

Similarities and Differences in the Reportage of the G-5 Governors by Select Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

This study investigated The Similarities and Differences on how some selected newspapers reported the activities of the G5 governors in the build up to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The primary focus was to evaluate the perspectives from which the reporters framed the G5 governors' stories before, during and after the elections. The study delineated three objectives which traversed on the need to find out if the newspapers studied used the same frames in their reportage of the G5 governors, find out if the newspapers studies differed in their framing of the G5 governors. Framing theory guided the study. The design adopted was content analysis and the reports on the G5 governors from the three newspapers between April, 1st 2022 and March 31st 2023 constituted the data for analysis. Using a constructed calendar, 48 issues on the G5 governors were selected as the sample for the study. The study found from the analysis that the three newspapers framed the activities of the G5 governors mainly as straight news stories and interviews. While some stories were sourced from press briefings, others were through interviews as disclosed from the reviewed stories. It was also found that the dominant frames used by the three newspapers were peace reconciliation and political frames. The insights recorded from the stories were the intents of the G5 governors as intertextual referencing was not done to link previous actions of the governors to their agitations during the electoral process. The study concludes that while it is pertinent that journalists be neutral and objective when choosing angles to a story, it is clear that neutrality can be relative especially when these journalists are hoodwinked or restrained by editorial policy, socio-religious attachments, educational

competence, personal beliefs and general social upbringing as well as the need to survive. From the findings made in the study, it is recommended that Perspectives of political report should not only center on what political actors are saying currently but interpreted in line with their previous actions and promises. Also, National dailies should deliberately differ their angles to stories as this will make every newspaper unique in reportorial style and provide varied but truthful perspectives to stories.

Keywords: *Similarities, G-5 Governors, Newspapers, Differences, Reportage, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Political communication serves as a powerful tool for citizen empowerment. It allows citizens to voice their concerns, express their opinions, and participate actively in the political process. Through political communication, citizens gain access to information about public policies, government actions, and the positions of political actors. This knowledge empowers citizens to engage in meaningful dialogue, contribute to public debates, and influence the decision-making process. By fostering citizen participation, political communication ensures that the diverse voices of society are heard and considered.

Politics and social lifestyle are two interconnected aspects of human society that shape the way individuals interact with one another and collectively govern themselves. Politics encompasses the activities, actions, and policies that define the distribution and exercise of power within a society, while social lifestyle refers to the patterns, behaviours, and customs that individuals adopt as part of their daily lives. Together, they play a crucial role in shaping the structure, dynamics, and values of a community or nation. Over the centuries, politics and social lifestyle have evolved in response to changing historical, cultural, and economic contexts. Different political systems, such as democracy, monarchy, communism, and socialism, have emerged, each with its own set of principles and mechanisms for governance (Hine, 2018). Similarly, social lifestyles have seen significant transformations, influenced by factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and shifting societal norms.

Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Chong & Druckman 2007). A more precise definition of framing starts with a conventional expectancy value model of an individual's attitude and an attitude toward an object, in this context, is the weighty sum of a series of evaluative beliefs about that object (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980 cited in Chong & Druckman 2007, p. 105). A frame in communication organizes everyday reality by providing meaning to an unfolding strip of events and promoting particular definitions and interpretations of political issues (Shah, *et al.* 2002, p. 324).

The framing of the G5 by select Nigeria newspapers could be traceable to the unsettled water in the camp of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) especially in the build up to the 2023 General Elections, hence, a cause for concern among party faithful and in turn became a major news story on the front pages of some national newspapers. Nigeria's main opposition Peoples Democratic Party was thrown into disarray following the decision of five of its governors led by Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike (others are Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State,

Samuel Ortom of Benue State and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State), to kick against the emergence of the party's presidential flagbearer, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, and the national chairman, Sen. Iyorchia Ayu, who were both of northern descent. These five aggrieved governors which would later be identified and framed as G5 or the Integrity Group kicked against virtually every decision of the party aimed at resolving disputes and misunderstandings arising from the conduct and outcome of the presidential primaries of the party.

The G5 had argued that the North cannot produce both the Presidential Candidate as well as Chairman of the party at a time, hence, the call for the resignation of Sen. Iyorchia Ayu as Chairman of the party in favour of a southerner. However, the inability of the party to address this demand is said to have led to the withdrawal of the support of the G5 to the presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, before and during the presidential election. Political analysts had argued that the misunderstanding between the integrity group (G5) and the party led to an abysmal performance of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) at the presidential poll.

