Analysis of *the Guardian* and *the Vanguard* Newspapers' Coverage of Kidnapping in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to analyse The Guardian and The Vanguard newspapers' coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the frequency; prominence, format and genre of the stories on kidnapping in the select newspapers so as to measure the extent the print media report kidnapping cases in Nigeria. Media dependency theory was utilised for the study. Content analysis method was adopted to collect data from the select newspaper stories published from September to December, 2022. Findings revealed that the two newspapers under study were fair enough in their coverage of stories on kidnapping. Straight news format took a major lead of the coverage. Findings also revealed that enough prominence were not given to the issue and that the select newspapers dwelt so much on attacks of kidnapping, neglecting security measures and government responses; only few of them were reported in the newspapers. However, the researchers recommended that, Media organisation especially newspapers should work closely with government in order to get detailed and credible information and that the print media should live up their role as the watchdog of the society by engaging in ethical reporting in terms of investigative and interpretative journalism.

KEYWORDS: *Kidnapping, Newspaper coverage, Nigeria, Boko Haram, Newspaper.*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has continued to witness increased cases of violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping and abduction, banditry, assassinations, militancy and terrorism despite the government efforts in tackling insecurity. Kidnapping is a criminal offense consisting of the unlawful taking and carrying away of a person either by force or fraud. It is also referred to as the unlawful seizure and detention of a person against his will. It is also the abduction and captivity of a person, typically to obtain a ransom. Kidnapping is one of major problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Kidnapping by bandits and insurgents is among the biggest organized or mob crime in Nigeria which poses as a threat to the national security of the state.

Kidnapping according to Ngwama, (2014) is a security concern which is not new in Nigeria, and its ubiquity has been exacerbated by the strain on security. Furthermore, the severity of kidnapping in Nigeria is so tremendous that it has impacted almost everyone in the country. The issue of poverty,

low level of education, lack of employment opportunities and the rising cost of living has contributed immensely to the increased number of kidnap cases because many have turned to kidnapping as a means of survival.

Kidnapping is a national problem that has eaten so deep into the fabric of Nigeria (Dodo, 2010), but it takes place more in the moment of terrorism, insurgency and other forms of political violence. However, with the high rate of abduction witnessed in recent years in different part of the country, Nigeria is fast topping the list of kidnapping nations. Between 2000 and 2010, for instance, no fewer than 4000 persons were kidnapped in Nigeria, with most of them released after ransom was paid (Onuoha, 2011). Also, between 2008 and 2010, the Nigeria Police Force recorded 887 cases across the country (Action on Armed Violence, 2013). With the alarming increased cases of kidnapping of government leaders, business owners, the rich, the poor, and even students, there is need for firsthand information about kidnapping in Nigeria.

There is need for communication between the media and the public. Communication according to Asemah (2009), is the process of sharing information, ideas and attitudes. This means that both the sender which is the media in this context and the receiver (the public) are actively working together for common understanding. Communication is simply intended to influence one another and is an essential aspect of human life which can be the basic essence of life that it revolves around (Asemah 2009). Media here refer to not only the physical mode of communication through which information is transmitted but also refer to the varied channels such as print as well as the non-print, through which news and information are disseminated to the users. In light of this, Nwabueze, Ugochukwu, and Gebra (2014) asserted that the print media has to brace-up and carry out wider surveillance so as to bring to public notice issues that require urgent attention with a view to mobilizing development efforts in that area. Importantly, print media is one of the most cost-effective ways to reach out to the public, and as a result, audiences can easily comprehend and keep up with current events. This study, therefore, is an analyses of newspaper reports on kidnapping in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical researches have revealed that the media are not living up to their role as the watchdog of the society. According to Muobike (2018), journalists provide contradictory information on issues regarding crisis situations. He further claimed that coverage varies from newspaper to newspaper and this has contributed to the failure of print media houses as they have failed to harmonize their information. Many newspapers houses give diverse account of the happenings in the society which have led to the distrust members of the pubic now perceived toward the media when it comes to getting accurate information.

