ETHICAL FACTORS IN THE COVERAGE OF STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the extent to which the Nigerian journalists comply with ethical values in the course of their reportage. Two national dailies – The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers were selected for content analysis, using systematic random sampling technique to pick 26 editions per newspaper. A period of six months from 14 December 2014 to 14 June, 2015, covering the 4th phase of the state of emergency was chosen. Tables, figures, and sample percentage counts were employed in making the research data easily understandable. The findings revealed that though the newspapers appeared to be ethically compliant in their reportage, none of the two newspapers was neutral in its reportage of the state of emergency rule. Majority of their stories were considered unpleasant and capable of aggravating the crisis in the troubled states. The hypothesis were tested, one showed that there is a significant difference between the number of news stories and the number of ethical breaches in the selected newspapers; hypothesis two showed a significant difference between ethically breaching and ethically standard reports/content of the selected newspapers; hypothesis three showed a significant difference between the ethical breaching of Daily Trust and those of The Nation – X² = 0.09; P<0.05, df1. The study therefore, recommends that journalists should always have a healthy regard for the public interest, desist from slavish adulation and join hands with the government in bringing about lasting peace to the troubled states and desist from publishing inflammatory stories.

Keywords: Ethical breaches, state of emergency, objective, reporting.

Background of the Study

Human beings are endowed with a moral conscience that determines their daily action. This conscience is a product of man’s social, political, cultural, and religious doctrines. Since human beings are moral by their very nature, media professionals can be expected to obey self-imposed principle of good conduct. To
this, Merrill and Lowenstein (1979, cited in Onabajo, 2002, p.21) submits that “journalistic ethics is primarily personal to individual journalists and must be internalized within the journalist, to be meaningful”. Ethics as a moral philosophy is concerned with the general nature of morals and specific moral choices that people make in relationships with others (Everett, 2002; p.44). By this conception, journalistic ethics is usually taken to mean the study and application of journalistic standards of conduct and moral choices.

Journalism, is a very hazardous profession with myriad of press laws and ethical challenge to contend with in the course of realizing journalistic goals. However, Aina (2011, p.34) regrets that:

> Journalists do not enjoy public trust, as there is ever present, a crisis of confidence between journalist and members of the public culminating in an outpouring of media criticism.

To Onabajo, (2011, p.3) “the Nigerian media is like an ugly mirror trying to reflect the ugliness of the larger society.” This brings us to the imperatives of ethics in journalism and its importance especially when a country is passing through a major crisis. The press is central to achieving peace and national unity by serving as a bulwark of the citizens against tyranny and divisive elements. This is achieved by disseminating useful information that will help members of the public to reach rational discernment on issues of national significance, yet in full compliance with ethical imperatives of the profession. Even though every journalist is a hired laborer, his responsibility is not entirely to his employer, but to the human race. It is on this premise that Enahoro (1990; p.20) argues that “journalism is a profession meant for only those who want to help save the world.” Against this backdrop, the imperative of high ethical values in media operation becomes urgent, considering the fact that the media is a catalytic agent in the fight for social justice, maintenance of peace and stability needed for a country’s growth and development.

**Statement of the Problem**

Basically, journalism is a profession of collecting, writing, editing and publishing or producing (as the case may be) materials in the media of mass communication for public consumption. Journalism is about working for the people, about people and events. Therefore, it involves a high degree of public trust. Such trust is the cornerstone of journalism. Consequently, journalists are expected to perform their duties selflessly, faithfully and fearlessly to earn that trust. Consequently, it is through religious adherence to ethics that the media can help to deliver a flow of objective and accurate news which afford the people, the opportunity to critically examine all sides of issues with a view to reaching a decision that will be for their good and that of the society.
While agreeing with Ndolo (2011, p.9) that “presently, Nigerian journalism remains the most vibrant, most daring, most ubiquitous and most professional on the African continent”, it must be admitted that unethical practices are still rampant, as unprofessional practices are becoming the norm rather than the exception. The rate at which members of the public and government officials cast aspersion on Nigerian journalists in recent time over non-compliance with the code of ethics calls for great concern.

