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NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Global program such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will hardly achieve its target without appropriate means of information dissemination and awareness creation. Newspaper indeed remains a vital means through which people receive information and awareness. However, the study sought to investigate how newspaper has performed in reporting SDGs since its adoption in 2015. Four newspapers (The Guardian, The Nation, Nigeran Tribune, and Daily Trust) were analysed for a study period of 3 years. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as a tool for the data analysis. From the study, it is clear that extent of space allotted to reports on SDGs in Nigerian newspapers is small. The Nation reported 25 SDGs issues representing 23.8% in the 3rd year of the study, and 14 (13.3%) in the 2nd year. Guardian reported the least, which was 3 (2.9%) stories in the 1st year. The prominence given to SDGs in terms of number of times Nigerian newspaper published stories on SDGs is very low. In terms of report format, news story (68)65%, followed by column (19)18%, features (11)10%, and Editorial (7)7%, while there were not any publications on campaign and picture format for the entire newspaper under study. In light of the findings, the Nigerian newspapers have not done quite good in the first three years in its role of coverage of SDGs reports to help drive SDGs towards reaching the target. Therefore, it is recommended that newspaper editors should be well educated about the importance of global developmental programmes.

Keywords: *coverage, development, goals, newspaper, SDGs*

INTRODUCTION

To promote access to things that improve quality living standard by people across the globe, world leaders and leading development institutions around the world deemed it necessary to come together at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGAS) in New

York to sign a new universal partnership for development which was tagged – "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", at the expiration of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2015. The SDGs comprises 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at building on MDGs. Consensus was reached on these goals and targets on the principles of multi-stakeholder engagement and collective implementation. The consensus, therefore, was that everyone had a role to play and no one would be left behind. Nigeria is not left out in this world developmental programme. She agreed on SDGs and made commitment to working towards achieving the goals. As the third-year rolls by since the adoption of the SDGs, there is no denying the fact that concrete plans have been made to achieve the set goals since the beginning of implementation in January 2016. Nigeria's vision on implementing the SDGs is through multi-stakeholder collaborations, including the media (Omoniyi, 2016).

It has been emphasized that the media has a central role to play in achieving considerable progress in any global project. What is known or not known defines people's response to it; and what is reported and the manner in which it is reported also goes some way in shaping the policy and defining agenda of action as well as the implications for the millions of people whose lives are affected. However, the media have to be reinforced and acknowledged as key drivers for the spread of information. Since advent of Newspapers in the 17th century, it will continue to remain a useful and important source of information in the society (George, Curran, & Wingate, 1978; Weber, 2006; Tom, 2012). Newspaper disseminates vital development information to every individual in the community without a recourse of beliefs, gender or age (Patrick & Yvonne, 2008). As a communication medium, newspapers have maintained its prominent roles in shaping thoughts, including being a medium of controlling both political and economic powers (Copeland, 2003). Newspapers also provides means for discussions and debates among the public, thus providing proper guide and information for the society (Copeland, 2003). Newspapers socialize the public by the roles they play in terms of information, education and entertainment through instilling in people the values and norms of society (Stephens, 1988). Also, newspapers, like other media, have spread their tentacles of coverage to numerous and divers' aspects of human endeavours such as health and environment, politics, entertainment, education, arts and culture, sports, religion, and business and economy.

However, considering that Nigerian newspapers have regional and community-based orientations, its archival excellence both in hard and soft copy, and their comprehensive and enriching contents, this research considers the newspaper a centre of investigation for the delivery of the objectives of the SDGs. Thus, this study is to examine the level to which Nigerian newspapers publicize information on SDGs programmes. On this particular issue of sustainable development, the role of newspaper is fundamental to raising consciousness, deepening advocacy and providing better understanding of SDGs agenda, and the on-going efforts towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

The study includes assessment that gives insight into how the media has feared in reporting on the SDGs since its adoption in 2015. Newspaper coverage of SDGs in Nigeria was examined using opinions, straight news, features, and news analysis, as the units of analysis. The study also strengthens the assertion that people can get information through the newspaper to aid in reaching the goals of global developmental programmes. However, the principal objective of the study is to evaluate the level of prominence given to Sustainable Development Goals issues reported in selected Nigerian newspapers. Nevertheless, to achieve this main objective, the research aims to examine the following objectives:

i. to investigate the position of the news story given to SDGs in the newspapers
ii. to examine the extent of story coverage on SDGs issues
iii. to evaluate the frequency of reports on SDGs
iv. to analyse types of report format on SDGs in Nigerian Newspapers.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

According to Walter and Booner (2015), the communication objectives for meeting the SDG goals by 2030 are continuous communication and examination of the activities and 'unfinished goals' of the MDGs which existed before SDGs emergence; provide timely, reliable, adequate, reasonable and up-to-date information for SDGs implementers at every levels of engagements, both for private sector partnership and the community, and for Nigerians as a whole; and also, to provide general SDGs performance data across all levels, at periodic intervals.

