

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

3 Oluwaferanmi O. Adeyemo¹ and Ene Comfort Obaje²

4 ¹ University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

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6

7 **Abstract**

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

31

32 **Index terms**— internal displaced persons (IDPS), newspapers? coverage, prominence, vulnerability.

33 **1 Introduction**

34 Internal displaced persons (IDPs) are persons or group of persons residing within a national recognized border
35 who due to circumstances beyond their control flee or are forced to leave their permanent place of habitation in
36 order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, occurrence of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural
37 disasters as well as humanmade disasters (Oladeji, 2015). According to Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede (2016),
38 an average of the global IDPs can be found in Africa with an increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014. In 2014,
39 International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), global overview revealed that Nigeria has Africa highest
40 number of persons displaced by conflict, ranking behind Syria and Colombia. According to Olukolajo, Ajayi, and

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

41 Ogungbenro, M.T. ??2014), this is as a result of an unfounded argument in religious, belief, underdevelopment, 42 poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, ethnic tensions, unemployment, political and economic subjugation of 43 minorities, the absence of democratic procedures, intolerance, and many other factors.

44 In Nigeria alone, over 2 million people were displaced as a result of the civil war of 1967-1979 (Mohammed, 45 2017). Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede (2016), observed that the post-election violence of 2011 in Nigeria caused 46 about 65, 000 persons to internally displaced in the northern part of the country, while between January 2013 47 and February 2014, about 613, 729 persons were displaced by both internal conflicts and natural disasters cutting 48 across 24 states of the Nigerian federation. However, the Boko Haram insurgency escalated the issue of internal 49 displacements in Nigeria. In 2013, IDMC recorded approximately 3.3 million displaced persons and over 1 million 50 displaced persons in the northern region of Nigeria in April 2015 majorly as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. 51 Alobo and Obaji (2016), assert that the insurgency accounts for 85% of displacements of about 2,152,000 by 52 December 2015.

53 Despite all efforts, it has been observed that IDPs have continued to face harsh condition, especially in the 54 IDP camps while the issue of the social reintegration or return back into their communities is becoming a dashed 55 hope. Human rights and concerned scholars are concerned both locally and internationally about the poor living 56 state of these IDPs which in turn has resulted to poor sanitation, health issues, hunger, poverty, inequality, lack of 57 freedom to movement, unemployment, lack of education, lack of social amenities, etc. (Emmanuelar, 2015;Azam, 58 2009). With all these, it is vividly becoming difficult to achieve the Millennium Sustainable Goals (Osagioduwa 59 and Oluwakorede, 2016). Also, failure to address long-term displacement has the potential to undermine the 60 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as articulated in the African Union Agenda 2063. The challenge 61 of internally displaced persons generally has a tremendous negative effect on Nigerians and thereby militating 62 against both human and community development.

63 Sambe (2015), identifies the unique features of the newspaper over the television and radio of the broadcast 64 media as the portability and reviewability of news items on the print media in circulation against the portability 65 and simultaneity the broadcast media. The reviewability is the ability of news items or information of the print 66 media to read and subsequently reread at convenience as against the simultaneity experienced in the broadcast 67 media which has the ability to reach all members of the audience concurrently ??Sambe, 2015).

68 Newspaper is therefore an infallible, commendable and dependable veritable mass media tool of disseminating 69 information to the general public in influencing specific actions. Newspapers coverage does not just give the 70 public expedient report on issues and developments that are of public concern, but they adequately give detailed 71 and oriented account. The conventional functions of the newspapers which collectively aims at building an ideal 72 society, free and healthy enough to foster a true democracy and thus serve as a mean for information (Asemah, 73 2011; ??naeto et al., 2009), socialization ??Daramola, 2003), cultural promotion, entertainment (Folarin, 2005), 74 education, motivation, debates and discussions (Amudu, Usaini and Ige, 2014). Moreover, Hamid and Baba 75 (2014), observed that the media, newspapers are expected to bring to the consciousness of the public impending 76 dangers. Moemeka (2000), opined that they are obliged to providing the citizenry with information and discussion 77 on important societal issues as a social responsibility function. This function places a demand on newspapers to 78 cover, analyze and report significant developments within and outside a given society.