Statement of the Problem

The stance of the leadership of the people's Democratic Party (PDP) occasioned the crisis between it and the G-5 Governors especially in the build up to the 2023 general elections. The crisis assumed a terrifying dimension immediately after the PDP presidential primaries of 28th May, 2022 which the former Vice President, the *WAZIRI Adamawa*, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar won. The G-5 Governors vehemently contended that both presidential candidate and National Chairman of the party (PDP) cannot emerge from the same zone (northern Nigeria) as it was in contravention of the tripod of justice, equity and fairness upon which the party was founded. They agitated that the national chairman of the party, Sen. Dr. Iyorchia Ayu must resign his position to pave the way for a Southern Chairman to emerge, failure of which they (G-5 Governors) would not support the presidential candidate of the party. The agitation raised serious concern among some party faithful especially in the home states of the aggrieved governors, and in turn became a major news story on the front pages of most newspapers.

With the plethora of perspectives on the clamour and agitations of the G5 governors, it becomes a cause of great concern to appraise how the print media especially newspapers projected the entire interplay using the instrumentality of framing as cornerstone. It is in the light of the above that this study seeks to analyze how *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *The Vanguard* newspapers framed the activities of the G5 governors with a view to streamlining their ideological path while narrowcasting on areas of convergence and divergence in the tactical use of frames to tell a story. This interestingly is the primary concern of the study.

Objectives of the Study

The study appraised how *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *The Vanguard* framed the activities of the G5 governors so as to synthesize and streamline their convergences and divergences. The specific objectives among others include the need to:

1. Find out if the newspapers studied used the same frames in their reportage of the G5 governors
2. Find out if the newspapers studied differed in their framing of the G5 governors

3. Ascertain if the reportage of the G-5 governors gave very rich insights into their path of action.

Research Questions

The study therefore, answered the following questions:

1. What are the similarities in the frames used by the newspapers in their reportage of the G5 governors?
2. What are the differences in the frames used by the newspapers in their reportage of the G5 governors?
3. How insightful were the reportage of the G-5 governors on the path of action of the governors?

Theoretical Framework

While three theories guided the study, the study was however anchored on the framing theory and Social Responsibility Theory.

Framing Theory

This theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974 and the focus of the theory is on the choice of angle and emphasis the media gives to perspectives of a story. In this context, the term "framing" refers to the way that the mass media provide a specific angle on a topic by means of choosing, emphasizing, isolation, and amplification (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2010 cited in Okoro & Odoemelam (2013). This implies that the objectives of the reporter or the media outlet they work for are used to frame the content of every channel. In a similar vein, framing is conceptualized by Chew, Ahmad, Ibrahim, and Chang (2012) as a model that is focused on the presentation of media contents. According to the framing theory, during the news collecting and production process, reporters highlight some parts of reality while underscoring others (Goffman, 1974).

Accordingly, framing can be done by reporters and the media organizations where they work in a deliberate or unconscious manner. It makes sense that Kuyers (2006) identified framing as the act of media practitioners creating a perspective that promotes the facts of an instance to be perceived in a particular way, with certain details emphasized as more obvious compared to others. It is important to note that the media has developed into society's eyes because people rely so much on the information provided by daily media coverage to guide their decisions. The media is perceived as being everywhere, reflecting the society and accumulating information for general consumption; as a result, the society at large (particularly the individuals that possess direct interaction with these media) takes seriously any information that predominates in these media.

This theory is relevant to this study because it clarifies the importance of framing in newspaper publishing. It guides us in understanding framing and why it is important in this study.

Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory was embedded by Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson & Wilbur Schramm in 1956 in their book "Four Theories of the Press".

The theory is associated with the Hutchins commission on the freedom of the press in the United States of America in 1942 and is widely used to explain or argue the present press system and

provides the framework for the concept that the mass media fulfils significant duties to the society (Tsegyu, 2015).