It has been shown that the media can help the SDGs in the direction of achieving their goals. And so, for this reason, it is imperative that all media outlets participate in the current global developmental programme for multiple possibilities of contribution to each of the SDGs. Out of a total of 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, only goal 16 is seen to give recognition to the media as a relevant actor in the developmental processes, and to highpoint how freedom of expression or information can be encapsulated as both a means to, and a goal of development. Specific targets related to building a media system should be included as goals so that the roles of the media can be integrated as a positive factor for development, to ensure sustained contribution to all the subgoal, goals, or that information and communication should be included in targets of every main goal (SDGs Nigeria, 2017).

Lack of media integration as the fulcrum in the developmental goals, and proper understanding of the concept of Sustainable Development by relevant key players are factors that need to be examined thoroughly. This will evade a huge failure of SDGs in Nigeria after massive investments in financial, material and human resources. New policies and institutional mechanisms will be required by the goals in SDGs to ensure action on ground, as compared to Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which terminated in 2015 with low goals achievement. The MDGs goal on environmental sustainable development had a setback as a result of poor communication to promote awareness and understanding of the issue, among many other factors (DFID, 2006; Obinna & Simon, 2016).

Having recognized the failure of MDG to attain its goal on environmental sustainability in Nigeria, and also SDGs being an offshoot of MDG as a global programme, this research work will look into how different developmental issues are represented in Nigerian newspapers to communicate the SDGs and thereby helping in achieving its goals. This will also translate to identify the level of attention and efforts the Nigerian government has towards achieving SDGs in the areas of awareness that newspaper coverage will create among the populace.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

a. From MDG to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

The SDGs replaced the universally-agreed "Millennium Development Goals" MDGs which were targets to be reached by the end of 2015, and which have achieved a degree of success in some parts of the world. On September 25, 2015, at the 70th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly, every member state of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). The Agenda has a set of 17 SDGs and 169 targets, with a framework for a peaceful, just, equitable and inclusive world (Walter and Booner, 2015). The new development Agenda aligns with Nigeria's drive to deliver democratic dividends and improve the lives of the poor (Omoniyi, 2016). The SDGs are built on the MDGs, eight anti-poverty targets that the world committed to achieving by 2015. The Open Working Group's suggested SDGs cover objectives such as: ending extreme poverty by 2030, reducing inequalities, cutting mortality rates, ensuring universal schooling, ending gender discrimination, fighting climate change and ensuring sustainable energy and economic growth for all.

The 2030 Agenda commits all signatory countries to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection; ensure that every person fulfilled his or her potentials in dignity and equality in a healthy environment (Obinna and Simon, 2016).

b. Overview of Sustainability or Sustainable Development

The raise in living standards of the humans occurred in developed countries in the past 100 years. This has been happening in most developing countries now. This raise in living standards has many positive effects, such as: better access to health care resulting in increase in life expectancy and reduction in child and infant mortality; better access to educational facilities rising literacy and improving economic opportunities; improved infrastructure; increased availability of consumer goods; and increased access to modern media. But, at the same time, increased development, rising living standards, and increased consumption and production result in increased pressure on the environment, threatening the long-term sustainability of the earth's life-support systems. Ecological systems are particularly vulnerable, and pressures will certainly mount in the years ahead (Warburton, 2005). The growing population and development activities, especially in urban areas, reduce the air quality in urban areas and lead to localised water pollution and land pollution in the form of deforestation and waste, and thus, there are obvious links between poverty, environmental degradation, and economic development. It was this realisation of the links between environment, economic development, and poverty which resulted in the coining of the term 'sustainable development' by the United Nation Commission in 1987 (United Nations 2002).

c. Newspapers

Newspapers are a vital source of information in enlightened societies; providing the most recent information to readers. Newspapers serve various purposes for different categories of users. Berelson (1999) described five ways of what newspaper reading means to different people: as respite or recreation (using it to unwind from stress or as a tension reliever), public affairs (using it to develop public opinions), for information (using it to know what is going on in the society) as entertainment (using it for pleasure or to find out about pleasurable activities) and for socialization (using it to feel joined to others beyond the family block in the broader society). In Nigeria, there are over 150 newspapers and are mostly regional and community-based, including 20 national daily newspaper (Dragomir & Thompson, 2012).

