



## A critical analysis of selected national newspapers on 2023 Nigerian presidential election

Okoji Chukwudinma Taiwo <sup>1\*</sup>, Olanihun Sunday Zechariah <sup>2</sup>, Okoji Morenikeji Chukwufumnaya <sup>3</sup>, Ganiyu Bisiriyu I <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,4</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Redeemers University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

\* Corresponding Author: Okoji Chukwudinma Taiwo

---

### Article Info

**ISSN (online):** 2582-7138

**Impact Factor:** 5.307 (SJIF)

**Volume:** 05

**Issue:** 02

**March-April 2024**

**Received:** 09-01-2024;

**Accepted:** 12-02-2024

**Page No:** 51-57

### Abstract

The media performs a crucial role in the maintenance of democratic societies. This study examined newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election. The study aimed at identifying the frequency, genre of stories, prominence, and space allocated to the coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. The research was anchored on Agenda Setting theory. For this investigation, Content Analysis was used. Samples were drawn from select newspapers (Guardian, the Nation, Punch and Vanguard). This investigation spanned the final four months preceding the Nigerian presidential election of 2023, from 1st November, 2022 to 28th February, 2023. The population of the study comprised all 480 editions. The findings showed that news is the most covered aspect of disseminating information by the four selected newspapers on the 2023 Presidential election to a heterogeneous nationwide audience, with slight prominence in the front-page lead. Another result showed that the Nation newspaper allocated more space to the coverage of the 2023 presidential election perhaps because it was owned by one of the Presidential candidates Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The study, therefore, recommends that newspaper houses should allow other genre of reportage (editorial, features, interview, letter to the editor and opinion articles) to also be seen as important ways of passing across political information and other related election matter to the diverse audiences of the media as most news are paid for, which could be indirectly bias.

**Keywords:** newspaper, coverage, Nigerian, presidential election

---

### Introduction

An election is a process of selecting leaders in a democratic system where a constitutionally permissible change of government is permitted (Johari, 2011) <sup>[17]</sup>. Since 1922, elections have been held in Nigeria, and they were held continuously until 1960 when Nigeria achieved political independence from Britain. Following political independence, elections were held in 1964, but the democratic regime was brief due to a violent military rebellion. In 1979, Nigeria abandoned its parliamentary system and adopted the presidential system. The transition from the aborted Third Republic in 1991 to the Fourth Republic, which emerged in 1999, was the longest democratic transition in the country's history (Sule *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Multiple levels of an election are held in Nigeria. Constitutionally, there are seven electoral offices in the Fourth Republic, from 1999 to the 2023 General Elections, including the Presidential, Senatorial, Federal House of Representatives, Gubernatorial, State House of Assembly, Chairmanship, and Councillorship (Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended). The Presidential Election is among the most intriguing events in Nigerian politics. This is due to the voting pattern and political conduct of the Nigerian electorate when it comes to choosing their leaders. This makes the battle for the presidency intense, tumultuous, and potentially menacing to the point of national dissolution. (Sule *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[29]</sup> The culture of ethnic, religious, and regional voting inherited from the nationalists during the colonial period appears to continue into the present day.

Abdullahi (2015) <sup>[1]</sup> cites the Nigerian political culture and voting pattern of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism as challenges to the country's ability to produce outstanding leaders. Elections in Nigeria are plagued by cheating, violence, manipulation of results, and intimidation of the opposition and their supporters utilising the machinery of security personnel and political thugs (Auwal, 2015) <sup>[4]</sup>, all of which are closely tied to the politics of winning at all costs described above. Vote buying, godfatherism, extortion, corruption, overspending, violation of electoral regulations, and other irregularities all had a role in the process and the outcome of the election in Nigeria (Sule *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[26]</sup>. The 2015 Nigerian presidential election was the zenith of the money-in-politics phenomena in the country.