The Hutchins Commission is credited with the development of the Social Responsibility theory, which is widely used to explain or argue the present press system and which provides the framework for the concept that the mass media fulfils significant duties to society (Tsegyu, 2015). Given the fact that the media are a creation of the society, there are some responsibilities that they are expected to fulfil for society. This viewpoint is supported by Baran (2004), who cites McQuail (1987) that "the social responsibility theory of the press maintains that the press must stay free of government control but in exchange must serve the public responsibly" (p.449). The underlying presuppositions of the theory lie somewhere in the middle between libertarian fundamentals of press freedom and the pragmatic awareness of the essential requirement of media control. The idea that one must accept certain responsibilities in exchange for one's freedom is one of the most essential tenets of this philosophical perspective. It highlights how the media needs to also be answerable to the people or masses by performing some key functions of mass communication (Ojobor, 2012, as cited in Tsegyu & Asemah, 2014).

The relevance of this theory to the study is that the mass media including newspapers owe the society a duty of fair and balanced reporting especially concerning issues like elections which is a defining moment in every democracy. The choice of perspective highlighted about candidates and political parties during elections go a long way in contributing to the voting outcome hence it is the responsibility of the media to give every candidate fair coverage to allow the electorates to make a fair decision on their choice of candidate. The mass media ought therefore to carry out their reportorial duties with this responsibility at heart to prevent unbalanced reportage.

Concept of Newspaper

The newspaper is a print media. Ndolo (2011) cited in Christie and Chris (2012) defines newspaper as a printed product created on regular (daily or weekly) basis and distributed to a large number of people (p. 2). According to Ewelie (1985), the first newspaper, 'Acta Diurnal', was introduced by Julius Ceasar decades before the dawn of the Christian era in Italy. Ceasar's objective was merely to inform the people of Romans about the happenings within the eternal city and of development in the rest of the empire. This early newspaper was display and pasted in public places for all to read. Newspaper still marks as the origin of journalism and has remained a product of social and the political atmosphere, particularly, in Europe mostly influenced political revolution throughout the centuries. In the 17th century, journalism practice flourished in England, the Scandinavia, USA, Germany, and France. The development of journalism in these areas were aided by 30 years' war in the early part of the 17th century, which provided background for different issues to be discuss across the continents.

The print media in Nigeria aid readers become informed citizens and make better decisions by providing lots of facts (Abdulraheem, Adisa & La'aro, 2012). The newspaper is a paper, which contains accurate account of daily occurrence about the people and the society of a particular place. Emphatically, (Okon, Obukoadata, & Ekwok, 2022) explains that some other newspaper actually champion political and partisan ideologies at the expense of national ideologies. Interestingly, at the moment, we have the Daily Trust newspapers as the champion of northern agenda; the Sun,

clamoring for the eastern block and the big four – *Guardian, Vanguard, Punch, and The Nation* as pro-western Nigeria, with a twinge of biases for southern stories.

Political Communication

This includes all the interactions that take place for political reasons or benefits in any sociopolitical setting (for instance the interactions of the G5 Governors with the media, their party, other political parties and their online followers all fall within the purview of political communication). The function of communication in the course of politics is known as political communication. It can occur through a number of media (mediated or unmediated material), in a variety of settings (public and private), and in a variety of forms (formal or informal) (Anyanwu & Oguibe, 2022). It entails the creation and dissemination of political information by politicians, their transmission using both indirect and direct routes, and its reception (Oparaugo, 2021). Every political communication effort made by parties, advocacy organizations, or the media is directed at the public in order to enlighten and persuade them (Anyanwu & Oguibe, 2022).

The phrase "political communication" refers to a professional practice that encompasses a number of communication techniques that have been dubbed propaganda, governance marketing, electoral advertising, political outreach, and political communications (Gonçalves, 2018). With roots in theories and methodologies from communication, political science, sociology, psychology, marketing, history, and rhetoric, political communication has grown into an academic discipline of study (Anyanwu & Oguibe, 2022). Its transdisciplinary nature explains why it's challenging to come up with a clear description. However, it is generally acknowledged that political communication focuses on relationships among politicians, the press, and citizens, and that these interactions are characterized by their persuasive and strategic nature (Gonçalves, 2018).