The importance of newspapers by the illustrations of Cheyney (2012) is that they are the textbooks that provide up to date information on local, state, national and world affairs, the most current analysis and criticism on executive and legislative decision making, the latest in music, theatre, television, fine arts and even column and comics to make readers laugh.

Babalola (2002) opined that newspapers are the most accessible written documents to the largest proportion of people of all categories, young and old, students and workers, elites and peasants, literates and illiterates. Babalola (2002) also highlighted various ways in which newspapers have been used as vehicles for facilitating literacy empowerment. Due to the way people gather daily to discuss contents of newspapers, it inevitably promotes critical thinking, retention of information, problem solving and the querying of information source.

d. Campaigns of SDGs through use of Print Media

In view of the urgent need for awareness of sustainable development with respect to its three-fold facets: economic, social and environmental values, research should be conducted to determine the level of awareness of sustainable development communicated through the available medium of communication. From the previous research study it was found out that only few people are aware of sustainable development and the majority of these people think that sustainable development seeks to address environmental issues. There is a need to develop a strategic approach to improve the links between the mass media and sustainable development goals. The media influences, not only public opinion, but also decision makers, politicians and other journalists (Semiu, 2015).

Empirical Review

a. Coverage of Development Programs through Newspapers in Nigeria

The art of using communication to change and motivate people through education and inspiration towards development is 'development communication'.

A study conducted by Kayode and Adeniran (2012) on the media coverage of development issues in Nigeria using the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the title: 'Nigerian Newspapers Coverage of the Millennium Development Goals: The Role of the Media.' The agenda setting and development media theories were the theoretical framework for the study. Two Nigerian national newspapers, The Punch and The Guardian, were sampled for the research. The study covered 182 editions of each sampled newspaper published from January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008. Thus, 364 editions were content-analysed. The findings showed that the Nigerian media did not give equal coverage to the development issues they covered. They reported some issues frequently, while other equally pressing developmental challenges in the country were neglected.

In terms of the sampling procedure, the study has not given details on procedure adopted for the research; this in most cases allows room for data manoeuvring by researchers. However, the number of editions analysed were enough data to give any information needed. According to Ifenkwe (2008) in a study on ''Assessment of Newspaper Advocacy for Rural Development and Environmental Education in Nigeria'', which analysed five national newspapers for a period of twelve months. Using a content analysis method, the study revealed that The Sun newspapers with 23.65% was considered the best print medium in reporting environmental and rural development news, among the five-news media. This was followed by The Punch (22.5%) and The Champion (21.3%) newspapers. The Sun newspapers also exhibited consistent leadership in promoting activities in the health and population and family planning sub-sectors. Other newspapers in the study are *Thisday* and The *Guardian,* coming fourth and fifth respectively. Though, the research has not explained fully how the samples were obtained. If the procedure of selection of a sample has validity problem, then it does affect the outcome of the research.

In a study conducted by Agbaje (2002) on a content analysis of Nigerian Newspapers, the result of the findings revealed that 49% of stories sampled focused on the central governments, 41.3% on state governments, while a mere 5.9% focused on local government. Furthermore, it was also found that 873 stories collated on national affairs, constituting 97.6% were sourced from urban areas while a mere 2. 4% from rural areas. The situation is made worse by the fact that most newspapers in Nigeria do not have reporters in rural areas, the study revealed. Those who maintain a national presence have reporters in state capitals and other urban centres gathering news and, in these areas, you only find reporters who are interested in reporting what happens at the National Assembly or the Presidency.

It also revealed that the Nigerian newspapers did not give sufficient press coverage in terms of prominence in its reportage to agriculture compared to other issues. Also, the press did not give sufficient attention on certain areas of agricultural sub-sector in its report as observed in the study. The study revealed that the Nigerian press as an institution or organ is expected to report all or every sector of the Nigerian economy with sufficient attention on each sector. This becomes necessary because each sector of the economy is of equal importance to the development of the Nigerian society.

Though, the study contained results of development and non-development items in the newspapers, which were not specified, with the exception of agriculture, which indicates the research angle of interest. If the study is talking about agriculture, it should dwell in that area alone, but given a vague statement containing other development issues that were not specified in the study raises a lot of suspicious about the intent of the research and how data seems to have been manipulated.

Ogan and Fair (1984) conducted a study of newspapers in eight developing countries and found a high number of government sources. Their findings also showed that most of the stories published were event, rather than process oriented. In the same vein, the researchers found that human sources were consulted more frequently than were documents (cited in Oso, 2012). Their findings thus imply that media professionals in developing countries are not committed to development journalism. Rather, they rely on what individuals say as fact. Therefore, some developmental needs may not be identified or reported. They called for greater use of critical sources and analysis of development topics; and less dependence on government as the main source of information.