The media serve several functions in modern society, including those related to government and national development. The media serves as an important check on the administration and helps ensure that elections are fair and honest (Buami, 2016) <sup>[6]</sup>. Activities leading up to an election are broadly defined to include campaigns, rallies, gatherings, voter education, and sensitization. Unfortunately, a sizable proportion of voters is never invited to or even aware of these gatherings. Voters typically turn to the media for information on all of these issues. If the media are not respected and allowed to inform and report on political campaigns, it will be a violation of the rights of the people. According to Kadiri, Muhammed, Raji, and Sulaiman (2015) <sup>[18]</sup>, the media are the "cognitive engine" of a democratic society. They provide voters with critical political information on which they may base their ballot choices. Furthermore, Odunlami (2013) argues that the quantity and quality of information an individual is exposed to reflect the individual's potential to have educated opinions and take judgments on political affairs. Their exposure to the media could influence these. However, as Buami (2016) <sup>[6]</sup> points out, the mass media have remained preeminent providers of knowledge on politics in democratic nations, despite recurrent worries about media impartiality, especially during election years.

Some authors have studied the Nigerian 2023 general elections. While Annkatrin and Hanne (2023) <sup>[3]</sup> look at Violent Elections and Citizens' Support for Democratic Constraints on the Executive: Evidence From Nigeria, Syed, Zia, Fatima (2023) look at Presidential Election in Nigeria 2023 Trial and Tribulation of Democracy, Martin (2023) <sup>[19]</sup>, looked at Overpromising and Underdelivering? Digital Technology in Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Elections, Yau Idris Gadau & Murjanatu Abubak (2023) <sup>[32]</sup> examined Youths and the electoral violence in Nigeria's democratic regime: Lesson for youth ahead of 2023 general election.

However, none of these studies examined the newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election. This study, therefore, wants to critically look at the newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election with a view to appraise the level of agenda set by Nigerian newspapers.

### Research Objectives

1. To determine the frequency of newspaper coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria.
2. To identify the genre of newspaper articles covering of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria.
3. To examine the prominence of newspaper's coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria.
4. To determine the space allocated by the newspaper for coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria.

### Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of newspaper coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria in the designated newspapers?
2. What genre does the designated newspaper's coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria fall under?
3. What prominence does the designated publication accord its coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria?
4. How much space does the newspaper devote to its coverage of 2023 presidential election in Nigeria?

### Review of Related Literature

#### Election in Nigeria

"Elect" literally means "to choose." According to Obiam (2021) <sup>[22]</sup>, citing Ujo, the history of elections can be traced back to the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as to the middle ages, when they chose Popes and Emperors (Ujo, 2012) <sup>[31]</sup>. According to Eulau, Gibbins, and Webb (2019), elections are the process through which the general populace chooses a leader.

The 1999 Constitution as Amended and the Electoral Act 2010 govern Nigerian elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is in charge of elections and related matters like registration and de-registration of political parties, regulating contestants and political parties, and designing election regulations for voters. The INEC has been criticised for corruption, bias, anomalies, inadequate preparations, and a lack of experience and professionalism (The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives, 2015).

Nigerian elections are plagued by ethnicity, religion, and regionalism (Abdullahi, 2015) <sup>[1]</sup>. The Nigerian politics of winning at all costs involves rigging, violence, manipulation of results, and intimidation of the opposition and their followers by security forces and political thugs (Auwal, 2015) <sup>[4]</sup>. Nigerian elections were marred by vote buying, godfatherism, bribery, corruption, overspending, electoral law violations, and other anomalies (Sule *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[26]</sup>. Nigerian money politics peaked during the 2015 presidential election.

Due to their inability to fulfill their duties, political elites considered religion the simplest way to gain power. Nigerian politicians use politics to enrich themselves. Politicians buy and bribe religious clergy to lure voters to religious politics Sule *et al.* (2018) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Nigerian politics is characterised by violence, zero-sum games, militarism, the employment of thugs by politicians, and the use of every means to achieve power, including killings, political assassination, and voter intimidation. Nigerian elections are war-like because elites seize power at all costs for personal benefit Babayo (2019) <sup>[5]</sup> citing Falola & Heaton (2008) <sup>[11]</sup>.

Improved behavior may make elections peaceful, safe, and fair. E-voting prevents manipulation and ensures politicians follow policies. Public awareness of the evils of rigging, violence, and voter manipulation should be forceful. Managing ethnicity, religion, and regionalism help make elections secure.

