REPORTAGE OF ENDSARS PROTEST IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE *PUNCH*, THE *GUARDIAN*, THE *NATION* AND *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the frequency, depth and slants/tone of stories in some selected newspapers in the coverage of EndSars protest against police brutality in Nigeria. Agenda Setting was used to explain the study. Content analysis method was used to implement the study. Findings indicated that, in terms of Frequency of coverage, The Nation newspaper reported more EndSars protests than The Punch, The Guardian, and Vanguard, having 28% from the total population while The Punch and The Guardian recorded 26% and 24% respectively; and Vanguard recorded 22%. Furthermore, depth of story indicated that the selected newspapers reported features adequately across the columns, that is, Single Column, Double Columns and Multiple Columns with 34%, 35% and 31% respectively. Slant/tone of story indicated that Negative stories about the protest were highly reported in the four newspapers, having 73% of the population than Neutral and positive stories with 15% and 12% respectively in the period under review. This study concluded that the selected newspapers focus substantial attention on the coverage of the protest. Therefore, this study recommended that policemen and women should be thoroughly screened and trained through workshops and seminars for sound orientation.Governance and the justice system should also be reformed while member of the public should learn to cooperate with police in order to promote an overall individual, community and national security.

Keywords: EndSars, Newspaper, Coverage, Protest, Police Brutality

Introduction

The state of insecurity in Nigeria is made obvious by the alarming trend of anti-social acts prevalent in the nation which in the not-so-distant past, were unthinkable and could not be associated with the country (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013). Generally, the Police are charged with very many difficult duties which relate mainly to the maintenance of law and order and the security of the State. These responsibilities are forced on them by law, and failure to fulfill them is a crime. In general, these responsibilities include preventing and detecting crimes, apprehending criminals, maintaining peace and order, protecting property, and enforcing all laws and regulations with which they are directly responsible. Other responsibilities of the Police include traffic management, procession control, quelling disturbances, assisting in the recovery of lost items, and assisting in the search for missing persons both within and outside Nigeria (Gambo, 2008).

In 2017, the hashtag '#EndSARs#' was first used on Twitter. Following that, the hashtag evolved into a well-known social movement in Nigeria. The social campaign gained traction after a video of SARs officers shooting a young man in a white SUV and seizing his car, leaving him dead on the road, went viral. SARS has been accused of misusing their position and victimising citizens, according to social media reports. The young and wealthy with iPhones, computers, and personal cars as well as those who were well dressed and possessed expensive items were the prime targets. People's rights were violated, and their privacy was invaded.

SARS also violated taxpayer privacy by monitoring people's phones without their permission. The majority of individuals fear being harassed and victimized on a regular basis, or perhaps being shot. Despite the government's repeated attempts to correct the SARS policy by disbanding and recognizing the unit while also adopting regulations to curb inhumane actions and police violence, the units' torturing of citizens continues. The #EndSARs# protests in Nigeria were spearheaded entirely by Nigerian youngsters, with no formal leadership structure or mentoring, and were fueled entirely by social media. In Nigeria, October 20, 2020, will be remembered as "Black Tuesday." The sound of gunshots rang out in the darkness, broken only by the blue light of cell phone screens, as the army and police allegedly fired into a crowd of young people gathered at Lagos's Lekki toll gate to protest the now-disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a notoriously abusive arm of the police. The shooting in Lekki came after more than two weeks of anti-police violence protests in Nigeria. The hashtag #EndSARS began trending (again) on social media on October 4, 2020. A video of a SARS officer shooting a young motorist in Ughelli, Delta State, then pulling his body out of the car and driving away with the dead man's Lexus SUV was the immediate cause. Crowds of young people gathered in Nigerian cities within days to demand that SARS be abolished. The protests follow prior activism and government announcements in 2014, 2015, and 2017 that SARS will be demobilized. Despite this, SARS operatives continued to act with impunity, carrying out armed robberies, rapes, various forms of torture, and extrajudicial killings such as the one in question in Delta State.