With the increasing incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria, the media ought to ensure the issue is reported accurately and constantly because the magnitude of the issue is deserving of media coverage. However, the degree of prominence, regularity, and direction given to such occurrences or issues by the press is low (Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013). While the broadcast media may not have assigned more air-time to such issues because of too many other programmes, it is assumed that newspapers report on those issues since publications are done on daily basis by most print media firms. This study therefore set to comparatively examine print media coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the frequency of coverage given to Kidnapping by the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers;
2. Find out the prominence given to these stories in the select newspapers;
3. Determine the format adopted by newspapers in reporting kidnapping cases in Nigeria;
4. Find out the genres of the stories in the select newspapers.

CONCEPTUAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Definition of Kidnapping

Kidnapping is a global problem that affects countries all over the world especially countries in Africa despite the government's efforts in addressing this problem and ensuring that the perpetrators are captured and brought to justice. Kidnapping refers to the abduction and captivity of a person, typically to obtain a ransom. Kidnapping is defined by various scholars with varying degrees of success. Firstly, Inyang and Abraham (2013, p. 532) define it as "the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the key part is that it is an unwanted act on the part of the victim". Another definition is offered by Fage and Alabi (2017, p. 289) who conceive kidnapping as "forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to struggle for self-determination". They however add that the forcefully or fraudulently abducted individuals are carried off as hostages for ransom purposes. This implies that while political and economic factors can instigate kidnapping, the economic reason is the most common predisposing factor of the phenomenon.

Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014, p. 132) also define kidnapping as the "act of seizing and detaining or carrying away of a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. It involves taking a person from their family forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family.

From the foregoing, the definition of kidnapping has no one best way to describe it, but it is clear that for an act to be deemed kidnapping, it shall involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, detention or seizure of that person, be it a child or an adult. That is why Inyang and Abraham (2013) added that it is legally regarded as a restriction of someone else's liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from. Kidnapping can be targeted at individuals or at groups. School children have been kidnapped in groups in various parts of Nigeria. Usually, the prime targets of kidnapping for ransom are those considered to be wealthy enough to pay a fee in exchange for being freed. However in recent times, Kidnapping is now an issue that affects everyone regardless of their status in the society. The principal motives for kidnapping are to subject the victim to some form of involuntary servitude, to expose him to the commission of some further criminal act against his person, or to obtain ransom for his safe release. More recently,

kidnapping for the purpose of extortion has become a tactic of political revolutionaries or terrorists seeking concessions from a government. In all countries it is considered a grave offense punishable by a long prison sentence or death.

Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping, as a violent criminal offence, is a rather complex phenomenon that takes place in various contexts and for various reasons. Its causes and consequences are also many. Hazen and Horner (2007), observed that hostages are often taken for two primary reasons: political bargaining and economic gain. This broad classification of kidnapping explains the underlying factors of the problem. It is important to note that criminals involved in kidnapping for various reasons and intentions, such as for adoption, begging, illicit intercourse, marriage, prostitution, ransom, revenge, sale, selling body parts, slavery, unlawful activity, murder and for other purposes (Zenn, 2014).

In Nigeria and many other developing countries, political factors, poverty, lack of legal/available employment opportunity among the youths all play fundamental roles in the rise of kidnapping. In line with the above, Tepperman (2006) as cited in Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2016) observed that Nigeria has a large number of adolescents living and making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks. Generally there are two main kinds of kidnapping for ransom. These can be roughly categorised as "criminal kidnapping", where the main motive is to obtain a ransom from the family or business of the victim. This category includes instances where criminals take hostages as a shield to help them escape from the scene of a crime, or use them to obtain money or valuables. The other type of kidnapping, according to Zannoni (2003), is "political kidnapping", where the foremost objective is to further the political aims of a particular political group or movement. In this case, a ransom is usually demanded to obtain money to raise fund for the group and their activities. This made the dividing line between economic and political kidnappings so blurred. In addition, religious and other political extremists use kidnapping as political weapons and as a means of financing their activities (Catlin Group, 2012).

