NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF NIGERIA POLICE ACTIVITIES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study is a content analysis of newspaper coverage of police activities in Nigeria from January to March, 2012. Three national dailies (the Nation, the Punch and Daily Sun) were studied. Among
the specific objectives were to determine the volume of coverage of the activities of Nigeria Police by selected newspapers, the story types in which police activities are presented in the newspapers and direction of stories by the selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria Police. The research is structured on agenda –setting theory. Population of study is 273, while the sample is 162 within a period of 36 days. It was found out that the police activities during the period of study were presented mostly as straight news and the direction of stories were mostly negative. The study recommended, among others, that newspapers should give in-depth coverage of police activities in Nigeria and that positive aspect of police activities should also be given attention in the media.

Introduction

Communication is crucial to the development of any society. The mass media are central to the provision of relevant communication for nation building. The press can bring to public notice, issues that require attention with a view to mobilizing development efforts in that area.

Security is very vital in any nation of the world. The police make people to obey law and prevent crimes. Human and industrial growth cannot be achieved in the atmosphere of anarchy and disorder; hence the police are very important in any society.

The present Nigerian Police are deep in corruption; hence the public see the police with anger and disdain. As Agudosy (2006, p. 31) puts it, “The police need to restore confidence in the people with respect to their job of crime fighting”. Nigerians see the police as the most corrupt institution in the country. Nwosu (1990, p. 276) says that police brutality and unfriendliness are definitely the greatest contributors to the problem of lack of understanding between the police and the public. This has led citizens of the country to see the police with disdain and express reservations in employing the services of the police in distress situation (Agudosy, 2006).
The mass media are powerful tools in information dissemination. This includes disseminating the activities of the Nigeria Police. These activities are seen mostly on the pages of newspapers hence, it makes newspaper a powerful tool of mass communication.

There is a total system collapse in Nigeria with regards to security (Adegbamigbe, 2012). Training and re-training which should be the hallmark of police in Nigeria is no longer what it ought to be. The cardinal objectives of the police are arrests, crime prevention, investigations, maintaining order among others. In recent times, police is not performing up to expectation; hence crime is on the increase in Nigeria (Adegbamigbe, 2012).

The crux of this study is to ascertain the volume of coverage and direction of stories concerning the police by selected newspapers. This is to examine how newspapers through their coverage, are helping to reform the police by enlightening the public on activities of the police..

The Problem

No nation can thrive in the atmosphere of insecurity. The police are very important in ensuring security of lives and property. Hence, over years, the image of the police is on the decrease due to corruption, which makes members of the public to see the police with distrust.

The main function of the newspaper is to tell its readers what is happening in the world, including the country, the state, the town or city and the locality (Okunna, 1999, p. 52). Newspaper is an information carrier. People believe strongly in what they read because newspapers give the truthful comprehensive and intelligent account of the daily event in a context- which gives them meaning. Adegbamigbe (2012) affirms that there is a total system collapse in Nigeria police.

This research is aimed at ascertaining newspaper coverage of the police activities in the face of bad image and reputation of the police which makes the public see the police with anger and disdain. Can it
be said that the repulsive impression of the public about the Nigeria police is a reflection of newspaper reports on the police?

**Objective of the Study**

The basic objective of this study is to determine the newspaper coverage of police activities in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

1. The volume of coverage by the selected newspaper on the activities of Nigeria police.
2. The story types in which the Nigeria police activities are presented in the Newspapers.
3. The direction of stories by the selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police.
4. Whether newspapers give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.

**Research Questions**

1. What is the volume by selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police?
2. What are the story types in which police activities are presented in newspaper?
3. What is the direction of the stories by the selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police?
4. Did newspaper give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally?

**Research Hypothesis**

\[ H_0: \text{Newspapers do not give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.} \]
H<sub>1</sub>: Newspapers gives prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on agenda-setting theory of the media. This theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. Agbo (2003 p. 21) states that agenda setting theory has the power to determine what we are thinking about by pre-determining what issues are regarded as important in the society. Ngoa (2012, p. 22) writes that agenda setting theory hinges on the media capability to structure issues in peoples’ mind; in other words, people take as important issues the media consider to be so. Kuncizik (1988) in Agbo (2003, p. 32) says that the opportunity for agenda-setting by the mass media becomes enhanced when the value structure of a society is in a state of flux.