The above studies show a common scenario, which is a lack of reporting on development issues.

b. Role of the Mass Media in Development

A number of roles have been assigned to the media in achieving development within any society. At one point in time, policy makers, government, civil societies, development organisations and the private sector acknowledged the important role the mass media can play in achieving developmental goals or targets (Kayode and Adeniran). It has also been noted by Aggarwala (1989), who was a senior executive of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), that it is expected of journalists covering the development beat to:

> 'critically examine, evaluate and report on the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation and the difference between its impact on the people as claimed by the government and as it actually is' (cited in Dare, 2000).

Aggarawala's description of development journalism emphasises the watchdog role of the press. Graves (2007) noted the need for the media to provide reliable sources. According

to this report, developing an appropriate media development strategy can create accelerated sustainable democratic and economic development. The report also noted that the media can enhance democratic development by giving a voice to the people, acting as a balance and watchdog to potential government misconduct.

Reporters were encouraged to report on one or all of the following categories (Wood and Barnes, 2007):

i. Tracking progress on SDGs: Reporters are expected to develop stories on how countries are performing, which countries are likely to achieve the SDGs and which are not. Why are some countries performing and not others?
ii. Human Face: Reporters are expected to report on the consequence of the SDGs to people's daily lives and specify the role of civil society. They are expected to report success stories and achievements towards 2015, and also the key players driving forward change with their activities.
iii. Changes needed in achieving the MDGs: Reporters are expected to report on changes needed to meet the 2030 target.

Deane (2007) noted two areas in which the media can fit in its role in the support towards achieving the SDGs. The areas include: (i) The media's role in advocating for, and actively working toward the achievement of the MDGs. (ii) The media's role in providing information to people most affected by development-related issues and providing opportunities for them to voice their perspectives through public debate.

Deane also suggested that it is expected of the media to provide a platform where differing and opposing views can be put together in public domain to influence and improve public policy.

Awareness building and *stressing solidarity* as two specific roles of the press in promoting the SDGs as the SDGs are a collective responsibility, while the press need to be self-educated and commitment in reporting on the goals (Pigot, 2007).

A number of studies have been conducted on the role of mass media in achieving the MDGs in Nigeria. Oyero and Areoye (2008) conducted a study to assess the impact of the Nigerian press on National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), a Nigerian reform programme, intended to revive the Nigerian economy. Their findings showed that the Nigerian press did not adequately report on the economic reform programme, and urged the press to rise to its responsibility.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two applicable theories adopted in this study are Agenda Setting Theory, and Development Media Theory.

a. The Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory concept emphasizes that the audience can easily get influenced, through mass media, by the kind of stories they choose to read or stories considered news worthy, and level of prominence and space attached to such news. (Baran & Davis, 2003). Attention is on how media coverage could shape the priority given to Items of media content such as problems, candidates, events and issues is given attention by the media to shape the coverage priority. Mass media messages are checkmated by the editor, who acts as gatekeeper. Media agenda are promoted by the editors by setting priorities on certain issues. While other issues of less importance are ignored, they offer provision for a sustained and prominent coverage on issue of relevance.

In other words, Agenda Setting may be explained as thus: when media repeatedly covers news, the importance of issues is intensified in the mind of the society that receives the news. (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Baran and Davis (2003) describe agenda building, a step up of agenda setting theory, to mean a collection of procedures through which the press, government and the citizens get each other influenced in areas of formation of public policies.

The bottom line of the theory is that it is a sense of duty for media to take decision as to position where the story of the day be placed in the newspaper. Some stories may be placed at back page or front page, or having a big headline; the smaller headline goes to stories of less important, which also could be short and précised with no supplementary graphics.

Going by the agenda setting theory as a theoretical framework, this study seek out to examine whether SDGs goals has been raised to the public agenda through the newspaper, as the theory describes the connection between the rate at which story is covered by the media, and the degree of importance attached to the story by the people. It is understood that the behaviour or action of an individual at any given time is a function of issues such person regards as important. The media can arrive at this achievement by selecting stories that are considered imperative or newsworthy, and in addition, also the level of prominence given to such report.

b. Development Media Theory

Propounded by McQuail (1987), the `Development Media Theory seeks support of both the media and present-day government to put efforts together as synergic to attain socio-economic development in the society. It claims that media must render his hands of support instead of being a critic of the government to help implement their policies, and by so doing, the nation's economic development will be established. McQuail highlights main principles of this theory, which is media must bear responsibility of carrying out positive developmental duty which are in accordance to the formulated policies of the national policy makers, and press autonomy ought to be in line with economic main concern of the government and the developmental necessities of the citizen. Therefore, Media is expected to place its priority on the reports of news that have a positive impact on the populace. In a similar manner, Moemeka (1991) explains that Development Media Theory agree to take national building and development as its principal and main objective, and in this way, the media here serves as agents for societal transformation and associates in progress.