Torture is one of the most extreme kinds of violence that can have both psychological and physical ramifications. Nonetheless, it is sometimes regarded as a necessary interrogation tool for acquiring strategic intelligence (Costanzo, 2009). However, the use of excessive torture or force by law enforcement officials, particularly the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), on criminal

suspects has resulted in police brutality in Nigeria, which has been so widespread and detrimental to human life, property, and rights (Aborisade & Fayemi, 2015). The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) is a unit of the Nigerian Police Force created in 1922 under the Military Administration of Ibrahim Babangida to combat an epidemic of violent crime including robberies, carjackings and kidnappings in the Nigerian societies (Amnesty International, 2014). The unit (SARS) is commanded by the Inspector General of Police. However, the purpose for the creation of the unit metamorphosed over time into gross violation of human right such as violation of human right surfaces in various dimensions such as arbitrary arrest, torture, extortion, harassments, exploitation, oppression, extrajudicial killings, etc. While it was credited with having reduced brazen lawlessness in its initial years, the police unit was later accused of becoming a criminal enterprise that acts with impunity.SARS officers were rarely held accountable for their behavior. According to the reports of Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) in 2010, extrajudicial murder is a feature of the Nigerian Police Force. Between the year 2000 and 2007, the report of Human Right Watch estimated that 10,000 humans were murdered by the Nigerian police. Amnesty International corroborated the aforementioned reports by documenting several cases of torture under the detention of SARS.

In 2017, a social media campaign with the hashtag #EndSARS was launched. Hundreds of Nigerians used the hashtag to document abuses by SARS officers and demand the end of impunity for those human rights violations. Social media presented protesters with a chance, which does not exist in conventional media. Social media have essential advantages when they are used effectively to mobilize people to participate in a protest. Facebook for example creates connection between and among friends while Twitter to a great extent allows its users to comment about a subject. McClurg (2003) observed that the potential of social media lies mainly in their support of civil society and public sphere, change measured in years and decades rather than weeks or months. Civil society has a chance for expression in the social media. When issues that are likely to cause argument or disagreement occur, like that of the #EndSARS, people have different expectations.

However, in response to the gross violation of human rights by SARS, awareness began as early as 2018 for the disbandment of SARS. In reaction, the government disbanded or restructured the unit in 2017, 2018 and 2020 without any meaningful result (Human Right Watch, 2021). The last straw that broke the camel's back was in October 2020 with the gruesome shooting of a boy at Wetland Hotel in

Ughelli, Delta State by SARS personnel which appeared on social media. This incident generated a wide public outcry with the trope #EndSARS. Thus, celebrities and their fans, activists, social campaigners, etc. canvased supports on social media (especially Twitter and Instagram) demanding the immediate and unconditional disbandment of SARS. In achieving this, they began with a peaceful protest on the street of Lagos, Abuja, Rivers, Benin, etc. which later spread to other parts of the country.

The protest forced the government to swiftly replace SARS with Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) which further provoked and exacerbate the protests. What began as a peaceful protest was later highjacked by hoodlums which transcended into violent protests, vandalisation of public and private properties, attacks on security personnel among other illicit activities. The Federal Government was left with no other alternative than to quench the situation with force. It is germane to note that #EndSARS protests concealed other demands, that is, End Bad Governance (Uwazuruike, 2021).

However, the press in its function as the fourth estate of the realm is socially responsible for sensitizing the masses to the current news in the society together with its watchdog roles to the society. These roles of course often involve but not limited to digging out facts behind perpetration of crime and corruption in the political arena. The press also investigates corporate wrongdoing like the police brutality that ended up with the public #EndSARS protest in Nigeria which is of great importance to readers, viewers or listeners meaning that the press is vested with the duties involving digging deeply into an issue or topic usually of public interest (Ansell, Serino, Djokotoe, & Mwaba, 2002).

Hence, the crux of this study is to ascertain the frequency of coverage, depth of the reports and the slant/tone of the EndSars protest reported by *Punch, The Guardian, The Nation* and *Vanguard* Newspapers in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To examine the frequency of coverage of EndSars protest by *The Punch, Vanguard, The Nation* and *The Guardian* newspapers in Nigeria.
2. To examine the depth of the reports that the selected newspapers published or disseminated to the public about EndSars protest.
3. To examine the slant/tone of the EndSars protest reported by the selected newspapers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Communication is essential for any society's development. The mass media play a critical role in providing timely and relevant information for nation-building. The press can bring to the public's attention issues that need to be addressed in order to mobilise development efforts in that area. The media is a significant tool for disseminating information. This includes sharing information about the Nigeria Police Force's activities. Because these activities are largely seen on the pages of newspapers, newspapers are a significant medium for public communication (Ukonu, 2006).