The present political and security challenges which has led to the declaration of the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States make the need for high ethical values in media operations not only vital but urgent, considering the pivotal role of the press to maintenance of peace and fostering of national unity. Therefore, the problems of this study consist in questions such as: has the press been able to maintain fairness and objectivity in their reportage of the state of emergency declared in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States? During the period under review did the press give adequate coverage to the state of emergency in the affected states? What is the level of press commitment to the country’s cohesion and harmonious development as a unified nation through their reportage?

Objective of the Study

The objectives of study include the following:

i. To ascertain the extent to which The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers exhibit fairness and objectivity in their reportage of the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States.

ii. To investigate the dominant direction leaning of The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers reports on the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States.

iii. To investigate the extent to which the selected newspapers cover the state of emergency in the affected states.

iv. To verify the level of prominence given to the state of emergency by selected newspapers.

Research Questions

i. To what extent do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers exhibit fairness and objectivity in their reportage of the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States?

ii. What is the dominant direction of The Nation and Daily Trust newspaper reports on the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States?

iii. To what extent do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers cover the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States?

iv. What is the level of prominence given to the state of emergency by The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers?
Research Hypothesis

**H01:** There is no significant difference between the number of news stories and the number of ethical breaches in the selected newspapers.  
**H02:** There is no significant difference between ethical breaches and ethical standard reports/contents of the selected newspapers.  
**H03:** There is no significant difference between the ethical breaches of Daily Trust and ethical breaches of The Nation.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it will provide both theoretical backgrounds to ethical issues and practical knowledge from the case being investigated. For example, inferences gained from this study can shape public policy on the use of newspapers in a crisis situation. Consequently the study would become a handy tool for academic research and newspaper organizations in Nigeria, and other stakeholders in the industry. The study would also afford the selected newspapers the opportunity to appraise themselves and adjust when necessary and by way of extension, other media outfits will borrow a leaf from them.

Scope of the Study

The study covered only newspapers; The Nation and Daily Trust. It covered the newspapers reports on the second phase of the declaration of the state of emergency from December 14, 2014 to June 14, 2015. The two newspapers’ content manifest, were analyzed.

Profile of The Nation and Daily Trust Newspapers

**The Nation**

*The Nation* is a daily newspaper founded on July 31, 2006 and published by Vintage Press Limited, in Lagos, Nigeria. According to the survey by ADUAN, AAPN, MIPAN, (major players in the advertising industry in Nigeria), it was second most read newspaper in Nigeria. The paper’s website says it stands for freedom, justice and market economy. Its target audience is the business and political elite, the affluent, the educated and the upwardly mobile. *The Nation* has printing plants in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. The newspapers cover business and economy, public, policies, the democratic process and institutions of democracy, sports, arts and culture.
Daily Trust

*Daily Trust* is published by the Media Trust Limited, based in Abuja. The company first established the Weekly Trust in March 1998 and launched the Daily Trust in January 2001. The two newspapers are currently, the largest circulating newspapers in Northern Nigeria. The group of newspapers, according its websites says it ranks among the top seven in Nigeria in advertising revenue.