79 Nigerian newspapers over the years have performed status conferral status on internally displaced persons 80 in Nigeria and have created awareness and information flow in building public attention. The newspapers 81 through the agenda-setting function of the mass media have either encouraged or discouraged the members 82 of the public and parties involved whereas no much consideration is given to how reported issues are capable 83 of proffering solutions. The role of key stakeholders such as Human Rights Commission (HRC), Civil Society 84 Organizations (CSOs), Educational Intuitions, Governmental, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) 85 have been emphasized in alleviating the plight of the IDPs. However, many questions remain unanswered in 86 regards to the role the Nigeria newspapers can play in reporting the situations to engender the safe return of 87 IDPs back to their communities.

88 Therefore, this study seeks to 1. Find out the level of prominence the selected newspapers gave to the issues 89 of internally displaced persons. 2. Examine the major issues the selected newspapers reported about internally 90 displaced persons. 3. Examine the geographical variation of selected newspapers' coverage of internally displaced 91 persons 4. To ascertain the dominant tone of the newspapers reported about internally displaced persons.

92 II.

93 2 Materials and Methods

94 This study adopted the mixed method research design used the content analysis of selected newspapers to 95 understand Nigerian newspapers coverage of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Six national daily newspapers 96 in Nigeria (Daily Sun, Daily Times, Leadership, The Nations, Punch, and Vanguard) published between May 97 2018 and July 2018 (92 weekday and weekend editions which make 552 editions), formed the accessible population 98 of this study and it was the period of conflict leading to internal displacements in Nigeria.

99 The coding sheet and interview guide were used for data collection. The coding sheet was compared to those 100 used in similar studies and variables were modified where necessary. The interview guide was self-developed by 101 perusing literature addressing media coverage on social issues. The content categories and variables of the study

102 include; issues covered (vulnerability, intervention, and return), the position of the story (prominence), the tone
103 of coverage, and the location/Proximity of story.

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

106 **3 III.**

107 **4 Results**

108 Out of the 552 editions, one hundred and eighty-two (182) editions were obtained and coded based on the
109 identification of IDPs stories found in them. The summary of the publication of the newspapers that were
110 accessed and used for this study from May to July 2018 is shown in Table 1 and Figure ???. There was a
111 noticeable decrease in the coverage of news stories on IDPs by the selected newspapers in the month of July
112 when compared with the earlier months. 2 show the position of stories published by the selected newspapers.
113 Majority of the stories on internally displaced persons were on the inside pages across the six selected newspapers
114 (n=166, 91%). In reporting IDPs stories, Daily Sun (n=50, 30%) placed stories on the inside pages more than
115 Leadership (n=40, 24%), Vanguard (n=27, 16%), Daily Trust (n=26, 16%), The Nation (n=15, 9%) and Punch
116 (n=8, 5%).

