
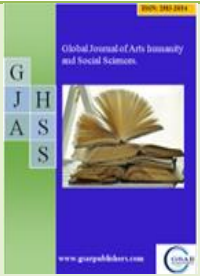


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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PUNCH AND THE NATION NEWSPAPERS REPORTAGE OF CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Media reportage around the world have shown that about 60% of children are engaged in one form of labour or another. World agencies like the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated the number of working children aged between 5 and 14 years to be about 250 million in the developing countries, of which at least 120 million are working full-time, and of these, 61 percent are in Asia, 32 percent in Africa and 7 percent in Latin America. This report gives concern to the research group who launched an inquiry find out how well Nigerian media, especially the press, give prominence to this societal menace. Adopting content analysis research method, two prominent national dailies, The Punchng and The Nation newspapers, were selected. Daily editions between January 2019 and September 2019 were purposively selected, giving a total of 546 edition of the selected newspapers which were studied in terms of prominence, forms of coverage and the unit of analysis were pegged at straight news stories, features, editorials, opinions and pictures on child labour issues in Nigeria. Data gathered reveal that the two national dailies give little attention to the issues of child labour. Worst still, the press was not making any deliberate attempt to raise awareness against child labour in the country. The study was hinged on media Framing theory, and the study recommends that Nigeria media should give more space and time to the menace of child labour. It was also recommended that deliberate efforts be put into the media campaign against child labour across the country.

Keywords: bonded labour, child abuse, domestic servant, media framing, sexual exploitation

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INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the mass media is aghast with News on the engagement of children in labour and or work. The media posit that the world population especially in the developing countries of Asia and Africa is made up of children (between ages 5-15) and about 60% of these children are engaged in one form of labour or another. For them, children should not have to work but the international labour organization (ILO) estimates the number of working children aged between 5 and 14 years to be about 250 million in the developing countries, of whom at least 120 million are working full-time of these, 61 percent are in Asia, 32 percent in Africa and 7 percent in Latin America. Relatively, fewer children

work in developed countries (ILO 1995). Aminu (2013) posits that there is need for intensified reportage from the media on the causes and dangers of child labour and that the media should bring the issue to the front burner. Media reports can also sensitise the government on the need for appropriate policies to be put in place to address the issue of poverty and uneven distribution of resources which could lead to child labour and also to make policies guiding the use of children and enforce punishment where necessary. International organizations like the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO see child labour as a serious global issue. It is the contention of these organizations that the engagement of children in labour is harmful in several ways to the children, the family and the society. It is their belief that it impairs the physical and mental development



of children. It affects the family image and rubs society of her future leaders and labour force.

Different legislations like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and some state laws have been instituted to address the problems that children face, yet child labour remains a major problem in the country. Child labour comprises street hawking, domestic service, bus conducting, trafficking and street begging among other activities. The threat of poverty, high rate of unemployment, diseases, violence and war makes children face commercial exploitations by adults who deny them the privilege of protection. Based on the Child Rights Act, children like adults have several rights which must not only be recognized, but enforced, upheld and protected; yet, today in Nigeria, children still walk the streets hawking and begging even when they should be in school. Failure on the part of government to strictly enforce this Act has not only done the damage of entrenching boldness in those who use children for labour but has increased the different forms of abuse society impose on the children. Nwiro (2010) reports that 15 million children under the age of 14 are working across Nigeria.

The mass media is a matter that touches all our lives. Without ceasing, almost every day since early childhood, it has continually played a significant role in molding our personality, enriching our background knowledge, feeding us with information of any kind. According to Valenzuela and McCombs (2009), the mass media help us to learn about the world beyond our reach. The media serve as the chief information source for most people; what most individuals know today is as a result of the pictures created for them by the mass media. The media can raise awareness on the need for parents to stop giving out their children for cheap labour and also sending them out to hawk or beg, they can also sensitize children on some of the rights as stipulated in the Child's Rights Act and the UNCRC. However, the media is the most powerful sector of an economy. It is a tool to maintain a balanced society which is characterized by well-informed people.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the media in every society is to educate, inform and enlighten the people. The media achieve this by acting as a watchdog to the members of the public through in-depth coverage of events and well written stories; they can portray the impending dangers involved in subjecting children to work that would affect them physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Media coverage seemed to be bias because much attention is paid to political issues and praise singing rather than balancing reports. Media reporting and coverage of child labour in the newspaper is countable, based on the fact that the reporting is limited or the stories are not juicy enough to report. Yet, Nigerian media houses are aware of the age at which a person is considered an adult and ready for employment. Goddard and Saunders (2001) cited in Oyero (2011) posits that the "though our local media create awareness about child labour; unfortunately, political issues receive far greater attention in the Nigerian mass media than some other important issues like health, education, environment, social issues and so on.". Child labour is an issue of not just on a national scale