#### Presidential elections in Nigeria

After the 1966 coup, Nigeria held presidential elections under the Second Republic (1979-1984). Nine presidential elections have occurred since 1979. 1979 and 1983 were the Second Republic's first elections. In 1991, the Aborted Third Republic was annulled. 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019,

and 2023 were Fourth Republic Presidential Elections. Nigeria's Presidential Election shows that voters vote by ethnicity, religion, and area. In the 1979 Presidential Election, AlhajiShehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), and Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) all won their political regions. The 1983 Presidential Election was similar (Akinboye & Anifowose, 2008; cited by Babayo 2019; Sule *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[2, 29, 5]</sup>. In the Fourth Republic, the Presidential Election was fought seven times: 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023, all of which had ethnic and religious influences on voters. President Jonathon of the South ran under PDP, whereas Muhammadu Buhari ran with CPC in 2011. Buhari won the North and Jonathon the South. Jonathon won, and the same

competitors returned in 2015, but Buhari won (Sule *et al.*, 2018) <sup>[26]</sup>. In the 2019 presidential election, President Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and AlhajiAtikuAbubakar of the PDP, both Hausa/Fulani Muslims, emerged from the North. However, the voting pattern showed a shocking result: Hausa/Fulani Muslims voted strongly for President Muhammadu Buhari, Northern Christians, and the SouthSouth and South East voted for Atiku, and South West ballots were spoilt. In 2023 presidential election election it was between the three major candidate, south west Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu (APC) and AlhajiAtikuAbubakar (PDP) and Peter Obi (LP). The discussion tables show the 2023 Nigerian presidential election in six (6) geopolitical zones is tabulated below.

Table 1

Candidate/Political Party	South - West	South – East	South – South	North East	North - Central	North West
<b>Bola Tinubu (APC)</b>	2,542,979	127,605	799,957	933,176	1,760,993	2,652,235
<b>Atiku Abubakar (PDP)</b>	941,941	91,198	717,908	1,741,846	1,025,178	2,197,824
<b>Peter OBI (LP)</b>	849,423	1,960,569	1,210,675	315,107	1,415,557	350,183
<b>Total</b>	4,334,343	2,179,372	2,728,540	2,990,129	4,201,728	5,200,242

Source: INEC Portal 2023

### Nigerian press and coverage of electioneering process

The press's role in a nation's election process is to properly engage voters. This feature helps voters choose a candidate and protect the public interest in the elections. The voter must be aware of political parties' beliefs and candidates' backgrounds to make educated electoral judgments.

Daniel (2021) <sup>[7]</sup> cites Habermas (1989) <sup>[15]</sup> to characterise the press as a complementary organ of information that guides political discussions and decisions among the population. Ochonogor and Fyneface (2016) argue that mass media influence society and politics. The media spread new ideas, popularise them, and influence public opinion through expert interpretation.

Since mass media are people's window to the world, they can influence audience perception and disposition (Ndimele and Innocent 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>. This is why cultures that value public opinion use mass media to promote public and personal well-being. Media interpret societal concerns, including opportunities and risks. Social problem interpretations help individuals make educated decisions that impact them. The press has a critical role under the law to be socially responsible in coverage of subjects that potentially divide the country responsibly Felix and Olanihun (2021) <sup>[12]</sup>. Byrant and Thomas (2002), referenced in Popoola (2013), list the democratic roles of mass media:

1. Surveillance of contemporary events that may affect citizens positively or negatively;
2. Identification of key social-political issues;
3. Provision of a platform for advocacy for causes and interest;
4. Transmission of diverse contents across the various dimensions and factions of political discourse;
5. Scrutiny of government officials, their institutions, and other agencies;
6. Providing incentives and information to allow citizens to become actively involved.

The mass media are vital to democracy. It also indicates that press surveillance is essential for engaged citizenship.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda Setting Theory, initially formulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, elucidates the media's significant influence in determining the importance of various issues. Originating from a focused examination conducted in Chapel Hill, this theory emerged from analyzing the media's impact on public perception following the 1968 presidential election in the United States.

In essence, Agenda Setting involves the news media's capacity to generate awareness and concern regarding prominent issues. Cohen (1963) succinctly encapsulated this notion when he remarked that while the press may not dictate people's opinions, it undeniably shapes what issues they deem significant. Wimmer and Dominick (2000) further expounded on this theory, emphasizing that the media's selection and coverage of topics profoundly influence the public agenda-determining the subjects people discuss, contemplate, and fret over.