Relating this theory to this study, it is important to know that politics, entertainment, education, arts and culture, sports, religion, business and economy, health, and good environment are paramount to good living of every human development. Also, the conceptions of communication and development is what is understood to aid development through media communication. Therefore, the Nigerian newspaper should do more on development journalism to bring about achieving goals on issues of SDGs, which is a turnaround for development in Nigeria. The theory explains the use of newspaper for national and societal development because it assumes the vital starring role of the newspapers in attaining development. Going by one of the principles of development media theory as suggested by McQuail (1987), newspapers reports should take responsibility of promoting positive development jobs in agreement with the established national policies, and thus this will help greatly in realizing the SDGs. The moment SDGs was adopted, it becomes a national policy. Based on the development media theory, this study seeks to examine the influences of Nigerian newspapers to achieving the SDGs.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, content analysis was adopted as the research design. Nwosu (1996) adds that content analysis creates a systematic and replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. In this study, this method was used to examine and analyse the content of a selected newspaper samples.

Study Period

The starting point of this study was October, 2015, and terminated in September, 2018, as this makes it three years since commencement of this global program. September 25, 2015 was the day United Nations General Assembly, where every member state of the United Nations adopted the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). The justification for a three-year time frame is that health related studies on newspaper coverage conducted in Nigeria were carried out within a short period of time. Semiu (2015) used a study period of four years in his research on newspaper coverage of health issues in Nigeria. Some study on developmental programs were done at most two years period (Okidu, 2013; Uwom & Oloyede, 2014). A similar study conducted by Kayode & Adeniran (2012) on Nigerian newspapers coverage of the Millennium Development, six-month study period was used. This time frame allows for ample time into implementation of SDG programs and makes the researcher to have a broader insight into the coverage of SDGs. The population of the newspaper editions collected for this period of time excluded Saturday and Sunday, as weekend are for entertainment news.

Population of the Study

The population of study comprises entire editions of Nigerian national dailies. However, the researcher selected four of the national newspaper, *The Guardian, The Nation, Nigerian Tribune and Daily Trust.* These four newspapers were purposely chosen based on their common attributes and unique characteristics as related to their national coverage, reach, circulation and year of existence (over ten years), which make them popular across the country (Nigeria Press Council, 2009; Adeyanju & Okweri, 2005). Since founding of these newspapers, they have consistently published and enjoy readership across the length and breadth of Nigeria (Dragomir & Thompson, 2012). According to Okidu (2013), these newspapers have a strong network of national correspondents and thoroughly bred professionals, which have over the years, earned them respect for their in-depth analysis and coverage of such national issues as politics, health, education, economy, sports, marine and insurance and so forth.

To estimate population of the study, the total amount of newspaper editions for the three years was gotten thus:

i. 5 editions per week for every newspaper (as Sunday and Saturday are excluded).
ii. Number of editions for a newspaper per year = (5 days x 53 weeks) = 265 editions.
iii. Number of editions for 4 newspaper per year = (265 editions x 4) = 1,060 editions.
iv. The total Number of editions for the 4 newspaper for 3years = (1,060 editions x 3) = 3,180 editions

Sampling Technique

A composite sampling technique was adopted. In content analysis of the newspapers, this technique is known to be the most scientific and superior to other sampling technic (Lacy,

Riffe, & Fico, 1998; Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993). This technique also is identified as more effective because of its ability to control the bias of cyclical trends in news coverage (Budd, Thorp, & Donohue, 1967; Riffe et al., 1993). In adopting composite technique, calendar was used to select each day of the week within 36 months of studies which covers from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2018.

Sample Size

Sample size is the selection of some elements that make up a population. Faridah (2002) defines sample as a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. For this study, applying composite sampling technique, gives rise to 160 newspaper editions which was selected for content analysis. Therefore, for the four newspapers, (160 x 4) 640 editions was content analysed from a population of 3,180 editions.

Measuring Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument employed in the process of data collection was coding sheet. A code is a descriptive construct designed by the researcher to capture the primary content or essence of the data (Charmaz, 2006). The coding sheet contains content categories that are representative of the unit of analysis of this study. In this research work, the coding sheet includes the story identity (newspapers, years, months and days), content categories, and unit of analysis.

