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Abstract- The objective of the study is to examine the extent to which newspapers reported the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. The agenda-setting theory and the social responsibility theory formed the theoretical foundation to this study. The study adopted content analysis and the survey method, through interview to scrutinize six (6) Nigerian national newspapers- Daily Sun, Daily Times, Leadership, The Nation, Punch and Vanguard for a period of 3 months: May 1, 2018 to July 31, 2018. Coding sheet was used to code 552 editions of the newspapers within the 3-months period where 182 contents on IDPs were found and analyzed. Also, interview guide was employed to garner the view of six (6) communications and media experts. Findings presented through descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that the selected national newspapers mainly accorded low prominence to issue of IDPs through page placement stories. The coverage of major issues the selected newspapers reported about the IDPs was about the vulnerability of the IDPs. It was shown that coverage of selected newspapers as shown to have been varied geographically where North-East garnered the highest coverage, while the South-West had no coverage on IDPs situation.

Keywords: internal displaced persons (IDPS), newspapers' coverage, prominence, vulnerability.

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Newspapers Coverage of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria: May - July 2018

Oluwaferanmi Adeyemo [α] & Ene Comfort Obaje [σ]

Abstract- The objective of the study is to examine the extent to which newspapers reported the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. The agenda-setting theory and the social responsibility theory formed the theoretical foundation to this study. The study adopted content analysis and the survey method, through interview to scrutinize six (6) Nigerian national newspapers- *Daily Sun, Daily Times, Leadership, The Nation, Punch and Vanguard* for a period of 3 months: May 1, 2018 to July 31, 2018. Coding sheet was used to code 552 editions of the newspapers within the 3-months period where 182 contents on IDPs were found and analyzed. Also, interview guide was employed to garner the view of six (6) communications and media experts. Findings presented through descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that the selected national newspapers mainly accorded low prominence to issue of IDPs through page placement stories. The coverage of major issues the selected newspapers reported about the IDPs was about the vulnerability of the IDPs. It was shown that coverage of selected newspapers as shown to have been varied geographically where North-East garnered the highest coverage, while the South-West had no coverage on IDPs situation. Results showed that the most dominant tone used by the selected newspapers was the positive. Also, findings revealed that Nigerian newspapers need understand more about the issue of IDPs, editors of newspapers need assign their reporters to intensively cover the IDPs situation and report it frequently on their publications; security agencies, NEMA, SEMA, INGOs, and NGOs need to corporate and collaborate with newspapers organizations for them to be further strengthened as a communication tool in proffering solution to the issue of internal displacements in Nigeria The study recommended, among other things, that the Nigerian press should be more intentional in increasing coverage on IDPs and give prominence to the coverage of IDPs by way of positioning of reports on the front page.

Keywords: internal displaced persons (IDPS), newspapers' coverage, prominence, vulnerability.

I. Introduction

Internal displaced persons (IDPs) are persons or group of persons residing within a national recognized border who due to circumstances beyond their control flee or are forced to leave their permanent place of habitation in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, occurrence of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural disasters as well as human-made disasters (Oladeji, 2015). According to Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede (2016), an average of the global IDPs can be found in Africa with an increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014. In 2014, International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), global overview revealed that Nigeria has Africa highest number of persons displaced by conflict, ranking behind Syria and Colombia. According to Olukolajo, Ajayi, and Ogungbenro, M.T. (2014), this is as a result of an unfounded argument in religious, belief, under-development, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, ethnic tensions, unemployment, political and economic subjugation of minorities, the absence of democratic procedures, intolerance, and many other factors.

In Nigeria alone, over 2 million people were displaced as a result of the civil war of 1967-1979 (Mohammed, 2017). Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede (2016), observed that the post-election violence of 2011 in Nigeria caused about 65, 000 persons to internally displaced in the northern part of the country, while between January 2013 and February 2014, about 613, 729 persons were displaced by both internal conflicts and natural disasters cutting across 24 states of the Nigerian federation. However, the Boko Haram insurgency escalated the issue of internal displacements in Nigeria. In 2013, IDMC recorded approximately 3.3 million displaced persons and over 1 million displaced persons in the northern region of Nigeria in April 2015 majorly as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. Alobo and Obaji (2016), assert that the insurgency accounts for 85% of displacements of about 2,152,000 by December 2015.