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. Nwosu (1990) 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). In efforts to enhance accountability and democracy within the Nigerian state, the watchdog role of the press does not exclude the coverage of dealings and activities going on within the Nigeria Police force and, more importantly, the EndSARS protest staged by the Nigerian youth was another leverage for the Nigerian press to unearth the corrupt and brutality system in the Police.

Nkwachukwu did a study titled Framing the #Occupy Nigeria Protests in Newspapers and Social Media (2015). This study looked into the frameworks used by the old and new media during the #OccupyNigeria protest. The three collective action frame construction tasks premised by the framing theory: motivation, diagnosis, and prognosis were applied in the content analysis of the samples. National newspapers featured the *Nigerian Tribune, Guardian,* and *Punch*, while social media examples included an Occupy Nigeria Facebook page, blog entries, Nairaland, and Twitter. According to the data, newspapers performed better than social media in describing the protest's purpose, diagnosis, and prognosis. It also revealed that the newspapers provided a more diverse account of the demonstration. According to the analysis, newspapers contribute more to the #OccupyNigeriaProtests conversation than social media.

However, Maradun, Yar'Adua and Msughter (2021) conducted a study on 'Perceived Value of Social Media in the #EndSARS' Protest in Nigeria'. The

study examined the perceived value of social media in the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. It analysed the kinds of messages that were posted on social media and the reactions to various turn of events in the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. Survey and interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to generate data. The study employed The Public Sphere Theory and Technological Determinism Theory. 389 questionnaires were shared among the #EndSARS protesters in Nigeria, while in-depth interview was conducted with five special advisers to the governor on social media in five mostly affected states. Lack of exhaustive list of the protesters allowed the study to use convenient sampling in generating quantitative data and purposive sampling in selecting the respondents for the interpretative phenomenological analysis. The study discovered that the use of media in mobilisation for protest actions has become a necessity in every social movement and that the use of social media has been very influential in attaining this cause. The study also discovered that a majority of the protesters fall within the age bracket of 25-35. The study found that the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria was triggered as a result of several factors like unfavourable government policies. The study discovered that people who involve in the protest in Nigeria are mostly male. The study also discovered that the social media are good platforms where people stage protest on issues affecting them. The findings of the study revealed that social media is an interactive medium where people come together to discuss issues. The study concludes that with the increasing use of social media in Nigeria, the citizens would continue to put pressure on government to address public issues. The study recommends that civil society groups in the country need to sensitize their followers on the usage of social media for effective participatory governance

Frequency in the Coverage of Current Events

Events that happen quickly and fit well with the news organization's schedule are more likely to be reported than those that happen gradually or at inconvenient times of the day or night (Aina, 2003). A murder, for example, that occurs at the same or similar frequency as the news medium is more likely to be chosen as news than a social trend that occurs over a lengthy period of time. News values are one of the most enigmatic meaning systems in modern culture.

It is said to be possessed by all 'real journalists,' yet few can or are able to recognise or define it. Journalists use the term "news" as though events choose themselves. Furthermore, they speak as if the 'most important' news item and the most important 'news perspectives' are divinely inspired. However, only a small percentage of the millions of events that occur every day throughout the world

ever become apparent as 'possible news stories,' and only a small piece of this proportion is ultimately created as the day's news in the news media. We appear to be dealing with a 'deep structure,' whose function as a selection mechanism is opaque even to those who know how to use it professionally (Hall, 1973).

The Depth of Stories in the Coverage of Current Events

In-depth assessments try to expose and explain in full a specific problem, issue, or occurrence that has significant local and/or international ramifications. They do not include the author's personal opinions (Balkan Insight, 2006). They do not deal with a single occurrence or problem, but rather a group, pattern, or sequence of them. In-depth analyses explain in detail how various issues or problems interact, assess whether additional difficulties or consequences arise as a result, and try to suggest viable answers and forecast future changes by taking a broader viewpoint in terms of thematic, geographical, and temporal scope. In-depth analysis, as a genre, is considerably more akin to an investigation than news analysis.