According to Ndimele & Innocent, 'the context and prominence of a news article reveal the nature of the problem and its significance. Influence from the media is possible. It has been suggested that "the media may determine the direction of the campaign' (p.176). People will evaluate the news they see. In a multi-party democracy, this rule helps ensure impartiality. The public may dismiss a political party as irrelevant if its goals are not accurately represented in the media. In a general election, this creates a fair playing field for all parties.

#### Methodology

This study used Content Analysis as research method and four national newspapers were purposefully selected based on readership and circulation strength as there is no Audit Bureau of Circulation to provide the statistical strength of circulation of national dailies in Nigeria. The selected newspapers were *Guardian*, *The Nation*, *Punch* and *Vanguard*. This study investigated newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election from 1<sup>st</sup> of November to 28<sup>th</sup> of February. These months were designated as the most

crucial for voting. In total, 480 publications were published by the four newspapers. The study employed systematic sampling with a two-day interval between Mondays and Sundays. This resulted in the Monday, Thursday, and Sunday constant (r). From the four sources, a total of 204 (42.5%) newspaper publications were selected at random. Using a cross-tabulation of percentages and frequency tables, the data was analysed. To identify and evaluate newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election, the following content categories were established:

- Newspaper Identity: (i) The Guardian (ii) The Nation (iii) The Punch (iv) Vanguard.
- Newspaper coverage frequency: (i) The Guardian (ii) The Nation (iii) The Punch (iv) Vanguard
- Story Genre/Description: (i) Editorials; (ii) Features; (iii) Interviews; (iv) Letters to the Editor; (v) News; (vi) Opinions; and (vii) Pictures
- Story placement: (i) Front page (ii) Inside page (iii) Back page
- Shape assigned to each tale: (i) Editorials (ii) Features (iii) Interviews (iv) Letters (v) News (vi) Opinions (vii) Pictures

**Table 3:** Genre of stories reported on coverage pattern mostly used during 2023 presidential election in Nigeria

Guardian	No	%	The Nation	No	%	Punch	No	%	Vanguard	No	%	Total
Editorial	8	3.8%		18	5.2%		14	4.5%		12	4.7%	52 (4.7%)
Features	17	8.2%		31	8.9%		27	8.8%		20	7.9%	95 (8.5%)
Interview	7	3.4%		19	5.5%		12	3.9%		8	3.1%	46 (4.1%)
Letter to editor	4	1.9%		8	2.3%		8	2.6%		6	2.4%	26 (2.3%)
News	96	46.2%		144	41.4%		136	44.2%		122	48.0%	498 (44.5%)
Opinion article	8	3.8%		16	4.6%		12	3.9%		4	1.6%	40 (3.6%)
Pictures	68	32.7%		112	32.1%		99	32.1%		82	32.3%	361 (32.3%)
Total	208	100%		348	100%		308	100%		254	100%	1,118 (100%)

Source: Content Analysis, 2023

From the table above, The Nation newspaper has the highest reportage of 2023 presidential election stories presented in the news format followed by the Punch newspaper, Vanguard and Guardian in descending order. The Nation newspaper, through its news stories on the topic, had a frequency of 144 (41.4%). The pictures placement came next with a frequency of 112 (32.1%), features had a frequency of 31 (8.9%), editorial had a frequency of 18 (5.2%), interview had a frequency of 19 (5.5%), the opinion article had a frequency of 16 (4.6%), while letter to the editorials appeared within the same newspaper appeared 8 (2.3%), the Punch newspaper had its news story format also with the highest frequency of 136 (44.2%). The pictures placement came next with a frequency of 99 (32.1%), features had a frequency of 27 (8.8%), editorial had a frequency of 14 (4.5%), the opinion articles and interview had a frequency of 12 (3.9%), while the

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 2:** Frequency of coverage in 2023 Nigerian presidential election

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
Guardian	208	18.6%
The nation	348	31.1%
The punch	308	27.6%
Vanguard	254	22.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Content Analysis, 2023