but also on an international scale. and against this backdrop, comparative analysis of *The Punch and The Nation* reportage of child labour in Nigeria and issues affecting the child will form the basis for this research.

Research Questions

1. What is the dominant journalistic genre in which child labour issues are presented in *The Punch and The Nation newspaper*?
2. What is the dominant child labour issue covered by the newspapers under study?
3. What is the level of prominence of child labour issues in selected newspapers?
4. What is the direction of framing of child labour issues in the selected newspapers?

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Child Labour

Child labour is an age-long practice in the history of mankind. It has existed in various forms in various parts of the world since ancient times. The earliest known form of child labour is slavery which was big business, as it both created and relied on the support network of big merchants and some well-placed members of the societies where it flourished. In more recent history, child labour emerged as an issue during the industrial revolution when children were forced to work in dangerous conditions for well up to 12 hours in a day. In 1860, 50% of children in England between the ages of 5 and 15 were said to be working. However, 1919 saw the world systematically begin to address the issue of child labour and the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted standards to eliminate it. Throughout the 20th Century, a number of legally binding agreements and international conventions were adopted but despite all these, child labour continues to this day. The highest number of child-labourers are said to be in the Asia-Pacific region but the largest percentage of children, as proportion of the child population, is evidently found in sub-Saharan Africa with Nigeria having a fair share. United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF 2015) summed up its report on child labour thus, "child labour remains a major source of concern in Nigeria till date despite legislation against it". It went further to define child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and deprive them of opportunities for schooling and development. The number of child-labour cases in Nigeria is so alarming that every sector of the country should get involved in the pursuit of finding solution to this challenge. According to (ILO 2014) Nigeria has 15 million numbers of children working under the age of 14years. The jobs assigned to these children are tedious and beyond what their age should embark upon in dangerous circumstances; these jobs include selling on the streets, begging, washing cars, or watching cars and shoe shining; others work as apprentice mechanics, hairdresser and bus conductors while a large number of works as domestic servants and farm hands.

Forms of Child Labour

In sub-Saharan Africa, hawking/street trading, seems to be the most popular form of child labour. Estimates indicate that 20 per cent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 are involved in child labour and street trading, ILO (2014). This is certainly the case in Nigeria in general and the South- East and south-West zone in particular where such children hawk a wide range of cheap articles, edibles and products such as sachet water, plantain chips, bread, biscuits, groundnuts, fruits, vegetables, wears, newspapers etc., in the streets and along the roads especially at damaged portions of the roads where motorists and other road users are constrained to slow down due to the bad condition of such roads.

Child Begging

This has negative psychological, social and health consequences. The three categories of child beggars are those who lead blind parents or relatives, those who beg entirely on their own and those who act as fronts for their parents, especially mothers, who are usually hidden from public view but supervise them from a close distance. These children are the most vulnerable because they are from families of the poorest of the poor. In all three categories, they run enormous risks of running or darting between cars in heavy traffic putting them in dangers of accidents. They also suffer the severe psycho-social consequences of engaging in demeaning type of activity and being exposed to constant abuse and aggression from the general public. In the southern part of Nigeria, begging was not significant though among the Yorubas, it was culturally expected that mothers with many children would beg (normally for a few days) as a symbolic expression of their willingness to demean themselves for the survival of the children. In recent times however, this has changed as beggars can be spotted in several cities. Begging is most wide spread in the north where alms giving are regarded as a religious obligation. Children known as the al-majiri (any child or adult who begs for alms in the streets or from house to house) commonly found in the northern part of Nigeria survive only by begging on the streets Nwiro, (2010).