Treneman and McQuail in Ojobor (2002, p. 21), observe that agenda-setting theory makes people think about what are they are told but at no level do think what they are told. According to Agbo (2003, p. 31) the media achieve the tenets of agenda setting through:

- The quality /frequency of reporting
- Prominence given to the report
- The degree of conflict generated in the reports
- Cumulative media – specific over time.


The mass media can set agenda on activities of the Nigeria police force with a view to enlightening the public on performance of the police, areas of need and improvement.
Review of Related Literature

The Press and Agenda–Setting

According to Coleman et al (2009, p. 147) in Mustapha (2012, p. 106) agenda-setting is the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others. Newspaper and agenda-setting go hand in hand. Newspaper provides the public issues to be discussed through its publications. Lowery and Defleur (1995, p. 265) in Mustapha (2012, p. 106) supports that the mass media are still the significant sources of detailed information about what is going on for very large number of people.

McCombs and Shaw (1972 in Ngoa, 2012, p. 11) agree that the media has the capacity to raise the importance of an issue in public’s min. Newspapers may not exactly tell you what to think, but they may tell you what to think about. Police activities in Nigeria are not an exception. Its activities are reported through the pages of Newspapers. The impact of agenda-setting makes newspapers. The impact of agenda-setting makes people to attach importance to any issue on pages of newspaper about Nigeria Police.

The Overview of Nigeria Police and their Activities

The Nigeria Police was formed in 1930. At present, it has 371,800 officers. With its motto “the police is your friend, it is headed by Inspector- General of Police appointed by the President federal Republic of Nigeria on the recommendation of Police service commission.

The police service commission was established following the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The commission was charged with the policy formulation for the police, organization of the police, administration and finance of Nigeria police.
Alemika (2011) further highlighted the responsibilities of police service commission dismissing and exercising disciplinary control in the force, providing guidelines for appointment of officers and identifying factors inhibiting the operations of the force.

The major function of the Nigeria police is ensuring the internal security of the country. Alemika (2011) in stating the functions of Nigeria Police went down the memory lane by citing section 4 of the police Act (laws of the federation 1990), these functions include prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, maintaining law and order, and protection of life and property. Alemika (2011) insists that these functions listed above are the powers Nigeria police in enforcing the law.

Police activities are the day to day activities of the police. Hence, these activities are arrests, crime prevention, investigations and maintaining law and order. The police Act, criminal procedure Act and criminal procedure code granted the Nigeria police to take measures to prevent crime, the power to investigate crime, the power to interrogate suspects, prosecute suspects, search properties and persons in order to prevent crime. Others are to grant bail to suspects pending investigations or arraignment in court, to serve summons, to regulate processions and assembly (Alemika, 2011). The headquarters of Nigeria police is located in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

**Police Activities and Crime Reporting: An Overview**

Police activities are the day to day activities of the Nigeria police. Crime reporting cannot be detached from coverage of the police activities (Nworgu and Nwabueze, 2005, p. 107). This is because the police activities include arrests, crime prevention, investigations and maintaining law and order which is the crux of crime reporting.

Most media outfits do not have police as a special rather they have crime beat. Crime reporting consists of gathering and disseminating news about crime in the society (Nwabueze, 2009, p.360). The police are major source of crime stories. To further show this Iyida (1999, p.
3) in Nwabueze (2005, p. 38) described the police beat as the market place of crimes easily available to the reporters. What crime reporters always look up for are stories like rape, kidnapping, arrested armed robbers, fraud and violence against women and children.

Nworgu and Nwabueze (2005, p. 107) opine that activities could also include policy statements by police authorities on crime fighting, training and improvement of staff welfare, transfer of officers among others, Crime reporters should focus on crime stories alone.

