in the face of the development news. Neutral are those that reflect neither favourable nor unfavourable conditions.

5. Story Category

The categories are: Politics, Human Interest, National Interest and International Interest. Stories on politics refer to news stories that report development news in a political light. Those on human interest are on unusual happenings as well as those of people in unique conditions or situations as a result of development news. Categories on national interest are those that have national bearing while those on international interest are relate to the concerns of the international community in the face of the development challenges.

6. Illustrations

Illustration include: Photographs, Cartoons and Not illustrated. Stories with photographs are coded under photographs. Those with cartoons are coded under cartoons. Those without any illustration are coded under not illustrated.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

From the 192 issues examined in this study, The Nation had 44, Punch had 49, Vanguard 53, and Guardian 46 issues respectively. In line with the objectives of the study, three research questions were generated so as to serve as bases for the conduct of this study. The research questions generated were;

Research Question 1: What is the volume of coverage given to development news in Nigeria by selected newspapers between from January to August 2020?

With regards to the first research question of this study, the researcher determined the volume of coverage given to development news in Nigeria by selected newspapers from January to August 2020.

Table 1: The total number of development news in the newspapers from January to August 2020

News	The Nation	Punch	Vanguard	Guardian
January	5 (11.3%)	7 (14.2%)	7 (13.2%)	4(8.6%)
February	6 (13.6%)	5 (10.2%)	4(7.5%)	6(13.0%)
March	3 (6.8%)	4(8.1%)	5 (9.4%)	5(10.8%)
April	7(15.9%)	8 (16.3%)	10 (18.8%)	8 (17.3%)
May	9 (20.4%)	8(16.3%)	8 (15.0%)	7(15.2%)
June	3 (6.8%)	4(8.1%)	6 (11.3%)	5(10.8%)
July	6 (13.6%)	4 (8.1%)	5 (9.4%)	7(15.2%)
August	5 (11.3%)	9 (18.3%)	8 (15.0%)	4(8.2%)
Total	44 (100%)	49(100%)	53(100%)	46 (100%)

Findings showed that Punch had 7 (14.2%) stories in January, 5 (10.2%) February, 4(8.1%) March, 8 (16.3%) April, 8(16.3%) May, 4(8.1%), 4(8.1%) July while 9 (18.3%) in August. Vanguard had 7 (13.2%) in January, 4(7.5%) February, 5 (9.4%)March, 10 (18.8%) April, 8 (15.0%)May, 6 (11.3%)June, 5 (9.4%) July, and 8 (15.0%) in August. Guardian had 4(8.6%) January, 6(13.0%) February, 5(10.8%) March, 8 (17.3%) April, 7(15.2%) May, 5(10.8%) June, 7(15.2%) July, and 4(8.2%) in August. While The Nation had 5 (11.3%) January, 6 (13.6%) February, 3 (6.8%) March, 7(15.9%) April, 9 (20.4%) May, 3 (6.8%) June, 6 (13.6%)July while 5 (11.3%) in August.

Thus, the Nation had 44 stories, punch had 49 stories, Vanguard 53 while Guardian has 46 stories. This indicates that Vanguard newspaper had more stories on development news in Nigeria compared to Punch, Nation and Guardian newspaper within the duration under study. Conclusively it can be deduced that 192 stories on development news in Nigeria were covered by four selected newspaper. Hence, one can consider the volume of coverage for development news low when compared to other stories in the selected newspapers.

Thus, findings of this study is line with the observation of Jimi & Raheemat (2012) study carried out on Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of the Millennium Development Goals: The Role of the Media, who discovered that the Nigerian press do not give sufficient coverage to development new in comparison to other issues in Nigeria. Also findings is also against the tenet of the Development Media Theory which says the media address imbalance in development and information flow as well as provide solutions to the problems facing them. The media is expected to accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy. Therefore consistent coverage of development news by the media will help to draw attention of government to certain issues thereby improving the country as well as inform the citizens of the various development projects by the government.

Research Question 2: What is the level of significance attached to development news in Nigeria by the selected newspapers from January to August 2020?

Table 2: Accumulation of story length from January to August 2020

Length	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
Length I	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
Length II	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Length III	20 (41.6%)	19(42.2%)	21 (42.8%)	20(40%)
Length IV	28 (58.3%)	26 (57.7%)	28 (57.1%)	30(60%)
Total	48(100%)	45(100%)	49(100%)	50(100%)

From the table above, result showed that Punch, Vanguard, the Nation and Vanguard had no stories on length I and length II. Punch had 20 (41.6%) stories on Length III and 28 (58.3%) on Length IV, making it a total of 48 stories. The Nation had 19(42.2%) on Length III and 26 (57.7%) on Length IV, making a total of 45. Vanguard had 21 (42.8%) on Length III and 28 (57.1%) on Length IV making a total of 49 stories. While Guardian had 20(40%) on Length III and 30(60%) on Length IV, making a total of 50 stories. Similarly findings are also seen in story placement.

