

APPRAISAL OF SELECT NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) IN BENUE STATE

Kingsley Inalegwu Onah, Josiah Sabo Kente PhD & Tsegyu Santas, PhD

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi.
akorjoy502@gmail.com
kingsleyinalegwuonah@gmail.com

Abstract

This study, "Appraisal of Select Newspaper Coverage of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Benue State" examined the level of involvement/engagement of the media, particularly the print in the issues of internal displacement and IDPs (especially internal displacement and IDPs issues in Benue State. To achieve this, quantitative and qualitative content analysis were adopted with a view to categorising and codifying two cosmopolitan newspapers with national outlook. The newspapers concerned were *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*. The data for this article were extracted from both primary and secondary sources. In other words, the interview conducted was administered in the form of questionnaire and the selected newspapers were content analysed for a whole calendar year spanning from January to December of 2018. The interview sessions and materials consulted formed valuable information sources. To this end, it was concluded that the media as non-state actors with constitutional recognition are critical to the resolution of the process. It was recommended among other actionable points that media organisations should take advantage of technology for more involvement of IDPs in their own stories.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Newspaper, Coverage, Benue State

Background to the Study

There is no denying that, given their widespread use and popularity, newspapers have stayed as one of the most effective mass communication tools since Johannes Gutenberg's press revolution in the fifteenth century. In actuality, the process of spreading news could not have developed into a modern "industry" if it had not been possible to generate written words in large quantities (Roos, 2019). It is however not in doubt that, newspapers have gone through the phases of gestation, trial, persecution, repression, eventual refinement and the latest challenge of the 21st century which is the internet. In light of this, Khalid & Ahmed (2014) summarise the trend as follows: newspapers' appearance has changed over the past few years, and editors, page builders, and

designers now have access to a number of freshly developed tools. The impact of visual media allows newspapers to provide more visual material, such as graphics, images, and colour photos, as well as alter how display adverts are employed. This, in the long run has defined the general outlook, content and disposition of newspapers in our various societies.

The above scenario brings to fore; the critical role newspaper plays in nation building (Khalid & Ahmed, 2014; Adeyemo & Obaje, 2020; Inobemhe, Bala, Shuaibu, Onah & Santas, 2022) and its surveillance function in society (Sambe, 2008, p.37). As one of those issues and events deserving of newspaper coverage is internally displaced persons (IDPs). Why? One may ask. This is due to the fact that displacement constitutes

one of the main problems the globe is currently facing in the twenty-first century. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC (2022), about 55 million persons had been displaced globally. With this huge number of displacements from the global world population, it is obviously startling that there is an endemic problem that has crystallised into global emergency by its nature and manifestation. The situation is further exacerbated by the rising incidence of climate change otherwise known as "global warming" and the general global unrest. According to UNHCR (2022), one of the most terrible effects of climate change is the catastrophe of relocation. To shed further light on the matter, Kalin (2008) points out that although global warming does not cause human displacement, it does have an impact on the ecosystem, potentially making it more challenging or even unattainable for individuals to stay alive where they currently are.

Despite the attention the subject of IDPs has received on the pages of newspapers, the recurrent issues seem not to have abated. Instead, status conferral of newspaper places humanitarian organisations, public figures and well-known individuals at vantage position over oppressed IDPs for being associated with them playing the 'philanthropists' while IDPs which should be the Centre of attention are generally denigrated and categorised as "IDPs" implying how lowly they are rated. There is also the concern of how IDPs issues are framed by newspapers and the agendas that are set therefrom. The study therefore shall be doing an "appraisal of select newspaper coverage of IDPs in Benue State" to ascertain how adequately or otherwise IDPs issues have been reported in newspaper. It is against this background that this study appraises select newspaper in the coverage of IDPs in Benue State.

Statement of Problem

Internally Displaced Persons are normal, regular citizens like every other Nigerian but because of risk factors threatening their continued stay in their places of habitual residence, they have been forcibly made to flee from their habitual residences to other places within the boundaries of their country for short or long periods depending on the prevailing circumstances in those trouble areas. It is a situation that has created the problem of suddenness of relocation that has necessitated the concern of shelter, food, clothing, welfare, family ties, employment (productive engagement) and socialisation. In addition, given the willful devastation of property and life, IDPs must deal with a tangible tension of anxiety and uncertainty about the future. As a result, even in situations where there may be little to no chance of returning to their usual homes, internally displaced people are left penniless in camps or other locations of their temporary refuge. In actuality, there is a higher chance of exposure for internally displaced people (IDPs), particularly for women and children who are vulnerable to sexual abuse that might result in an unintended pregnancy or the contracting of sexually transmitted infections (STDs) including gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS.