Newspapers and Political Reporting

Newspaper reporting of political news is simply ways and methods in which newspapers designed a political story or event to provide people with information about what is happening in the world of politics. It seeks to provide voters with the information to formulate their own opinion and participate in community, local or national matters that will affect them. According to Morrissey Edward (2016, p. 9), newspaper report of political news, otherwise called political journalism, frequently includes opinion journalism, as current political events can be biased in their reporting. Morrissey (2016) also established that the information provided in political journalism must include facts whose perspective should be subjective and leans towards one viewpoint. However, Nyhan and Malde (2011) argued that journalists who report on politics are frequently unfamiliar with political science research or question its relevance to their work. Adding that journalists covering politics who are unfamiliar with information that would provide context to their stories can enable the story to take a different spin on what is being reported.

Political journalism is provided through different mediums, in print, broadcast, or online reporting. In another dimension, the evolution of digital media use has increased and it provides instant coverage of campaigns, politics, event news, and an accessible platform for the candidate. It is also important to note that printed, online, and broadcast political humor presented as entertainment has been used to provide updates on aspects of government status, political news, campaign, and

election updates. For example, according to Baym Geoffrey (2005, p. 259), the information provided may not be considered fake news but the lines between entertainment and factual news may seem blurred or biased while providing political updates. Hence, it can lack objectivity which can prevent the accuracy of the presented information.

The G5 Governors

The G5, also known as Integrity Group, comprises five Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governors, Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu, Samuel Ortom of Benue, Seyi Makinde of Oyo, and Nyesom Wike of Rivers. Before the 2023 elections, the G5 governors led by Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike have been clamouring for the PDP National Chairman, Sen. Iyorchia Ayu's resignation shortly after a northerner, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, won the party presidential ticket (Oyero 2023 cited in Channels TV, 2023). The Integrity Group saw the need for the South to produce the party's national chairman because the party's presidential candidate for the 2023 general election, Atiku Abubakar, is from the North. The G5 was said to have been formed on equity, fairness, and justice, a maxim some analysts have criticized and faulted for lacking substance as it is more like a conglomeration of individuals with distinct interests rather than a common goal (Oyero 2023). Unfolding events after the party's presidential primaries and the failure of the party to heed to the demand of the G5 governors created room for an alliance of the G5 with other political parties. Also, within the ranks of the G5 governors, the group became a shadow of itself as three of its members failed in their quest to move to the Senate after their two terms as governors elapsed.

(Althaus 2012). Ownership is a critical factor in the regulation of the mass media. According to (Gamson & Modigliani 2019), media managers are often faced with the dilemma of balancing the media owner's interest and those of the public without informing on the laws of the candor the ethnics of the profession. Whether media is publicly or privately owned, the interest of the owner plays a dominant role in determining what the media managers do or fail to do. Hardly can an owner tolerate a manager who operates contrary to his interest (Holsti 2009).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the content analysis method in the quest for answers to the research objectives. Berelson (1952), cited in Mordi and Ogbu (2017) avers that content analysis is a study technique utilized for the objective, systematic, and the quantitative explanation of the manifest content of communication interactions. To ensure the data for the study is detailed, the study also utilized the interview method to ascertain the views of reporters that covered the activities of these G5 governors within the period of the study.

The universe of this study includes all the newspapers published within Nigeria. This is so because all these newspapers stand a chance of being selected for the study. However, only three newspapers shall be selected for the study; *The Punch*, *The Vanguard* and *The Guardian* newspapers. The manageability of these newspapers however necessitated their choice in order to have a representative coverage of the activities of the G5 governors during the period under review. The period covered was from April 1st 2022 to March, 31st 2023. During this period, the three newspapers (*The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *The Vanguard* newspaper) had three hundred and

sixty-five (365) publications each. A summation shows that the newspapers had one thousand and ninety-five (1095) publications within the study period. The population of this study was therefore 1095 publications from the selected newspapers.

The content of three newspapers was the focus of this study; *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* from April 1st 2022 to March 31st 2023. The sample size for this study was 48 issues selected from the 1095 publications targeting only issues that have stories on G-5 governors.

Data Presentation

The presentation of data in this research was done in two phases, the first phase displays the quantitative data generated from the contents reviewed while the other deals with the interview responses from the interviewees.

Data Presentation/Analysis

Table 1 Placement of the stories on the newspapers

Page	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Vanguard</i>	Total	Percentage
Front	3	5	4	12	25
Back	0	0	0	0	0
Centre	0	0	0	0	0
Others	13	11	12	36	75
Total	16	16	16	48	100

The newspapers presented majority of the G5 governors' stories on other pages outside the prominent pages (front, center and back pages).