Sexual Exploitation

Commercial sexual exploitation has become a problem of special concern in Nigeria. The demand for cheap commercial sex workers makes the sex industry a booming one today as well as a popular destination for many child labourers especially the female ones. This eventually gives rise to pornography and child prostitution as a worst form of child labour that is popular in many cities across Africa, today because of its role in the development of the HIV/AIDS epidemic now sweeping the country. Orubuloye et al (1994) indicate child prostitution in the country surveys carried out between 1989 and 1993 by the West African Research Group on sexual Networking, he identified the characteristics of commercial sex workers in five cities; Lagos, Ado-Ekiti and Benin, in the West, Port Harcourt in the South-South and Kaduna in the North. Previous investigation showed that Nigeria commercial sex workers were mostly under 30, somewhat better educated than average for women of their age in the community, and usually from other ethnic groups than those of the local regions. Orubuloye et al 1994. The commercial sex workers were found in hotels, brothels, bars

and streets, many below twenty years and partially educated. They operated outside their local governments, from different ethnic groups, most of them were single either separated or divorced. Those who had children were left with grandmothers in their local areas. They were on the average found to have about thirty clients a week; these clients were both single and married men. Sexual exploitation does not end with prostitution alone, there are other forms of abuse; scarcities of jobs, economic pressure of dependent children and inadequate financial support from husbands are among them. These include students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. In the end however, it leads to ugly trends such as sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, single parenthood, dropping out of school, poverty, illiteracy, etc., continue to be on an alarming increase.

Bonded Labour

Bonded labour which is also known as debt bondage is another form of child labour and it designates the practice of pledging labour as payment or collateral on a debt. Child bonded labour refers to situations where a child's labour services are offered in exchange for loan, (Genicot, 2000). In some instances, this practice occurs in respect of the labour of the child alone, or that of the entire family, is directly offered over a period of time. In other cases, bondage is intergenerational such that once parents are no longer able to work on account of sickness or old

age, debts are transferred from them to their children and this can even cut across generations. Bonded labour has been already widespread since ancient times and has flourished at various periods in most countries. It is estimated that millions of people are still held in bonded labour around the world (Human Rights Watch Asia, 1996). At the origin of bonded labour lies a loan that a family takes from an employer usually to service previous loans, pay for food, health care, marriage, funeral rites etc. In the event of inability to pay back for whatsoever reason, the family is made to pledge the labour of some of its members, adults and children alike, to the lender in exchange for the loan. These victims are then engaged to work in order to repay the debts. Such lenders do also take advantage of the illiteracy and lack basic skills of their victims; such that in many cases, the debt actually increases instead of going down. Working conditions are also usually exploitative and inhuman.

Child labour in House Helps/Domestic Servants

Child labour also exists in the form of house helps or domestic servants. In this case, privileged people from the cities easily convince poor rural parents to hand in their children to them with various promises of better life and education. However, these children are sooner than later turned into house helps who cook food, wash clothes, care for babies, fetch water and attend to all sorts of household chores etc. Children in domestic service in Nigeria can be in several forms. Firstly, it may involve children from other families, parents, or another society employed by certain people which are believed to be wealthy and sometimes of modest income. The child is expected to work as 'house help' (domestic servant), taking care of the house and making sure that the needs of the entire family are meant. He or she gets up very early in the



morning and begins his or her work by fetching of water from a nearby well, balancing the heavy jug on his or her head as he or she returns. Then he/she prepares breakfast and serves it to the members of the household. In addition, he/she later does the remaining jobs in the evenings and late in the night (Okafor, 2010). In many cases, such children are exploited as they are merely used and dumped on the basis of one accusation or the other. This has led to the frustration of many youths who lack the adequate machinery to seek any form of redress or social safety measure to fall back on. Another type of domestic service that can be rendered by a child at home is whereby the child stays with his/her parents or guardian, though he/she is not paid wages like the domestic servant, but he/she is born or socialized into the family to help the household by doing most of the work. This is most common among all the labor done by the child, which may be beneficial and give the child a sense of self-worth and esteem in the family. But the fact that the labor is not paid for and that the labor deprives the child of needed rest and recreation, constitutes as child labor (Kuti, 2006).