There is also the incidence of out of school children being forced into child labour to support their families. According to UNESCO (2022), over 20 million children were out of schools and internal displacement is a contributing factor. For there to be 8 recognised IDPs camps out of 27 implied that more than 2/3 of the designated camps were at the mercy of the whims and caprices of life. The implication is that most IDPs camps lacked basic amenities with attendant consequence of high mortality and morbidity. A UNICEF report, cited in Ibrahim (2021),

states that as of 2016, there were 2.5 million kids with malnutrition living in IDP camps.

As purveyor of news, these issues are attention catching, newsworthy and discourse provoking on the pages of newspapers. Due to their strategic and critical roles in the society, the newspapers raise societal issues to the front burner (Santas, 2013; Santas, 2015). However, the challenge is that despite newspaper coverage, the issues have remained precariously daunting and worrisome which arouse concerns of agenda setting function of newspapers and the frames accorded these issues. Considering that newspapers are not isolated from the environment in which they do business, the gatekeeping process is usually deployed in the management of time and resources which may impede adequate coverage of IDPs. Also related to this is the challenge of information sourcing which emanate from government sources which may skew the intents and purposes of newspaper reporting of IDPs issues. To this end, the research shall be ascertaining how IDPs issues are covered hence the appraisal of select newspaper coverage of IDPs in Benue State.

Research Questions

Drawing from the objectives of the study and the need to unravel the media framing of issues relating to IDPs, the following research questions shall undergird the study:

1. What kinds of frames did the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* give Benue IDPs and IDPs related issues?
2. How did newspapers source(s) of information impact on Benue IDPs?
3. What were the projected thematic structures of newspapers on Benue IDPs?
4. What were the focus areas of the newspapers' coverage of IDPs in Benue State?
5. What were the established contiguous and extraneous challenges in the coverage of Internally Displaced Persons' camp?

Review of Concepts

The Concept of Newspaper

Newspapers are defined as any remarks, assessments, or opinions regularly published for purchase in Nigeria under the Nigerian Newspaper Act (NNA). To elaborate, a newspaper is defined by the Britannica Encyclopaedia as a publication that is typically released daily, weekly, or at various regular intervals and that frequently contains advertisements in addition to news, opinions, features, and other material of public interest. Sambe (2008, p.114) opines that newspaper is a broad range of publications ranging from the small weekly in which every task is done by a handful of people, to the huge metropolitan daily with hundreds of staff and a daily circulation of over a hundred thousand copies (though with more subscription to internet services and social media handles for news and other updates, the daily circulation has reduced drastically). The above definitions provide insights to what the newspaper does and its relevance to society. It is therefore clear that certain features remain consistent with the definitions advanced which make newspapers uniquely different from other publications. In essence, newspapers are periodically cheap and affordable publications that contain news, features, articles of opinion, public interest information and advertising.

Newspapers represent the most traditional and widely used media for providing readers with local, regional, worldwide and national news, according to Pandey (2020). It is a media that uses a network of reporters and news organisations to deliver the most recent events occurring across the globe. It implies that newspapers are linked around the world and prepared to provide readers with up-to-date information on events as they happen. In actuality, digitization has sped up and eased the process of acquiring data for distribution. In effect, newspapers now operate both in

hardcopies and virtually. In the words of Kumar (n.d.), the growth of newspaper is related to the modernisation of society. To this end, newspaper acts as a link between the state and its citizens.

It is this pivotal role of mediation that has made it a critical non-state actor that has championed several causes. In fact, newspapers are the amplifiers of the voice of liberation and transformation. Newspapers are the defenders of freedom and rights for citizens in the civilised world, claims Pandey (2020). This was seen in the liberation move during the Civil War in Britain granting newspapers the access to and report about the British Civil War in order for citizens to make informed decisions about latest happenings during the War. It was newspaper that was deployed in reversing the repressive actions of government for democratisation paving way for equitable governance and citizens' participation during the colonial system in the United States. As a matter of fact, it was also newspaper that nationalists in the likes of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sirs Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa championed the move and realisation of Independence (Inonemhe, Bala, Shaibu, Onah & Santas, pp.271-272). It was also with the strength of the newspaper that the return to democracy in 1999 was actualised. Aside these struggles, newspaper has been in the frontline of disseminating important information among common people.

As a matter of priority, newspaper provides the space for the common man's problems and informs the government (and other relevant bodies or parties) about issues faced by the citizens of the state (Kumar, n.d.). Nevertheless, the laudable performance of newspaper is not without limitations. The limitations could range from the issues of paucity of funds, integrity, brown envelope syndrome, yellow journalism, compromise to environmental factors. The correctness of

reporting may be significantly hampered by these restrictions. The limits are best expressed by Chris Isiguzo, National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists: "In Nigeria, doing journalism is like trying to pull water out of a white stone. The terrain is challenging, and the surroundings are unfavourable. The output is impacted by an unfavourable atmosphere. In addition to ownership issues, there are economic difficulties and constant government attention. The discussion of our study has become relevant in light of this.