However, Nwabueze (2009, p. 371) believes that crime could be country-specific or state –specific. In this context, what is crime in Northern part of Nigeria may not be a crime in Southern part of Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria where some states practice Sharia law, it is a crime to hug a woman or been seen drinking alcohol in an open place.

In learning the ropes of crime reporting, it is important also to be conversant with how to ensure successful coverage of police. Nworgu and Nwabueze (2005, p. 107) categorically state that most crime stories are police activities and if a reporter cannot distinguish a crime story from the day to day activities of the police, the journalist will not make a good reporter.

The Image of Nigeria Police

Image is a general impression that a person, an organization, a product etc gives to the public. The image of the Nigeria police is clothed in corruption. Hence, the public see the police with disdain, mistrust and anger.

Okonkwo cited in Nwosu (1990, p.276) said that the use of unnecessary violence in court by police, the unnecessary delay in attending to complaints by the police and corrupt and unfriendly attitudes of most policemen. Okonkwo indeed summarized the Nigeria police, an institution that has lacked mutual understanding between itself and Nigerians as a whole.
Abubakar (2012) in his address to the police said that image of the police is deep in corruption. Corruption means dishonesty act in giving or collecting money or any item to limit a person performing his legal duties. Illegalities thrive very well in Nigeria police because they compromised the very soul of their profession, Nigerians has lost even the slightest confidence in the ability of the police to do anything good. He reiterated that police brutality and unfriendliness contributes to this. According to him, police stations and state criminal investigation department have become business centers and collection points for all sorts of bribery.

Abubakar (2012) reinforces the fact that the special anti-robbery squad has become killer team, engaging in routine extra-judicial killings, even officers on the road engage in the killing of innocent citizens for one reason or the other. The Punch newspaper report has a story entitled “police have stolen my joy”. It is a story of a mother that lost her son to officers of Nigeria police. From the newspaper report, the victim refused to give the officers the usual N20 they collect from drivers.

This has made the public to view the Nigeria police with resentfulness, hence the image of Nigeria police bring anger to many. Investigation, which is the critical function of the police, is not carried out unless you pay money to the police. This has made so many to be arbitrarily detained in cells because they cannot afford the illegal bail money Abubakar (2012). The image of Nigeria police needs cleansing and this can be achieved through strict discipline of erring officers and other penalties.

The Method

The research method used in this study is content analysis. The manifest content of the selected newspapers concerning newspaper coverage of police activities in Nigeria was subjected to quantitative analysis.
Data were collected from newspapers published in the country from January 1 to March 31 2012. Data were gathered from the newspaper coverage of the issue under review through a sample selected based on the strength of mass media (newspaper) credibility.

The researcher covered the period of three months (January 1 to March 31, 2012) within the three months of the study, the researcher studied all issues relating to Nigeria police. The essence of studying three months publications of *The Nation*, *The Punch* and *Daily Sun* Newspapers is to determine the coverage of police activities bearing in mind the security challenges in Nigeria.

To study all issues relating to police in Nigeria by all the national dailies is impracticable. Hence, a practical route was to select a representation sample of the population. Newspapers selected were *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Daily Sun*. The choice of selection is because these newspapers were daily and circulated in Nigeria.

The total population of newspapers studied is 273. In each of the newspapers, three were selected for study in a week. Twelve days were studied in a month for each of the newspaper. 108 is the number of days the study was carried out. In summary, a total number of 273 newspapers were studied in 36 days.

Systematic sampling was used in selecting days that were studied. Rather than studying all the days of the week, three days were selected for each week. The days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Also, since the period of study was 36 days, each of the three selected newspapers, we have a total population of 273 within the period of study.

The sampling size was determined using Taro Yamani’s formula thus:

\[
S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}
\]

Where \(S\) = Sample size
N= Population figure
I = Constant
\( e = \) Error margin (0.05)
Therefore, the sample size is 162.

**Units of Analysis**

The following units of analysis were employed in this research to help guide coding of the selected newspaper.

1. **Volume of coverage:** This is the amount of reporting police activities
2. **Story direction:** It is the point that a story is going concerning police activities.
3. **Story placement/prominence:** it implies where stories on police activities are placed and the importance attached to it.
4. **Story type:** This refers to the class of story that police activities gets in the selected newspapers.