Table 3: Accumulation of story placement from January to August 2020

Placement	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
Front page	4 (6%)	2(4.3%)	2 (4%)	3(6.1%)
Inside page	30 (67%)	32(69.5%)	38 (72%)	30(61.2%)

Centre page	13(27%)	12(26.0%)	10 (20%)	16 (32.6%)
Back page	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)

Result on table showed that the period between January to August 2020, Punch had 4 (6%) front page stories, the Nation had 2(4.3%), Vanguard 2 (4%) while Guardian 3(6.1%). Inside page stories, Punch 30 (67%), the Nation 32(69.5%), Vanguard 38 (72%) while Guardian 30(61.2%). Center page, Punch 13(27%), the Nation 12(26.0%), Vanguard had 10 (20%) while Guardian 16 (32.6%). While on Back page stories Punch, the Nation, Guardian and Vanguard had no stories reported within the duration under study. The page placement of stories indicated the level of significance attached to the reportage of development news in the country. There was a low level of coverage of development news on the front page which recorded 11 stories for the four newspapers under the period of study, as most of the stories appeared inside the pages of the newspaper with a total of 130 stories. Therefore it can be said that for the duration of eight months the selected publications had more stories development issues in it insides pages, compare to centre and front pages.

Table 4: Accumulation of stories from January to August 2020 according to Illustration

Illustration	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
Photos	11 (21.5%)	9(20.9%)	10(18.8%)	10(22.2%)
Cartoons	7 (12.7%)	3(6.9%)	13 (24.5%)	12(26.6%)
Not illustrated	33(64.7%)	30(69.7%)	30 (56.6%)	23(51.1%)
Total	51 (100%)	43(100%)	53(100%)	45(100%)

The illustration of stories reported in the eight months under study showed that most of the stories were not illustrated as Punch had 33(64.7%), The Nation 30 (69.7%), Vanguard 30(56.6%) and Guardian 23(51.1%). These further points to the fact that there was low level of significance attached to the reportage of development news by the four newspapers.

However, the story length where some level of significance was attached to development news as most of the stories by the four newspapers appeared under length IV (31 and above). Thus, Punch had 28 (58.3%), The Nation 26 (57.7%), Vanguard 28 (57.1%) stories and Guardian 30(60%) under length IV.

Consequently, following the afore-stated, it is quite clear that there was no much significance attached to the coverage of development news in the eight months period under study. This supports the finding of Emeka (2014) who found out that 87.4% stories on development news were given low significance, that is, they were placed on inside

pages. Thus this is against the observation of Udomisor (2017) who stated that the print media devote a substantial part of their time and resources to covering development news. Thus, as pointed out by the Agenda Setting Theory, it is the responsibility of the media to set agenda and raise issues of public interest because members of the public learn how to place importance to issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place on a topic. Therefore, it become imperative for the Nigerian press to accord significance to development news in the country as they do to other stories.

Research Question 3: What type of report received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria?

Table 5: Accumulation of story type from January to August 2020

Story type	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
News	29 (59.1%)	28(63.6%)	39 (69.6%)	30 (69.7%)
Features	7(14.2%)	8 (18.1%)	7 (12.5%)	6 (13.9%)
Editorials	2 (4.0%)	1(2.2%)	1 (1.7%)	1(2.3%)
Letter to the Editor	2(4.0%)	1(2.2%)	3(5.3%)	2(2.3%)
Opinion Articles	9 (18.3%)	6(13.6%)	6 (10.7%)	4(9.3%)
Total	49 (100%)	44(100%)	56(100%)	43(100%)

Result showed that between January to August 2020 Punch had 29 (59.1%) news stories, 7(14.2%) Features, 2 (4.0%), 2(4.0%) and 9 (18.3%). The Nation had 28(63.6%) News, 8 (18.1%) Feature, 1(2.2%) Editorials, 1(2.2%) Letter to the Editor and 6(13.6%) for Opinion Articles. Vanguard had 39 (69.6%), 7 (12.5%) Features, 1 (1.7%) Editorials, 3(5.3%) Letter to the Editor and 6 (10.7%) Opinion Articles. While Guardian had 30 (69.7%) News, 6 (13.9%) Features, 1(2.3%) Editorials, 2(2.3%) Letter to the Editor and 4(9.3%) Opinion Articles. Thus, result implies that majority of the reports of development issues within the duration under study were covered as news stories, opinion articles and feature stories. This supersedes other story types like features, editorials, letters to the editor and opinion articles which received minimal attention by the two newspapers in the period understudy as seen in table two. Therefore, news stories received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development news in Nigeria.