Shorter texts that attempt to show what is underlying a particular occurrence are known as news analyses. Some scholars say that the phrase is superfluous because all reporting is investigative in character, and that it is perceived as semantic deception intended to elevate in-depth reporting.

Specific messages, as well as the overall volume of articles, can be used to determine the depth of coverage (Michealson & Griffin, 2005). The depth of news coverage of events in newspapers is measured in columns. Newspapers' most comprehensive coverage and reporting of issues is written and delivered in numerous columns. Double-column news reports are thought to be more in-depth than single-column news stories. This indicates that the more columns used to communicate stories to the public, the more in-depth the problem is covered in newspaper pages.

According to Sambe and Akpede (2007), in-depth reporting includes uncovering what is being hidden, revealing what is being hidden, and nailing down lies that have been told. It can be both reporting on hidden facts and uncovering what someone wants to keep hidden. While some journalists contend that in-depth and interpretative reporting are interchangeable, others argue that in-depth reporting provides more than surface meanings without the need for interpretation. Additional details are included in the in-depth account to assist in setting an event

in context, but the depth reporter does not explain the ultimate meaning of the facts he presents.
According to Itule and Anderson (2000), an in-depth analysis - based on lengthy study and interviews - provides a narrative that goes much beyond the typical news article. In-depth report on the news also provides detailed information that helps people live lives that are more joyful, safer, profitable, or well-informed. As a result, in-depth reporting is simply thorough and accurate news reporting, as well as back grounding treatment.

Slant/Tone in the coverage of current issues
Slanting is a technique in which media outlets purposefully select details that are favourable or unfavourable to the subject being discussed (Hayakawa, 1940). Domestic newspapers frequently tilt left or right on the political spectrum, and regional media favourably report on local businesses. Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005) argue that even if all publications tilt an attentive reader can still learn a lot about the truth by comparing news from several sources.

Slant in the media can occur for at least three causes. First, media slant might represent journalistic, editorial, or media owner preferences (Baron, 2006; Besley & Prat, 2006; Djankov, McLiesh, Nenova & Shleifer, 2003). Second, media bias can emerge from positive coverage of corporations that advertise in print media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Ellman & Germano, 2009). Third, media tilt might result from a profit-maximising decision by the news source to accommodate to the readers' preferences or prior convictions (Mullainathan & Shleifer, 2005; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2006). However, editors or journalists may have certain views that they deliberately or subconsciously incorporate in the news. Similarly, media owners may attempt to stir news reporting in the direction of their beliefs. These effects are likely stronger in the political sphere, but they may also be present in reporting about companies that are vital for the national economy.

Prime Research (2014) employs native speakers to code and assign tone to news published in different countries and languages. The unit of observations is a segment of an article. A segment is a title, subtitle or a paragraph of an article. The tone is assigned for segments that contain value judgments and is determined on the 9-point scale from minus four (most negative) to plus four (most positive). For facts that contain no value judgment, tone is not assigned. Coders undergo rigorous training to guarantee the quality and comparability of the coding procedures across newspapers, countries and languages.

Besides the tone, the main variable of interest, the date and the name of the newspaper, the data include many other variables that we use in our analysis. These variables include: the visibility of a segment/paragraph, whether segment is about the product or the company, the general topic of the segment, whether a segment references experts, financial institutions, or public entities, whether news is about the past, present or future event, whether the article includes photos, the name of the coder, and the name of the journalist. Visibility of a segment is based on the overall reach of the newspaper, location of the article within the newspaper, and the number of paragraphs within the article.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is anchored in the Agenda Setting theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw in (1972).The theory proposes that the public agenda or what kind of things people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize. The notion of agenda setting can be traced back to Lippmann (1992), who suggests that the media were responsible for the picture in our heads. Lippman reinforced this notion, by observing that the media pay attention to certain issues; they are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals should think and have feelings about. Folarin (1998) posits that agenda setting involved elements such as the quantity or frequency of reporting, prominence given to the reports through headlines display, pictures and layouts in newspapers, magazines, films, graphics or timing on radio and television, the degree of conflicts generated in the reports and cumulative media specific effects over time.

Agenda setting theory is relevant to the study because the theory describes a powerful influence of the media's ability to tell us what issues are important. The media was able to set agenda during the #EndSARS protest by sensitizing the public to the brutality in the police force and creating public awareness and concern on salient issues raised by the protesters in *The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspaper.