Major instruments used in coding system are the coding guide and coding sheet. Coding guide helps in developing the coding sheet and the number of content categories used in the study. Items in this study were coded as *The Punch* 01, *Daily Sun* 02, *The Nation* 03 and *Straight news* 04

**Content Categories**

These are the groups or categories of content, a researcher is to look out for or use in the study. They can be called the units of observation. They are straight news report, picture stories, feature stories, cartoons/illustrations, letter –to-the-editor and columns.

**Inter-Coder Reliability**

Two coders were carefully used for this study. The training made use of coding guide, which was prepared to identify coding content, rules
of coding. After the training, a pilot study was done to clarify inter-coder reliability. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000, p. 159) “the inter-coder reliability is calculated using a co-efficient or reliability formula based on the ratio of coding agreement to the number of coding decision” The formula is

\[
\text{Reliability} = \frac{2m}{N_1 + N_2}
\]

Where \( m \) = number of coding decision the code agree.

\( N_1 + N_2 \) = total number of coding decision by the first and second respectively.

Therefore:

\[
\frac{2(10)}{13+13} = \frac{20}{26} = 0.76
\]

So, each of the coders identified and categorized 13 themes, but they agreed on only 10 themes.

**Findings**

**Answer to Research Questions**

1. What is the volume of coverage by selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police?
Table 1: Volume of coverage by selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria Police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Volume of coverage</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>The Punch</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>14 (14)</td>
<td>15 (11)</td>
<td>21 (15)</td>
<td>50 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Features</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
<td>6 (4)</td>
<td>11 (8)</td>
<td>26 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Straight News</td>
<td>62 (62)</td>
<td>84 (60)</td>
<td>74 (53)</td>
<td>220 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>6 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>6 (4)</td>
<td>9 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>12 (9)</td>
<td>22 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Letters to Editor</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>13 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Picture Stories</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>19 (14)</td>
<td>11 (8)</td>
<td>30 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>BACK page</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 (100)</td>
<td>140 (100)</td>
<td>139 (100)</td>
<td>379 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content Analysis, 2012
(Values in parenthesis are percentages)

The table 1 above shows that straight news stories 200(58%) had the greatest volume on police activities in Nigeria followed by front page stories 50(13%). The least treated is the back page, which had 3(1%) by the selected newspapers.

On individual issue, the front page of The Nation had 14 (14%), Daily Sun 21 (15%) and The Punch 15 (11%). Features had 10(10%) in The Nation while Daily Sun had 11(8%) and The Punch 6 (44%). Straight news in The Nation had 62(63%), Daily Sun 74(53%) and The Nation, 2 (1%) in Daily Sun and 3(2%) in The Punch. Letter-to-editor had 2 (2%) in The Nation, 1(1%) in Daily Sun and 3(2%) in The Nation, 6 (4%) in Daily Sun and none in The Punch. Columns had 7(7%) in The Nation, 12 (9%) in Daily Sun and 3 (2%) in The Punch. Letter –t-editor had 2(2%) in The Nation, 1 (1%) in Daily Sun and 10(7%) in The Punch newspaper. No picture stories in The Nation, while Daily
Sun had 11 (8%) and The Punch 19(14%). Back page in The Nation had 1(1%), Daily Sun 2(1%) and none in The Punch newspaper.

Table 2: The story in which Nigeria Police activities are presented in newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Story types</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>The Punch</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Straight News</td>
<td>62(65)</td>
<td>84(68)</td>
<td>72(63)</td>
<td>218(65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Features</td>
<td>9(9)</td>
<td>6(5)</td>
<td>11(10)</td>
<td>26(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>3(2)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>6(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Letter-to-editor</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>10(8)</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>13(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>3(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6(5)</td>
<td>9(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Picture Stories</td>
<td>11(2)</td>
<td>19(15)</td>
<td>11(9)</td>
<td>41(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>8(8)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>12(10)</td>
<td>22(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100(100)</td>
<td>140(100)</td>
<td>139(100)</td>
<td>379(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Content Analysis, 22012
(Values in parenthesis are percentages)