The Concept of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internally Displaced Persons otherwise known as IDPs are citizens of their country given that their relocation is usually within the confines of their country. IDPs are so distinguished from refugees who apply for asylum outside of their nation of origin by this. Unlike refugees, IDPs always maintain their status of citizenship. Given the above scenario, who then are IDPs? The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement defines those who have been internally displaced (also referred to as "IDPs") as "individuals or groups of individuals who have been compelled to flee or abandon their residences or places of usual residence, particularly due to or in order to avert the consequences of violent conflict, instances of widespread violence, breaches of human rights infringements, or disasters of any kind, and who are not within an internationally acknowledged borders" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, n.d; Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, n.d. & International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, 2019).

According to Abideen & Yusuf (2018), displaced individuals or people are those that have been compelled to flee their residences and sources of support but are in

other locations within their nation because of severe disagreements in their original locations of abode. To provide more light, Owoaje, Uchendu, Ajayi, and Cadmus (2022) note that women and children make up a large proportion of those who have been displaced and are particularly vulnerable to violations of their fundamental rights. The Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement, 1998 defines IDPs as having two essential components, which the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) recognises as important given the current unstable circumstances. The two main components of the definition, that have functional instead of having legal status, are: (i) The migration is involuntary; and (ii) it occurs inside national borders. Additionally, IDMC emphasises that internally displaced people (IDPs) might be citizens or other regular inhabitants of the nation from which they are removed, such as stateless individuals.

This explains why the UNHCR does not accord Internally Displaced Persons the same legal status conferred on refugees. This is further compounded by treaties and legalities surrounding the territorial integrity of countries. As a vital component of sovereignty, the UNHCR believes that governing bodies in the nations where internally displaced people are found have a duty to protect and help them.

Appraisal of Newspaper Coverage of IDPs Issues

The newspaper, as a mass communication tool, has undoubtedly been able to establish itself throughout time as an essential element of a community that cannot be compromised. Inobemhe, Bala, Shaibu, Onah, and Santas (2022) assert that newspapers, along with the rest of the mass media, are important stakeholders, through both direct and indirect means. The "Fourth Estate of the Realm" title is bestowed upon it by its responsibility for

keeping the federal government and its representatives responsible (Santas, Inobemhe, Nnaane, 2022; & Inobemhe, Bala, Shaibu, Onah & Santas, 2022). This explains why the media (especially the mainstream) still remains relevant in the business of surveillance in the society. It is this surveillance function that provides the media with sensitivity of identifying and generating newsworthy stories for the consumption of the public for informed decision. Consequently, it is the role of news organisations worldwide and newspapers more specifically to present up-to-date, accurate, and unbiased information, leaving it to the viewer's interpretation as necessary. This very important responsibility of the press places the burden on the operators to be conscious of objectivity, fairness, truthfulness and honesty. In essence, the reportage of issues must be done with high sense of professionalism and integrity devoid of bias or favouritism.

However, this does not negate the fact that media portrayal of issues has a way of influencing the judgment of the reader/audience. In addition to providing the knowledge we need to understand the world and our place in it, the mainstream media frequently plays a crucial role in shaping discussions, influencing political agendas, and drawing attention to certain global happenings or events (O'Reilly, Jackson, Bell & Hunter, 2022). Similarly, Pandir (quoted in O'Reilly, Jackson, Bell & Hunter, 2022) suggests that "the way displaced people are portrayed in the media can lead to prejudice against them as well as understanding and acceptance, demonstrating that the media can either contribute to or mitigate conflicts and promote integration between the home and displaced communities as a whole. Put another way, perspectives are shaped and guidance is given by media narratives and contextualization. This highlights the problems pertaining to people who have been

displaced in Benue and the function of media outlets. A careful observance of media coverage of IDPs indicate that they are members of society who by reason of their transgression like the Biblical Old Testament era have been plagued by a contagion of disease and isolated as consequence of their sins. Rather than show empathy and accord dignity to them, they are seen as less important members of the Society that have come to burden their host communities. There might be initial media hype but as days, weeks and months and years go by, the ecstasy wanes and withdrawal syndrome set in.

The absurdity of the matter is shown in the manner the media handle IDPs issues. Instead of making IDPs experts of their issues when they are reported, third party non-IDPs are consulted to provide expert advice while IDPs are objects of their own issues. They are not given the privilege to ascribe ownership (i.e. self-belonging) to their issues. This is also seen in the general derogatory categorisation of persons in camps as IDPs by media coverage of events. As dignified men and women who have been condescended to this unfortunate situation, the sanctity of human dignity should be demonstrated in media reportage. Names, occupation and capabilities of persons should be obtained during interviews and news content. Rather than promote media (that is, newspaper) stereotyping, vulnerable groups in the camp should be given due media attention. Instead of using the media to politicise IDPs and cash in on the situation to make money, the media should be engaged in sensitisation, advocacy and collaboration for humanitarian assistance and successful resettlement of IDPs.