Conceptual Review

**Ethics**, which come from Greek word “ethos” means the discipline dealing with what is good and bad, and with moral duty and obligation (Webster Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, cited in Egbon, 2007, p.61). Okunna, (2003, cited in Nsikan, 2009, p.167) asserts that ethics is synonymous with morality and both involve human action. Ethics therefore, is the application for rational thought by the journalist when he chooses between two or more competing moral issues (Nsika, 2009, p.168). In essence, ethics has to do with certain moral principle accepted by those in the profession. According to Egbon (2007, p.61) “ethics is much of a normative science of conduct, with conduct considered primarily as self-determined and voluntary.” Therefore, it is a sort of self-regulation. Even though, ethical behaviour or morality cannot be legislated, they are however expected to be upheld by the practitioner since they were arrived at by mutual agreement. The fact that ethics infuses a dose of morality into the practice of journalism, and constitutes some sort of a watchdog to journalistic practice makes it indispensable to the profession. Folarin, Adeseye and Akindele (2002, p.38) list and discuss common ethical issues in Nigeria to include; bribery, tribalism, stealing, rape, murder, ‘gangsterism’, drug peddling, drug addiction, sexual permissiveness, child abuse, incest, and religious extremism”. The list is seemingly in-exhaustive.

**Code of Journalistic Ethics.**

Codes of journalistic ethics has been defined as rules and norms, which are prepared and adopted by journalists to regulate the conduct of their profession. (Oloruntola, 2007, p.59). Professional ethical norms first began to be codified in the early 1920 in view of the responsibilities and duties of journalist as a purveyor of information. The press code of ethic was initially adopted in 1978 by Nigerian journalist, and this later paved the way for the new one in existence. It covers the following areas: Editorial Independence, Accuracy and Fairness, Privacy, Privilege/ Non-Disclosure, Decency and Discrimination. Others are Reward and Gratification, Violence, Children and Minors, Access to Information, Social Responsibility, Plagiarism and Copyright.

Under these categories, the code stipulates the right attitudes towards the practice of journalism. It clearly spells out what ought to be done and what should
not be, against the background of establishing good conduct and morals within the rank of those engaged in the professional practice of journalism. This code of ethics or conduct for Nigerian journalists share remarkable similarities in the ideas or standard of conduct with the code of ethics of other international organizations such as the International Federation of Journalist, the credos, which deal with the right to truth, professional integrity, non-disclosure of confidential sources of information, social responsibility, fairness and accuracy and respect for human dignity (Egbon, 2007; p.71). The bottom line here is that, the code of ethics for the Nigerian journalist is very much in tune with what obtain elsewhere in the world.

State of Emergency in Nigeria

A state of emergency is a governmental declaration which usually suspends a few normal functions of the Executive, Legislature and Judicial power, and alert citizens to change their normal behaviors (Ogunoye, 2014, p.19). It is also when government gives special power in order to control a usually difficult or dangerous situation, especially when it involves limiting people’s freedom. The Nation newspaper, while reviewing the history of state of emergency in Nigeria, in its July 28, 2013 edition records that the first state of emergency in Nigeria was in 1962 when Dr. Moses Majekodunmi was appointed the Sole Administrator of the defunct Western Region as a way of resolving the crisis that engulfed the Action Group government in the region. Since its return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria’s political history has been topsy-turvy. The country has experienced some security challenges that threatened its peace and unity. Consequently, some of its past leaders have been forced to invoke section 305 of the nation’s constitution which empowers the sitting president to declare emergency whenever the peace of the country is threatened. Before President Goodluck Jonathan’s declaration of partial emergency rule in Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States on Tuesday, 14th May 2013, Plateau and Ekiti, where the only states that have experienced emergency rule since this democratic dispensation began in 1999.

The former President Olusegun Obasanjo on Tuesday May 18th, 2014 declared an emergency rule in Plateau state, following a sectarian crisis that claimed hundreds of lives and left many homeless. Ekiti was the next state to experience emergency rule. On Thursday, October 19, 2006 the former president Obasanjo declared an emergency rule in order to restore peace and orderliness in the place.

However, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States on 14th May, 2013, due to the mindless and ceaseless loss of lives and properties as a result of the attacks by the Boko Haram sect. The emergency rule in the troubled States was in its third phase during this research.
Ethical Demands for Coverage of Crisis

Of ethical demands for the coverage of crisis, Walter Lippman, in his statement in 1920, “Telling the truth is the highest Law of Journalism” Gullimore and Root (1975 cited in Aina, 2011, p.37) corroborate this view, when they aver that; “truth is the word that summarizes many journalistic ideals (and the) ideals of accuracy, objectivity and fairness are all contained in the larger ideal of truth. In line with the ethics of the profession, journalist must assume professional responsibility by watching over the interest of the people and bark if and when these interests are threatened. Enahoro (1990) posits that “ethical journalist is the crusader for social justice, public morality, civil liberty, and human progress.” However, Nsikan (2009, p.169) notes that on the other side of ethics are stiff challenges called ethical dilemmas which include: “deception, accepting gifts, conflict of interest, commercial news, media manipulation and plagiarism”.

Notwithstanding the above, Nsikan (2009; p.169) believes that “ethical principles constitute the antidote to the dilemmas.”

Theoretical Framework - Deontological Theory:

This theory simply assumes that for an action to be judged right or wrong, it should not be hinged on the consequence, rather, it should be based on the intension behind the action. Thus Okunna (2003, cited in Nsikan, 2009, p.169) defines the deontology or non-consequentialism as the process of assessing the rightness or otherwise of an act or omission, by considering the intrinsic qualities of action. Deon means, what ought to be done. For the deontologist, certain things like virtues are intrinsically good and ought to be done, consequently, the rightness or wrongness of actions should depend on the intrinsic quality and not the consequence. (Owoeye, 2014, p.43)

This is much vital to this study as journalists are always expected to conform to the ethical standards of their profession irrespective of the consequence. To this, Nsikan (2009, p.169) affirms that the intention rather than the consequence of an action is what calls for ethical appraisal. The import of the above is that once a journalist believes that the action he is taking is right or ethical, he should not consider what the outcome would turn out to be.

Research Design

This study adopted content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for systematic objective and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. It is a systematic procedure that is designed to identify and examine the content of a text or recorded information (Frey et al, 1991; Kerlinger, 1986; Walizer and Wiener 1978; Berlson, 1952). From the above definitions, it can be said that content analysis is used to measure or describe communication content. The method was chosen for the study because
the content of the selected newspapers during the period under review served as reliable data for measuring their performance in the coverage of state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. This view is supported by Borden and Abbout (2008) who state that “we use content analysis when we want to analyze a written or spoken record for the occurrence of specific categories or events.”

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researchers considered the purposive (non-random) and the systematic sampling techniques for this study. While the purposive (non-random) sampling technique was used to arrive at the two newspapers – Daily Trust and The Nation, the systematic random technique was used to arrive at the two newspapers editions that were finally content analyzed. The purposive (non-random) sampling techniques was used because the researcher understands the need to obtain a somewhat representational frame among the national dailies and would not risk the tendency of obtaining national dailies that may all be from a particular geo-political and geo cardinal locations. Therefore, Daily Trust and The Nation were largely considered because of their national spread and the fact that they are located in both the Northern (i.e. Daily Trust) and Southern (The Nation) part of Nigeria.

However, the systematic random sampling technique was deemed appropriate because it is not just scientific in approach but also provides equal representation for the two newspapers that were purposively considered. Systematic random Sampling is a procedure in which every nth subject or unit is selected from a population after a random start. (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). This kind of technique requires a sampling frame from which the sample was drawn. The systematic random sampling was used to pick a sample of 26 edition, at interval seven to one (i.e. edition per week), to get 52 edition from the two newspapers for the content analysis. The table below shows the sample size of the two newspapers during the period of study.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of Sample Size of Newspaper Editions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/n</th>
<th>Emergency Rule</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total Edition</th>
<th>Sampling interval</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>State of Emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe State.</td>
<td>Dec 14, 2014 to June 14, 2015</td>
<td>182×2 (364)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>26×2(52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content Analysis, 2014/2015
Measuring Instrument.

The instrument of data collection is the coding sheet used to analyze the content of the selected newspapers.