The table 2 above shows that straight news stories 218 (65%) is the highest in story types of police activities in Nigeria, followed by picture stories 41 (12%) and the least which is editorials 6(2%)

On individual issues, The Nation news stories had 62 (65%), while Daily Sun had 72(63%) and The Punch 884(68%). Feature stories of The Nation had 9(9%), Daily Sun 11 (10%) and 6 (5%) in The Punch. Editorial of The Nation has 1(1%), 2(2%) from Daily Sun and 3(2%) from The Punch. Columns had 8(8%) from The Nation, 12 (10%) from Daily Sun and 2 (2%) from The Punch. Letter-to-editor of The Nation had 2(2%), 1 (1%) from Daily Sun and 10(8%0 from The Punch. The Nation newspaper had 3 (3%) cartoons; Daily Sun 6 (5%) and The Punch none. Picture stories of The Nation had 11(12%), 11(95) from Daily Sun and 19(15%) from The Punch.
Table 3: The direction of Stories y thee selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
<th>The Punch</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>38(33)</td>
<td>38(33)</td>
<td>25(23)</td>
<td>97(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>40(35)</td>
<td>29(28)</td>
<td>43(39)</td>
<td>112(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>37(32)</td>
<td>40(39)</td>
<td>42(38)</td>
<td>119(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115(100)</td>
<td>103(100)</td>
<td>110(100)</td>
<td>328(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content analysis, 2012
(Values in parenthesis are percentages)

The direction of stories from the table shows that neutral stories had 119 (36%) while positive stories had the least 97(30%). However, individual issues from The Nation newspaper had 38(33%) as positive stories, 40(35%) as negative stories and 37(32%) as neutral stories. Daily Sun had 34 (33%) as positive stories, 29(28%) as negative stories and 40(39%) as neutral stories. The Punch newspaper had 25 (23%) as positive stories, 43(39%) as negative stories and 42(38%) as neutral stories.

Table 4: On whether newspapers give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
<th>The Punch</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>14(18)</td>
<td>21(22)</td>
<td>15(15)</td>
<td>50(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Inside page</td>
<td>62(81)</td>
<td>74(76)</td>
<td>84(85)</td>
<td>220(81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>22(2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77(100)</td>
<td>97(100)</td>
<td>99(100)</td>
<td>273(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content analysis, 2012
(Values in parenthesis are percentages)
The table above shows that inside page stories had 220 (81%) on prominence of police activities in Nigeria, followed by front page 50 (18%) and the least the back page 3 (1%). On individual basis, *The Nation* had 14 (18%) of front page stories while the inside page had 62 (81%) and back page 1 (1%). *Daily Sun* had 21 (22%) of front page, 74 (76%) of inside page and 2 (2.5%) of back page. *The Punch* had 15 (15%) of front page, 84 (85%) of inside page and none at the back page.

**Test of Hypothesis**

H₀: Newspapers do not give prominence to police activities in Nigeria.

H₁: Newspapers give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>x²</th>
<th>x²₁</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>5.991</td>
<td>Null hypothesis accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside page</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesis not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision Rule**

The decision rule state null the hypothesis (H₀) should be rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₁) accepted if the calculated value of chi-square is greater than table value of chi-square.

However, based on the decision rule, alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis accepted. The null hypothesis states that newspapers do not give prominence to police Nigeria.

**Discussion**

The aim of this study was to determine the extent to which newspapers covered police activities in Nigeria, the volume of coverage by the selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria
police, the story types in which the Nigeria police activities are presented in the newspaper, the direction of stories by the selected newspapers on the activities of Nigeria police and determine whether newspapers give prominence to police activities in Nigeria generally.

The volume of coverage on the activities of Nigeria police by the selected newspapers was commendable. All stories under the volume of coverage got attention in the selected newspapers. Hence the view of Griffin (1991) in Ngoa (2002, p.2) suggests that it is possible, that media coverage is simply a reflection of public concern that already exist.