METHODOLODY

Research design is the basic plan that guides data collection and the analysis phase of the research work. Therefore, this study adopted a quantitative approach. Content analysis method was used to analyse how Nigeria newspapers framed/depicted #ENDSARS protest against police brutality. Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. The use of content analysis for the

selected newspapers helps to evaluate the dominant news tactics used in reporting EndSars protest in Nigeria.
Four newspapers (*The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation and Vanguard*) were purposively selected because of high readership and influence in setting the tone for reporting the EndSars protest. By having high circulation rate, these newspapers are highly likely to include broader coverage of the protest. Moreover, the newspapers present views from both popular and elite Nigerian publics.

The population of the coverage of EndSars protest by *The Punch, The Guardian* and *The Nation* newspapers is all the editions September and November, 2020. Moreso, the sample size which refers to the total number of responses covers a total of 364 selected through purposive sampling method. These editions cut across newspaper articles (inner page), headlines (front and back page) and editorials between September 2, 2020 and November 30, 2020.

Categories/Unit of Analysis
The following content categories were employed in this study: slant/tone and depth of coverage of various police brutality crises that eventually led to EndSars protest.

Depth of Reportage
In journalism the depth of news coverage could either be measured in pages or half pages in magazines; and in columns in newspapers. News stories in multiple columns were regarded as most profoundly covered. This was followed by news written and communicated in double columns. News that was communicated in single column was ranked the least covered/reported. Many of the stated elements or criteria for measuring depth of coverage of issues are highly subjective and usually are not tied to outcomes(Michealson & Griffin, 2005**)**. Unit of analysis under depth of coverage/reportage for this study are: single column, double columns and multiple columns.

Slant/Tone of Reportage
The tone variable determines whether a story's tone is designed in such a way that quotes, assertions, or implication are used to generate good, neutral, or negative coverage for the primary character as it relates to the story's problem. When reading or listening to a story, coders captured all the remarks that had a negative or positive tone to the reporting. All quotes, both direct and indirect, as well as assertions made by journalists themselves, were counted. To be classified

"positive" or "negative," a story must have 1.5 times the number of positive comments to negative comments, or 1.5 times the number of negative comments to positive comments.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency of Coverage of ENDSARS by the Selected Newspapers

Publication	Total	Percentage %
The Punch	93	26%
The Guardian	86	24%
The Nation	103	28%
Vanguard	82	22%
Total	364	100

Table 1 indicates a total of 364 news on EndSars protest on the pages of the selected newspapers, that is, 103 news were analysed in *The Nation* with 28%; 93 news were analysed in *The Punch* newspaper, which represent 26%, while 86 news were analysed in *The Guardian* newspaper, representing 24%; 82 news frames were analysed in *Vanguard* newspaper, representing 22%. These news items cut across the selected newspapers headlines (front and back page) and contents {straight news, editorial, opinion, interview feature articles, and advertorial}, that is, 364 editions: (91 in each) of the newspapers between September 1st to November 30th, 2020. This means that the selected newspapers sufficiently gave attention to and covered ENDSARS protest. Therefore, EndSARS news items were treated as a matter of urgent national interest by the selected media.

Table 2: Depth of Coverage of EndSARS Protest by the Selected Newspapers

Columns	The Punch	The Guardian	The Nation	Vanguard	Total	Percentage (%)
Single Column	28	27	45	23	123	34%
Double Column	38	26	32	32	128	35%
Multiple Column	27	33	26	27	113	31%
Total	93	86	103	82	364	100%

Table 2 shows that the selected newspapers (*ThePunch, The Guardian, The Nation* and *Vanguard*) published a total of one hundred and twenty-eight (128) double columns reports representing thirty-five (35%). It also shows that a total number of one hundred and twenty-three (123) single column news stories were published in the period under review representing thirty-four (34%) while one hundred and thirteen (113) multiple columns news stories were published representing thirty-one (31%). The findings show that the report occurred more in double columns in the newspapers in the period under review. Also, for selected newspapers to have employed multiple columns (31%) to report ENDSARS protest within the short period of September to November 2020 is an indication that the press is committed to security and welfare of Nigerians and deeply covered ENDSARS protest. The most profound coverage and reportage of issues by newspapers are written and communicated in multiple columns. News stories written in double columns are regarded as more profoundly reported than other news stories written in single column. This means that the more the columns employed in communicating stories to the public, the deeper the reportage of the issue in the pages of newspapers.