Table 2. Insights from *The Punch* newspaper

Date	Headline	Lead	Interpretation	Further Insight
18th November 2022	Aggrieved gov's still in PDP– Campaign council	The Director of Strategic Communications of the Atiku-Okowa Presidential Campaign Council, Dele Momodu, has said that the aggrieved governors in the party have not dumped the People's Democratic Party and the campaign remains steadfast, focused, and committed to the reconciliation process with the G5 governors.	This explains the importance the PDP placed on the G5 governors as their exit at that point was perceived to be dangerous for the party.	This gave an insight into the personality of the governors in their respective states and other parts of the country.

30th December 2022	UK meeting: Aggrieved PDP govts demand Tinubu support in five states	The five aggrieved Peoples Democratic Party governors have demanded the support of the All Progressives Congress presidential candidate, Bola Tinubu, for the PDP governorship and senatorial candidates in their respective states	The 5 governors presented this in a private meeting held with Tinubu in London. This was to seek external support haven lost the chance to produce a vice President (through Wike)	The governors were struggling to stay relevant in the then heated political space since the PDP refused to unseat its then Chairman Iyorchia Ayu
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Table 2. continued

Date	Headline	Lead	Interpretation	Further Insight
4th February 2023	Wike deceiving Makinde, Ortom, Ikpeazu, Ugwuanyi – PDP campaign	A spokesperson for the Peoples Democratic Party Presidential Campaign Council, Mr. Daniel Bwala, has said that the Governor of Rivers State and leader of the aggrieved G-5 PDP governors, Nyesom Wike, was deceiving his four colleagues over the presidential candidate they would collectively support.	This implies that Gov. Wike was using the other governors to actualize his ambition without them being aware. While Mr. Bwala called Wike ‘inconsequential’, one would wonder why his party made so much effort to reconcile him and their presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar	Although all the governors had their personal ambition, Wike’s ambition stood out as he had lost out of the presidential race and had a national influence on many PDP members.
28th March 2023	Ayu must go: G5 govts, Atiku campaign clash	The post-election crisis rocking the Peoples Democratic Party took a new turn on Monday as a Benue State High Court, Makurdi, restrained Senator	One of the G5 governors from Ayu’s state Gov. Ortom took the fight to the home front through	The intriguing part was that the party at its ward level claimed to have

Iyorchia Ayu from parading himself as the national chairman of the party. domestic legal suspended instrument. This Ayu for shows how antiparty desperately the G5 activities but wanted Ayu out of referred the helms of affairs Ortom to the in PDP. The disciplinary governors used all committee for the instruments in the same their disposal to offence. fight for the control of PDP leadership including the suspension of Ayu from the ward level.

Table 3. Insights from *The Guardian* newspaper

Date	Headline	Lead	Interpretation	Further Insight
13 Nov 2022	G5 Governors stand for peace, unity, progress in Nigeria - Ortom, Ayorinde. By Lawrence Njoku	The G5 Governors of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), yesterday, said that they were passionate about the country’s workability, stressing that they stood for peace, unity and progress of Nigeria. They revealed that integrity, equity, fairness and justice were the principles behind the formation of the group, adding that it was not about any particular political party.	This report tends to present the G5 governors as the voice of the Nigerian people from all the regions. This generalization only aimed to draw sympathy to the demands of the governors.	The report however did not explain how the requests of the governors stood to benefit ordinary Nigerians from all the geopolitical zones and how such reports would bring peace, integrity, equity and fairness. This became evident when the governors especially the same Ortom started blaming Wike for his support of the

					APC after the election
21 Nov 2022	G-5 governors meet in Lagos, now integrity group, insist on Ayu's removal. By Azimazi Momoh Jimoh Terhemba Daka Kehinde Olatunji Adewale Momoh	The train of the five aggrieved People's Democratic Party (PDP) governors, led by Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, yesterday, arrived in Lagos State, with the G5 governors rebranding as the Integrity Group within the party, while reinforcing its position not to support the presidential candidate of the party.	The group was renamed to present them as justice seekers instead of a potential internal disruptor which they turned out to be.	This explains how Nigerians are emotional about names such that they tend to believe that a change of name can alter or re-channel the focus of any institution or organization. Both as G5 or integrity group, they didn't support their party's candidate.	