Story types on the activities of Nigeria police in the newspapers were presented as straight news, features, editorials, columns, letter-to-editor, cartoons and pictures stories. Straight news had more stories than other story types.

Nwabueze (2009, p. 32) affirms that unlike the feature story, straight news reports do not contain interpretations, forecast or any information outside what has happened, the way it happened, expect the views of people interviewed in the course of gathering facts for the story. Feature stories on the activities of Nigeria police were not many on the selected newspapers. Feature stories are in depth and well researched. Nwanze (1999, p. 48) in Ofor and Obiorah (2012,p. 41) states that feature stories extended the horizon of news through explanation and other attractions that might have slipped the thoughts and pens of reporters. Feature stories contain background information and news behind news. Editorials on the activities of Nigeria police by the newspaper were few. Ossai (2002, p. 221) in Offor and Obiorah (2012, p. 46), insists that editorial is critical interpretation or an evaluation of significant usual contemporary events so that the publications typical readers will be informed, educated, influenced and persuaded.

Columns in the selected newspapers about Nigeria police were not many. Columns are written by persons who are not working within a newspaper organization. The implication of few columns means that
columnists are not bother on the present situation of Nigeria police that needs collective efforts to revamp. Ofor and Obiorah (2012, p. 140) in affirming the critical role of columns said that columns offer the readership with independent and knowledgeable perspectives to issues, especially where the columnist is coming from outside the organization.

Letters- to- the editors are powerful means of attracting attention to any topical issue especially the Nigeria police. Hence Fradley (1976, pp.12-13) in Ofor and Obiorah (2012,p. 165) puts it that letters that the public send to newspaper houses provide assurances to the readers that one small voice in the wilderness can get into print. This makes it a weapon in the hands of readers in contributing to solutions as regards Nigeria police.

The number of cartoons in the selected newspapers was not many as no cartoon was found in the punch newspapers as it regards Nigeria police. Cartoons are avenue for passing across serious message and when property used helps to correct societal ills or corruption as found in Nigeria police. Nwodu (2008, p. 25-26) in Ofor and Obiorah (2012, p. 173) is of the view that cartoon goes beyond mere stimulation of humors to entertaining and educating or better still, enlightening the audience as well as passing comments about individuals, events or state of affairs. Pictures speak more than words. Hence, photographs help to spice up a story. Nwabueze (2012, p. 150) states that photographs helps in investigation. Caution must be taken in using photographs because technology has made it possible to manipulate photographs using Photoshop.

Direction of stories about Nigeria police were classified as positive, negative and neutral stories. Neutral stories cannot be used to ascertain the true state of Nigeria police. Hence, there were more negative stories than positive stories.

Although most stories on Nigeria police were inside page stories, newspapers gave prominence to police activities as regards volume of coverage. This shows the reason why McCombs and Shaw (1972) in
Ngoa (2012, p. 5) insist that for newspapers the emphasis was on front page lead or headline stories, a three-column stories on an inside page and lead editorial taken as evidence of significant spotlight on an issue.

**Conclusion**

This research work examined how the selected newspaper covered police activities in Nigeria. It is a content analysis of three privately owned newspapers, The Punch, The Nation and Daily Sun in the coverage of police activities in Nigeria and it yielded the following conclusions that most stories about the Nigeria police were presented as straight news stories, there were more negative stories about the police by the three selected newspapers.

**Recommendations**

From the research findings, the following recommendations were, therefore, made:

1. The media and other stakeholders in security operations should realize that it is good to focus attention on the police as unsecured nation or country drives away investment.

2. With the rising security challenges facing Nigeria, the press should engage in developmental journalism to alert government on the need to rescue the Nigeria police.

3. Seminars, conferences and stake holders’ forum of international standard should be organized to save the Nigeria police from total collapse. Experts from advanced countries should also be invited to provide solution on how to manage our security outfit. Resolutions from such seminars and conference should be made known by the media to the police and government authorities.

4. The media should bright the gap between the police and the public through its stories about the Nigeria as this will help to gradually regain the lost confidence on the police.
References


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