Economic deprivation and a sense of desperation have planted the seeds of kidnapping as a way of getting money in poor communities. It can then become a way of life, even when legal options become available (Catlin Group, 2012). The disparity between rich and poor is growing, and thanks to the internet and global media, everyone can see how the rich are living. It fuels resentment and a desire for a bigger share (Catlin Group, 2012). Ohakhire (2010) clarified that kidnapping is associated with quest for ransom, revenge and ritual. That is the dictum of kidnapping, '3rs' of kidnapping. Other researchers have also campaigned for the following reasons to be responsible for Kidnapping: poverty, unemployment, proliferation of arms and military uniforms, policy of a cashless society, moral decadence and the quest to get rich quick syndrome, corruption and poor governance, the use of hard drugs and the inequality and absence of fairness and justice in the country among many others.

Newspaper role in Tackling Kidnapping in Nigeria

Newspapers provide information and alert us of the changes that take place around us. The newspaper has long been called the watchdog of a free society. Newspaper helps to critically analyse public issues through their editorial pages, column, feature page etc. These analysis made by media on issues that are of human interest are very vital to the society.

Newspapers play crucial roles in reducing the cases of kidnapping in Nigeria. Firstly, they have an educational role, providing well-researched stories that educate and enlighten the public about the true nature of kidnapping in the country. Readers are informed about what actions to take in such situations and the safety measures they can adopt to avoid becoming victims (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017). Additionally, newspapers educate the government on the necessary measures to tackle the issue effectively.

Secondly, newspapers contribute to sensitization efforts by raising awareness about various societal issues, including kidnapping. Through their coverage, they build a consciousness among individuals about the reality of the situation, fostering a deeper understanding of the impact of kidnapping on society. Furthermore, newspapers serve as a vital source of information dissemination. In today's world, access to adequate information is crucial for making informed decisions and improving lives. Newspapers provide a wide range of information to readers regarding kidnapping, including stories on its causes, effects, and potential solutions.

Moreover, newspapers fulfill an advocacy role by representing the voice of the oppressed and suppressed. Through their news stories, they highlight the issue of kidnapping and its widespread impact on the population. This advocacy helps raise alarm and urges the government to reinforce security measures in the country (Muobike, 2017). Newspapers emphasize that the government should pay attention to all cases of kidnapping, regardless of the victims' social status.

Lastly, newspapers contribute to mobilization by creating a collective consciousness necessary for communities to make decisions that improve their lives. News stories in newspapers inspire individuals and groups to take decisive security measures. For example, in some parts of the country, youth have formed security teams to ensure the safety of their communities, prompted by the information and awareness provided through newspapers (Muobike, 2017).

Empirical Review

In the study of Abba, Abbasaniel, and Msughteraniel (2021) on the "Comparative Content Analysis Of Press Coverage of Kidnapping Cases in Nigeria", they described kidnapping as a trend in the county noting that the country has been battling with diverse conflicts for more than two decades and the media are yet to report conflicts in a manner that will encourage the government and the governed to team together to tackle the problem, thereby implying that there is a possibility that the media frame news from a realists perspective. The study took a national scope in Nigeria and data were collected from the select Nigeria Newspapers- the *Daily Trust* and *Guardian*. The content analysis method was adopted by the researchers to obtain data. The aim of the research was to determine the level of frequency and prominence given to kidnapping cases in *Daily Trust* and *Guardian* newspapers and also to determine the direction of the kidnapping cases in the *Daily Trust* and *Guardian* newspapers from August to October, 2020. The findings revealed that the two newspapers under investigation reported kidnapping cases more in form of news stories. It was suggested that, considering the power of the media as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, reportage of issues should address societal problems like kidnapping.

Adekoya, Ifidon, and Chioma (2016) examined "Newspaper Coverage of The Chibok Girls Abduction in North- East Nigeria." Adopting the content analysis research design, the researchers comparatively investigated the level of coverage accorded to the discourse on the Chibok Girls abduction by two national dailies of: the *Punch*, and *Guardian*. Through the systematic sampling

technique, 30 editions were selected each from the two newspapers understudied. The study revealed that both newspapers gave prominence to the Chibok girls abduction in their coverage. The researchers therefore recommended that there is need for the media to take a relook at their journalistic ethics.

Nwammuo, Edegoh and Asemah (2016) examined the issue of "War against Kidnapping: Use of Indigenous Communication Systems by Vigilante Groups in Anambra State, Nigeria". This study aimed at ascertaining the indigenous media forms vigilante groups use in discouraging youth from indulging in kidnapping in Anambra State. It also aimed at finding out the indigenous media forms which are easily accessible to the vigilante groups and to ascertain whether the vigilante groups would accept the combination of conventional media forms and indigenous forms in the fight against kidnapping. The mixed research design was used in the study. Ten registered vigilante groups in the state were purposely selected. Interview schedule and Questionnaire were employed in generating data for the study.