117 Daily Trust however, gave more prominence to the IDPs through its front pages (n=4, 27%), followed by The
118 Nation and Punch (n=3, 20%), followed by Daily Sun and Leadership (n=2, 13%) and then Vanguard (n=1, 7%).
119 Daily Sun was the only newspaper that reported content on IDPs through the back page (n=1, 7%). Therefore,
120 the selected newspapers mainly accorded low prominence to the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs).
121 Nevertheless, Daily Sun gave more prominence to the coverage of IDPs more than the other five newspapers.
122 Research Question Two: What are the major issues the selected newspapers reported about internally displaced
123 persons? Table 3 shows the dominant issues which the selected newspaper reported as the causes of displacements.
124 The result showed vulnerability (n=83, 46%) of IDPs in Nigeria from insecurity such as Boko Haram attacks,
125 herdsmen/farmers clashes and communal conflicts; and environmental factors such as flood and windstorm as
126 well as abuse of IDPs. The interventions (n=79, 43%) of the IDPs described people given assistance or need
127 assistance and rehabilitation from either private individual, organizations or the government for survival. The
128 least dominant issue reported about IDPs by the selected newspapers was about IDPs return to their homes
129 (n=20, 11%). Therefore, the dominant issues reported about IDPs across selected newspapers was vulnerability,
130 followed by interventions, while the least reported news stories were about the return of IDPs to their homes.
131 Research Question Three: To what did the extent selected newspapers' coverage of internally displaced persons
132 vary geographically? Table 4 shows the selected newspapers coverage of IDPs across the six geopolitical zones
133 in Nigeria. The most frequently reported geopolitical location on IDPs across the selected newspapers were the
134 North-East (n=87, 48%), North-Central (n=73, 40%), South-East (n=5, 3%), and South-South (n=4, 2%) with
135 Daily Sun and Leadership (n=1, 25%) while Vanguard (n=4, 2%) had the highest coverage. However, none of
136 the selected newspapers reported on the IDPs in the South-West region. These imply that coverage was accorded
137 more for the North-East, followed by the North-Central; while the North-West, South-East and South-South
138 geopolitical zones were accorded the lowest rate of coverage on the IDPs; there was no coverage on the IDPs
139 accorded the South-West by the selected newspapers. Research Question Four: What is the tone of Nigerian
140 newspapers' coverage about internally displaced persons? From Table 5, the most dominant tone the selected
141 newspapers used in the coverage of IDPs in Nigeria was the positive tone (n=89, 49%) followed by negative tone
142 (n=79, 43%), and the least dominant tone used about IDPs by the selected newspapers was the neutral tone
143 (n=9, 5%). Therefore, the most dominant tone used in the report of IDPs across selected newspapers was the
144 positive tone while the least used tone was the neutral tone. IV.

145 **5 Discussion**

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

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151 herdsmen/farmers' clash particularly in North-East and North-Central regions. Interventions through
152 provision of relief materials such as Dangote's launch of 200 housing units to IDPs in North-East, assistance
153 and IDPs hopes for returning home also increased the frequency of reportage by the selected Nigerian national
154 newspapers within the period. Notably, the frequency of reports on IDPs across the newspapers dropped greatly
155 in the month of July, 2018. This was also supported by the responses of the experts (A, C, E and F) that issues
156 on IDPs have less coverage. Moreover, the results show that out of a total of 182 stories across the selected
157 newspapers, majority of the stories were concentrated on the inside pages (n=166, 91%), stories on the front
158 page were 15 (8%), and on story on the back page (n=1, 1%), and these implied that high prominence accounted
159 for 8 percent, medium prominence accounted for an insignificant 1 percent, and low prominence accounted for 91
160 percent of all stories published by the six newspapers within the period of study. These findings corroborated the
161 previous study by ??brahim and Gujbawu (2014), which reported that Daily Trust and The Nation newspapers

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

162 have low prominence to IDPs coverage with 69 (84%) of the reported 82 news stories were on the inside pages. It
163 can be inferred that "profuse front-page placement of stories on IDPs could have been more influential in public
164 agenda than a mere abundance of stories" (Olumojobi, 2017), as the public has the tendency to "perceive the
165 order of prominence assigned by the press in its agenda of stories in deciding the importance of reported issues"
166 (Defleur, 2010).

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

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

182 V.

183 6 Conclusion

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

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

198 7 VI.

199 8 Recommendations

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

205 1. There should be a conscious improvement in the coverage of IDPs in the volume and depth of discourse
206 and agenda, and also give prominence to the coverage of IDPs by way of the positioning of reports on the front
207 page. This is to ensure that issues revolving around the IDPs gained sustained public perception and attention,
208 which would be ^{1 2}

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

Figure 1: Nigerian Newspapers Coverage of IDPs across Selected

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

Table

Figure 1: Table 1 :

2

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

Figure 2: Table 2 :

3

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

Figure 3: Table 3 :

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4

Variables	North-E	North-W	North-C	South-E	South-W	South-S	Total
(Newspapers)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	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

Figure 4: Table 4 :

5

Variables	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
(Newspapers)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	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

Figure 5: Table 5 :

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Figure 6:

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