Content Categories /Unit of Analysis

Content categories, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2003), have to be mutually exclusive, exhaustive and reliable. They note that the category system is central to classifying media contents and should be adequate enough to cover the various aspects of the unit of analysis. The content categories for this study includes story positions on SDGs, extent of coverage of SDGs issues, frequency of reports on SDGs, and types of reports on SDGs. Relevant content analytical categories were created to provide answers on newspaper coverage on SDGs as a whole.

Unit of analysis is the smallest aspect of a content analysis and also one of the most important. Krippendorff (1980) adds that —the first task of any empirical research is to decide what is to be observed, recorded and thereafter considered a datum. In this study, media content, such as news stories, advertorials, editorials, column, pictures, and campaign on the coverage of SGDs in Nigeria was examine based on:

i. ***Page placement:*** front page, inside page, back page, editorial page
ii. ***Type of report:*** news story, editorial, advertisement, column, picture and campaign.
iii. ***Story size/length/extent of coverage:*** full page, half page, quarter page, a tiny mention
iv. ***Frequency:*** number of times the story appears.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In the context of content analysis, according to Krippendorff (1980), reliability suggests that there should be inter-rater agreement or, inter-coder reliability. Coding by a singular researcher in content analysis study is likely to have a subjective judgment, thus, two or more coders are recommended (Hruschka et al., 2004; Macnamara, 2005; Oleinik, Popova, Kirdina, & Shatalova, 2014). Inter-coder reliability refers to the degree of agreement that exists between independent coders on the rating or code given to each item in the study. In this

study, inter-coder reliability was obtained by measuring the percentage of agreement between two coders who content analyzed the same newspapers. In this study, the researcher adopted Cohen's kappa to assess the degree of agreement between the researcher and one research assistant in the coding exercise in order to determine the reliability of the data. Historically, percent agreement (number of agreement scores / total scores) was used to determine interrater reliability. However, chance agreement due to raters guessing is always a possibility. The Kappa statistic takes into account this element of chance.

Techniques of Data Analysis

Quantitative method of data analysis was adopted. Data was analyzed using simple frequency counts, percentages, tables and charts, which helped in answering the research questions of the study. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as a tool for the analysis. From data analysis is much easier to get a clearer picture of the research finding and easy assessment whether the research objectives are achieved or (Levesque, 2007)..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What level of prominence is given to Sustainable Development Goals issues reported in selected Nigerian newspapers?

This question was raised to evaluate the degree of prominence given to Sustainable Development Goals subjects which are reported in Nigerian newspapers. To answer this research question, the selected newspapers were content analyzed based on the position of the news story given to SDGs in the newspapers, the extent of story coverage of SDGs issues, frequency of reports on SDGs, and types of report format on SDGs. The prominence the newspaper gives to a story is usually a measure of the importance given to the report.

Table 1: Story Position on SDGs Articles

			Story Position on SDGs				
			Guardian	Nation	Tribune	Daily Trust	Total
Story Position	Front Page	Count	0	0	0	0	0
		% within Story Position	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0%
	Inside Page	Count	15	41	22	20	98
		% within Story Position	15.3%	41.8%	22.4%	20.4%	100.0%
	Back Page	Count	0	0	0	0	0
		% within Story Position	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0%
	Editorial Page	Count	0	6	1	0	7
		% within Story Position	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	15	47	23	20	105
		% within Story Position	14.0%	43.9%	21.5%	18.7%	100.0%

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) matters were not seem to be given high prominence, as most stories were located on the inside page of all the newspapers, as indicated in Table 1. Reported SDGs issues never featured on the front page and back page of all the newspapers in this study. Of all the 105 articles published, only (7) were found in

editorial page, while the remaining were positioned on the inside page of the newspapers. In the practice of newspaper publication, the level of importance of a story is first considered by the editor before taking decision on its placement; whether to be featured it on front page or otherwise of the newspaper. Nwosu (1996) is of the view that the position in which a newspapers place stories indicates the importance attached to the story, and in the consequence, this translates to amount of readership and circulation the story receives. Some stories that are also important but not given much prominence at times positioned on the back page of the newspaper, instead of front page. The publishing organization has a special position called editorial page where the publisher expresses his or her view on a particular event or issue – both local and national. It can also convey some views written by a local resident and or a reader.

The non-positioning of SDGs-related stories on the front page and back page, and low placement on editorial page strongly put forward that these newspapers do not have considerations for SDGs issues to be newsworthy to citizenry. This trend of low prominence given to development issues is reflected in Kayode & Adeniran (2012), where low placement of MDGs issues on the front page and editorial page of newspapers were observed. To raise public awareness, SDGs issues must be featured in front, editorial, and or back pages of Nigerian newspapers.