Child labour in Agricultural Sector

On a global scale, far more children work in rural than in urban areas, thus the activities most working children perform are in fields and on farms. This can include caring for animals and livestock and doing many other tasks. Some of these children work with their families and live at home. Others go out to work for employers, such as rural land owners, on a daily basis, and some work for employers far from their families, sometimes under arrangements that are neither legal nor beneficial to the child. Children can also be in forced and bonded labour in agriculture- an arrangement from which the child cannot easily escape unless "rescued" by some outsider, ILO (2014). The phenomenon under consideration has been associated with a number of remote and immediate causes by different researchers, popular among which include poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, culture, large household sizes, broken marriages and early loss of parents, ineffective laws and policies gravitated by lack will to enforce them, corruption and lack of appropriate social safety nets etc.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing Theory

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) developed framing theory. The major basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Media framing is the way in which information is presented to its audiences. Goffman (1974, p.29) was the first person to concentrate on framing as a form of communication and defined "framing" as a "schema of interpretation" that enables individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" occurrences or life experiences. Framing can manipulate the way information is presented and can influence and alter decision making and judgment about the information. Through the use of images, words and by presenting a general context around the information presented, press can influence how people think about that information.

Iyengar (1991) identified two categories of frames: Episodic and Thematic frames. He asserts that episodic framing is when the media present issues in individual terms and on a short-term basis while thematic framing is when the media present issues from a collective angle and on a long-term basis. Frameworks Institute (2002 p.3) in explaining episodic frame asserts that it "reduces life to a series of disconnected episodes, random events or case studies." On the other hand, "thematic frame provides details about trends, not just individuals; they identify shortcomings at the community or systems level that have contributed to the problem." Episodic framing has to do with highlighting the issue from the individual's angle, that is, like attributing the blame of the problem to the victim. In using episodic frames, the issue is depicted as a particular person's problem, a specific incident, for example, a child begging on the street as a result of poverty, a child running errands for criminal gangs and not looking at the situation(s) that led to the child being in the reach of such gang, attributing the problem of child labour to the poor who give their children up to augment the family income rather than the society. Thematic frame on the other hand has to do with viewing the problem from a general or societal context, for example, discussing some of the causes of child labour and highlighting poverty as a major cause that can only be addressed when there is a fair distribution of resources across the citizenry. The way a journalist reports a story highlighting the problem and some of the causes can go a long way in putting the issue on people's minds. The report can come from the angle of dangers of the child on the street or from what the government can do to help the child maybe by distributing resources across the citizens to alleviate the sufferings of those who are less privileged.

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis according to Daramola and Daramola (2011) is a research method or technique that enables researcher to study written works systematically and quantitatively. This method is considered appropriate for this study because of its reliability in analysing relevant and visible media content as well as giving accurate and dependable result. These manifest media content of the selected newspapers: news stories, articles, editorials, opinions, feature and pictures was carefully examined and analyzed with a view to make justifiable inferences on the manner of reportage given to the issues of child labour in Nigeria. The study population for this study comprises two of the Nigerian newspapers. The papers considered for this study are *The Punch* and *The Nation* newspapers. The newspapers were purposively selected to reflect their circulation, scope and availability. In other words, *The Punch* and *The Nation* newspapers are almost available anywhere in the country. The study analysed child labour issues in these newspapers starting from January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. The study population was 273 editions of *The Punch* and *The Nation* newspapers. These totaling 546 editions of the selected newspapers. For this study, purposive sampling was adopted as the sampling technique in that it helps in choosing editions that basically report features, straight news stories, opinions, editorials, pictures on child labour. The categories of analysis of the content

of the selected newspapers are:

Prominence: This implies the placement accorded to the stories in the selected newspaper samples. The story for instance, could be placed in the Front Page (FP), Inside Page (IP) and Back Page (BP). Where a story is placed, determines to an extent, its level of significance or importance. The item in all the two dailies was content analyses based on: Front Page: Back Page. Inside Page:

Genre/Forms of coverage: this has to do with some of the editorial contents of the newspaper like editorial, features, opinion articles/columns, pictures, straight news stories are in use for this study and these categories were used to answer the research question to know what extent *the punch and the nation* newspapers publish about child labour in Nigeria. Child labour issue types: Frame type

Units of Analysis: This is the smallest element of content analysis. In this research work, the unit of analysis include: features, straight news stories, opinion, editorials, pictures that relates to cases of child labour issues in Nigeria.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Answering of Research Questions

Generated data was presented using frequency tables and simple percentages. Data collected through content analysis was analyzed to examining how child labour issues were primed and reported by *The Punch and The Nation* newspapers.