The table above Showed the frequency of stories on newspaper coverage of 2023 Nigerian Presidential election in the Guardian, the Nation, Punch and the Vanguard newspapers. There were a total of 1118 stories of 2023 presidential election. The Nation newspaper had the highest reportage frequency at 348 (31.1%), the Punch followed with 308 (27.6%), Vanguard had 254 (22.7%) while Guardian had the least with 208 (18.6%). By implication, the four selected newspapers covered the 2023 Nigerian presidential election in a considerable manner.

letter to the editor appeared 8 (2.6%), the Vanguard newspaper also had its news story format with the highest frequency of 122 (48.0%). The pictures placement came next with a frequency of 82 (32.3%), features had a frequency of 20 (7.9%), editorial had a frequency of 12 (4.7%), the interview had a frequency of 8 (3.1%), letters to the editor had a frequency of 6 (2.4%), )while opinion article had a frequency of 4 (1.6%), while the Guardian newspaper had its news story format also with the highest frequency of 96 (46.2%), the pictures placement came next with a frequency of 68 (32.7%), features had a frequency of 17 (8.2%), editorial and opinion article had a frequency of 8 (3.8%), interview had a frequency of 7 (3.4%), while the letters to the editor appeared 4 (1.9%). The findings showed that news was the most used genre of reportage by the selected newspapers during 2023 Nigeria Presidential election.

**Table 4:** Prominence of coverage in 2023 presidential election

Guardian	No	%	The Nation	No	%	Punch	No	%	Vanguard	No	%	Total
Front	62	29.8%		99	28.4%		86	27.9%		57	22.4%	304 (27.2%)
Back	0	0%		12	3.5%		4	1.3%		0	0%	16 (1.4%)
Inside	146	70.2%		237	68.1%		218	70.8%		197	77.6%	798 (71.4%)
Total	208	100%		348	100%		308	100%		254	100%	1,118 (100%)

Source: Content Analysis, 2023

From the table given above, The Nation newspaper had the bulk of its stories on the inside page with a frequency of 237 (68.1%), the front-page stories accounted for a frequency of 99 (28.4%), while the back page had a frequency of 12

(3.5%). On the other hand, The Punch had the bulk of its stories on the inside pages with a frequency of 218 (70.8%), the front page stories accounted for a frequency of 86 (27.9%), back pages had a frequency of 4 (1.3%), The

Vanguard had the bulk of its stories on the inside pages with a frequency of 197 (77.6%), and the front page stories accounted for a frequency of 57 (22.4%), The Guardian had the bulk of its stories on the inside pages with a frequency of

146 (70.2%), and the front page stories accounted for a frequency of 62 (29.8%). It is worthy to note that the four newspapers published most of their stories in the inside page.

**Table 5:** Space allocated to the coverage of 2023 Presidential election

Guardian	No	%	The Nation	No	%	Punch	No	%	Vanguard	No	%	Total
Editorial	104	8.0%		236	10.1%		182	9.4%		156	9.8%	676 (9.4%)
Features	130	10.1%		348	14.9%		219	11.3%		162	10.2%	861 (12.0%)
Interview	96	7.4%		241	10.4%		168	8.9%		112	7.0%	617 (8.6%)
Letter to editor	32	2.5%		79	3.4%		72	3.7%		54	3.4%	237 (3.3%)
News	778	60.3%		1156	49.7%		1088	55.9%		978	61.4%	4004 (56.1%)
Opinion article	82	6.4%		156	6.7%		118	6.1%		48	3.0%	400 (5.6%)
Pictures	68	5.3%		112	4.8%		99	5.0%		82	5.2%	361 (5.0%)
Total	1,290	100%		2,328	100%		1,946	100%		1,592	100%	7,156 (100%)

Source: Content Analysis, 2023

From the above table, the Nation newspaper had the highest space allocated to the coverage of 2023 Nigerian presidential election with frequency of 2,328 (32.5%) in terms of paragraph in reporting the newspaper coverage of 2023 Presidential election while the Punch newspaper had 1,946 (27.2%), Vanguard newspaper had 1,592 (22.3%) while Guardian newspaper had 1,290 (18.0) with the combined total of 7156 (100%) paragraphs dedicated to the coverage of 2023 presidential election.