Units of Analysis

Units of analysis are the smallest element of content analysis. It is the basic unit of the text to be classified under content analysis (Zhang and Wildemuth 2005; Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). It is therefore, the thing that is counted wherever it is encountered. For the purpose of this study, the units of analysis include news stories, features, editorials, opinion, advertorials, and pictures, cartoons, and letter / text to the editor.

Categories of Analysis

They are category system used to clarify media content under investigation. It is a system used to classify media content. (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). For the purpose of this study, intensity of reports and direction of report formed the categories into which the units of analysis were classified.

Intensity: Intensity of reports has to do with the volume and magnitude as well as the emphasis placed in such reports. It was measured by the frequency of reports and the prominence attached to such reports.

Frequency of report has to do with the number of reports of how many times each unit occurs. This helped to determine the number of times each newspaper reported news on state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states.

Prominence: This refers to the level of significance attached to the reports. This was determined by the size of the reports and the position the reporters occupy in the selected newspaper(s). To this end, the size of stories was determined by the number of paragraphs of each story, where the size of pictures, cartoons, and advertorials was determined by columns and inches.

The Position: The reports were grouped into front page and others. In other words, front page reports were considered more prominent than others.

Direction: This refers to reports/ contents about issues/events that tend to oppose or support the state of emergency. The units of analysis under this category were: neutral, positive and negative. Reports that were neither positive nor negative reports were consider neutral. Positive reports/ contents were those that promote stability and public order, as well as good anticipation for citizens while negative reports/contents were those that promote instability and public disorder.

Method of Data Collection.

The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers were used for this study. The sources of the selected newspapers were the libraries of Adekunle Ajasin
University, Akungba-Akoko, University of Ilorin and the Federal University, Oye Ekiti. The researchers employed and trained research assistants who helped in collecting relevant data for the study.

**Validity and Reliability of the Measuring Instrument.**

Validation and reliability of research instrument, which is the central part of every academic research is usually done to ensure that the instruments accurately measure what they set out to measure (Diri, 2014, p.93). To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, five editions each of *TheNation* and *DailyTrust* newspapers were pre tested. At the end of the pilot study, the pre tested editions were given to a measurement and evaluating expert in the Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. His critical comment was used to improve and refine the final test instrument for overall content and reliability and validation.

**Method of Data Analysis.**

The researcher employed quantitative method of data analysis. The four research questions were answered using statistical tables and representing of figures in simple percentage counts. The two (2) null hypotheses were tested using chisquare ($\chi^2$)

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

This study set out to evaluate the ethical factors in newspapers coverage of state of emergency in north east Nigeria. *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* Newspapers were chosen from the numerous newspapers in Nigeria for evaluation via content analysis. The twenty six (26) editions from each of the selected newspapers (The Nation and Daily Trust) were content analyzed in line with the research questions formulated for the study. Furthermore, some graphical tables were presented below to reveal the nature of data collected and to, consequently used them in providing answers to the research questions.

**Table 1: Distribution of Stories by Daily Trust and The Nation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of reports/content</th>
<th>Daily Trust</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News stories</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoons/caricature</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows the distribution of stories by the two newspapers that were studied—*Daily Trust* and *The Nation*. Data show that Daily Trust had 145 reports/contents on the state of emergence, while The Nation had 76. This means Daily Trust newspaper published reports or contents about the state of emergency more than The Nation. Furthermore, data show that out of a total of 221 (145 + 76) newspaper reports/contents, 73.8% are news stories.