Research Question one: What is the dominant journalistic genre in which child labour issues are presented in *The Punch and The Nation newspaper*?

Table 1: table showing distribution of reports according to the content units

| Story type | The Punch Newspaper | The Nation Newspaper |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| News stories | 36 (92.3%) | 53 (88.3%) |
| Editorial | 1 (2.6%) | 2 (3.3%) |
| Features | 2 (5.1%) | 5 (8.3%) |
| Opinions | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Comment | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Pictures | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | 39 (100%) | 60 (100%) |

Content Analysis (2019)

The data from the above table 1 revealed the differences among the selected newspapers in relations to their overall reportage of the same period. The highest reportage was by *The Nation* Newspapers with 53 news stories (88.3%), 2 editorials (3.3%), 5 features (8.3%), opinions, comment and pictures had no report all summed up to 60 (100%) items. *The Punch* newspapers had the second highest reportage with 36 (92.3%) news stories, 1 (2.6%), editorials 2 (3.3%), features (5.1%), opinions, comment and

pictures had no report, all summed up to 39 items. Hence, the total sum of items by the two newspapers on child labour issues in Nigeria related stories between January, 2019 and September, 2019 were 99 items.

Table 2: showing the distribution of reports on the coverage of child labour issues and other reports in the selected newspapers

| STORY TYPES | THE NATION NEWSPAPER | THE PUNCH NEWSPAPER |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Child labour issues | 60 (6.3%) | 39 (4.5%) |
| Politics | 449 (47.3%) | 400 (46.5%) |
| Sports | 68 (7.2%) | 75 (8.7%) |
| Health | 50 (5.3%) | 49 (5.7%) |
| Finance | 79 (8.3%) | 75 (8.7%) |
| Crime | 63 (6.6%) | 60 (7%) |
| Education | 45 (4.7%) | 36 (4.2%) |
| Foreign affairs | 30 (3.2%) | 29 (3.4%) |
| Others | 46 (4.8%) | 58 (6.7%) |
| Total | 950 (100%) | 860 (100%) |

Content Analysis (2019)

From the data above it can be deduced that both newspapers gave relevance to political news contents. Child labour issues had 6.3 % in the nation and 4.5 % in the punch newspapers news content of the total news content of the two newspapers in the period of study. With the interpretation above, it can be concluded that both the nation and punch newspapers gave little relevance to child labour issues reportage.

Research Question two: What is the dominant child labour issue covered by the newspapers under study?

Table 3: Table showing the distribution of the reportage of the types of child labour issues in the selected Newspapers

| Types of Child Labour Issues | The Punch Newspaper | The Nation Newspaper |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Child street hawking | 1 (2.6%) | 0 (0%) |
| Child street begging | 1 (2.6%) | 5 (8.3%) |
| Child domestic servants | 0 (0%) | 3 (5%) |
| Child abuse | 30 (76.9%) | 31 (51.7%) |
| Child trafficking | 4 (10.3%) | 11 (8.3%) |
| Commercial sexual exploitation | 0(0%) | 0(0%) |
| General child rights | 3 (7.6%) | 10 (16.7%) |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total | 39 (100%) | 60 (100%) |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|

Content Analysis (2019)

The above table indicates the distribution of the reportage of the types of child labour issues in *The Punch* and *The Nation* newspapers.