Table 3. continued

Date	Headline	Lead	Interpretation	Further Insight
14 Jan 2023	G5 Governors will soon shut door of reconciliation, Wike warns PDP By Ann Godwin	Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, has said the G5 Governors would soon shut the door of reconciliation with the leadership of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The governor stated this yesterday during an interview with BBC Pidgin, which was monitored by <i>The Guardian</i> in Port Harcourt.	This report shows how powerful the G5 became even within the party as they were very vocal on shutting down negotiations yet the party could not caution or dismiss them	Then Gov Wike in particular held major structures within the party making him indispensable before, during and after the election in 2023.
12 March 2023	Tinubu, G5 PDP governors and ride to Aso Rock By Adamu Abuh	As the President-elect Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu savours his victory in the Presidential poll held on February 25, he would remain grateful	Here the 'integrity' G5 governors are tagged rebellious because of their role in the outcome of the	The true aim of the G5 was to hold on to power and support any team that they felt could win and favour them hence their rebellion

to the rebellious G5 governors over their role in his emergence and the defeat of the leading opposition parties.	2023 election.	general	within their party. Despite this tag, the PDP still haven't been able to dismiss them from the party.
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Interview Presentation

In order to get further insights into how frames are arrived at, some reporters were interviewed to ascertain their perspectives on newspaper framing. The interview responses are presented thus:

Q. 1. What is your position on the activities of the G5 governors before, during and after the 2023 general elections?

Response A: Our newspaper acknowledged the G5 governors' bold stance during the 2023 general elections. Their decision to abstain from endorsing their party candidate and actively support Tinubu's presidency reflects their principled approach to politics.

Response B: The G5 governors' actions before, during and after the 2023 elections demonstrated their commitment to their beliefs. Despite being members of the PDP, their support for Tinubu's candidacy and subsequent meeting with him at the presidential villa highlight their influence and strategic engagement in the political arena.

Response C: Our newspaper recognizes the G5 governors' significant role in shaping the political landscape before, during, and after the 2023 elections. Their protest against their party candidate and their support for Tinubu presidency showcase their determination to uphold their principles and pursue their political objectives.

Response D: The G5 governors' activities before, during, and after the 2023 elections reveal a sophisticated approach to political engagement. While their decision to abstain from endorsing their party candidate may have caused friction, their alignment with Tinubu candidacy and their subsequent meeting with him underscore their strategic positioning within the political sphere.

Q. 2 How would you rate the overall performance of national dailies as they reported the activities of the G5 governors?

Response A: The overall performance of national dailies in reporting the activities of the G5 governors varies. Some newspapers provided thorough and balanced coverage, offering in-depth analysis and multiple perspectives on the governors' actions. Others may have been more sensationalist or biased in their reporting, which could affect the overall quality of their coverage.

Response B: National dailies generally did a commendable job in reporting the activities of the G5 governors, offering timely updates and comprehensive insights into their political maneuvers. However, there may be instances of bias or lack of depth in certain publications, which could impact the overall effectiveness of their reporting.

Response C: The performance of national dailies in reporting the activities of the G5 governors have been mixed. While some newspapers demonstrated a commitment to accuracy and objectivity, others have been criticized for sensationalism or favoritism towards certain political figures. Overall, there is room for improvement in ensuring balanced and nuanced coverage.

Response D: The quality of reporting on the activities of the G5 governors by national dailies varies widely. While some newspapers have provided thorough analysis and balanced reporting, others have been accused of biased or superficial coverage. To enhance overall performance, national dailies should prioritize accuracy, impartiality, and comprehensive analysis in their reporting.

Q. 3. Comment freely on what should constitute the journalistic stance in political reporting

Response A. In political reporting, journalists must uphold principles of accuracy, impartiality, and fairness, ensuring that their coverage is objective and free from bias. By presenting multiple perspectives and holding political figures accountable, journalists contribute to a well-informed public discourse.

Response B. The journalistic stance in political reporting should prioritize factual accuracy, impartiality, and transparency. Reporters must strive to provide comprehensive coverage that informs the public without promoting any particular agenda or viewpoint. Holding political leaders accountable and scrutinizing their actions is essential for a healthy democracy.

Response C: Journalists covering politics must maintain a neutral and objective stance, presenting information accurately and fairly to the public. It's imperative to provide context and diverse viewpoints while avoiding sensationalism or bias. Holding politicians accountable for their actions is a fundamental aspect of responsible political reporting.