### Discussion of Findings

From the analyses, the study found that the selected newspapers adequately covered the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. In the four months (November, December, January, and February) that were examined, 1118 stories on the topic were reported through the major genre of the newspaper. Therefore, the media outlets under focus considerably performed the agenda-setting role (McCombs and Shaw in 1972). This observation agrees with (Felix, 2018 cited by Sanusi et. al.), who averred that mass media determine what we think and worry about and project them daily.

The research question on the genre of stories reported on the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria indicated that news is the most covered aspect of disseminating information by the four selected newspapers on the 2023 Presidential election. New stories are directed toward informing the audience in a summarised and fact-alone manner. Features combine the dual purpose of informing and entertaining, while editorials, on the other hand, are specifically directed towards educating the readership through analysis of societal and national importance issues. Interpretative articles, which include opinions, columns, and other reports incorporating in-depth analyses, are directed toward interpreting events and issues (Felix, 2018). The goal is to let the reader put events in perspective and take positions on important issues. However, the percentage of editorials deliberated on the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria was ample. As observed earlier, the editorial critically analyses, direct, and enlightens the public along a path of consciousness and conscientiousness; however, such advantage was not explored by the newspapers examined.

The Story placement or positioning is one of the methods through which the print media perform the agenda-setting function; hence, the location of a story goes a long way in determining the measures of importance attached to it by the publisher and, inadvertently, by the audience as well. The

majority of the stories were inside the pages of the newspapers examined. Front-page, center spread, and back page of newspapers are meant to attract attention and command prominence; therefore, the newspapers examined adequately used the parameters mentioned to cover the issue and brought it to prominence except for the little shortfall recorded for the back spread. Therefore, prominence was given to the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria. This is in line with other scholars 'findings that the media are the brain box of democracy (Buami, 2016, Kadir *et al*, 2015) [6, 18].

The research question on the space allocated to the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria in terms of paragraphs indicated the Nation newspaper out of the selected newspapers had the highest frequency in terms of paragraphs in reporting the newspaper coverage pattern of the 2023 Presidential election. Succinctly put, the four selected newspapers dedicated a lot of space to the coverage of the 2023 presidential election.

### Conclusion

Newspaper coverage of presidential election in Nigeria plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and fostering informed citizenship. Through in-depth reporting, analysis, and editorial commentary, newspapers serve as crucial platforms for disseminating information about candidates' policies, campaign promises, and political agendas. They not only provide a comprehensive overview of the electoral landscape but also facilitate critical discourse on issues such as governance, corruption, and socio-economic development, which are central to voters' decision-making process. Thus, the importance of newspaper coverage in presidential elections cannot be overstated, as it not only informs public opinion but also strengthens the foundations of democracy by ensuring an informed and engaged electorate.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The media should always provide equal attention to the coverage of events or topics that are vital to society without letting any reason influence the tone and interest of the professions.
2. The media should allow other genres of the newspaper (editorial, features, interview, letter to the editor and opinion articles) to also be seen as important ways of passing across political information and other related election matter to the diverse audiences of the media as

- most news are paid for, which could be indirectly biased in representing the stand of the media houses.
3. Nationally significant events, such as presidential elections, should always be prominently featured on the front page and even the back page of a newspaper. This is especially crucial for election-related matters, which are continuously monitored by the international community.
  4. The daily publications in Nigeria should make an effort to devote more space to the coverage of issues deemed more important to the country's democracy.