Findings showed that vigilante groups in Anambra State made use of indigenous communication forms in the fight against kidnapping. They do this by using visit, patrol, opinion leaders, presidents of Town Unions, traditional news men, church leaders and idiophones in discouraging youths from indulging in kidnapping for ransom. It was equally discovered that vigilante groups in Anambra State would like to combine the use of cell phones and walkie-talkie with indigenous communication systems in fighting kidnapping. Findings also revealed that visits and patrols were the indigenous communication forms easily accessible to vigilante groups. The study also revealed that meager salary militates against the active work of most vigilante groups in the state. The study therefore recommended that indigenous communication systems be harnessed and strengthened so as to stop the menace of kidnapping in the state and in other South Eastern States. The above studies are related to the current one in that they all examined media coverage of kidnapping, however, the scope of the current study differed from the previous ones.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Media Dependency Theory

Media dependency theory was proposed by Sandra Ball Rokeach and Melvin Defleaur in 1976. The theory is grounded in classical sociological literature positing that media and their audiences should be studied, in the context of larger social systems (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). The theory states that the more dependent an individual is on the media for having his needs fulfilled, the more important the media will be to that person. According to LittleJohn (2002), people will become more dependent on media that meet a number of their needs than on media that provide only a few ones. If a person finds a medium that provides him with several functions that are central to his desires, he will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future. Thus, if the newspaper satisfies more of an individual needs than other mass communication channels like television, radio, magazine, internet, etc, the individual is likely to depend on it than these other media.

The import of this theory to this study is that the public are vulnerable to depending on media that meet a number of their needs like the newspapers for instance. People are more tuned or attach to newspaper or other media that fulfill their normative needs. In relation to this, these media must therefore increase their intensity of reportage on security matters so as to sustain the public to the

media. The more alternatives open for readers or viewers, the lesser they become dependent on the media. The forgoing therefore implies that for the print media to stay relevant, they must ensure they keep the public abreast of any information on kidnapping otherwise the public may turn to other means of mass communication to satisfy their needs.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised content analysis research design to examine how selected newspapers reported kidnapping cases in Nigeria. This design involves systematically investigating and analysing the content of the newspapers using specific categories and coding procedures to generate empirical data (Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023). Content analysis was chosen as it provided an organised approach to data collection, measurement of concepts, and interpretation of the studied content. Researchers using this method aim to objectively study, interpret, and analyze media content (Ajibulu & Nwaoboli, 2023). Due to the impracticality of studying all newspapers reporting kidnapping cases, the study focused on two national newspapers, namely the *Guardian* and *Vanguard*. These newspapers were selected based on their national prestige, reach and content. The study analysed 122 editions of each newspaper from September to December 2022, resulting in a total of 244 editions which is the population of the study.

Census sampling technique was used to select all (75 from the *Guardian* and 88 from the *Vanguard*) stories on kidnapping considering that the population were not overwhelming. The coding sheet was used as the research instrument for this study. Coding involved categorizing units of analysis (news on kidnapping) according to manifest content from the selected newspapers. The coding sheet facilitated data collection, categorization, and quantification of content based on established categories.

A pilot study involving 20 copies each of the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers was conducted to test the instrument's reliability. The researcher examined the manifest content in relation to the study's topic, establishing the instrument's reliability. The study employed several units of analysis to obtain reliable results, including frequency (number of kidnapping stories covered), genre (writing style), prominence (placement in the newspapers), and format (space allocated). These units helped analyse the contents of the select newspapers.

The content categories used in the study included frequency (high, medium, low), genre (features, opinion, cartoon, straight news, etc.), prominence (front page, inside page, back page), format (full page, half page, quarter page), and themes related to kidnapping. Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through non-participant observation by closely examining newspaper editions. Secondary data was obtained through content analysis of the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, presenting the findings in tables and expressing them as simple percentages.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Frequency of Coverage of Kidnaping by the Select Newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Guardian	75	46%
Vanguard	88	54%
Total	163	100%

The data revealed that *Vanguard* newspaper reported more stories on issues relating to kidnapping than the *Guardian* newspaper. It also indicates that the level of print media coverage on kidnapping in Nigeria is very high.