Review of Empirical Studies

This study has carefully reviewed empirical scholarly work whose literature have close bearing to the subject of study which is, 'appraisal of select newspapers coverage of

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Benue State'. The study is diverse and thought-provoking touching on salient and elucidating issues that relate and affect IDPs and their day-to-day activities. To this end, this section shall be presenting findings of The Cardiff School of Journalism showing the relevance, similarities and dissimilarities to the current study.

In a research of The Cardiff School of Journalism (2015) titled: "Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries," it aptly provided pertinent understanding of the current study, "Appraisal of Select Newspaper Coverage of Internally Displaced Persons in Benue State," underscoring the crucial role that the media plays in internal displacement. The study effectively demonstrated the changing patterns and politics of the press's coverage of homeless individuals, whether they are refugees or internally displaced people (IDPs), despite focusing on migrants and refugees across the region of the Mediterranean Sea.

In actuality, many displaced people sought refuge in Europe after the Arab Spring and other conflict-related displacement across Africa and the Middle East. However, because of complex issues with access to Europe, some of them opted for the illegal route through the Mediterranean Sea, which proved to be their albatross and resulted in the deaths of over 200,000 refugees and migrants in 2014 (UNHCR, 2015). Following public outcry to this predicament, the UNHCR and other non-governmental organisations entered the issue through extensive media advocacy campaigns. The outcome of the research covering five European countries namely, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Spain and the UK showed that discordant opinions among the media and the under reporting of humanitarian problems of the migrants/refugees. It was a content analysis

of European press publications containing a wide spectrum of political opinions and strong circulation. The chosen newspapers from Germany, Sweden, and the UK were broadsheets and tabloids, with the intention of highlighting the parallels and discrepancies between the popular and quality journalism. Exclusively broadsheets were printed in Spain and Italy; tabloids were not. The study proposed that media narratives should be taken into consideration instead of viewing refugees and migrants as the issue. According to the Cardiff School of Journalism (2015), there is no one-size-fits-all approach to media coverage of migrants. It was suggested that targeted, customised campaigns that take into consideration the distinct political and cultural contexts of the many European countries be necessary for media advocacy.

It is significant to note that, while there are differences, the concept and technique of the aforementioned study and the current study are comparable. The conceptual connection between the two studies stems from their shared objective of determining the scope and justification of coverage. Methodologically, newspaper material was analysed in both investigations. However, the research on their subjects highlights the key distinctions. One example of this is that, whereas the present study focuses on IDPs in Benue State, the Cardiff School of Journalism's (2015) study focused on refugees and migrants traversing the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, the study under debate is concentrated on IDPs in Benue State, whereas the Cardiff School of Journalism (2015) study covers a broader spectrum, namely the continent of Europe.

Theoretical Framework

The framing and agenda-setting theories serve as the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. This is because these theories have been found to be most

appropriate for this study. As a matter of fact, related studies of this nature have proven that framing and agenda setting theories are germane to this study. Reports of the Council of Europe Support and the UNHCR with the sustained resistance to the migration of displaced persons through the Mediterranean Sea are pointers to this fact. It was discovered that framing of the refugees/migrants as "crisis" framed the opinion of the governments and publics as well as influence political agenda in five and eight referenced countries of Spain, Germany, Sweden, and Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Serbia and Uk respectively. In the same vein this study sees the narratives of the mainstream media with regards to how the events of IDPs are covered makes the choice of these theories befitting for the study.

Therefore, the focus of this study will be limited to the ideas of framing and agenda-setting. The explanation for this is because the theories are relevant to the research and have commonalities. Agenda Setting Theory is adapted in Framing Theory. Both theories discuss how media shifts viewers' focus from the significance of a problem to what it wants to portray and how this is utilised to determine the impact of media (Bajrachaya, 2018). In essence, while framing theory is predicated on the idea that the media draws attention to certain events by framing them and then contextualising them (Mass Communication theory (online) quoted in Arowolo, 2017), agenda setting infers that the public is more likely to view a topic as significant the more attention it receives from the mainstream media on a particular incident (Drew, 2022).

Research Design

Using empirical data to answer your research question is known as research design (McCombes, 2022 & University Libraries, 2022). A research design, according to Kothari, quoted in Mirgisa (2019, p. 34), is a

fundamental strategy that directs the various stages of the research project that deal with data collecting and analysis. It is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy (Mirgisa, 2019, p.34).