Despite all efforts, it has been observed that IDPs have continued to face harsh condition, especially in the IDP camps while the issue of the social reintegration or return back into their communities is becoming a dashed hope. Human rights and concerned scholars are concerned both locally and internationally about the poor living state of these IDPs which in turn has resulted to poor sanitation, health issues, hunger, poverty, inequality, lack of freedom to movement, unemployment, lack of education, lack of social amenities, etc. (Emmanuelar, 2015; Azam, 2009). With all these, it is vividly becoming difficult to achieve the Millennium Sustainable Goals (Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede, 2016). Also, failure to address long-term displacement has the potential to undermine the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as articulated in the African Union Agenda 2063. The challenge of internally displaced persons generally has a tremendous

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negative effect on Nigerians and thereby militating against both human and community development.

Sambe (2015), identifies the unique features of the newspaper over the television and radio of the broadcast media as the portability and reviewability of news items on the print media in circulation against the portability and simultaneity the broadcast media. The reviewability is the ability of news items or information of the print media to read and subsequently reread at convenience as against the simultaneity experienced in the broadcast media which has the ability to reach all members of the audience concurrently (Sambe, 2015).

Newspaper is therefore an infallible, commendable and dependable veritable mass media tool of disseminating information to the general public in influencing specific actions. Newspapers coverage does not just give the public expedient report on issues and developments that are of public concern, but they adequately give detailed and oriented account. The conventional functions of the newspapers which collectively aims at building an ideal society, free and healthy enough to foster a true democracy and thus serve as a mean for information (Asemah, 2011; Anaeto et al., 2009), socialization (Daramola, 2003), cultural promotion, entertainment (Folarin, 2005), education, motivation, debates and discussions (Amodu, Usaini and Ige, 2014). Moreover, Hamid and Baba (2014), observed that the media, newspapers are expected to bring to the consciousness of the public impending dangers. Moemeka (2000), opined that they are obliged to providing the citizenry with information and discussion on important societal issues as a social responsibility function. This function places a demand on newspapers to cover, analyze and report significant developments within and outside a given society.

Nigerian newspapers over the years have performed status conferral status on internally displaced persons in Nigeria and have created awareness and information flow in building public attention. The newspapers through the agenda-setting function of the mass media have either encouraged or discouraged the members of the public and parties involved whereas no much consideration is given to how reported issues are capable of proffering solutions. The role of key stakeholders such as Human Rights Commission (HRC), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Educational Intuitions, Governmental, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been emphasized in alleviating the plight of the IDPs. However, many questions remain unanswered in regards to the role the Nigeria newspapers can play in reporting the situations to engender the safe return of IDPs back to their communities.

Therefore, this study seeks to

1. Find out the level of prominence the selected newspapers gave to the issues of internally displaced persons.
2. Examine the major issues the selected newspapers reported about internally displaced persons.
3. Examine the geographical variation of selected newspapers' coverage of internally displaced persons
4. To ascertain the dominant tone of the newspapers reported about internally displaced persons.

II. Materials and Methods

This study adopted the mixed method research design used the content analysis of selected newspapers to understand Nigerian newspapers coverage of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Six national daily newspapers in Nigeria (Daily Sun, Daily Times, Leadership, The Nations, Punch, and Vanguard) published between May 2018 and July 2018 (92 weekday and weekend editions which make 552 editions), formed the accessible population of this study and it was the period of conflict leading to internal displacements in Nigeria.

The coding sheet and interview guide were used for data collection. The coding sheet was compared to those used in similar studies and variables were modified where necessary. The interview guide was self-developed by perusing literature addressing media coverage on social issues. The content categories and variables of the study include; issues covered (vulnerability, intervention, and return), the position of the story (prominence), the tone of coverage, and the location/Proximity of story.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data collected. The data was presented through frequency counts, and tables.

III. Results

Out of the 552 editions, one hundred and eighty-two (182) editions were obtained and coded based on the identification of IDPs stories found in them. The summary of the publication of the newspapers that were accessed and used for this study from May to July 2018 is shown is Table 1 and Figure 1. There was a noticeable decrease in the coverage of news stories on IDPs by the selected newspapers in the month of July when compared with the earlier months.