Table 2: Level of Prominence given to Stories on the Select Newspapers

Variables	*Guardian*	*Vanguard*	Total	Percentage
Front page lead	1	0	1	0.6%
Front page	8	15	23	14.1%
Inside page	66	73	139	85.3%
Back page	0	0	0	0%
Total	75	88	163	100%

The data revealed that majority of the kidnapping stories covered by the select newspapers were on the inside pages. This shows that Nigerian newspapers did not give enough prominence to the coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Table 3: Genre of Kidnapping Stories on the Select Newspapers

Variables	*Guardian*	*Vanguard*	Total	Percentage
Straight News	65	65	130	80%
Features	4	7	11	6.7%
Editorial	3	3	6	3.6%
Column	0	2	2	1.2%
Interview	0	5	5	3%
Opinion	3	6	9	5.5%
Total	75	88	163	100%

The data revealed that more straight news was used to report stories on kidnapping in the select newspapers. The implication of this is that people were not actively involved and engaged. Media

organisations and public (individuals) were not given adequate privilege to air their view on the subject matter. This is why there were less of opinion, column, editorials and others.

Table 4: Format of Space allocated to News Stories on Kidnaping

Variables	*Guardian*	*Vanguard*	Total	Percentage
Full page	5	2	7	4.3%
Half page	10	14	24	14.7%
Quarter page	60	72	32	81%
Total	75	88	163	100%

The data revealed that newspapers publications in respect to space allocation of issues relating to kidnapping was not commendable.

Table 5: Format of the Portrayal of Stories on the Select Nigerian Newspapers

Variables	*Guardian*	*Vanguard*	Total	Percentage
Attack on kidnapping	17	26	43	26.4%
Arrest of kidnappers	8	9	17	10.4%
Government Response	7	5	12	7.4%
Individual Response	17	22	39	24%
Security measure	14	3	17	10.4%
Security effort	6	11	17	10.4%
Impact of kidnapping	6	12	18	11%
Total	75	88	163	100%

The data revealed that there are more report on attack of kidnapping in the newspapers studied. The implication of the above data is that kidnapping attacks in Nigeria is way higher compare to the level of security measures and efforts put in place to reduce the upsurge of kidnapping in the country.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From table 1, the researchers found out that there is a high level of reportage of stories with a total of 75 news stories representing 46% in the *Guardian* newspaper and 88 new stories constituting 54% in *Vanguard* newspaper. Results obtained in the study revealed that the newspapers understudy were committed to reporting stories of kidnapping in Nigeria. The media is solely responsible for how we perceive issues in the society. Obaje (2017) observes that the media has the duty of letting the society know what happen around them though adequate attention from the media organisations. The media may not always determine what we think, but, what we think about. McQuail (2008) cited in Asemah (2011), says that frequent reportage of certain issues in the media move these issue to public agenda. This implies that when media reports are frequent, the issue become elevated in the mind of the public. Thus the media raise salient issues in our society

and people begin to think along that line (Asemah & Edegoh, 2022). The public depend on media information to meet their needs and goals therefore the media systems must interact with audience to create needs, interests and motives in the individuals. This therefore implies that the media can alter the beliefs, attitudes and the interests of the audience members, thereby setting agenda for them to follow. With the frequent report of kidnapping in Nigeria, it can be said that the media is living up to their role as the watchdog of the society.

From table 2, the researchers found out that stories on kidnapping appeared more on the inside pages. Stories on inside page were 139 which constitutes 85.3%. The study therefore revealed that the level of prominence given to kidnapping in the select newspapers was not good enough. The placement of most stories on the inside pages of the select newspapers did not align with Sa'idu's (2017) observation which says that the front page allocation, editorials and back page columns in newspapers indicate prominence. This implies that more front page coverage or editorial and back page columns enhance prominence. The prominence given to any issue goes a long way in showing how important that issue is. The placement of a particular current issue on the front page of the newspaper by the editor determines its prominence. It can be deduced from the above discussions that mass media in Nigeria to a very high extent do not pay enough attention to kidnapping, Both the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers did not give enough prominence to stories relating to kidnapping and thus failed in their agenda setting role to the society, which in line with Izuogu (2009), as cited in Anorue, Obayi, Onyebuchi, Odemelam & Ekwe (2012) postulation that agenda setting theory is the media capacity to cause an issue to be elevated as importance in the mind of the public through repeated focus or coverage.