Table 2: Distribution of Stories According To Placement/Position of Reports/Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement/position</th>
<th>Daily Trust</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front page</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside page</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back page</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Content Analysis, 2014/2015.*

Table 2 contains data that show the placement and position of reports/contents. The data depict that out of 221 reports/contents, 15% of the reports/contents are in the front page while 85% were in the inside page. There are no reports/contents at the back page. The above revealed that the two newspapers did not attach much importance to the coverage of emergency rule in the affected states as majority of their reports were in the inside page.
Table 3: Distribution of Stories According To Space/Size of Reports/Contents
Source: Content Analysis, 2014/2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space/size</th>
<th>Daily Trust</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small/short (0-25cm)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (26-51cm)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long/large (52cm &amp; above)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in table 3 is about space/size allocated to the reports/contents of Daily Trust and The Nation newspapers. Accordingly, data show that out of 221 reports/contents, 7.2% of the spaces/sizes allocated to reports/contents were small/short (i.e. a quarter and less page), 37.6% were medium, (i.e half page and more than a quarter page) while 55.2 were long/large (i.e. more than a half page upwards). These means that though majority of the reports/contents of Daily Trust and The Nation on the state of emergency rule were not placed in the front page as shown in table 2, many of such reports/contents were vastly covered.

Table 4: The Direction of Reports/Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction/frames/slant</th>
<th>Daily Trust</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content Analysis, 2014/2015.

Table 4 is about the direction of reports/content of Daily Trust and The Nation on the emergency rule. Data show that out of 221 reports/contents on emergency rule, none is neutral as they all have a certain direction in their reportage. Accordingly, 19% are positive while, 81% are negative.

Table 5: Sources of Reports/Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Daily Trust</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs/Associations/Political</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Groups | Eyewitness Accounts/Reporters | Boko Haram Militants | Columnists | Editorial Board | Others | Total
---|------|----------------|------|----------------|------|------
26 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 145 |
32 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 76 |
26.3 | 0 | 4.0 | 2.2 | 0 | 100 |

Source: Content Analysis, 2014/2015.

Data contained in table 5 show the sources of report/contents on state of emergency as covered by Daily Trust and The Nation. Data show that out 221 reports/contents, 42.1% are from government or official sources, 25.4% are from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), 26.3% are from eyewitness accounts. None of the reports/coverage is from Boko Haram militants. These means that most of the reports/contents on emergency rule from Daily Trust and The Nation put together are from government or official sources. However, majority of The Nation reports were from the eyewitness accounts/reporters.

Table 6: Level of the two Newspapers Compliance with the Ethical Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethics Considerations</th>
<th>Sensational report/content</th>
<th>Inciting report/content</th>
<th>Judgmental content</th>
<th>Obscenities</th>
<th>Ethically standard</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical breaches</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content analysis, 2014/2015

Table 6 further investigated the level of the two newspapers compliance with the ethical standards in the coverage of the second phase of the state of emergency in North-East Nigeria. Data show that out of 221 reports/contents of Daily Trust and The Nation newspapers, 6.3% were sensational, 7.7% were inciting, while 9% were judgmental. None of the reports/contents show any obscene pictures. On the whole 33% of reports/contents were unethical, while 77% are acceptable ethical standard. However, The Nation newspaper recorded more cases of ethical breaches.
Data Analysis

Analysis of data for this study was based on the research questions

Research Question 1: To what extent do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers exhibit fairness and objectivity in their reportage of the state of emergency in Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States?

From the findings as reflected in table 6, majority of the stories in the newspapers (77%) were ethically compliant. However, The Nation newspaper recorded more ethical breaches (32 cases) than Daily Trust newspaper (16 cases). This may be due to the fact that the financier of The Nation newspaper, Alhaji Ahmed Tinubu is a leader of the opposition party, APC.

Research Question 2: What is the dominant direction of The Nation and Daily Trust newspaper reports on the state of emergency in Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States?

It was gathered from table 4, that none of the two newspapers was neutral as they all have a defined direction during the period under review. The two newspapers had majority of their stories published as negative, with Daily Trust newspaper recording more of such negative stories (111 stories) compared to The Nation (68stories). Going by the definition of negative report in this study, which connotes reports that are capable of causing instability and public disorder, it is clear here that majority of the two newspapers reports were unpleasant and capable of aggravating the crisis in the troubled states.