In a similar vein, Kumar (2011) quoted Mirgisa (2019, p. 34), who states that a research design is an approach that the researcher chooses to follow in order to provide vivid, impartial, accurate, and cost-effective answers to questions. It is a methodical, targeted strategy to choosing how data should be gathered. This is because research design is organised in a systematic, goal-oriented manner. Drawing from the above, mixed research content analysis approach was adopted, meaning that both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in the content analysis of the chosen newspapers' editions. The goal of the quantitative method was to explain phenomena by the collection and analysis of numerical data using mathematical techniques, particularly statistics (Gunderson, 2002 quoted in Muij, 2010 as cited in Mirgisa, 2019, p. 34).

Quantitative study necessitates counting and classifying articles that are connected to IDP tales in terms of genres, topics, sources, location, and importance provided for the stories in the media, claims Mirgisa (2019, p. 34). However, qualitative methods are interpretive in nature, or more accurately, they use an inferential approach. The information obtained through content analysis is supplemented by the qualitative technique, which has a comprehensive approach that incorporates an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Mirgisa, 2019, p. 35). This took into cognisance the units of analysis and content categories as critical compasses in extrapolating data during content analysis as applied in this case. Content categories

provide us the limits or framework for analysis, whereas the unit of analysis supplies the fundamentals. Studies in particular have been fruitful inasmuch as the categories were precisely defined and suitably tailored to the issue and the subject matter (Berelson quoted in Wimmer & Dominick as cited Mirgisa, 2019, p. 41). With this in mind, the items on the pages of the chosen newspapers which included news, features, editorials, pictures, cartoons, letters to the editor, and advertorials were the units of study.

In complementing the mixed approach, interview was employed for wide extrapolation of data. The researcher chose purposive sampling approach for the selection of *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* Newspapers on the basis of their coverage and penetration. The same also applied to the choice of Benue State IDPs for the study. Furthermore, conducting the coding, the researcher and a coder who is from Abdullahi Adamu Library in Keffi were engaged in the coding. To effectively carry out this task, the researcher had to provide hands-on training to the coder on how to code the newspapers purposively selected for the research. Having understood the process, a coding sheet was provided for collating and collecting the needed data. The researcher adopted Holsti formula for the study in determining the intercoder reliability. Holsti (1969) states that this method may be used to determine the dependability of nominal data, hence it was taken into consideration (Mirgisa, 2019 p. 42).

Reliability= $\frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$

$N1 + N2$

Where M= number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree

N1 = number of coding decisions by the first coder

N2 = number of coding decisions by the second code

Data Presentation and Analysis

Upon completing the field work of collecting data in respect of analysing the contents of *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian Newspapers* for the editions of 2018 beginning from January to December, a total of 730 editions of the newspapers were covered containing 792 publications of IDPs and related IDPs issues. Within the period of review, it was observed that internal displacement was not just limited to conflict as a causal factor but

includes natural disaster. While conflict arising from communal clashes, farmer-herder conflagration, insurgency, banditry and other heinous atrocity constitute the major reason for displacement, natural disasters too, have in no small measure contributed to this malaise. To this end, the tables below capture the analysed data of the newspapers and how the newspapers reported displacement from these planks.

Table 1: The below showing the stories by *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* reflecting the various units of analysis from January to December 2018

Variables	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Frequency	Percentage (%)
News	278	213	491	62%
Features	46	36	82	10.3%
Editorial	1	6	7	1%
Photo	73	35	108	13.6%
Caption	67	29	96	12.1%
Cartoon	3	-	3	0.4%
Letter to Editor	4	-	4	0.5%
Advertorial	1	-	1	0.1%
Total			792	100%

Source: Researcher's Content Analysis 2023

The implication of this is that news had the highest concentration of IDPs stories which as translated expressed the level of importance attached to IDPs stories. While the significance of news stories cannot be overemphasised, the embellishments, depth and variety can only be augmented by features, editorials and pictorials. However, features, editorials and pictorials had frequency distributions of 82, 7 and 108 representing 10.3%, 1% and 13.6% respectively.

Table 2: The table below showing the segregation of *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* reports of displacement

Variable	News	Features	Editorial	Photo	Caption	Cartoon	Letter to Editor	Advertorial	Total	Percentage (%)
Natural disaster related	38	8	-	34	15	1	-	-	96	12.1%

displacement	453	74	-	74	81	2	4	1	696	87.9%
Conflict related displacement	491	82	7	108	96	3	4	1	792	100%
Total										

Source: Researcher's Content Analysis for 2023

The table above shows that conflict as a causal factor had greater coverage of 696 representing 87.9% of the entire coverage. Another consideration is the fact that Nigeria unlike other disaster endemic climes of the world, contends majorly with flooding as a natural disaster which is seasonal and prevalent during the rainy season. The implication is that conflict or man-made displacement as it is in Nigeria today, is unpredictably rampant and sporadic. This may have occasioned the reason for the low coverage of natural disaster-related displacement as compared to conflict.