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Table 1: Summary of Newspapers Publication and Stories Analyzed

Variables (Newspapers)	Frequency (May 2018)	Frequency (June 2018)	Frequency (July 2018)	Frequency Total	Percentage (%)
Daily Sun	30	14	9	53	29
Daily Trust	12	14	4	30	17
Leadership	9	27	6	42	23
The Nation	7	8	3	18	10
Punch	3	7	1	11	6
Vanguard	11	6	11	28	15
Grand Total	**72**	**76**	**34**	**182**	**100**

Figure 1: Nigerian Newspapers Coverage of IDPs across Selected Months

Research Question One: What is the level of prominence the selected newspapers gave to the issues of internally displaced persons?

Table 2 show the position of stories published by the selected newspapers. Majority of the stories on internally displaced persons were on the inside pages across the six selected newspapers (n=166, 91%). In reporting IDPs stories, Daily Sun (n=50, 30%) placed stories on the inside pages more than Leadership (n=40, 24%), Vanguard (n=27, 16%), Daily Trust (n=26, 16%), The Nation (n=15, 9%) and Punch (n=8, 5%). Daily Trust however, gave more prominence to the IDPs through its front pages (n=4, 27%), followed by The Nation and Punch (n=3, 20%), followed by Daily Sun and Leadership (n=2, 13%) and then Vanguard (n=1, 7%). Daily Sun was the only newspaper that reported content on IDPs through the back page (n=1, 7%). Therefore, the selected newspapers mainly accorded low prominence to the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Nevertheless, Daily Sun gave more prominence to the coverage of IDPs more than the other five newspapers.

Table 2: Level of Prominence Accorded Internally Displaced Persons

Variables (Newspapers)	Front Page Frequency (%)	Inside Page Frequency (%)	Back Page Frequency (%)	Total Frequency (%)
Daily Sun	2(13.3)	50(30.1)	1(100)	53(29)
Daily Trust	4(26.6)	26(15.6)	0(0)	30(17)
Leadership	2(13.3)	40(24.1)	0(0)	42(23)
The Nation	3(20)	15(9.0)	0(0)	18(10)
Punch	3(20)	8(4.8)	0(0)	11(6)
Vanguard	1(6.6)	27(16.2)	0(0)	28(15)
Grand Total	**15(100)**	**166(100)**	**1(100)**	**182(100)**
Percentage %	**8**	**91**	**1**	**100**

Research Question Two: What are the major issues the selected newspapers reported about internally displaced persons?

Table 3 shows the dominant issues which the selected newspaper reported as the causes of displacements. The result showed vulnerability (n=83, 46%) of IDPs in Nigeria from insecurity such as Boko Haram attacks, herdsmen/farmers clashes and communal conflicts; and environmental factors such as flood and windstorm as well as abuse of IDPs. The interventions (n=79, 43%) of the IDPs described people given assistance or need assistance and rehabilitation from either private individual, organizations or the government for survival. The least dominant issue reported about IDPs by the selected newspapers was about IDPs return to their homes (n=20, 11%). Therefore, the dominant issues reported about IDPs across selected newspapers was vulnerability, followed by interventions, while the least reported news stories were about the return of IDPs to their homes.

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Table 3: Major issues reported about internally displaced persons

Variables (Newspapers)	Vulnerability F (%)	Intervention F (%)	Return F (%)	Total F (%)
Daily Sun	37(45)	15(19)	1(5)	53(29)
Daily Trust	10(12)	14(18)	6(30)	30(17)
Leadership	12(14)	22(28)	8(40)	42(23)
The Nation	7(8)	9(11)	2(10)	18(10)
Punch	4(5)	6(8)	1(5)	11(6)
Vanguard	13(16)	13(16)	2(10)	28(15)
Grand Total	**83(100)**	**79(100)**	**20(100)**	**182(100)**
Percentage %	**46**	**43**	**11**	**100**

Research Question Three: To what did the extent selected newspapers' coverage of internally displaced persons vary geographically?