Table 2: Extent of Coverage on SDGs (story size/length)

			Extent of Coverage on SDGs				
			Guardian	Nation	Tribune	DailyTrust	Total
Story Size/length	Full page	Count	0	6	3	0	9
		% within Extent of Coverage on SDGs		12.8%	12.5%		8.6%
	Half page	Count	4	17	9	5	35
		% within Extent of Coverage on SDGs	26.7%	36.2%	37.5%	26.4%	33.3%
	Quarter page	Count	5	13	8	7	33
		% within Extent of Coverage on SDGs	33.3%	27.7%	33.3%	36.8%	31.4%
	A tiny mention	Count	6	11	4	7	28
		% within Extent of Coverage on SDGs	40.0%	23.4%	16.7%	36.8%	26.7%
Total		Count	15	47	24	19	105
		% within Extent of Coverage on SDGs	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The extent of coverage which is the story size or length on SDGs in newspapers is another reflection of the quality of coverage given to a story. From the data presented in Table 2, it is clear that extent of space allotted to reports on SDGs in Nigerian newspapers is small. It is evident that 35 items, representing 33.3% of the content were placed on half pages, while 33 of the reports was placed on quarter pages, translating to 31.4%. In addition, 28 contents (26.7%) of reports had a tiny mention, with 9 of the contents representing 8.6% were on full pages in the selected newspapers. The findings reveal that majority of the stories on SDGs issues were given less than half page and it is an indication that there is no prominence given to SDGs issues in Nigeria. This outcome is in agreement with Uwom & Oloyede (2014) who studied Newspaper Coverage of Health Issues in Nigeria. In their result, the newspapers did not give prominence to the health issues by way of placement and giving it enough space.

Some controversial issues such as politics, crime, and economy among others took the lead in space allocations in the newspapers. These issues especially politics seem the most preferred because of the presence of conflict; Gupta and Sinha (2010) supports this assertion that "the health beat is not particularly high news yielding beat like politics or the economy".

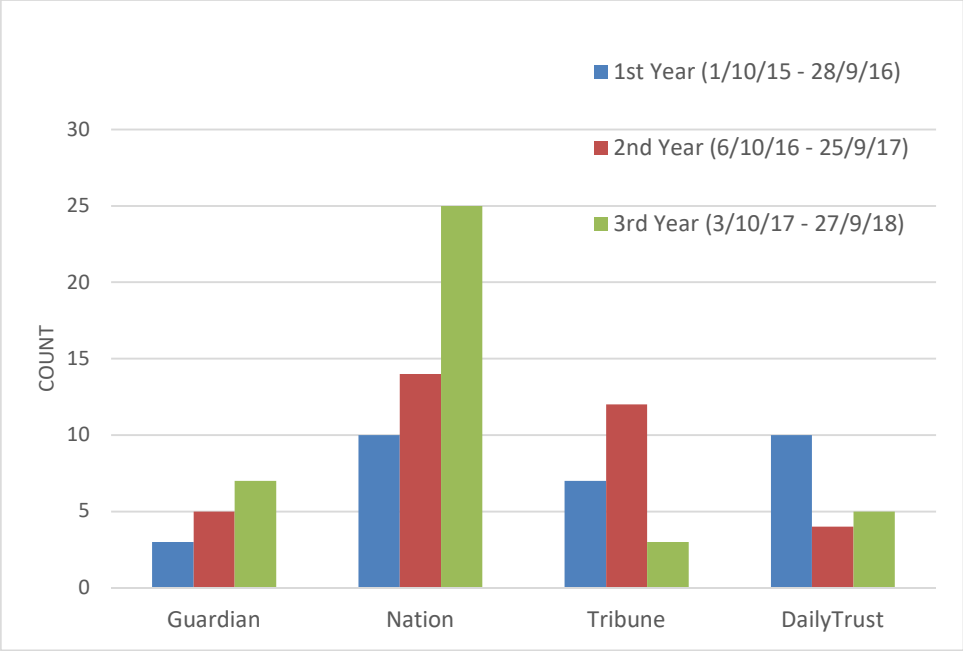

Figure 1: Frequency of Reports on SDGs

Frequency is yet other indices which can be used to determine the prominence Nigerian newspaper have given to SDGs stories in the past three years of its establishment. Frequency indicates the number of times reports on SDGs issues were circulated. Figure 1 indicates that The Nation newspaper reported the most of SDGs issues in all the three years of the study. The Nation reported 25 SDGs issues representing 62.5% in the 3rd year of the study, and 14 (40%) in the 2nd year. Guardian reported the least, which was 3 (10%) stories in the 1st year. The prominence given to SDGs in terms of number of times Nigerian newspaper published stories on SDGs is very low, from the findings of this study. This, can be attributed to the dynamism of the meaning of "Sustainable Development" which needs to be understood, and initiatives also need to be taken by media to empower and engage people about the issues (Walter & Borner 2015).