Table.3: What kind of frames did newspapers give Benue IDPs and IDPs-related issues?

	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assistance	68	17	85	10.8%
Framing				
Attribution of Responsibility	22	8	30	3.8%
Framing				
Conflict Framing	119	65	184	23.5%
Diagnostics	14	5	19	2.4%
Framing				
Human Interest	180	207	387	49.3%
Framing				
Solution Framing	56	207	387	49.3%
Total	459	326	785	100%

Source: Researcher's Content Analysis for 2023

By Implication, it is obvious to infer that as a going concern with the consideration of profitability and sustainability, stories that are eye-catching and attention-seeking spontaneously spur the intuitive wittiness of reporters and by extension the newspapers they represent. It is this ulterior motive that drive the coverage of IDPs from the perspective of human interest. Further, it is decoy for shifting attention from the IDPs who should have been the primary beneficiaries of media frames to government, NGOs, philanthropists and other actors. This situation undermines the sincere concerns of IDPs which have to do with their empowerment, welfare and resettlement in the face of worsening economic hardship.

Table 4: How did newspapers source(s) of information impact on Benue IDPs?

Variables	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Host Community	54	53	107	13.9%
Security (Personnel)	45	18	63	8.9%
Government	142	84	226	29.2%
Correspondent/Contributor	180	107	287	37.2%
Internally Displaced Person	3	9	12	1.6%
Non governmental Organization	49	28	77	10%
Total			772	100%

Source: Researcher's Content Analysis for 2023

The implication of this is consequent upon the fact that IDPs are infinitesimally insignificant in matters that concern them. The import of this is that critical decisions about IDPs are taken without recourse to their inputs. This can also mean that they are treated with contempt knowingly or unknowingly. As far as Benue IDPs are concerned, the presentation generally covers their predicaments as they share in this challenge. As an intrinsically connected part of the entire IDPs population in the country, the inferred meaning is that the opportunity of expressively making meaningful contributions to issues bordering on their humanity was not accorded to Benue IDPs.

Table 5: What are the projected thematic structures of newspapers on Benue IDPs?

Variables	Daily Trust	The Guardian	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Advocacy	29	54	83	10.7%
Insecurity	217	155	372	47.9%
Resettlement	24	3	27	3.5%
Donation	67	23	90	11.5%
Conflict Resolution	6	14	20	2.6%
Humanitarian issues	108	42	150	19.3%
Opinion	9	26	35	4.5%
Total			777	100%

Source: Researchers Content Analysis for 2023

As a matter of fact, displacement is usually the eventual outcomes of conflicts as we have witnessed in the last decade or more. The exponential escalation of sporadic conflicts in diverse dimensions have seen lives and property lost in great proportion necessitating people to flee from such trouble spots to areas of safety. This unfortunate situation portends the automatic conversion of their status to IDPs. While the nexus between insecurity and displacement is inextricably ingrained, the focus should be on the way out and the victims of this national cataclysm. In other

words, the underlying challenge for displacement however, the aftermath of this calls for both humanitarian and security response. This is so because the situation which has necessitated their unpremeditated exit from their homes of residence meant that they were not prepared for the unforeseen exigencies which have to do with their feeding, housing (shelter), clothing, health and children's needs as applicable.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the content analysis and, consequently, the interview, the newspapers mostly used news articles to draw readers' or the public's attention to IDP events and concerns. This has shown that as purveyor of news, IDPs stories were included but the concern was, how much of the needed impact could this make after the rudimentary ingredients had been communicated? Which in this case, is beyond the who, what, when, where, why and how. When all this has been done, the consideration then would be: what happens to the causal effects, the intrigues, and the consternation of forces at play, the bittersweet and the resolutions? Having pointed out this, it is also important to ask: What then happens to the editorial position of the newspapers when it comes to IDPs? It is therefore instructive to state that, while news is incontestably irreplaceable as far as the practice of journalism is concerned, augmentations cannot be overruled. While this supports the adage "a tree does not make a forest," it also supports Ibrahim & Gujbawa's (2017) claim that the frameworks used to study IDPs did not sufficiently highlight the issues that would help reduce or address underlying problems that would ensure not just the short-term, transient interventions but also factor medium- and long-term solutions to the persistent problems of IDPs.