The Nation has the highest reports on the types of child labour: child abuse 31(51.7%), 11(8.3%) were published on child trafficking, 10 (16.7%) General Child rights, 5 (8.3%) child street begging, 3(5%) Child domestic servants, commercial sexual exploitation and Child Street hawking had no report. *The Punch* newspaper had 30 (76.9%) child abuses, 4 (10.3%) Child trafficking, 3 (7.6%) General Child rights, 1(2.6%) child street begging, 1(2.6%) child street hawking, 0 commercial sexual exploitation and 0 child domestic services. The data shows that the most dominant child labour issue covered by the newspapers [The *Punch* 30(76.9%) and *The Nation* 31 (51.7%)] was child abuse. Furthermore, Child trafficking also was covered most by *The Nation* 11 (8.3%) while General Child rights were covered most by *The Nation* (21.1%). Six child labour issues including general child rights were raised for this study. *The Nation* newspaper looked at general child rights issues while making reference to some specific types. Such stories which made reference to child rights violation generally and made some allusions to some types of child labour were categorized under the general child rights section. Important child labour issues such as child domestic servants, child street begging and child street hawking were partially relevant while commercial sexual exploitation were overlooked by the newspapers.

Research Question Three: What is the level of prominence of child labour issues in selected newspapers?

Table 4: table showing the distribution of stories according to prominence given to reports of child issues based on position of coverage in the selected newspapers

| Placement | The punch Newspaper | The Nation Newspaper |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Front page | 5 (12.8%) | 0 (0%) |
| Inside page | 34 (87.2%) | 60 (100%) |
| Back page | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | 39 (100%) | 60 (100%) |

Content Analysis (2019)

Data from table 5 above showed that *The Punch* newspaper, 5(12.8%) reports were published on the front page, 34(87.2%) were published as the inside pages while there were no publication on the back page. Also, in *The Nation newspaper*, there were 60 (100%) in the inside pages while there was no publication on the front page and the back page. This reflects the placement of child labour issues in Nigeria selected while covering the issues of child labour in Nigeria. The analysis showed that *The Punch and The*

Nation newspapers attached different level of prominence to the reportage of child labour issues in the country.

Table 5: Table showing the distribution of stories according to prominence given to child labour issues based on position of coverage in both newspapers

| Placement | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Front page | 5 | 5.1% |
| Inside page | 94 | 94.9% |
| Back page | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 99 | 100% |

Content Analysis (2019)

From the table above, both newspapers reported 5 (5.1%) stories on the front page of their newspapers, 94 (94.9%) on the inside pages of the newspapers and for the back page no news contents. This data implies that the two newspapers (*The Punch and The Nation*) allocated greater space for child labour issues in the inside pages. This analysis also reveals that based on the placement; the two newspapers accorded prominence to the reportage of child labour issues by reporting more stories from the inside pages rather than the front page. However, the back page had no news content and this connects to the fact that lot of times, the back pages of the newspapers were mostly used for advertisement and sport news.

Research Question Four: What is the direction of framing of child labour issues in the selected newspapers?

Table 6: showing the direction of framing of the news content on child labour issues reported by the selected Newspapers

| Direction of Framing | The Punch Newspaper | The Nation Newspaper |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Episodic | 31 (79.5%) | 45 (75%) |
| Thematic | 8 (20.5%) | 15 (25%) |
| Total | 39 (100%) | 60 (100%) |

Content Analysis (2019)

From the above table 7 shows the percentage of how the two newspapers framed the child labour issues in Nigeria in 2019. The highest framing was by *The Nation* newspaper, the news items were framed episodically 45 (75%) and thematic 15 (25%) all summed up to 60(100%). *The Punch* newspaper had the second highest framing: episodic 31 (79.5%) and thematic 8 (20.5%) all summed up to 39 (100%). Therefore, the total sum of items by the two newspapers on child labour issues related stories 99 frame altogether. *The Nation* had the highest number of reports but more than half were episodically framed, most of the stories gathered were seen on the Crime page, this means that the stories were reported looking at the crime the individual committed without further discussing some of the underlying causes that led to that problem. More than half of the stories reported in *The Punch* were

also episodically framed. During the findings few of the reports were thematically framed that is giving the stories a broader context and societal angle. The frame types were also measured against the child labour issues to find out if certain child labour issues are prone to being framed episodically or thematically. The child labour issue with the highest number of reports was child abuse and more than half of the total number of stories on child abuse was framed episodically. This means that most of the reports were covered looking at individual episodes or crimes perpetrated by individuals.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ1: What is the dominant journalistic genre in which child labour issues are presented in *The Punch* and *The Nation* newspaper?