Table 4 shows the selected newspapers coverage of IDPs across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The most frequently reported geopolitical location on IDPs across the selected newspapers were the North-East (n=87, 48%), North-Central (n=73, 40%), South-East (n=5, 3%), and South-South (n=4, 2%) with Daily Sun and Leadership (n=1, 25%) while Vanguard (n=4, 2%) had the highest coverage. However, none of the selected newspapers reported on the IDPs in the South-West region. These imply that coverage was accorded more for the North-East, followed by the North-Central; while the North-West, South-East and South-South geopolitical zones were accorded the lowest rate of coverage on the IDPs; there was no coverage on the IDPs accorded the South-West by the selected newspapers.

Table 4: Geographical variation of Newspapers Coverage of IDPs

Variables (Newspapers)	North-E F (%)	North-W F (%)	North-C F (%)	South-E F (%)	South-W F (%)	South-S F (%)	Total F (%)
Daily Sun	19(21.8)	5(38.5)	25(34.2)	3(60)	0(0)	1(25)	53(29)
Daily Trust	12(13.8)	3(23.1)	15(20.5)	0()	0(0)	0()	30(17)
Leadership	25(28.7)	2(15.4)	14(19.2)	0()	0()	1(25)	42(23)
The Nation	13(14.9)	2(15.4)	3(4.1)	0()	0()	0()	18(10)
Punch	7(8.0)	0(0)	3(4.1)	1(20)	0(0)	0()	11(6)
Vanguard	11(12.6)	1(7.7)	13(17.8)	1(20)	0(0)	2(50)	28(15)
Grand Total	**87(100)**	**13(100)**	**73(100)**	**5(100)**	**0()**	**4(100)**	**182(100)**
Percentage %	**48**	**7**	**40**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**100**

Research Question Four: What is the tone of Nigerian newspapers' coverage about internally displaced persons?

From Table 5, the most dominant tone the selected newspapers used in the coverage of IDPs in Nigeria was the positive tone (n=89, 49%) followed by negative tone (n=79, 43%), and the least dominant tone used about IDPs by the selected newspapers was the neutral tone (n=9, 5%). Therefore, the most dominant tone used in the report of IDPs across selected newspapers was the positive tone while the least used tone was the neutral tone.

Table 5: Tone of selected newspapers coverage about Internally Displaced Persons

Variables (Newspapers)	Positive F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Negative F (%)	Total F (%)
Daily Sun	18(20.2)	1(11.1)	34(40.5)	53(29)
Daily Trust	17(19.1)	2(22.2)	11(13.1)	30(17)
Leadership	25(28.1)	4(44.4)	13(15.5)	42(23)
The Nation	10(11.2)	1(11.1)	7(8.3)	18(10)
Punch	6(6.7)	0()	5(5.9)	11(6)
Vanguard	13(14.6)	1(11.1)	14(16.6)	28(15)
Grand Total	**89(100)**	**9(100)**	**84(100)**	**182(100)**
Percentage %	**49**	**5**	**46**	**100**

IV. Discussion

Findings of this study showed that coverage of the internally displaced persons were more frequent in the months of May, 2018 and June, 2018 than the month of July, 2018. This is indicative as a timeline in which internal displacements came to a climax during the 3-month period as there were some major occurrences which resulted in massive displacements. These include recurrent herdsmen attacks,

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herdsmen/farmers' clash particularly in North-East and North-Central regions. Interventions through provision of relief materials such as Dangote's launch of 200 housing units to IDPs in North-East, assistance and IDPs hopes for returning home also increased the frequency of reportage by the selected Nigerian national newspapers within the period. Notably, the frequency of reports on IDPs across the newspapers dropped greatly in the month of July, 2018.This was also supported by the responses of the experts (A, C, E and F) that issues on IDPs have less coverage.

Moreover, the results show that out of a total of 182 stories across the selected newspapers, majority of the stories were concentrated on the inside pages (n=166, 91%), stories on the front page were 15 (8%), and on story on the back page (n=1, 1%), and these implied that high prominence accounted for 8 percent, medium prominence accounted for an insignificant 1 percent, and low prominence accounted for 91 percent of all stories published by the six newspapers within the period of study. These findings corroborated the previous study by Ibrahim and Gujbawu (2014), which reported that Daily Trust and The Nation newspapers have low prominence to IDPs coverage with 69 (84%) of the reported 82 news stories were on the inside pages. It can be inferred that "profuse front-page placement of stories on IDPs could have been more influential in public agenda than a mere abundance of stories" (Olumojobi, 2017), as the public has the tendency to "perceive the order of prominence assigned by the press in its agenda of stories in deciding the importance of reported issues" (Defleur, 2010).