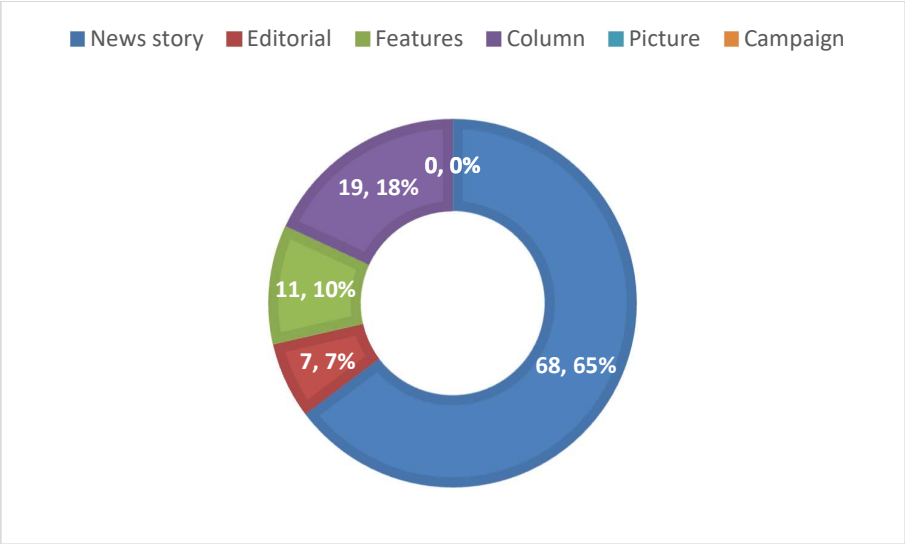

Figure 2: Types of Report Format on SDGs in Nigerian Newspapers

Comparative study of the publication formats also determines the level of importance Nigerian newspapers placed on SDGs issues. Figure 2 reveals that the newspapers selected for the study devoted related amount of stories to news story (68) which represents 65%, followed by column (19) representing 18%, features (11) representing 10%, and Editorial (7) which is 7%, while there was not any publications on campaign and picture format for the entire newspaper under study. The findings further observe that the newspapers report SDGs stories as raw as they occur without giving a comprehensive analysis of the news in the format of column, features, editorial, campaign and pictures. In a related study by Uwom and Oloyede (2014) on health issues in Nigeria, their result shows that a small editorial news was observed. But opposite was the case of Amenaghawon (1998) who researched on a conflict related issue of Niger Delta, Nigeria. All the newspapers at the time of his study dedicated related number of stories to editorials, features and commentaries. This is because crisis is controversial in nature and thus gains much more prominence in newspapers (Gupta & Sinha, 2010). Editorial is considered to be an authority and influential voice of publishing house; however, this study discovers that very little priority was given to it, which has limited the potential of the media to lend adequate support to SDGs issues. This generally translates to low level of prominence accorded SDGs in Nigerian newspaper.

CONCLUSION

The level of prominence given to Sustainable development Goals issues as reports on Nigerian newspaper is overwhelmingly not adequate. The prominence, a measure of the importance given to a report as found from the position of the news story given to SDGs in the newspapers, and in this case no single newspaper under study placed SDGs issues on the front page and back page: the editorial page was grossly inadequate. The extent of story coverage of SDGs issues, frequency of reports on SDGs, and types of reports on SDGs all measured the prominence given to SDGs.

The implication of the findings of this study is that there is urgent need to, first and foremost, educate the newspaper publishers the importance of the SDGs to the modern society and thereby improve on its reportage. When SDGs reports is given a maximum

coverage and prominence in Nigerian newspaper, callosal failure of the SDG program will be avoided, else what happened in MDGs for not meeting its target after 15 years may repeat itself in SDG.

From the findings of the study the following recommendations are hereby made:

i. The newspaper owners and editors should be well informed and educated on the importance of global developmental programmes which are of immense beneficial to the society.
ii. Sustainable Development on its own is a complex idea which needs to be popularized and engaged with at the grassroots level and the newspaper publishers. The dynamism of the meaning of "Sustainable Development" needs to be understood, and initiatives also need to be taken by the newspaper houses to empower and engage people about the issues.
iii. The media should do more publishing as feature or news analysis and editorial and not just direct news on SDGs, and should place SDGs issues on the front pages and back pages.

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