Table 6: Accumulation of stories from January to August according to direction

Direction	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
Favourable	21 (41.1%)	20 (46.5%)	16 (29.6%)	15(34.0%)
Unfavourable	19 (37.2%)	15 (34.9%)	26 (48.1%)	20(45.4%)

Neutral	11 (21.5%)	8 (18.6)	12 (22.2%)	9 (20.4%)
Total	51 (100%)	43 (100%)	54 (100 %)	44 (100%)

Result showed that within the period under study the development news recorded as Punch 21 (41.1%) favourable, The Nation 20 (46.5%), Vanguard 16 (29.6%) and Guardian 15(34.0%) . Unfavourable stories are Punch 19 (37.2%), the Nation 15 (34.9%), Vanguard 26 (48.1%), and Guardian 20(45.4%) (22.2%), while Neutral stories were recorded as 11 (21.5%) for Punch, The Nation 8 (18.6), Vanguard 12 (22.2%) and 9 (20.4%) for Guardian. Thus result showed that majority of the report on development news reported by the selected newspapers was unfavourable.

Table 7: Accumulation of Stories category from January to August 2020

Story category	Punch	The Nation	Vanguard	Guardian
Politics	12 (27.9%)	20 (39.2%)	20 (34.4%)	9(22.5%)
National interest	20 (46.5%)	16 (31.3%)	26 (44.8%)	20(50%)
International interest	6(13.9%)	9 (17.6%)	7 (12.0%)	6(15%)
Human interest	5 (17%)	6 (11.7%)	5 (8.6%)	5(12.5%)
Total	43 (100%)	51(100%)	58 (100%)	40 (100%)

The table above revealed that story category for development news covered by the selected newspapers under the duration of study are on politics Punch had 12 (27.9%)stories, The Nation 20 (39.2%), Vanguard 20 (34.4%) and Guardian 9(22.5%). National interest stories Punch had 20 (46.5%), The Nation 16 (31.3%), Vanguard 26 (44.8%) and Guardian 20(50%). International interest stories Punch had 6(13.9%), The Nation 9 (17.6%), Vanguard 7 (12.0%) and Guardian 6(15%), while on Human interest Punch covered 5 (17%), The Nation 6 (11.7%), Vanguard 5 (8.6%) and Guardian 5(12.5%). Therefore, result shows that majority of the stories were covered as national interest stories on development news in Nigeria within the duration under study.

CONCLUSION

This study examined an analysis of selected newspapers coverage of development news in Nigeria. The objectives was to ascertain the volume of coverage given to development issues in Nigeria by selected newspapers from January to August 2020, to determine the level of significance attached to development news in Nigeria by the selected newspapers from January to August 2020 and to examine the type of report that received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria. Agenda Setting theory and Media Development theory was adopted for this study. Stratified and purposive sampling technique was also adopted for this study. Content analysis was adopted as a method for this study with a code sheet as an instruments for data collection from four selected newspapers (Punch, the Nation, Guardian and Vanguard) were 192 Nigeria development news was examines from January to August 2020. Findings showed

that the volume of coverage for development news was low when compared to other stories in the selected newspapers.

Findings also showed that there was no much significance attached to the coverage of development news in the period under study. Furthermore, news stories received more attention by the selected newspapers in their coverage of development issues in Nigeria. Lastly, it was discovered that majority of the stories were covered as national interest. Low coverage was given to human interest stories with a magnitude of only 21 (10.9%) by the four newspapers within the period under study. In conclusion the press should give adequate attention in the coverage of development news in the country, as well as provide human interest angle to stories in order to tackle the state of underdevelopment in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus based on the findings, the study recommends that the two newspapers should ensure that:

1. The coverage development news come from the human interest angle as this would make the government and other relevant bodies to know the current situation of the people.
2. Newspapers should make it a point of duty to update the public on the strategies and measures adopted by the government to handle development projects in the country.
3. Significance should be given to coverage of development news by the selected newspapers. Since story placement indicates story's importance, development news should be given front page coverage more often than the inside page placement.

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