From table 3, the researchers found that the straight news gained more coverage over the others with a total of 80%. Given the position of the agenda-setting role of the mass media as the medium that "paints the picture in our head", it is necessary to report kidnapping as straight news to emphasise the importance of the story, this is in line with Ochonogor & Hyacinth (2011, p.363), which says that serious and current events are usually given straight news treatment.. However, straight news has its disadvantage, it pays little attention to the view of the individuals about the issue. Straight news reports do not contain interpretations or any information outside what has happened and the way it happened. but the editorial, interview, opinion and column are written and published to represent the voice of individuals in the society. This is also in line with Alfred, Ogwo & Ekwueme's (2017) postulation that the dominance of straight news in newspapers coverage implies that the correlation function, which is the interpretative role of the press, was not really dealt with because interpretative genres such as features, opinions and in-depth news analysis were not recognised. The use of more of the other genres would have created a balance and helped the reader to be better informed from the write up of other opinion articles which would have given more factual and updated information on the issue. The study therefore revealed that in the reportage of kidnapping in Nigeria, the media pay less attention to the opinion of the public. The dominant of straight news in the print media report on kidnapping shows poor engagement of the public. However, given the seriousness ascribed to straight news stories and the consistency of coverage by both newspapers in the study, the frequency of coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria by the newspapers is commendable, hence, the media plays its watchdog role to the society.

From table 4 & 5, the researcher found that the amount of space allotted to stories on kidnapping was not commendable in both newspapers as only 4.3% of news stories were placed on full pages. Readers learn not only about a given issue but also how much importance to attach to that issue

from the amount of information in a news story and its position. Therefore, the agenda setting power of the media resides in the amount/type of space on print or time devoted to a story and its ranking in broadcast (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, cited in Baran & Davis, 2006). The mass media help the public determine the important issues to be discussed hence any news report written in full and half pages is considered as important and factual. The presentation of kidnapping in just quarter pages will not be adequate as there will be no room for updates and relevant facts that the public is entitled to, hence, it will be considered as unimportant. The study also revealed that print media focuses more on reporting attacks on kidnapping rather than the security measures and efforts to tackle the menace of kidnapping. It can be deduced from the above discussions that the study did not give enough emphasis on the importance of stories on kidnapping because majority of the stories were given quarter pages, this therefore revealed that the media failed in its agenda setting role to the public. The study also revealed that mass media in Nigeria to a very high extent pay attention more in reporting attacks on kidnapping The implications of the above data is that kidnapping attacks in Nigeria is way higher compare to the level of security measures and effort put in place to reduce the crime.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined *The Guardian* and *The Vanguard* newspapers' coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria and found that while there was a high level of coverage, the issue did not receive sufficient prominence compared to other topics like politics. The space allocated for coverage was limited, with a heavy reliance on straight news reporting. Based on the aforementioned findings, the following were recommended:

1. Newspapers should accord more prominence to issues on kidnapping, using their front page, front page lead and back pages to place emphasis on the importance of the issue. This will enable news readers attach corresponding importance to such issues.

2. The print media should dedicate more space to news on kidnapping instead of focusing only on issues about politics, business and economy. This is based on the fact that the findings of the study reveals that enough space was not provided to news relating to stories on kidnapping.

3. Print media in Nigeria in fulfilling their social responsibility to the society should pay serious attention to the issue of Kidnapping. There should be ethical reporting by the mass media, the media should provide the clearest, most factual and most balanced information on kidnapping. They should endeavor to assign journalists to cover and report unbiased issues regarding kidnapping.

4. Media practitioners should be trained in the area of crime journalism. Journalists should engage more in investigative and interpretative reporting of issues relating to kidnapping in the country to ensure critical and in-depth interpretation of the stories. Newspaper houses should emphasise in-depth and interpretative coverage of the crime.

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