In a similar spirit, Mirgisa (2019) notes that news outlets mostly covered topics pertaining to internally displaced people (IDPs), with a notable distinction being the extensive use of government officials' quotes in the newspapers he chose for his research. Mezentsev & Kuznetsova (2022) contend

that the media primarily covers the problems of internally displaced people (IDPs) as a population that receives assistance, mainly disregarding more complex concerns like their human rights, trauma, adaptability, and feeling of belonging. In line with this assertion, Journalists for Christ (2019) claim that deeper problems such the dearth of necessities, sexual harassment, poor health, and human rights violations affecting internally displaced people were not covered. To elaborate further, why are augmentations necessary? Major news events serve as a springboard for more discussion on contentious and bothersome topics, such as the humanitarian plight of internally displaced people (IDPs) brought on by disasters that are both natural and man-made. In Nigeria's case, though, it is primarily man-made. This supports the findings of the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) study from 2023, which said that the protracted struggle between farmers and herders was the cause of the violence in Benue.

Conclusion

IDPs situation has become a pandemic creating humanitarian crisis across the globe. In the last decade or more, Nigeria, particularly Benue State, North Central and North Eastern part of the country have witnessed rising wave of sporadic attacks that have claimed lives, destroyed property and rendered many others as IDPs. The IDPs sometimes find themselves in government-approved camps while some others improvise makeshift camps for themselves. There are others too, who have resorted to staying with relatives, friends or settle for private

arrangements. Bearing this mind, it is important to stress that IDPs are scattered all over in order secure alternative accommodation for themselves. There is also the concern of these IDPs being exposed to further attacks from marauders. There are also cases of rape, malnourishment, poverty, poor hygiene, forced adolescent marriages and high mortality and morbidity rates.

Also very disturbing are reported situations where those who are meant to provide security to these distraught group of Nigerians turn out to be the same people who add to the pain. Needless to mention the documented instances of the camps' profiteering scheme. This is an instance of someone abusing the system by taking advantage of the current unfavourable conditions facing internally displaced persons. What do I mean? Relief supplies or donations intended for internally displaced people are being misappropriated for personal use. It is also a situation when relief supplies that are piled up in State Emergency Management Agencies' warehouses are not dispersed and are allowed to spoil or expire. The list is endless, but the obstacles are significant and crippling. What function does the media serve in all of this? The media, particularly newspapers, have an obligation to do more than just report events; they should also develop, reinvent, and spark conversations inside their pages that might result in practical solutions for internally displaced people.

Recommendations

Newspapers are undoubtedly strategic and have the power to sway judgements that might alter the stories told about internally displaced people. The state of the internally displaced people in Benue is alarming and urgently needs care. The study's result leads to the following five suggestions, which are listed below:

- i. That media organisations should deploy technology to its advantage by encouraging citizen journalism. In this case, in camps or locations where there is connectivity and available smart telephones, the IDPs can be coached on how to report issues or events happening around them to media organisations. By so doing, they are not just reporting about themselves but trust is being built. Where there are no smart telephones, IDPs through established mutual relationship with media organisations can become vital information source to these media organisations.
- ii. That rights-based journalism approach can be adopted when reporting about IDPs. Rather than see IDPs from the angle of vulnerability, pity and hopelessness, they should be seen as normal, regular citizens with equal rights as other Nigerians but for unforeseen circumstances not within their control, they have been subjected to deplorable situations.
- iii. Training and retraining of IDPs should be encouraged with a view to keeping them updated with global best practice in handling and reporting IDPs issues.
- iv. That media houses should bring to bear their framing and agenda setting responsibilities in stimulating issues-based discussion about IDPs.
- v. That media organisations should collaborate across board with relevant agencies of interest in adopting workable models for changing the negative trend around IDPs.