## References

1. Abdullahi SA. Youth, political parties and electoral violence in Nigeria. In: Mohammed H, editor. *The patterns and dynamics of party politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. Kano, Nigeria: Hallmark Publishing Nigeria LTD, 2015.
2. Akinboye SO, Anifowose R. Nigerian government and politics. In: Anifowose R, Enemufo F, editors. *Elements of politics*. Lagos, Nigeria: Sam Iroanusi Publishers, 2008.
3. Annekatrin DI, Hanne J. Violent elections and citizens' support for democratic constraints on the executive: Evidence from Nigeria. *Comparative Political Studies*. 2023; 0(0):1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231178730>
4. Auwal A. Political parties and electoral misconduct in Nigeria. In: Mohammed H, editor. *The patterns and dynamics of party politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. Kano, Nigeria: Hallmark Publishing Nigeria LTD; 2015.
5. Babayo S. The 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria: An analysis of the voting pattern, issues and impact. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*. 2019; 15(2):129-140.
6. Buami E. The Mass Media and Voter Decision Making: An Assessment of Ghana's 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary Election. *New Media and Mass Communication*. 2016; 53(5):254-266.
7. Daniel N. Nigerian press promotion of equal opportunity in reporting general elections: Evidence from Punch and Vanguard Newspapers' coverage of 2019 presidential electioneering. *International Journal of Advanced Mass Communication and Journalism*. 2021; 2(1):10-17.
8. Daramola I. *Mass media and society*. Lagos, Nigeria: Rotham Press Ltd., 2005.
9. DeFleur ML. *Mass communication theories: Exploring origins, processes and effects*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2010.
10. Eulau H, Gibbins R, Webb P. Election. *Political Science* [Internet]. [Cited 2022 Jan 27]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/election-political-science>
11. Falola T, Heaton M. *A history of Nigeria*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
12. Felix OT, Olanihin SZ. Newspaper Coverage Pattern of the Re-Arrests of Nnamdi Kanu. A Content Analysis Review of Two National Dailies. *Online Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (OJAMSS)*. 2021; 5(2):296-309.
13. George R. *Mass media in a changing world*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Inc., 2006.
14. Griffin EM. *First look at communication theory*. 4th ed. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Inc., 2000.
15. Habermas J. *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1989.
16. Heath R, editor. *Encyclopedia of public relations*. London, UK: Sage Publications, 2005.
17. Johari JC. *Comparative politics*. New Delhi, India: Sterling Publishers, 2011.
18. Kadiri K, Muhammed Y, Raji A, Sulaiman. Constraints and Challenges of the Media in the Development of Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. 2015; 17(1):132-145.
19. Martin Acheampong. Overpromising and Underdelivering? Digital Technology in Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Elections. *GIGA Focus | Africa*. 2023; (2):1-13. ISSN 1862-3603.
20. Miller K. *Communication theories: Perspectives, processes and contexts*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Inc.; 2002.
21. Ndimele OM, Innocent KH. *Fundamentals of mass communication*. Port Harcourt, Nigeria: M & J Grand Orbit Communications Ltd.; 2006.
22. Obiam SC. The Nigerian State and Electoral Violence: An Analysis of the 2019 Presidential General Election in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 2021; 26(3):2279-0845.
23. Odulami D. Media Use as a Predictor of the Political Behaviour of Undergraduates in South West Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*. 2013; 4(2):53-66.
24. Okim AO, Ngozi O. Health Communication: The Responsibility of the Media in Nigeria. *Science Arena Publications Specialty Journal of Medical Research and Health Science*. 2017; 2(3):1-14.
25. Ravi BK. Media and social responsibility: A critical perspective with special reference to television. *Academic Research International*, 2012, 306-325.
26. Sule B, Azizuddin M, Sani M, Mat B. Opposition political parties and democratic consolidation in Nigeria: Examining All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 General Elections. *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs*. 2018; 21(4):81-112.
27. Sanusi BO, Olanihin SZ, Omipidan IA, Daniel HA. Newspaper Coverage of Developmental Communication Issues: A Content Analysis of Two Nigerian's Daily (The Punch and The Nation). *Global Journal Of Education, Humanities And Management Sciences (Gojehms)*. 2022; 4(2):1-13.
28. Ahmad SS, Uddin Z, Shah FA. Presidential Election in Nigeria 2023 Trial and Tribulation of Democracy. *Propel Journal of Academic Research (PJAR)*. 2023; 2(2):12-21.
29. Sule B, Azizuddin M, Sani M, Mat B. Political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: The case of 2015 Presidential Election. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education Arts and Sciences*. 2017; 4(4):1-13.
30. The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives (CPPA). 2015 Presidential Election outcome: Analyses & implications [Internet]. [cited 2022 Jan 27]. Available from: <http://cpparesearch.org>
31. Ujo AA. *Understanding election in Nigeria: The first 50 years (1960-2010)*. Kaduna, Nigeria: Joyce Graphic Printers and Publishers, 2012.
32. Yau Idris Gadau, Murjanatu Abubak. Youth and the electoral violence in Nigeria's democratic regime: Lesson for youth ahead of 2023 general election. *African*

Social Science and Humanities Journal (ASSHJ). 2023;  
3(4):76-88.