Response D: The journalistic stance in political reporting should be rooted in integrity, objectivity and accountability. Reporters have a responsibility to present the facts accurately, provide balanced coverage and hold politicians to account for their actions and decisions. By upholding these principles, journalists play a crucial role in fostering informed citizenship and democratic governance.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the similarities in the frames used by the newspapers in their reportage of the G5 governors?

Similarities abound in the various frames used by the newspapers in their various reportage. These similarities are seen in the use of betrayal, grievances, irreconcilable differences, etc. The result shows that all three newspapers reported the stories as challenge and political frames respectively. *The Guardian* newspaper had 6 peace/reconciliation frame while *The Vanguard* had 5 and *The Punch* had 2. This similarity shows that they reported the stories from the perspectives of the governors as the frames were drawn from the focus of each emanating story from the G-5 governors. Similarly, all the newspapers had political frames as the next major frame from the 16 G-5 reports studied.

The Vanguard newspaper had 4 while *The Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers had 3 respectively. The same was applicable for the grievance, challenge and betrayal frames respectively as the three newspapers gave similar coverage to these three frames.

The result shows that all the newspapers had majority of their stories on G-5 governors reported as straight news and a few others as interview. Some of the newspapers used similar images of the governors for their captions.

Research Question 5: What are the differences in the frames used by the newspapers in their reportage of the G5 governors?

Differences in the use of frames by newspapers are seen in the construction and caption of various reports on the activities of the G5 stories. Although there are some similarities, there are also differences in their interpretation and underlying meanings as used within each publication. The differences were in the presentation of the stories as the reporters used different languages in writing their reports. The result shows that *The Punch* newspaper had 1 ethnicity and 2 competition frames while the other 2 newspapers had none. This means that *The Punch* gave an ethnicity tint to the stories on G5 governors.

Daramola (2013) contended that ethnicity exerts a significant influence on journalism practice in Nigeria, much like how it infiltrated journalism through the establishment of newspapers by political figures like Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who utilized them as platforms to propagate their ethnic political ideologies.

This silence on ethnicity is surprising as one of the demands by the G5 (in fact the major demand) was borne out of tribal divide that Ayu being a northerner must go.

Research Question 3: How insightful were the reportage of the G-5 governors on the path of action of the governors?

The reports on the G-5 governors were written in plain and simple languages for different levels of audiences to understand. However, the personal reasons behind the agitations of the G-5 governors were usually shielded or not queried. The key reason given by the governors and reported by the papers was that the party chairman Iyorchia Ayu must go without seeking further what that will do to the generality of PDP faithful and the entire Nigerians. This negates the position of the social responsibility function of the media where the media is expected to stand in the questioning gap on behalf of the audience it represents. This implies that the media were not deep enough in their investigation of the circumstances surrounding the G5 activities before and during the electioneering process. This did not give complete insight into all the angles to the G5 stories.

Result above shows that the G5 Governors of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), were passionate about their course, stressing that they stood for peace, unity and progress of Nigeria. It is also revealed that integrity, equity, fairness and justice were the outlined principles behind the formation of the group. However, these principles were not clearly explained in the stories reviewed.

Conclusion

The circumstances that lead to newspaper framing or any other media framing is dynamic and socially produced. While it is required that journalists be neutral and objective when choosing angles to a story, it is clear that neutrality can be relative especially when these journalists are hoodwinked or restrained by editorial policy, socio-religious attachments, educational competence, personal beliefs and general social upbringing as well as the need to survive.

We can conclude in simple terms that journalists are products of the society they live in, the way they are trained, the religious affiliations and their decisions to stay upright while practicing their profession. Political reporting comes with a lot of benefits and risks hence those involved (including media houses and journalists) tend to be careful in choosing the angles to report from.

Recommendations

From the findings made in the study, it is recommended that;

1. Perspectives of political report should not only center on what political actors are saying currently but interpreted in line with their previous actions and promises. This will reduce the number of vague political promises made during electioneering.
2. National dailies should deliberately differ their angles to stories as this will make every newspaper unique in reportorial style and provide varied but truthful perspectives to stories.
3. While newspapers strive to stay true on the facts of a study, the debt and pattern of coverage distinguishes newspapers with quality. Hence, newspapers should strive to continue to stand out in terms of quality of reports they produce.

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