Furthermore, findings of this study show that vulnerability issues were predominantly reported by the selected newspapers. This suggests that incidents and issues relating to IDPs were that of vulnerability than interventions and the return of IDPs to their homes; as perpetuation of Boko Haram attacks, herdsmen/farmers clashes and communal conflicts were prevalent in the issues reported on vulnerability of IDPs. Results of this study show that the coverage of the six newspapers traversed five out of the six-geopolitical zones of Nigeria, thereby, confirming the national dimension of the IDPs issues. The North-East and North Central garnered more coverage by the selected newspapers can be attributed to the fact that Boko Haram insurgents, violent clashes between herders and farmers have concentrated more in the North-East and North-Central regions in Nigeria (Olayoku 2014). Although, most of the selected newspapers are all corporately based in Lagos (South-West), none of them covered stories of IDPs in the South-West region within the period of study. To this end, social proximity could be an influential factor (Bendix and Liebler, 1999) in how the IDPs were covered by the newspapers.

It was observed that, although the dominant issues reported by selected newspapers were that of the vulnerability of the IDPs, although the dominant tone used by the newspapers was a positive tone. These findings were similar to the report of Bruggemann (2014), that newspapers will always practice some degree of frame sending when assembling information into news stories.

V. Conclusion

Accruing from the findings, this study concludes that the selected national newspapers performance was not as diligent in carrying out their surveillance function in gathering and providing adequate and timely reports on issues related to internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Nevertheless, Daily Sun newspapers exemplified some measure of diligence by the volume of its coverage on IDPs. The level of prominence the newspapers accorded to issues in their coverage is fundamental to how the readers and the general public would view such issues as important. Overall, the selected newspapers accorded low prominence to IDPs issues by placing a majority of the stories on IDPs on the inside pages of their editions.

This nationwide representation of the IDPs, therefore, indicates that physical and social proximity has no significant hindrance to the coverage of IDPs among the selected newspapers. Consequently, the six selected newspapers cannot be alleged of ethnic bias or advocacy in their consideration and selection of newsworthy occurrences and issues within the context of displacement. However, it is pertinent to find out if there are no occurrences of displacements or issues related to IDPs in the South-West zone within the period of this study to validate the claims of the selected newspapers. Therefore, this study concludes that the selected newspapers are yet to discharge their social duties effectively considering the coverage of internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

VI. Recommendations

The issue of internal displacements in Nigeria is a national one which requires combined efforts of all stakeholders involved to overcome the situation through various processes of interventions, resolution, rebuilding, and transformation. The findings of this study have shown explicitly and implicitly that the media can have certain implications on both government and public perception of issues on IDPs for measurable direction for solutions. The following recommendations are proffered;

1. There should be a conscious improvement in the coverage of IDPs in the volume and depth of discourse and agenda, and also give prominence to the coverage of IDPs by way of the positioning of reports on the front page. This is to ensure that issues revolving around the IDPs gained sustained public perception and attention, which would be

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pivotal in driving required interventions and reintegration of the IDPs as well curbing the main causes of internal displacements in Nigeria. Furthermore, there should be a deliberate redirection from laying emphasis on the vulnerability of IDPs to prominently feature reports about interventions and return on the front page.

2. Media organizations in Nigeria should invest more in the consistent training of journalists in the area of social- and human-interest reporting, with particular emphasis on solution-based reporting. It is also recommended that development reporting, human rights, and human-interest sensitive reporting should be incorporated in the journalism, broadcasting, and mass communication curricula of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
3. Newspapers owners and editors should give their journalists required skills and support needed in the coverage of IDPs situation in Nigeria. The media should also partner with afore stakeholders on how to genuinely communicate practical-solution based approaches to internal displacements in Nigeria as a means of achieving articulated sustainable development goals as a response to meeting basic human rights.

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