References

- Adeyemo, O. & Obaje, E.C. (2020). Newspaper coverage of internally displaced persons in Nigeria: May-June 2018. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: An Arts & Humanities - Psychology*, 20 (2), pp.1-7.
- Arowolo, S.O. (2017). Understanding framing theory. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.25800.52482
- Bajracharya, S. (2018). Mass communication framing theory. Retrieved on November 19, 2022 from <https://www.businessstopia.net/mass-communication/framing-theory>.
- Bentil, S. & Asekere, G. (2021). Internal conflict displacement galore in the horn of Africa: Ethiopia on the radar. In Sage Open, pp.1-35. DOI:10.31124/advance.1660110.
- Buciuman, L. (2020). History of newspapers from the first one published to the digital age. Retrieved on January 1, 2023 from <https://blog.flipsnack.com/history-of-newspapers/>.
- Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (2015). Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries being a report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, December 2015.
- Drew, C. (2022). Agenda setting theory (definition, examples & criticisms). Retrieved on November 19, 2022 from <https://helpfulprofessor.com/agenda-setting-theory/>
- Ekpa, S. & Dahlan, N. (2016). Sovereignty, internal displacement and right of interventions: Perspectives from the African Unions constructive act and the convention for protection and assistance of internally displaced persons. DOI:10.32890/uumjla.7.2016.4633
- Encyclopedia Britannica (n.d.).
- Ibrahim, M. (2021). Coverage of internally displaced persons (idps) in Nigeria by Daily Trust and the Nation Newspapers. *SAU journal of management and social sciences*, 6(3), pp.190-196
- Ibrahim, M. & Gujbawu, M. (2017). An analysis of news reports of internally displaced Persons (idps) in Nigeria by *Daily Trust* and *the Nation* newspapers in the year 2016. In *New media and mass communication*, 59, pp.11-15
- Inobemhe, K., Bala, G.A., Shaibu, O.M., Onah, K.I. & Santas, T. (2022). Assessing the pros and cons of political communication and the politics of power rotation in Nigeria. In E.S. Asemah, D.O. Ekhareafu & T. Santas' (Ed), *Thoughts on political communication in Nigeria*. pp.271-283.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC (2022).
- Journalists for Christ (2019). Monitoring media reportage and portrayal of internally displaced persons (idps) in Africa.
- Kalin, W. (2008). Brookings report on displacement caused by the effects of climate change: Who will be affected and what are the gaps in the normative framework for their protection? Retrieved on November 27, 2022 from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/displacement-caused-by-the-effects-of-climate-change-who-will-be-affected-and-what-are-the-gaps-in-the-normative-frameworks-for-their-protection/>.
- Kellenberger, J. (2009). Root causes and prevention of internal displacement: The ICRC perspective. Retrieved on November 10, 2022 from www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/statement/displacement-statement-231009.htm
- Khalid, M.Z. & Ahmed, A. (2014). A snapshot of role of newspapers. In the contemporary newspeak. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 19(5), pp.6-11.
- Kumar, N. (n.d.). What is the role of newspapers in society? Retrieved on November 27, 2022 from <https://www.quora.com/what-is-the-role-of-newspaper-in-society>
- Lwabukuna, O.K. (2011). Internal displacement in Africa: African solutions to African problems? Challenges and prospects. In *journal of internal displacement*, 1(1), pp.131-141. Retrieved on

- November 11, 2022 from <https://journalinternaldisplacement.webs.com/announcements.htm>
- McCombes, S. (2022). What is a research design? Types, guide & examples. Retrieved on November 19, 2022 from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-design>
- Mezentsev, K. & Kuznetsova, E. (2022). What shapes the narratives on internally displaced people in Dnipro media? Retrieved on April 24, 2023 from <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/02/02/what-shapes-the-narratives-on-internally-displaced-people-in-dnipro-media/>
- Mirgisa, G. (2019). A comparative content analysis of Ethiopian newspapers coverage of internally displaced persons (idps): The case of the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter newspapers being a thesis submitted to the school of journalism and communication, Addis Ababa.
- Obidike, N.F. & Ezeabasili (2020). Coverage of gender-based violence in IDP camps: A critical analysis of select Nigerian newspapers. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 25(8), 2, pp. 19-26.
- O'Reilly, N., Jackson, K., Bell, J. & Hunter, C. (2022). Media portrayal of displaced persons. Retrieved on November 18, 2022 from https://www.physio-pedia.com/Media_Portrayal_of_Displaced_Persons
- Owoaje, E.T., Uchendu, O.C., Ajayi, T.O. & Cadmus, E.O. (2016). A review of the health problems of the internally displaced persons in Africa. In *Nigerian Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 23(4) 161-171. DOI: 10.4103/1117-1936.196242
- Pandey, E.A. (2020). The role of newspaper in society, *CaymanianTimes*, January 27, 2020. Retrieved on November 27, 2022 from <https://www.caymaniantimes.ky/news/the-role-of-newspapers-in-society>
- Sambe, J.A. (2008). *Introduction to mass communication practice in Nigeria*. Spectrum books ltd
- Santas, T., Inobemhe, K. & Nnaane, B. (2022). Curbing corruption in the midst of a pandemic: The role of the media in Nigeria during covid-19 pandemic. *Malaysian Journal of Communication Education*. 2(1), pp.39-57.
- Santas, T. (2015). Print media coverage of the kidnap of the secondary school girls in Chibok, Borno State: A study of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers. *International Journal of Communication: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication Studies*, 17. Pp166-176.
- Santas, T. (2013). The media, terrorism and the challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria's fourth republic. *Benin Mediacom Journal*, 7. Pp 63-75.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, UNHCR (2018). Retrieved on November 16, 2022 from <https://www.unhcr.org/ng/12477-unhcr-contribution-non-food-items-to-idps-in-benue.html>
- Yigzaw, G S. & Abitew, E.B. (2019). Causes and impacts of internal displacement in Ethiopia. *Journal of social work*. (1), pp.32-41.