The data from the table 1 shows the percentage and the sum of items reported by the two newspapers in 2019 on child labour issues in Nigeria. The data reveal as well, the differences among the selected newspapers in relation to their overall reportage of the same period. The highest reportage was by *The Nation* Newspapers with 53 news stories (88.3%), 7 editorials, features stories (1.7%), no reports on opinions, comment and pictures all summed up to 60 (100%) items. *The Punch* newspapers had the second highest reportage with 36 (92.3%) news stories, 3 (7.7%) editorials, features stories, no reports opinions, comment and pictures, all summed up to 39 items. Hence, the total reportage of items by the two newspapers on child labour issues was 99 items.

The highest news content by the newspapers on child labour issues was straight news stories with 89 (89.9%) news stories. The editorials and features followed suit, Child domestic servant, Child Street begging, child Street hawking was partially significant while commercial sexual exploitation was overlooked by the newspapers. With the overall results, news items like sport, politics, and business had more space in the two newspapers than child labour issues. The findings further revealed how Nigerian newspapers focused little attention on their reportage of child labour issues generally. This, however, shows the level of priority given to child labour issues as well as intent to eradicate such by Nigerian newspapers in their reportage generally. The implication of this is that the reports did not allow for much interpretation and analysis by the reporters. News only contains information of what happened and the way it happened without any interpretations while features serve as analyses which help the audience to have better understanding issues surrounding child labour issues.

Features are in-depth piece of writing that also gives a background to an issue. It is important that newspapers give balanced attention to news and features so that while some issues are reported as news, it can further be discussed to give a better background to the problem. Editorials are meant to provide background and analyses of events, provoke thought and discussion and critical thinking; in addition, editorials should influence public opinion and also public officials, and suggest a cause of action on an issue. Editorials provide critical interpretation of an issue or events to not only inform but to educate, persuade and influence a course of action.

Opinion articles and columns are also important to the newspaper in the sense that they provide knowledgeable perspectives to issues and this means that when child labour issues are discussed by columnists especially as most are from outside the organisation, it could offer different angles to view the issue.

RQ2: What is the dominant child labour issue covered by the newspapers under study?

Tables 2 and 3 critically analysed and explained this issue. The highest child labour type by the newspapers was child abuse 61(61.6%). Followed by the child trafficking with 15 (15.2%), general child rights with 13 (13.1%). Child Street begging polled 6(6.1%), child domestic servants has 3 (3%), Child Street hawking got 1 (1%) and commercial sexual exploitation got no reports. The findings show that child abuse was the most reported child labour type while child trafficking, child street begging, child domestic servants had little reportage and commercial sexual exploitation were overlooked by the newspapers. Child abuse is an issue that some people still find hard to understand in the sense that some people do not know that between discipline and child abuse is a thin line. This could be why child abuse issues gained more coverage because while some parents/guardians were trying to enforce discipline, they ended up inflicting pain on the child/children and some led to death of the child. It was discovered that child abuse and neglect accounted for majority of the coverage after youth crime and violence.

RQ3: What is the level of prominence of child labour issues in selected newspapers?

Prominence here was measured using placement of story. The findings from table 4 shows that issues on child labour were placed in less prominent positions, particularly, the stories appeared more frequently on the Inside pages of the newspapers and rarely on the front page or back page of the newspaper. 94 of the stories were on the Inside pages. Data from the table 4 represented that *The Punch* newspaper, 5 (12.8%) reports were published on the front page of the paper, 34 (87.2%) on the inside pages and there was no publication the back page of the newspaper. Also, in *The Nation*, only 60 (100%) news contents were in the inside pages while the front page and back page had no publication. Only 5 stories were on the Front page and this means the newspapers seemed not to attach enough importance to child labour issues. Stories that appear on the front page are consider most important and secondly on the back page are often considered important and should attract the audience's attention even without picking up the papers. This could be attributed to the fact that children are not considered as very important topics as compared to political and economic issues.