Research Question 3: To what extent do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers cover the state of emergency in Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States?

As pointed out by the findings of this study, Daily Trust reported and published more stories 145 stories were published by Daily Trust on the state of emergency rule, while The Nation published 76 stories on the same issue. Location/proximity may be a likeable influential factor in the way the two newspapers covered the state of emergency in the affected states. For instance, Daily Trust is a northern based national daily, and as such is closer to the states where the state of emergency is declared as it is likely to be more interested in reporting such issue than The Nation, which is a southern based newspaper.

What is the level of prominence given to the state of emergency by The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers?

As earlier stated in this study, the page placement and space (columns) devoted to the state of emergency stories were used to measure the importance attached to the reported stories. It is apparent from table 2, that the two newspapers did not attach much importance to the state of emergency in Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe States. Most of the stories, 185 stories were published in the inside page, while a meager 33 stories were allowed to hug the front page. However, the two newspapers gave more space as reflected in table 3) to the state of emergency rule stories. This clearly showed that many of such reports were extensively done.
Research Hypothesis

**H0₁**: There is no significant difference between the number of news stories and the number of ethical breaches in the selected newspapers.

The test of hypothesis one (H0₁) was successfully done through SPSS 17.1 and manually confirmed. The test showed that there is a significant difference between the number of news stories and the number of ethical breaches in the selected newspapers. This means majority of the unethical breaches were not from news stories. Respectively, test result for the Nation and Daily Trust are: $X^2=0.006$; $p<0.05$, df1 and 0.08; $p<0.05$, df1. This means that hypothesis one is rejected. The test type was 2 X 2 contingency.

**H0₂**: There is no significant difference between ethically breaches and ethically standard reports/contents of the selected newspapers.

The test of hypothesis two (H0₂) was done through SPSS 17.1 and manually confirmed. The 2X2 contingency type of test of hypothesis was used. The test result showed that there is a significant difference between ethically breaching and ethically standard reports/contents of the selected newspapers. Respectively test result for Daily Trust and The Nation are: $X^2=0.09$; $p<0.05$, df1 and 0.0007; $p<0.05$, df1. As such, hypothesis two is rejected.

**H0₃**: There is no significant difference between the ethical breaches of Daily Trust and ethically breaches of The Nation.

The test of hypothesis three (H0₃) was done through SPSS 17.1 and manually confirmed. The 2 x 2 contingency type of test of hypothesis was used. The test result showed that there is a significant difference between the ethical breaches of Daily Trust and the ethical breaches of The Nation $X^2=0.09$; $p<0.05$ (H0₃) hypothesis three is rejected.

Recommendations

Premised on the above, the following recommendations are offered:

1. It is a known fact that the legitimacy of every government lies in the protection of lives and properties of the citizen. This task is by no means an easy one. Thus all hands must be on deck. Journalists should therefore join hands with the government in bringing about peace and development to the country and desist from disseminating inflammatory stories, fueled by ethnic and religious bigotry, which can set Nigerians against Nigerians. The unity of purpose is ultimately what is required.

2. The Nigerian press is suffering from the economic depression in the country, and this no doubt, has put the journalist in a very compromising position. Media owners should as a matter of urgency should make adequate arrangement for the welfare and general upkeep of the journalists they employ.
3. The academia should endeavour to make available to the sector (e.g. media) the findings of academic researches.

Conclusion

Following the findings of this study, we can draw these conclusions

1. The two selected newspapers were more ethical in their reportage of the state of emergency rule in the three states than unethical. However, The Nation newspaper, recorded more ethical breaches in its reportage of the same issues. The two newspapers were not neutral in their reports.
2. Based on what the data offered, the two newspapers reports were capable of fueling the existing crisis in the troubled states, as most of their reports were negative.
3. The two selected newspaper did not attach much importance to the state of emergency rule in the inside page. However the two newspapers gave more space to the same issues. Daily Trust was more diversified in its reportage.

References