Table 3: Slant/Tone of EndSARS Protest Coverage by the Selected Newspapers

Position	**The Punch**	**The Guardian**	**The Nation**	**Vanguard**	**Total**	**Percentage**
Positive	18	7	7	13	45	12%
Negative	63	68	76	60	267	73%
Neutral	12	11	20	9	52	15
Total	**93**	**86**	**103**	**82**	**364**	**100%**

Table 3 demonstrates that two hundred and sixty-seven (267) reports are unfavourable, accounting for (73%) of all reports. In the period under examination, a total of fifty-two (52) reports or fifteen (15%) are neutral. A total of forty-five (45) reports or twelve (12%) percent of EndSars protests against police brutality were reported as favourable or favourable reports in the selected publications. This suggests that the EndSARS protest received a lot of unfavourable news reports.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the frequency of the *Punch*, *The Guardian, The Nation*, and *Vanguard* newspapers in the coverage of EndSars protest against police brutality

indicate high prominence for the protest reportage through the *Nation* newspaper, which represent 28%, *The Punch* (26%), *The Guardian* (24%), and *Vanguard* newspaper with 22%.

This agreed with Ukonu (2006) that 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. Also, reports in the selected newspapers according to depth of story showed that percentage of single and double columns reports in *The Nation* newspaper is more than that of The *Guardian, Vanguard* and *The Punch* newspapers putting into consideration the total number of all stories reported by the selected newspapers; However, *The Nation* newspaper reported more multiple columns stories than *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* newspapers in the period under review. Therefore, with these results, the study concludes that the selected newspapers (*The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation* and *Vanguard*) did very well in the reportage of the EndSars protest against police brutality in Nigeria in terms of column dedication.

These findings agree with Ansell et al. (2002)'s assertion that the press's function is not limited to uncovering facts behind political crime and corruption, but that the press also investigates corporate wrongdoing, such as police brutality that resulted in the public #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, which is equally important to readers, viewers, or listeners. Findings indicated that the selected newspapers published a total of one hundred and twenty-eight (128) double columns reports representing thirty-five (35%). It also discovered that one hundred and thirteen (113) multiple columns news stories were published representing thirty-one (31%). These findings agree with Michealson and Griffin's (2005) study. Specific messages as well as the overall volume of articles can be used to determine the depth of coverage. The depth of news coverage of events in newspapers is measured in columns. Newspapers' most comprehensive coverage and reporting of issues is written and delivered in numerous columns. Double-column news reports are thought to be more in-depth than single-column news stories. This indicates that the more columns used to communicate stories to the public, the more in-depth the problem is covered in newspaper pages.

To cap it all, the slant/tone of article in the selected newspapers revealed that all four publications reported adversely or unfavourably to the public about police violence during the #EndSARS demonstration, with an aggregate of 267 (267) reports representing 73%. As a result, the study agrees with Aborisade and

Fayemi (2015) that the use of excessive torture or use of force by law enforcement agents on criminal suspects, particularly the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), has resulted in Police brutality in Nigeria, which has been so widespread and damaging to human life, property, and rights.

Recommendations

The study found that the press played an appropriate and efficient role in covering and reporting the #EndSars protest. As a result, the study suggests that:

1. The democratisation of Nigeria's political system and economy must be hastened. This is the only way to ensure that the country's police are effective, efficient, civil and courteous, accountable, well-equipped, and sufficiently compensated and motivated.
2. The public should be educated on the need of public-police cooperation in order to promote overall individual, community, and national security.
3. Before being recruited, police officers and women should be rigorously examined and tested during their initial training to verify that they have good character and are mentally stable.
4. At the state and divisional command levels, workshops, seminars, and lectures for reorienting police officers should be held to enable them to gain suitable orientation for policing a free and democratic society. Human rights education, international codes and ethics for law enforcement officers, and other topics should be included in the curriculum of police colleges.
5. The benefit packages of security agents should be improved as this will go a long way toward eliminating corruption.

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