This analysis presents that, *The Nation* had more news stories, although still attached much prominence to the reportage of child labour issues as it has more stories published on the inside page compared to *The Punch* newspaper. Also, *The Punch* had the few news items published on the front page while *The Nation* had no news items on front page. The back page of the two newspapers had no news items on child labour issues; this may be due to the fact that the back pages were mostly covered with sports and advertisements as well as soft columns. Two studies (Nwodu and

Ezeoke, 2013; Oyero, 2011) also corroborates this finding as they report that most stories on children and women alike are buried inside the pages of the newspaper probably showing they lack newsworthiness. The agenda-setting theory asserts that when the media gives salience to issues in terms of story placement and space allotted to the reports, then the public will perceive such issue as important for discussion and the constant discussion of such issue at different for could lead to the policy makers considering such issue as important. The finding of this study shows that the tenets of this theory are not being applied by the media in issues concerning children.

RQ4: What is the direction of framing of child labour issues in the selected newspapers?

The data presented in table 5 reveals how the newspapers frame child labour issues. The data shows that 45 (75%) of the items published on *The Nation* newspaper were episodically framed. From the above table 6, it shows the percentage of how the two newspapers framed the child labour issues in Nigeria in 2019. The highest framing was by *The Nation* newspaper, the news items were framed episodically 45 (75%) and thematic 15 (25%) all summed up to 60 (100%). *The Punch* newspaper had the second highest framing: episodic 31(79.5%) and thematic 8(20.5%) all summed up to 39 (100%). Therefore, the total sum of items by the two newspapers on child labour issues related stories 99 frame altogether. *The Nation* had the highest number of reports but more than half were episodically framed, most of the stories gathered were seen on the Crime page, this means that the stories were reported looking at the crime the individual committed without further discussing some of the underlying causes that led to that problem. More than half of the stories reported in *The Punch* were also episodically framed. During the findings few of the reports were thematically framed that is, giving the stories a broader context and societal angle.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study therefore lead to the following conclusions: the study concludes that the newspapers did not give sufficient reportage to child labour issues. The most emphasized child labour issue was Child abuse; this means that there was a high occurrence of child abuse cases that gained media attention during the period of the study. Also, the majority of the stories were in straight news format it means the newspapers only performed more information role of the media. It was also found out that the two newspapers did not allow for much interpretation by the reporters. News only contains information of what happened and the way it happened without any interpretations while features serve as analyses which help the audience to have better understanding issues surrounding child labour issues. It was also discovered that child labour issues are reported more using episodic frames. This means that the angle given to a report will determine the focus the audience will have. Child labour is a problem that is occurring in the social, cultural, religious and even the political system and looking at the issue from an individual angle alone will lead to proffering flawed solutions.

The study further determined how Nigerian newspapers have focused attention in their reportage of child labour issues generally. This, however, shows the level of priority given to child labour issues as well as intent to eradicate such by Nigerian newspapers in their reportage generally. By the evidences gathered herein, it can be concluded that both *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspaper gave little relevance to child labour issues reportage. The finding of this study also reveals the placement of child labour issues in Nigeria selected newspapers while covering the issues of child labour in the country. The analysis shows that *The Punch and the Nation* newspapers attached different level of prominence to the reportage of child labour issues in the country. This gives concerned citizens reasons to worry about the future of the country. While the government is not doing enough in this regard, the media are not making any strategic effort to set the agender of child labour as a societal priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As regards the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The media should carry out more reports on the issues of child labour in other to combat the menace facing children in the society.
2. The media in the country should support the government with constant campaign on fight of child labour and sensitize the parent, guardians and the general public in that regard.
3. In line with social responsibility function, media outfit should intermittently organize seminars with members of the society, traditional rulers and religious leaders in the country to sensitize them on how their positions can be used positively as regards curbing child labour issues.
4. The media should endeavor to attach more prominence, objectivity and prompt reports on child labour issues. Newspapers should devote more attention to child labour issues which also should be placed in more prominent positions with ample space.
5. The media through incisive editorials and feature articles can be advocates of the people by lobbying the government for good policies and proper implementation of such policies/programmes as regards the welfare of children.

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